



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

Info-bulletin no.8 – January 2006

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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.

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A. NALAS ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATIONS

1. Meeting between NALAS President, Mr. Tarzan Milosevic and SDC – Swiss Agency for Co-operation and Development representatives

On January 23rd, in Geneva, the NALAS President, together with Mrs. Vanja Starovlah, NALAS treasurer, Mr. Francois Saint Ouen, FEDRE had a meeting with Mrs. Alice Thomann and Mrs. Katrin Stocker, SDC representatives. The meeting objective was to present to SDC the Action Plan of NALAS, which includes the priorities of the network for the next years. The SDC representatives found the action plan interesting, the priorities for Task Forces very important for the region and the budget acceptable. The conclusion of the meeting was that the discussions on possible financial aid from SDC to the implementation of this action plan should continue.



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2. Meeting between NALAS President and Mrs. Danuta Hübner, the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy

During the meeting, Mr. Tarzan Milosevic shortly introduced NALAS to Mrs. Hubner, and asked her to consider possibility to give a consulting mandate to NALAS in the drafting of new EU structural programs dealing with local governance in SEE, since one of the added values of NALAS is to be a huge network reflecting local authorities' opinions on the subject, and not only opinions of central governments

Mrs. Hubner was positively surprised by the existence of the NALAS network and expressed opinion that local governance should play a very important role in EU matters.

B. MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS' ACTIVITIES

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

Considering its fifty-three years long tradition, Standing Conference is the oldest and the strongest Association of Local Self-Government in the region.

The Mission of SCTM is to create efficient, sustainable and democratic local government by joint efforts with towns and municipalities, and through achieving high quality performance in serving the needs of its members.

SCTM is big and extended organisation that works through different bodies of this association. The most important one is SCTM Assembly which consists of authorised representatives from all towns and municipalities in Serbia, also members of SCTM.

At its assessing, Assembly elects the Presidency and the President of SCTM, as well as members of Auditing Committee and presidents of respective SCTM committees. Current President of SCTM is Mayor of Novi Beograd, Mr. Zeljko Ozegovic, who was elected at the 35th General Assembly, which took place in Belgrade on 5 December 2005. The Presidency consists of 21 members (apart from the President, members of the Presidency are also the Secretary General and the representative of municipalities from AP Kosovo and Metohija).

SCTM has 10 respective committees and representatives of almost all towns and municipalities in Serbia participate in its work directly. These respective committees are the following: Committee on Local Self-Government and Local Finances, Committee on International Co-operation, Committee on Municipal Public Services and Housing, Committee on Environmental Protection, Committee on Urbanism, Committee on Energy Efficiency, Committee on Social Issues, Committee on Economic Development, Committee on Culture, Youth and Sport and Committee on Services to Municipalities.

Functioning of SCTM bodies is supported by SCTM Secretariat that currently consists of 40 employees, as well as by certain number of external co-workers and consultants, who are engaged at particular projects. The Head of Secretariat is Secretary General of SCTM, Mr. Djordje Stanicic.

SCTM has different publications and web-site presentation (www.skgo.org) through which the members and other public of an interest are informed on SCTM activities and other issues important for Local Self-Government. One of the main publications is monthly magazine "Lokalne samouprava" (Local Self-Government), but there are others too.



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One of the basic SCTM activities is representing the interests of Local Self-Government in front of the Central Government bodies. Therefore, in the previous period, SCTM was engaged regarding this issue, especially in the domain of local finances and initiatives for property devolution to Local Self-Governments.

SCTM has a fruitful co-operation with a great number of International Organisations, as well as with the donors through which SCTM secures its funds - both help for association's functioning and funds concerning financing different projects of towns and municipalities in Serbia.

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

- The National Association of Municipalities participates in a project "Developing Administration and Customer Services Skills in Local Taxation" under the Leonardo da Vinci Program of the European Commission

Local taxation is a major issue for all European countries, and especially for CEE countries. Moreover, the fiscal decentralization process, which is currently implemented in the newly accessed and candidate - member countries of the EU, requires significant reforms in taxation systems. It poses the challenge of finding the balance between national and local taxation and assuring sufficient resources for local governments to provide services.

From January 1st, 2006 Bulgarian municipalities are assuming the function of collecting local taxes (so far this was within the tasks of the state tax administrations). Municipal staff need to be trained to administer effectively and efficiently local taxes and to service customers properly. In order to support its member, in the beginning of 2005 NAMRB was involved in the project "Developing Administration and Customer Services Skills in Local Taxation".

