



Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe
Réseau des Associations de Pouvoirs Locaux de l'Europe du Sud-Est

NALAS Annual Activity Report

January – December 2009

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2. List of Abbreviations

AAM	Association of Albanian Municipalities
ACoR	Association of Communes of Romania
AKM	Association of Kosovo Municipalities
ALVRS	Association of Towns and Municipalities of Republic of Srpska
AoM	Association of Municipalities of Croatia
CLO	Committee of Liaison Officers
FALR	Romanian Federation of Local Authorities
FEDRE	European Foundation for the Sustainable Development of the Regions
LOGIN	Local Government Information Network
NALAS	Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe
NAMRB	National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria
NLAMM	National League of Associations of Mayors from Moldova
SCTM	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities
SOGFBiH	Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Hercegov.
SOS	Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia
TF AD	Task Force on Association Development
TF FD	Task Force on Fiscal Decentralization
TF EE	Task Force on Energy Efficiency
TF SWM	Task Force on Solid Waste Management
TF UP	Task Force on Urban Planning
UoM	Union of Municipalities of Montenegro
UMM	Union of Municipalities of the Marmara Region
ZELS	Association of the Units of Local Self-government of Republic of Macedonia

3. Detailed 2009 Activity Report

3.1. Activities of task forces

In the reporting period, NALAS Task Force Guidelines were evaluated at the CLO Meeting held on 19-20 February in Skopje, and updated with the improvement recommendations based on the findings and suggestions of the members.

3.1.1. Task Force on Solid Waste Management (TF SWM)

3.1.1.1. Solid Waste Management

Task Force meeting



TF on SWM was held on 20-21 March in Budva, Montenegro. Experts from 9 member associations participated at the meeting.

The update of Solid Waste Legislation Initiatives and Best Practices in South East Europe showed that the focus in the region is on establishing regional landfills – in some countries, it is still at the level of legislation reforms, while in most cases the siting and grouping of municipalities is the main issue, with first landfills

being constructed.

The project proposals developed by the Task Force on the topics of SWM databases, SWM cost estimation, recycling, landfill management and siting were updated and finalised to be able to raise funds for their implementation.

CEMR Ad hoc Working Group on waste

The meeting of the CEMR Ad hoc Working group on waste was held on 25 February 2009 in Brussels. NALAS representatives participated at the meeting and built connections with its members, active in various fields of municipal waste management at the European level. The topics that were discussed at the meeting were: green paper on the management of biowaste in the European Union, Directive on industrial emissions (IPPC), EU Waste Framework Directive, Waste electrical and electronic equipment directive (WEEE). The main result of the meeting is the CEMR response to the Green paper on the management of biowaste in the European Union, which represents common opinion of CEMR members. All documentation from the meeting was shared with TF SWM members and is available at the NALAS Knowledge Center.

Further cooperation between NALAS TF SWM and CEMR Working Group on Waste will be implemented through permanent exchange of documents and participation at events, with the possibilities to launch joint projects and exchange experts. The information sharing was also agreed with Municipal Waste Europe, network of national municipal waste associations.

Seminar on Waste Management



The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities invited the members of the Task Force on Solid Waste Management to participate at the Seminar on Waste Management, organized in cooperation with -French partners on 17-18 June in Belgrade. 10 representatives joined the event, and had opportunity to get acquainted with new development and best practices in the field in Serbia and France. Besides legal framework, the discussion was focused on the techniques for the treatment of waste, through comparative approach. The French experiences in inter-municipal cooperation and education of citizens raised lost of interest of participants. At the same time, members of the TF SWM had occasion to establish bilateral contacts with representatives of Serbian and French municipalities and public utilities.

International Trade Fair for Waste Management and Environmental Technology Entsorga-Enteco 2009



The Fair was held on 27-30 October in Köln (Cologne), Germany. Some of the main topics of the fair are: local authority and environmental services, waste management and recycling, incineration and renewable energies. The Fair is organised by the Federal Association of the German Waste Disposal Industry. The NALAS Task Force on Solid Waste Management visited the fair, and had chance to get introduced to latest innovations in the field of waste management. In the framework of the fair, the *Eastern European Environmental Summit* was also organised, presenting latest progress in environmental markets and waste disposal in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Russia. Additionally, some exhibitors will organise a “speakers’ corner”, as platform for presenting new products and services to visitors.

3.1.1.2. Water Management

World Water Forum, 16 March, Istanbul

The 5th World Water Forum was held in Istanbul in the period of 16-22 March. NALAS was presented at the event by the SCTM representative, as the leader of the Task Force on Solid Waste (and Water) Management.



Mayors and local government leaders were invited to unite in order to save and recover resources of urban water. In this context, participants were presented the non-binding agreement between cities, the “Istanbul Water Consensus”. It should be only the beginning of a longer process of implementation, which should address the need to: retain control over the provision of water, especially when services are privatized; share benefits for water; provide access to water for all households and companies.

