

## PRESS RELEASE

### SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT ON THE AGENDA OF SEE MAYORS

**Vienna, 16 May 2017** – The XII General Assembly of the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS) this year takes place within the annual Danube Water Conference (17-19 May 2017, Vienna, Austria), bringing together SEE Mayors to discuss topics related to sustainable water management and provision of quality services to their citizens. As part of the conference program, NALAS will host a training session on *Local governments' role in planning investments and improving performance of water and sanitation services*, while Mayors and member LGAs' representatives will address in various workshops during the two-day program of the conference.

On **19 May, NALAS General Assembly** will be opened by the current NALAS President, Mr. Naim Ismajli, Ms. Breda Pecan, the Vice President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and Dr. Franz Schausberger, Special Advisor to Commissioner Hahn. Delegates will review NALAS work in 2016 and the work plan for 2017, and will discuss and approve the new Strategic Plan of the Network for the period 2018 - 2022. Two important policy positions will be voiced by the General Assembly, one on the Western Balkans in the EU enlargement agenda and the Local Governments and their Associations as key stakeholders in the EU Integration process, and the second one on responding to the need for capacity development for the water and sanitation sector in South-East Europe.

*“EU is about people, for people and around people. The location where people live, act, meet and liaise directly with government and public administration is the local level! A functional bottom-up approach depends on an effective coordination and cooperation between local and central government level to be successful”*, states NALAS Position Paper on EU Integration. The position paper puts forward several proposals for dialogue facilitation, such as: EU Commission - Technical or administrative unit for LGAs and LGs to address to, European Parliament Working Group, Western Balkans Cooperation Days, and suggestions for EU support instruments that will increase involvement of Local Governments and their Associations.

Based on the rotation presidency system, Mr. Mico Micic, Mayor of Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, is expected to assume the role of NALAS President, who will lead the Network in the next year.

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