



Network of Associations of Local Authorities from South-East Europe - NALAS

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NALAS is announcing through this info-bulletin the intention to bring into your attention as many as possible general information about its activities, but also about what the member associations are doing at the level of the respective countries. The information from this info-bulletin is submitted by the associations' representatives and by different collaborators. To subscribe or to unsubscribe to this info-bulletin, please send e-mail with your request to nalas.see@gmail.com.

Summary:

A. NALAS activities and participations

- [Meeting](#) of the NALAS secretariat representative with the Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia representatives

B. Members associations' activities

- Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities from Serbia - [SCTM](#)
- Albanian Association of Municipalities - [AAM](#)
- Romanian Federation of Local Authorities - [FALR](#)

A. NALAS ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATIONS

1. Meeting between NALAS secretariat representative – Mr. Ergys Bezhani – and AMTS's representatives - Mrs. Mojca Mernik and Mrs. Saša Kek

The Albanian Association of Municipalities (Mr. Ergys Bezhani, working for NALAS Secretariat) had an official meeting with the Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia (Mrs. Mojca Mernik and Mrs. Saša Kek).

The meeting took place near AMTS office in Slovenia. The purpose of this meeting was to establish a closer work between these two bodies of NALAS in order to get better coordination of their work for any further activities. Slovenia is the only country near NALAS that is a member of EU. So its experiences are useful not only to AAM but to all NALAS members.

A short description was made by the two sides about the recent activities of these associations. Another important issue was the exchange of experiences of how these two Associations operate. One of the priorities of NALAS is the concrete exchange of experiences and information among the members.



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B. MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS' ACTIVITIES

1. SCTM short presentation (www.skgo.org)

- *The first constitutive session of the new SCTM presidency: „Decentralisation – Key Precondition of Prompt Development”*

The first, constitutive Session of the SCTM Presidency, elected on the 35th SCTM General Assembly, was held in Belgrade on 31 January 2006. The chairman of the Session was Mayor of Municipality of New Belgrade Mr. Željko Ožegović, who was also elected for a SCTM President with two-year mandate at the Standing Conference General Assembly.

The members of the Presidency – 19 mayors from different parts of Serbia expressed their disbelief concerning Central Government's readiness to initiate resolving of accumulated problems. The Presidency has stood for recent beginning of Structural dialogue between SCTM and the Government of the Republic of Serbia, based on the agreement for which signing the Government expressed its willingness by principle.

They also discussed and adopted the Decision on membership in SCTM Committees, by which the towns and municipalities are assigned in ten SCTM working bodies. At the session the proposals for SCTM and Presidency activities in 2006 have been discussed and appointed two working groups - for citizens' participation strengthening and for preparing the Strategy for SCTM financial sustainability. The Presidency has adopted the proposal to form the Council for European Integration in the Standing Conference framework.

- *Round table: “Developing Municipal Credit Market”*

The Round Table “Developing Municipal Credit Market”, organised by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities together with MEGA – Municipal Economic Growth Activity funded by USAID, took place on 7 February 2006.

Participants at this successful event were representatives of important banks in Serbia, representatives of the Ministry for Finance, Ministry for International Economic Relations, Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Municipal Infrastructure Agency, as well as other international experts in this area.

- *Symposium: “Local Agenda 21: Towards Planning of Sustainable Development in Serbian Municipalities”*

The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, in co-operation with Serbian Chamber of Commerce, organised Symposium “Local Agenda 21: Towards Planning of Sustainable Development in Serbian Municipalities” on 7 February 2006.

The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities is involved in the implementation of the Strategy for Local Sustainable Development, promoted at the Local Sustainable Development



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Conference in May 2005, and adopted at the 35th General Assembly of the SCTM in December 2005. The Strategy for Local Sustainable Development is implemented in 6 pilot municipalities, with support of Norwegian partners from the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, through the "Program for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development in Towns and Municipalities in Serbia".

At the current phase of the mentioned Program it is not possible to include more municipalities. The aim of the Standing Conference was to help other SCTM members and inform them on the planning process for sustainable development at local level through this symposium, which was an opportunity to share experiences between all interested parties.