It was also concluded that some local authorities are still in critical situation when it comes to enabling the provision of water services, access to water supply and sewage. The progress and improvement may come if institutional, financial, technical and professional capacity of local authorities is clearly defined, developed and strengthened, with support of national governments and international organisations.

1st Steering Committee on for the organisation of an international conference on "The Contribution of Local Authorities to the Water activities of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)", 7 May 2009, Lyon, France

NALAS was invited by the UCLG Mediterranean Commission to participate in the work of the Steering Committee for the preparation of the Conference “Contribution of Local Authorities to the Water activities of the Union for the Mediterranean”, to be held at the end of November – beginning of December this year. The first meeting of the SC was held on 7 May in Lyon, and the second on 1 July. SCTM, the leader of TF SWM, represents NALAS in this body.

The role of NALAS in the organisation of the conference will be to contribute to mobilisation of local authorities of the Balkans. Also, at this occasion, NALAS plans to hold the first meeting of the NALAS Water Working Group, as sub-group of TF SWM. This will allow NALAS members’ water experts to initiate new projects and exchange of experiences within the network, but also to establish close linkages with relevant French and European stakeholders in the field of water.

Western Balkans Water Regulatory Workshop

NALAS representatives were invited to assist at the Western Balkans Water Regulatory Workshop, organised by the Macedonian association of providers of communal services (ADKOM) on 2nd October in Ohrid. The purpose of the workshop was to exchange experiences on existence and functioning of Regulatory Committee for establishing water prices in the countries of the Western Balkans, the so called "natural monopoly regulator". Besides participants from Water Associations from Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Kosova, NALAS Executive Director and three members of the NALAS Task Force on Water and SWM represented and the associations of Kosovo municipalities and the association of cities and the federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The participants agreed that such a regulator of water service prices plays an important role in motivating the utilities in becoming financially self-sustaining. However, such a regulator must assess the quality and cost of services in professionally manner to ensure that the interests and the rights of both the customers and the utilities are met. In addition, this regulator will also be able to maintain a proper balance between the local political interests of elected officials, and the longer term needs of the utility.

3.1.2. Task Force on Fiscal Decentralization (TF FD)

Task Force meeting

The seventh meeting of TF FD was held on 23-24 March in Skopje, and 13 experts from 8 NALAS member associations participated at the meeting.



At that occasion, the final workshop of the property tax administration project was organized, where training, peer review visits and other possible capacity building activities were discussed, with the aim to collect inputs for design of the second phase of the project. Additionally, the expert meeting on the Municipal Cost Estimation Project was held, developed methodology for cost estimation discussed, and guidelines for its piloting presented.

Special attention was given to planning of upcoming activities for the period 2009-2010: it was estimated that 4 launched projects, with the additional project on local borrowing that was submitted to GTZ for the approval, will be sufficient for the following 2 years.

Projects

1. Budget Negotiations

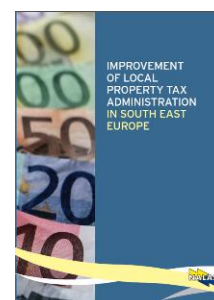
The first phase of the project was finished with the distribution of the recommendations for successful budget negotiations at the General Assembly 2008. Before starting with training activities, as foreseen in the second phase, the new issue to be tackled within this project emerged: the consequences of global economic crisis at local governments in the region have started to be felt, and there is the need to support LGAs and local governments in leading budget negotiations in new circumstances. Therefore, the funds of the Quick Response Program are used to finance the survey on situation in NALAS countries (to be done in cooperation with LGI and OSI), and development of methodological approach on estimating direct/indirect influence of crisis on local budgets.



2. Improvement of Property Tax Administration

In the reporting period, property tax administration project has been completed: guidelines were developed, printed and translated. Additional capacity building activities (peer review visits, training) were proposed. The following phase will be focused on enhancing practical knowledge and exchange experiences between LGAs and LG staff in different aspects of the property tax collection.

This publication contains guidance on the most critical tasks needed to improve local tax administration with a comparative analysis of the situation in SEE. It provides practical advice by specifying methods used for property identification, assessment of property and techniques of local property tax collection and



enforcement. It presents good practices on property administration within the countries of South East Europe. Recent successful international programs in some SEE countries are also described.

3. Municipal Cost Estimation



The project on municipal cost estimation ended in July 2009: the draft methodology was developed, discussed at the TF FD meeting, and tested in 8 pilot countries. The pilot cases showed that the estimation of municipal costs is difficult exercise, as well as its regional comparison, since the differences between the countries are significant. Therefore, it was decided not to proceed with the capacity building programs for the moment. The manual on municipal cost estimation was prepared and published.

4. Municipal Finance Database

The funds for the project implementation were received from OSI in June. The expert team constituted of experts from Macedonia, Slovenia and Bulgaria and lead by an International Expert, was established. The work plan was elaborated: after the initial meeting of the expert team held in Skopje on 10 September, a survey was prepared and distributed to all members. After the analysis of data collected, the expert team will visit all NALAS members and assess the needs and opportunities for creation of database in all countries.



