

**ALDA General Assembly 2007 and Conference on Active Citizenship in Sarajevo
25 May 2007**

ALDA is involved in concrete projects in the entire territory of Europe. It is often amazed how this became a reality and how it has grown. But the fact that this work does not operate from top to bottom, but from bottom to top is something completely new and created by us – which we have to be very proud of – and which has to be improved constantly, since we are facing a long road „Gianfranco Martini, President ALDA That active citizenship is vital for the countries in the Western Balkans on their way to EU integration was one of the main conclusions of the conference 'Active Citizenship in the Balkans: How regional and cross-border co-operation can promote active citizenship' organized by the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) on 25 May 2007.

In cooperation with the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe/Thessaloniki Office (SPOT), the Bosnian Association of Local Authorities and the Sarajevo City Hall, almost 140 participants from across Europe (mostly local and regional authorities, NGOs, international organizations) had gathered to adopt a final declaration to foster active European citizenship. The declaration stressed that it is important to involve citizens in the debates and discussions on the future enlargement of the European Union. Moreover, it encouraged the dialogue between governments and their citizens to foster civic participation at all decision- making levels.

New technologies and cross-border co-operation can be an important tool for the countries in South-East Europe in this process. However, governments have to support civic education programmes to promote the concept of active citizenship from an early age onwards. The final declaration of the conference was diffused among local and national governments as well as international organizations. The conference coincided with ALDA's General Assembly 2007 during which both ALDA and the LDAs presented their most important projects to their members.

As in previous years, the Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe awarded a Diploma of intermunicipal and interregional partnership to new members and partners of the network, recognizing their active role in the development of local democracy in South-East Europe and the Southern Caucasus.