- *Conference: "Code of Conduct for Local Officials – Towards the Implementation"*

The Conference "Code of Conduct for Local Officials – Towards the Implementation" took place on 13 February 2006, and was organised within the framework of the Project of adoption and promotion of the Code of conduct at local government level, implemented by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and supported by the European Union, Open Society Institute and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

The Conference had two parts: first session was dedicated to the Code of conduct in the context of existing national legislation, while the issue of the implementation of the principles of ethics at local level was elaborated at the second session. Foreign participants had an opportunity to hear about Serbian experiences in this field, as well as about the first steps in monitoring the implementation of the Code and the system of scrutiny that the Standing Conference has prepared in the framework of the new Project of the establishment of Municipal Monitoring Boards, supported by the Westminster Foundation.

This event was at the same time the occasion for towns and municipalities that have adopted the Code to get posters with the text of the Code – 145 out of 167 towns and municipalities have adopted the Code till now. At the same time, pilot municipalities that will participate in the new project signed the Memorandum of understanding on the participation at the project.

Participants of the conference were mayors and other representatives from all Serbian towns and municipalities, high officials from the Central Government level, foreign and international organisations and actors in the fields of importance for local governments in Serbia.

- *Conference: „For a More Active Citizen"*

The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities organised the first conference 'For a More Active Citizen', which took place on 6 March 2006. The conference was organized within project 'Support to Increased Citizen Participation in Serbia', implemented with financial and expert assistance of the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation in Serbia and Montenegro (SDC).

The project leads to greater involvement of citizens into decision-making process in our towns and municipalities. Its goals are to improve the awareness of the need to increase citizen participation in local political life, promote principles of democratic governance, initiate and



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assist adoption of the Green Paper on citizen participation in local public life by the Government of Republic of Serbia, and to improve citizen participation at local level, especially securing the participation of the youth, women, minorities, and the poor.

Within activities that should support this process, SCTM initiated the work on comparative analysis of the legal frame and policies in Republic of Serbia and other European countries, and the research of the current situation in our country, related to citizen participation at local level. The results and recommendations of these researches were presented at the conference as well. Based on these recommendations and other relevant experiences, but also on the conclusions of this conference, SCTM will, through its working group, create and promote adoption of the national strategy for citizen participation at local level.

Besides representatives of local authorities, numerous national and foreign high officials, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations and institutions, and the international donor organisations attended this conference.

2. AAM activities (www.aam-al.org)

During March 2006 AAM representatives participated in 12 regional meetings where the following topics were discussed.:

- Local budget for the year 2006;
- New methods for the implementation of the budget and the relations with the treasury branch;
- Future reform of the small business tax; and
- Transfer of water-supply near the local power within 2006.

These activities were organised by LGDA, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Finance.

Some of the conclusions were that together with the Ministry of Interior, the municipalities should know better the concept of competitive grants. As for the Treasury Branches, the relationships between this body and the municipalities have improved notably. But a series of seminars and workshops is necessary to be organised in order that both these institutions now better what rights and responsibilities they have. AAM together with the Ministry of Finances and LGDA will be in charge for the organization of these activities.

AAM should be ready for the administration of the competence of the small business tax. A task force will be established for this purpose. Another task force will be established for the management of the competences of the water-supply system.

3. FALR activities (www.falr.ro)

Romanian Federation of Local Authorities, as a partner of VNG International, implemented the program LOGO EAST. The project intends to strengthen the collaboration between local and regional authorities and water companies from Romania and Netherlands.



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Within the framework of this program, VNG organized in The Hague a twinning training dedicated to the representatives of 14 twinning partnerships focused on internal management. Also, the event was focused on supporting the efforts of these partnerships for developing twinning projects to be financed through the program, planned to improve the human resources and financial management of the Romanian partners.

The LOGO EAST program is implemented in other 2 other Balkan countries – Serbia and Bulgaria and could become a good opportunity for changing information and best practices between NALAS member associations.