5. Local borrowing

The Local Borrowing Project was approved to receive financing through German ORF – Municipal Services fund, and the contract should be signed till the end of the year. The project will be lead by the Romanian Association of Municipalities (FALR), and will result in collecting experiences from NALAS member countries and drafting guidelines on local borrowing for municipalities of South East Europe.

3.1.3. Task Force on Urban Planning (TF UP)

Task Force meetings

Four meetings of the task force on urban planning took place during the year of 2009.

The first task force meeting for 2009 was held in Skopje on 16-18 January. The second meeting was held in Tirana on 7 May and was followed by a National Workshop of the Urban Integration of Informal Settlements project in Albania. The third one took place in Ohrid on 4 July after the Training Course on Sustainable Communities organized by the UN-HABITAT Warsaw Office. The last meeting of the task force for the year 2009 took place– in Ljubljana on 15-16 October. All meetings were focused on the current project activities and on development of new projects for

2010 and beyond. In addition, the second meeting The task force meeting in Ohrid followed Training Course on Sustainable Communities organized by the UN-HABITAT Warsaw Office.

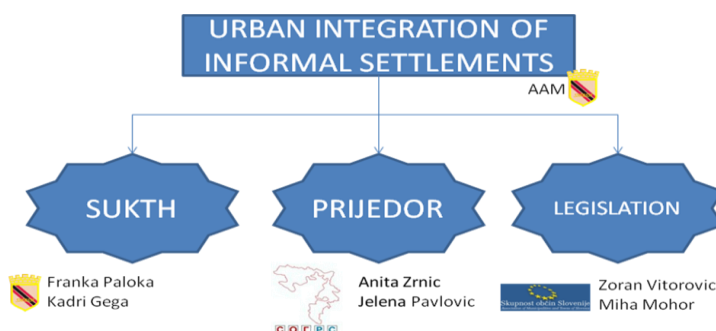
One of the conclusions from the last meetings is that most of the countries in South East Europe are still facing serious challenges in urban planning. This is especially the case as the economy shrinks and municipalities are now even less able to build new social and physical infrastructure to serve their growing communities. Central governments are not helping either - in some cases they are disrupting municipal efforts, by using “legal shortcuts” to bypass regular municipal planning processes, or by not giving state land to the municipalities.



Task Force Meeting in Hotel Tirana International

It was noted that the financial crisis has led some municipalities to innovate harder and try approaches that are not necessarily prescribed by the current legislation. In some municipalities, for example, investors applying for building permits have been asked to contribute, or even completely bear the cost of the needed social and/or physical infrastructure. In places where municipality (or the state) has no ownership of the land where infrastructure is to be built, investors have been asked to transfer ownership rights before building permit can be issued.

Current urban planning projects



Components of the UP1: Urban Integration of the Informal Settlements Project

The three current project activities are gradually completing. The Comparative Legal Analysis Report was completed on the 15th of November 2009 and the pilot projects in the municipalities of Sukth and Prijedor will be finished by the end of February 2010. There were negotiated extensions

for all the project components in order to achieve better quality of the project deliverables. In 2009 both pilot projects conducted National Workshops – one in the Republic of Srpska on the 27th of April and the second in Albania on the 8th of May.

Emerging urban planning project proposals

The Task Force developed five project ideas for implementation in 2010 and beyond. These are:

1. Follow-up activities

The current “Urban Integration of Informal Settlements” project is scheduled to continue until the end of 2009, until the newly acquainted knowledge will be documented in reports, manuals and brochures. It is very likely, however, that some of the dissemination materials – and especially those focusing on regional comparisons – will be developed in year 2010. A comparative problem analysis would identify the problems common for most of the informal settlements in the region.

A symposium, possibly together with other partners working in the same area, would help in disseminating the results and raise the awareness of the many stakeholders working on addressing the issue of informal settlements.

The dissemination materials and the generated knowledge are good products of the project activities, but they do not complete the process in the pilot municipalities. As the goal is to also help the pilot municipalities in achieving results by doing the right steps at the right time, an economic promotion would also be a required step. The economic promotion would take place in the municipalities of Sukth and Prijedor and, possibly, in a third municipality in similar position.

Interested associations in leading these activities: AAM, ALVRS and possibly a third association.

2. Legislation framework

This project idea would build upon the results of the legal analysis component of the current project. It is envisioned that this project would update the current analysis to include missing countries and entities and would update the analysis itself, as some of the countries are currently adopting new laws or introducing changes in the current ones.

The goal of this project is to identify gaps in the legislation in the participating countries, ideally all members of NALAS. Based on previous recommendations, the project would also facilitate/help associations in drafting alternatives and approaching respective central governments in negotiating changes in the legislation. The project would also include legislative support for prevention of informal settlement development. The project proposal is fully developed and is soon to be deposited in GTZ for approval and possible financing.

