

## **Serbia**

### **LDA Subotica**

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Partners: Wolverhampton City Council, UK (lead partner), City of Subotica, host city (Serbia), Buskerud County Council, Nordland County Council, Fauske, Narvik City Council (Norway), Philia - Association of Multiethnic Municipalities of SEE, Centre for regionalism, Novi Sad, Serbia; Vojvodina Centre for Human Rights, Novi Sad (Serbia) Minority Self-government Seged, Hungary.

#### **Strategic goals of the LDA:**

- Capacity building of local self-government and civil society for EU integration
- Capacity building for improved citizen participation at local level
- Fostering human/minority rights and intercultural understanding and tolerance
- Promoting youth participation and empowerment of youth groups
- Promoting EU Programmes involving youth
- Fostering effective cross-sectoral partnerships for local development
- Fostering cross-border/regional co-operation programmes

#### **Member of the following councils and organisations:**

- PHILIA – Association of multiethnic local communities of SEE
- City of Subotica – Council of Local Economic Development
- SuCivitas – Network of Local civil society organisations – Subotica
- Resource/Training Centre of the Standing Conference of cities and municipalities of Serbia

## **1. Projects fundraised by ALDA**

### **1.1 Preparation and implementation of Micro – credit programme**

Activities in implementation of micro –credit programme are integrated in wider LDA activities aimed at inclusion in local economic development and training for entrepreneurship in particular. This Programme is co-ordinated by ALDA and supported by the Norwegian KS and Council of Europe's Development Bank. Local implementing bank in Serbia is Banca Intesa San Paolo. After a series of training for trainers (involving two LDA local project co-ordinators), activities are in progress for developing a product to be offered to potential users.

The role of LDA is to support its promotion among the potential clients, help select the potential users and provide them with necessary assistance in application procedure, and if necessary help develop a business plan. The rural development and all the actors participating in this wide sector are designated as the main target clients.

The process of determining of the terms of micro-credit line is in progress and activities in co-operation with Banca Intesa Belgrade in this regard is being successful.

## **1.2 Promoting LDA Subotica in EU Youth in Action Programme – European Volunteer Service Programme as accredited as a sending, hosting and coordinating local organisation**

Since July 2007., Local Democracy Agency Subotica is an accredited organisation within European Volunteer Service (EVS) Programme – sending, hosting and co-ordinating organisation. In partnership with Wolverhampton Volunteer Centre a collaborative project proposal is being developed for exchange of volunteers between Subotica and Wolverhampton (deadline February 2008) In addition LDA Subotica is a local partner organisation for EU Youth in Action Programme with SEE Youth net (Training for trainers programme – Livno, Bosnia and Herzegovina) and ALDA local partner in implementing EU Youth Programme. Also, in co-operation with European Volunteer Center, LDA Subotica is a partner in a EU Youth training programme.

LDA Office is currently creating a data basis of potential volunteers and local institutions and organisations that will be included in the activities planned for 2008. Local Youth Programmes co-ordinator is Ms. Olga Perusic (contact: [ldasubotica@aldaintranet.org](mailto:ldasubotica@aldaintranet.org) )

## **1.3 Partners' meeting held in Subotica, 13-16th September**

In communication with the LDA partners, Wolverhampton City Council (lead Partner), Buskerud County Council, Fauske and Nordland municipal councils (Norway) and the representatives of the host city authorities, the annual meeting programme was prepared in line with common project priorities and co-operation developed since the Fourth Annual meeting held in Wolverhampton, July 2006. The Programme of the visit to Subotica therefore also included meetings in Local Economic Development Office and Business Incubator as well as the Neighbourhood Community centre and civil society organisations in Subotica.

Co-operation programme with recently established local institutions in Subotica were the main topic of visits and meetings held in Subotica, while particular focus was on: local cross-sectoral partnerships for economic development opportunities and youth volunteers' exchange within EU Youth in Action Programme. As agreed in the meeting, chaired this time by Mr. Bjarne Stabak, Senior Adviser in Buskerud County Council, a new Action plan of LDA would therefore include jointly developed projects aimed at capacity building for local civil society and local authorities through exchange programmes with partner cities in the above mentioned areas. Furthermore, LDA Subotica will be included in co-operation programme between Norwegian and Serbian municipalities in support to local implementation of different initiatives, including co-operation between Fauske and Melenci, and co-operation between Buskerud County and Subotica municipality. This meeting was a farewell meeting for **Ms. Julia Speht**, who has been seconded to the Regional Development Agency in Birmingham, but whose persistent work and efforts invested in this partnership resulted in numerous contacts between Wolverhampton and Subotica, including our new partner in EU Youth in Action programme: Wolverhampton Volunteer Centre. Ms. Julia Speht and Ms. Rita Beddard presented the work of Wolverhampton Volunteer Centre and more specifically co-operation programme with LDA Subotica and partners in Hungary within EVS (European Volunteer Service Programme) as an opportunity for local youth groups and exchange of volunteers.

## **ALDA EVALUATION MISSION TO LDA SUBOTICA**

The evaluation visit to the LDA Subotica was conducted by Mr Dobrica Milovanovic (ALDA Vice-President) and Mr Lukas Van Damme (Secretariat of the Congress) in an atmosphere of general trust and openness. During the first full day of the assessment, interviews were held with the LDA collaborators and local (project) partners. Afterwards the international partners and the Mayor were met for their assessment interviews. On the last day, the assessment was further discussed with the Delegate, Ms Stanka Parac, who was given a first feed-back on the results of the assessment interviews.

### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

Subotica hosts the first LDA, established in 1993. The current Delegate started in 2001, and had to cope with a number of problems, not in the least the lack of international partners and insufficient funding. With the help of ALDA, Wolverhampton City Council as the new lead partner in 2003 and a new mid-term action plan the situation improved enormously. New Norwegian partners were attracted and the LDA managed to secure enough funding with its own projects in addition to those provided by ALDA.

The Delegate seems to be widely known and appreciated in the local community and has good relations with the NGO sector as well as with the municipality. The Delegate is the only permanent staff of the LDA, and only for certain programmes temporary project managers are hired. However, the Delegate can count on the support and co-operation of a team of committed volunteers.

The past priorities of the LDA were quite vast, giving attention to:

- youth
- cross-border co-operation
- minority rights, inter-ethnic dialogue and tolerance
- citizens and civil society participation in local decision making
- institution building and capacity building of local self-government and civil society
- establishing partnerships between the civil, public and private sector
- local economic development

Throughout the last years many activities have been organised and results have been achieved in line with those priorities. The only exception seems to be cross-border co-operation, for which relatively fewer outcomes have been attained. At the last partner meeting (15 September 2007), the partners were asked to give the necessary input for the drafting of a new mid-term strategic/action, in which clear priorities should be indicated.

(Taken from the Evaluation Report)

## 2. Projects fundraised by LDA Subotica

### 2.1 Local Partnerships for Tolerance, EU supported project (EIDHR Programme)

LDA Subotica is implementing the EU supported project Local Partnerships for Tolerance (2007/2008) intended for improving interethnic dialogue and tolerance through improved citizen participation at local level. The main beneficiaries are the local civil society organisations and neighbourhood community centres in Subotica municipality. The project activities include Round Table on intercultural tolerance in Subotica, capacity building on diversity management, training for trainers, establishing innovative forms of citizen participation in neighbourhood communities, publishing a Guide for intercultural tolerance for local elected/appointed councilors and civil society organisations. Our main priority is to improve cross-sectoral co-operation and help establish effective partnerships at the level of neighbourhood community centres – the tier of local government closest to citizens. Improving knowledge and skills for diversity management, European standards in human/minority rights, creation of innovative forms of consultation and citizen participation is among the main objectives of our project.

The Round Table on Intercultural Tolerance (held at the end of August) gathered around 40 participants – representatives of local government and a number of local institutions and civil society organizations and was seen as an opportunity for establishing a direct and permanent forum for citizen consultation facilitated by the Local Democracy Agency. A number of recommendations have been put forward in regard with the need to improving the work of the Municipal Council for Interethnic Relations, as a recently established local elected body in the following areas:

- Conflict prevention and resolution
- Active promotion of tolerance and respect for diversity
- Encouraging intercultural dialogue and understanding
- Consultation with civil society and national minority communities on intercultural tolerance and minority rights in local community

In September and October activities continued with the analysis of the survey on citizen participation in neighborhood communities and one-week Training for Trainers seminar – Capacity building for community centres: Diversity management skills for local elected/appointed councilors and civil society groups. Currently, one-day trainings in five neighbourhood community centres are in progress. The trainings were conducted by Prof. **Eamonn O’Kane**, Senior Lecturer on Conflict Management, Head of the Department of the University of Wolverhampton (UK) **topics**: sources of conflicts in local community; methods of conflict prevention and resolution; EU standards of human/minority rights protection; good governance – from standards to local implementation; innovative forms of citizen consultation;

A new network of trainers for neighborhood community centres in Subotica was initiated and the mailing list established. The best local practices they presented during the training programme will be incorporated in the Guide on Intercultural Tolerance.

### **3. Other activities**

#### **City of Subotica – potential participant in the Pilot Programme: European Intercultural Cities of the Council of Europe**

At the Round Table on interethnic tolerance (31<sup>st</sup> August 2007) held in the framework of the project: Local Partnerships for Tolerance, LDA in co-operation with the host city authorities submitted the proposal to the Council of Europe to be included in the Pilot Programme: European Intercultural cities. Following this expression of interest, the delegation of the Council of Europe (DG Culture) visited Subotica in a fact finding mission. The delegation had separate meetings with the representatives of the city authorities, civil society organisations, cultural institutions, local media and media in minority languages.

#### **3.1 SuCivitas network of local civil society organisations**

In 2007 co-operation within the network continued with specific emphasis on creation of the local pool of trainers who will be actively engaged in capacity building programmes aimed at improving the performances of local self-government. In 2007., our main focus were the neighbourhood communities in Subotica and elected members of local councils and assemblies.

#### **3.2. LDA promotion and visibility actions**

Throughout the whole year, promotion and visibility actions were organised in order to make the LDA activities and programmes more visible to the local public. In co-operation with EC Delegation in Belgrade, Days of EU Youth in Action Programme were organised , separate press conference to promote the EVS programme, as well as EU-info desk for promotion and dissemination of publications and information materials on EU(in November/December). Furthermore, LDA Subotica will have its website constructed soon.

#### **3.3. Participation in co-operation activities**

1. Over the last year, LDA Activities were aimed at a) developing common project proposals with the partners and at b) improving the visibility through a more active participation in various projects initiated at regional (Vojvodina) and national level in Serbia.

Activities:

- 1) Participation in the activities of the Assembly of European Regions (A-E-R) taking place in Vojvodina ( thematic conferences on entrepreneurship and presentation of LDA activities)
- 2) Co-operation with the Standing Conference of towns and municipalities in the Training programme on EU integration for local governments in Serbia and exchange of best practices with EU local regional authorities (Training Programme development and delivery, Guide on EU integration for municipalities)

Co-operation with LDA Central Serbia in developing visibility actions : joint Newsletter, co-operation in establishing local EU Info-desks in close collaboration with EC Delegation in Belgrade.