The project aims at developing a trans-European training program, which will deliver the necessary skills for administering local taxes.

Partners under the project are:

- Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation – London, UK – www.irrv.org.uk
- SUMA Gestion Tributaria – Alicante, Spain – www.suma.es
- National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria – Sofia, Bulgaria
- Ceska Danova Sprava – Ministry of Finance, the Czech Republic - www.mfcr.cz
- Universitatea Ovidius – Ovidius State University, Faculty of Law and Public Administration, Constanta, Romania – www.univ-ovidius.ro/drept
- University of Wales – Newport, Wales – www.newport.ac.uk
- Warrington Borough Council – UK
- Nelson Croom – a UK-based company that develops and delivers total training solutions.

The project will result in a series of training modules, which will be produced jointly by the partners.

The modules will cover:

- Local Government Structures
- Relationship between National and Local Taxation
- Methods of Local Taxation



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- Principal Taxes in European Countries
- Cadastral Systems
- Principles of Billing and Collection
- Principles of Enforcement
- Framework for enforcement
- Administrative Systems
- Performance Measurement
- Professional Ethics

The modules will be designed, approved and tested by the partners, working together with the aim of developing a transferable training program, which can be easily adapted by each country according to its specifics. The finalized modules will be translated into the respective native language. The program will enable people to work on modules at remote locations, thereby increasing access to and availability of training.

If you are interested in the project, please visit the project site www.leonardoirrv.co.uk, where you could also get the contacts of the representatives of your country in the plenary working group of the project.

3) Other activities

- The regions of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Vojvodina (Serbia and Montenegro) will begin their tenure as European Region of the Year 2006 on January 1

The European Region of the Year is an initiative that is aimed at increasing awareness and recognition of European regional affairs, and making new contributions to regional construction and European integration, as well as projecting the regions chosen as European Region of the Year onto the European and international stage in all their aspects: social, cultural, economic, tourism, etc.

So far, the following regions have been designated as European Region of the Year:

- 2003: the Balearic Islands (Spain) and the Republic of Karelia (Russia)
- 2004: the German-speaking Community (Belgium) and Madeira (Portugal)
- 2005: Kiev (Ukraine) and Piedmont (Italy)
- 2006: Sarajevo (Bosnia & Herzegovina) and Vojvodina (Serbia and Montenegro).

Sarajevo is one of the ten cantons of the Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina. It is also the capital of the country. The region (www.ks.gov.ba) has an area of 1,277 km² and a population of 401,000 habitants, and the languages spoken are Bosnian, Croat and Serb. It has signed international cooperation agreements with 38 cities and regions of the world.

The year 1462 is considered as one of the dates when Sarajevo was born. Between 1440 and 1463, many important buildings were constructed, such as the Imperial Mosque, the Hammam (Turkish baths), and a bridge on the river Miljacka. In the 17th century, new impetus was given to the city's development, which would be completed during the period of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, when Sarajevo became an important administrative and political centre. After the Second World War, and up to 1991, Sarajevo developed considerably. In 1984, the Winter



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Olympics were held in the city. In 1992, Sarajevo became the capital of the newly-independent state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the city suffered, until the Paris Peace Treaty was signed (14 December 1995) from a protracted siege which caused enormous loss of life and damage to property. The President of the Canton of Sarajevo is Denis Zvidic.

The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (www.vojvodina.sr.gov.yu) is located in the northern part of the Republic of Serbia, where three great rivers meet: the Danube, the Sava and the Tizza. It has an area of 21,506 km² and a population of 2,031,000. Its capital is Novi Sad. Over half of its population are Serbs, with a large Hungarian minority, as well as Croats, Slovaks, Montenegrans and Romanians. The statute of Vojvodina, in addition to Serb, mentions official use of Hungarian, Croat, Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian. The Province is developing a major international presence, thanks to cooperation agreements with various regions and international organisations.

During the second half of the 1st century, the Romanians entered Vojvodina. Their influence would last over five hundred years, until the arrival of the Slavs, and three centuries later, the Hungarians. The Serbs arrived in Vojvodina after the Turkish incursion through the Southern Balkans. After the Turks were defeated in Vienna in 1683, the Austro-Hungarians dominated the region until 1918, when it was incorporated into Yugoslavia. The President of the Executive Council AP Vojvodina is Bojan Pajtic.

Any region of the 46 member states of the Council of Europe may apply to be chosen as European Region of the Year. Regions which wish to be chosen must present their application, by the deadline and in the appropriate form, to the headquarters of the promoting Organisation, which is in Barcelona.

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