Interested associations in leading these activities: SCTM

3. Land Procurement and Land Management

Having discussed some inventive approaches by some countries and/or municipalities, it became clear that the region would benefit from an analysis of the land procurement and land management procedures and practices currently in place in the region and in at least one country of the “Old Europe”. This project would focus on the following:

- Land provision for public infrastructure (both physical and social)
- *Land acquisition*
- *Land consolidation*
- *Land cadastre and Land registration*

Interested associations in leading this project: SOS

4. Training and Advisory

This project would use the currently generated knowledge and conclusions of a research, as part of the project proposal, in order to develop training materials customized for the needs of the NALAS members and deliver training, as well as disseminate the results of the projects. One component of this project would focus on the future prevention of informal settlements. The project proposal is fully developed and is soon to be deposited in GTZ for approval and possible financing.

Interested associations in leading this project: AAM, SCTM

5. Urban Rehabilitation, Regeneration

The main goals of this project would be to:

- increase the value of the town for improving living conditions
- improve the location advantages
- optimize the effects of investments
- create intra- and inter-municipal socio-economic linkages

Interested associations in leading these activities: UMM

Training Course on Sustainable Communities 30 June – 4 July Ohrid

The training course was organized by UN-HABITAT Warsaw Office in active collaboration with NALAS and the Helsinki University of Technology (TKK). The participants were taught on how to develop instruments for sustainable decisions and constructive cooperation in the context of informal settlements. The key issues discussed included the UN-HABITAT experience in the region, the current situation in the SEE countries related to the Regional Capacity Strengthening Program (RSCP) and Vienna Declaration (VD) redevelopment. The present and possible future shape of the VD cooperation process and the RCSP, with a focus on improvement of urban-related curricula and training programs and improved regulations and practices in the fields of legalization and urbanization was in the centre of the discussions. The event was supported by the Government of Finland.

3.1.4. Task Force on Energy Efficiency

Task Force Meetings

Energy efficiency is about better use of resources, so it is no surprise that three events were merged to take place together at the same time. A *Regional Energy Security and Energy Efficiency Conference*, a *Meeting of the Task Force on Energy Efficiency* and a *Meeting of the Task Force on Solid Waste Management* took place in Budva between 17 and 21 March.

The conference was organized by the Ministry for Economic Development of Montenegro, together with the German Development Cooperation - GTZ and was focused on the energy challenges in South East Europe.



One of the key speakers at the conference was Joschka Fisher, who delivered an impressive speech connecting the global economic crisis with the emerging energy challenges, but also opportunities. He compared today's economic crisis with 1921: "How could it happen? We ignored reality and believed in miracles! Miracles don't work!"

The members of the NALAS Task Force on Energy Efficiency composed a largely underrepresented, but extremely important group when it comes to energy efficiency: the local governments of South East Europe. The importance of the local level was especially emphasized by Mr Pedro Ballesteros Torres, Head of EE Unit at the European Commission. He spoke about the Covenant of Mayors¹, an ambitious Commission initiative that seeks to bring together the mayors of Europe's most pioneering cities in a permanent network to exchange and apply good practices to improve their energy efficiency and promote low-carbon business and economic development.

The conference included a presentation and discussions of the new instrument for technical cooperation in SEE called Open Regional Fund on Energy Efficiency. One of the pillars that make up the Open Regional Fund on Energy Efficiency is the creation of a Regional Energy Knowledge Network – to a large extent complementing the efforts of NALAS focused on building a Knowledge Centre that would include energy efficiency at the local level.

After the conference, the NALAS Task Force on Energy Efficiency held its scheduled meeting. This meeting was further enriched with the contributions from new task force members, as well as guests representing UNECE, USAID, RCC and GTZ. The participants focused mostly on two topics: the upcoming energy projects and the NALAS Knowledge Centre on Energy Efficiency.



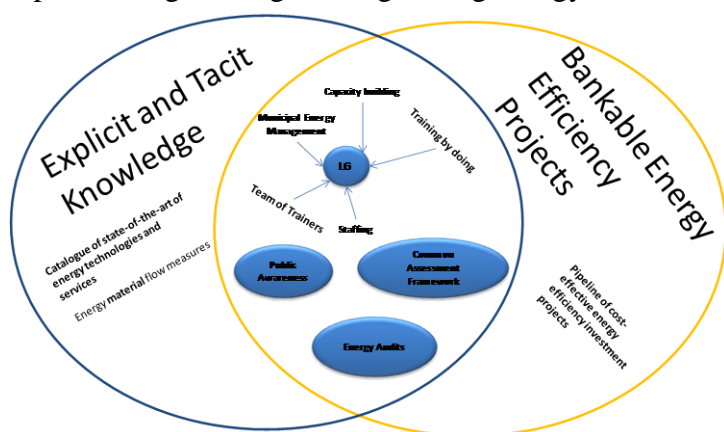
There are two energy efficiency projects developed by, or together with NALAS. Both are very much connected to each other and are in line with the comprehensive energy efficiency idea developed by the NALAS Task Force on Energy Efficiency in Geneva during September 2008². Both

¹ More information about the Covenant can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/energy/sustainable/covenant_mayors_en.htm

² A report from the meeting is available at <http://www.nalas.eu/events/2008-09-21-TFEE/>

projects focus on same targets – the local governments of South East Europe and go into a number of related areas, such as public awareness, assessment frameworks, energy audits etc.

