

## **THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY ARMENIA WAS OPENED IN GYUMRI**

The new Local Democracy Agency Armenia was opened on 28th of October in Gyumri. It is the second LDA in the South Caucasus area and the thirteenth LDA opened by the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) with the support of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

With the signature of the memorandum of understanding by the partners of the LDA, officially is started the work of this important tool for the local democracy and citizen participation.

The Armenian local authorities and the civil society have very high expectations on the contribution of the ADL to the growth of local democracy in Armenia. It has been demonstrated by the participation at the opening ceremony of a large number of citizens but also of representatives of the Armenian Government and local authorities.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, represented by Vice-President Fabio Pellegrini, strongly believes in the possibility to further the process of democratization in this country that is part of the Council.

Attended to the opening ceremony, with the Mayor of Gyumri, Mr. Vardan Ghukasyan, the, First deputy minister of the RA ministry of Territorial Administration, Mr. Vache Terteryan, the President of the Union of Communities of Armenia, Mr. Emin Yeritsyan, the Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Mr. Fabio Pellegrini.

Mr. Per Vinther, President of ALDA, AND Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA, attended too to the ceremony. Mrs. Véronique Moreira, Vice-president of Region Rhone-Alpes responsible for development cooperation stressed the full involvement of the France Region, that will be partner leader of the LDA, by a video contribution.

After the opening ceremony took place a conference on Cooperation between local authorities and civil society and European cooperation in Armenia, with the participation of Mrs. Armine Tukhikyan, Urban Foundation For Sustainable development (Armenia), Mrs. Raffaella Viviani, Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Italy, Mr. Levon Barseghyan, President of the Journalists' Club Asparez, Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA and Mr. Ioseb Khakhaleishvili, Delegate and Executive Director LDA Georgia.

Partners of LDA Armenia are the Rhône-Alpes Region (France), the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (Italy), the International Committee For The Development of Peoples CISP (Italy), the Union of Communities of Armenia, the Urban Foundation for Sustainable Development (Armenia), the Journalists' Club Asparez (Armenia), and the Armenian Municipalities of Gyumri, the host city, and Ijevan.

The Councillor for International Relations of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Elio De Anna, stressed in a message that "The accession of the FVG Region in the LDA Armenia is in line with the strategic choices of international policy set by President Renzo Tondo, that see in the Caucasian territory an area of economic and social interest for the region. The action of the FVG, as a partner of the LDA Armenian, shall be aimed at achieving the objectives of respect for democratic values in line with what is established by the European Community. "