In the diagram below, the left group represents the NALAS Appraisal Energy Project, with emphasis on gathering and organizing energy-related knowledge important for the local authorities



in South East Europe. This knowledge, however, is of little use without actual hands-on experience, which is to be provided by the previous, current and future energy activities in the region. In addition, this knowledge is also crucial for the union on the right, which represent the Energy Market Formation project. The union in yellow focuses more on increasing the capacity of the local authorities for

better energy management, improving their skills for project development and creating actual well formed and justifiable energy projects.

The two projects are consecutive and should take up to 3 years to complete.

NALAS Energy Efficiency and Energy Market Formation Projects

The next Task Force meeting was conducted on the 30th of November 2009 in Skopje. The main topic discussed was the new project Energy Efficiency Measures in South-East European Municipalities and the Role of National Associations and NALAS, financed by ORF-E. At the meeting was discussed general concept of the project, and the implementation scope of the project (management structure, time schedule, contributions, etc.). There were pinpointed and planned some events of the Task Force that will take place in 2010.

20th Session of the Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 21 Project

The Energy Efficiency 21 project is a region-wide project to enhance trade and co-operation in energy efficient, environmentally-sound techniques and management practices. It is the successor of the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project that was launched in 1991 and is guided and monitored by a Steering Committee composed of delegates from national participating ministries and institutions, international organizations and donor agencies. This Steering Committee gathered at the UN Palais des Nations between 3 and 5 of June 2009 and discussed the progress of the current activities and the development of future projects. NALAS was represented at this meeting by Zoran Gligorov.

NALAS conducted meetings with UNECE and GTZ to discuss the submitted Energy Efficiency project. The Open Regional Fund – Energy has one component on Knowledge Management for Energy and GTZ expressed interest to jointly conduct some activities of this component with the NALAS Task Force on Energy Efficiency. As the NALAS Energy Efficiency project consists of two phases – one focused on gathering knowledge and the second one on pilot activities, it was decided that the knowledge gathering activities can be done together with ORF-E. Details on these proposals were discussed at the task force meeting that followed, held in Skopje on 30 November 2009.

3.1.5. Task Force on Association Development

There were 2 AD Task Force meetings during this period. Several Task Force activities were implemented:

Meetings

Meeting in Skopje, 19-21 February 2009



TF AD meetings were organized together with the CLO meetings. At the meeting held on 19-21 February in Skopje, the issues discussed at the meeting were: NALAS financial sustainability, new GTZ support to NALAS, results of SDC evaluation, TF AD Operation Plan 2009, NALAS Action plan and budget 2009. Special attention was paid to evaluation of the results in 2008 and overview of lessons learnt, as well as to evaluation of NALAS Task Forces and proposals for its improvement (added to the Task Force Guidelines). At the same occasion, a peer review of ZELS was organized.

Meeting in Portoroz, 14-15 May 2009

The meeting held in Portoroz on 14-15 May was constituted of several separate sessions: planning session of new GTZ/SDC project 2010-2015, session on NALAS international positioning, SOS peer review and tourism workshop.

The purpose of the planning session was to provide the GTZ consultants with the necessary information to understand the network and be able to draft the proposal for the upcoming GTZ/SDC ID Project 2010-2015. The session forms part of longer process, which started with a workshop in Eschborn on 6 March 2009 and another one in Skopje on 26-27 March 2009.



Discussion on NALAS international positioning ended with a decision that NALAS Secretariat and UMMR Liaison Officer draft the Strategy on International Relations, with support of NAMRB in regulating reporting and monitoring system.

As a result of the workshop on tourism, it was decided to create a small working group composed of Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey to clarify expectations, clarify role of associations and refine presented ideas.

Meeting in Podgorica, 6 November

The TF AD meeting held in Podgorica was focused on the evaluation of the results from the previous year, collecting members' inputs on what were the main benefits they had from NALAS

activities in 2009, and what should be improved in the following period. Additionally, NALAS Secretariat presented the concept on EU program, which unifies different EU related ideas collected at various occasions, while SOS presented its initiative to apply for EU funds in cooperation with interested NALAS members, on the topic of EU promotion and intercultural dialogue in the region.

Peer reviews



In the reporting period, 3 peer review exercises were done, in the framework of CLO meetings: ZELS, SOS and UoM were first three associations to present their activities to other CLOs and get recommendations (reports available at the NALAS Knowledge Center). The reports will serve Associations for future improvements of their work.

NALAS Communication Strategy

NALAS PR Working Group, constituted of PR officers of LGAs from Serbia, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Bosnia, has been appointed to draft NALAS Communication Strategy. The group met on 27 May in Skopje, and agreed on the concept of the Strategy. The member of the group will give inputs and meet additionally, in order to agree on the content. In this process, the Working Group is supported by the CEMR Head of Press and Communications. Visibility and Publicity Rules will be compiled as an important part of the NALAS Communication Strategy.

EU Integration Activities

InWent Planning Workshop, 2 September, Skopje

Since the first phase of the InWent's program EU-Integration of South Eastern Europe - EU integration of local administration will finish in November, the planning of the new phase has start: NALAS and its members were recognised as main partners, therefore, the first Planning Workshop of the second phase was held on 2 September in Skopje. A part of the InWent and EuroInstitute, implementing agency, the participants of the workshop were representatives of NALAS members (ZELS, SCTM, UoM and UMMR), NALAS Secretariat, as well as KDZ, NALAS partner on EU activities. The purpose of the workshop was to evaluate the results of the previous project phase, and propose ideas for the following stage. InWent will incorporate the results of the workshop in the draft program document and present it to Liaison Officers for their approval.

NALAS EU Workshop in Vienna, 17-18 September

NALAS, the KDZ - Centre for Public Administration and Research and the Austrian Association of Cities held a Workshop on European Integration in Vienna, between 17-18 September 2009. At the workshop, representatives from 8 associations discussed important topics related with the challenges of European pre-accession and integration, thoroughly presented by experts and officers of KDZ, the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns, Vienna Municipality and others. Decision making process and information sources for the European Union, implementation of the Structural

funds in Austria, financing the City of Vienna, European Energy Efficiency Policies and the Municipal Energy Efficiency Program of Vienna (SEP) and lobbying and networking at EU level were amongst the most actively discussed topics.

NALAS associations' staff networks

IT Meeting, e-Government Study Visit, 23 - 25 September in Vienna

Between 23 and 25 of September, NALAS IT experts and mayors gathered in Vienna to discuss ongoing work and visit important Austrian ministries, municipalities and institutions that have made excellent use of ICT in their everyday work. The event was co-organized together with the Austrian Association of Cities and KDZ, which are driving forces in connecting the Austrian local governments to the federal system also known as Digital Austria. The meeting and the study visit will soon result with a set of guidelines and IT standards aimed to the local governments in South East Europe.

3.2.6. Other initiatives

Project “Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Local Sustainable Development in the Western Balkans”

NALAS was invited to participate in the work of the Steering Committee's Meeting of the Project “Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Local Sustainable Development in the Western Balkans”, implemented by the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) in cooperation with Regional Environmental Center (REC) and its offices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo. Its first meeting was held on 18 May in Belgrade, Serbia. NALAS is represented in the Steering Committee by the representative of the Montenegrin Union of Municipalities. The Steering Committee's role will be to oversee the implementation of the project, to advice on ensuring linkages to relevant international biodiversity policy targets, to bring together expertise in the Western Balkans and international community, and to discuss over dissemination of the results of the project towards international and national biodiversity and cross-sector stakeholders (more information about the project available at the NALAS Knowledge Center, in the section restricted to members).

Workshop on Tourism, Portoroz, 15 May 2009



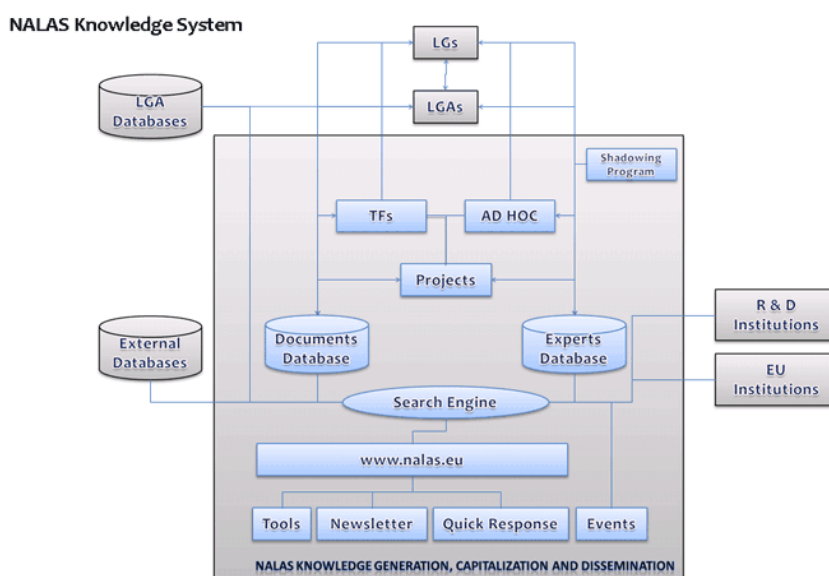
Following the initiatives of SOS, AAM and UMMR on the topic of tourism, NALAS organised the workshop on this issue during its CLO meeting in Portoroz, on 15 May 2009. The submitted initiatives were discussed, and eminent national and municipal experts from Slovenia presented Slovenian best practices. It was decided to establish the NALAS Working Group on Tourism, composed of members interested to participate in the activities (Slovenia, Turkey, Macedonia and Serbia from those who were present at the workshop). The Working Group will agree on the following steps and define clearly the possible role of LGAs in the tourism development.

3.2. Knowledge centre

“From its creation NALAS has been constructing stone by stone a comprehensive Knowledge System, which can be considered decidedly a big success. The interesting thing to observe is that it manages in parallel as well explicit as implicit/tacit knowledge. During the mission, starting by the description of what had been setup till now, it was possible to establish a chart proposal of the system once terminated. The Web site www.nalas.eu is very satisfactory.”

– SEREC Report on the NALAS Project Evaluation

The NALAS Knowledge Centre is the empowering central part of the NALAS Knowledge System, shown on the diagram below.




NALAS Knowledge Generation, Capitalization and Dissemination

During 2009, the Knowledge Centre grew rapidly and implemented a document management system, based on the award winning open source Knowledge Tree, followed many of the recommendations for improvement given in the review by SEREC and added new tools and services. The NALAS website is now available in all local languages, as well as few international, which was made possible with an implementation of the Google Translate tool.

The document management system includes a tool for indexing printed content, which is otherwise not available online. Books from the NALAS library, as well as other “brick and mortar” libraries will be indexed in it. For each stored document in the NALAS Knowledge Tree, members can submit comments, participate in discussions and offer quality ratings. While the NALAS Knowledge Tree is a standalone system, it also integrates with the NALAS website to offer publicly available content to the wider public.

In addition to the Knowledge Tree, NALAS members can also access the NALAS intranet, which offers administrative tools and a telephone directory, as given on the picture below.










Zoran GLIGOROV | [Logout](#)


Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe
 Réseau des Associations de Pouvoirs Locaux de l'Europe du Sud-Est

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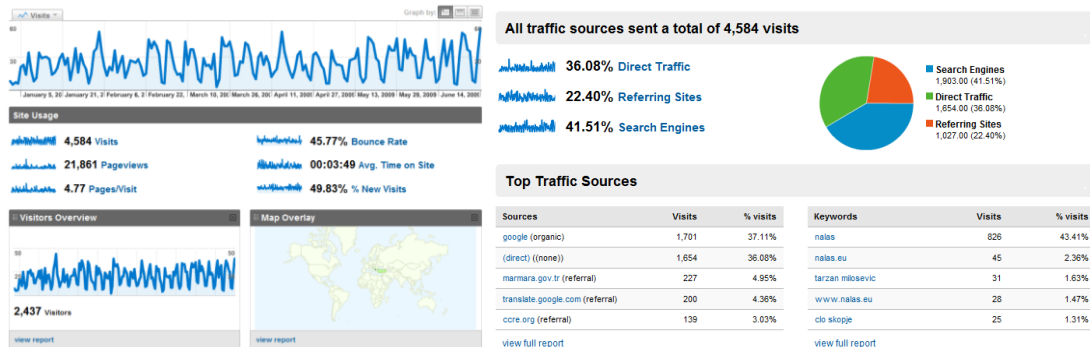
Telephone Directory

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NALAS Telephone Directory – NALAS Member Services

Both the average and the peak number visits have been increasing – During the first 6 months of 2009, the NALAS website served knowledge 21 861 times (to 4 584 visitors), with peaks just before and during important events.

The websites of the member associations increasingly carry information published on the NALAS website. The website of the Union of Municipalities of Marmara is one of the top sources of new visitors to the NALAS website.



NALAS Website Analytics

NALAS started promoting members only services of the Knowledge Centre. All experts from the NALAS Task Force on Urban Planning and the NALAS IT Network were given access to the knowledge repository (known as NALAS Knowledge Tree) and all meeting materials were shared there. In the future all task forces will operate only in this system, enabling NALAS to make best use of the gathered knowledge.

Basic facts, competences and financial facts of the local and regional authorities in SEE

During his internship at NALAS, Mr Xavier Vanvaerenbergh analyzed legislation and gathered basic facts about the countries of the NALAS member associations. These facts include some basic country information, competences of the local and regional authorities and local sources of

revenues. The result of his research is now part of the NALAS directory and it is published online at <http://www.nalas.eu/fd/facts>.

Meeting with the Union of Municipalities of Marmara in Istanbul, 26-27 August 2009

Brick by brick, or, rather, book by book, the Union of Municipalities of Marmara has been constructing a unique library specialized on issues important for the local governments. The library currently holds just over 10 000 books and 2 000 periodicals and it aims to offer impressive 30 000 publications in the near future. It is considered the largest specialized library in the region, if not Europe. Having books in Arabic, Turkish, English and French and planning to expand to Spanish, German and Russian publications, this is a truly international and most valuable source of information on local governance.

In August 2009, NALAS was invited to visit the library and meet with UMM to discuss cooperation opportunities. The NALAS team consisting of Zoran Gligorov and Xavier Vanvaerenbergh met with the UMM staff on 26th and 27th of August. One of the outcomes of the meeting is an agreement to connect the NALAS Knowledge Centre with the UMM Library.

3.3. Shadowing Program

The Shadowing Program was developed as a result of the work of the Association Development Task Force.

During the reporting period, 2 shadowing programs were realized:

AAM Shadowing Visit to ZELS and AKM

Two representatives of the Albanian Association of Municipalities, a lawyer and a project manager, visited the associations of Macedonia (ZELS) and Kosovo (AKM) in the period of 10-13 February. The AAM staff got introduced to structure and main activities of two host associations, to system of local governments in two countries and main challenges faced in the process of decentralization.

AKM Shadowing Visit to AAM

The AKM delegation composed of 4 persons (communication manager, financial manager, IT & Logistic Officer and administrative assistant) visited AAM in the period of 31st May - 3rd June 2009. The main issues discussed were: service delivery to members, communication, management, finance and urban planning. The staff of 2 associations exchanged project ideas that can be replicated by other association.

UoM Shadowing Visit to ZELS and NALAS

The UoM delegation visited ZELS and NALAS in the period of 28-29 September. During the visit, the newly appointed Secretary General of UoM got acquainted with the NALAS Strategic objectives and its projects and programs, as well as with ZELS activities and latest development in the fields of strategic planning, internal management, fundraising, project management, advocacy priorities, lobbying techniques and success stories.

3.4 Quick Response Program

AoM demand on information on territorial organisation

Since the territorial consolidation reform was launched in Croatia, and the Association of Municipalities of Croatia was expecting to be invited to participate in the working groups on preparation of legal changes, they submitted a demand for information on the topic of territorial organisation from the other countries, and NALAS Secretariat collected already existing material on the topic.

UoM demand on information on Municipal Boards for International Relations and on funding mechanisms available for local government to invest in social services

The Association of Municipalities of Montenegro needed information from other members on the on the existence and way of functioning of Boards for International Relations within Municipal Assemblies, as well as on funding mechanisms available for local government to invest in social services. 7 members replied to the demand: ZELS, AKM, FALR, NLAMM, AoM, SOS and NAMRB.

SOS support to SCTM on the topic of preparation and implementation of urban plans

SOS was represented by an urban planner who previously took part in the preparation of the Comparative Legal Analysis Report as a project component of Integration of Illegal Settlements Integration project. The seminar “Experiences in preparation and implementation of urban plans in the EU member states – a case study for Slovenia” took part on the 29th of October in Belgrade. The participants held discussion and exchanged ideas and experience.

NALAS Response to Global Crisis

Over the course of the last eight months, the global economic crisis has begun to hit local governments throughout South-East Europe (SEE) with increasing intensity. The finances of local governments have been badly affected as some national governments decided to cut grants and transfers to local governments in an effort to reduce public spending and to prevent higher budget deficits; real economic activity fell, leading to lower local government revenues from shared taxes and own sources; and now, as unemployment rises, increasing the pressure on local governments to provide social services and various forms of relief.

Presidents and executives of NALAS Member Associations met in Dubrovnik on 11-13 July and discussed impacts of the global economic crisis on the local governments in South East Europe. The current situation was assessed, good and bad practices were collected and recommendations were developed from the local governments and local government associations in South East Europe. In addition, the draft methodology for assessing direct and indirect impacts of the crisis on local budgets was discussed and it will soon be offered to local government associations in order to help them successfully negotiate with central governments.



NALAS member associations took the commitment to deliver the Dubrovnik declaration to their central government officials and share it with all local government authorities.

See attached the full text of the Dubrovnik declaration.

3.5. Other events

3.5.1. NALAS Membership

During the reporting period, 2 associations submitted applications for NALAS membership: the Croatian Association of Municipalities became full NALAS member based on the CLO decision taken on 14 May 2009 during its meeting in Portoroz, Slovenia, and the Association of Communes of Romania became a NALAS member based on the CLO decision taken on 7 November 2009 at its meeting in Podgorica.

3.5.2. NALAS members' events

SGOFBH General Assembly, 16-17 April 2009, Naum

The activities of NALAS were presented to members of the Bosnian Association of Cities and Municipalities, at its General Assembly held on 16-17 April in Neum. At this occasion, Mr. Husein Smajlovic, mayor of Zenica, was elected for the new president of the association, while the main topic of the event was the role of local governments in Bosnia in the processes of the European Integration.

UMMR General Assembly, 28-29 April 2009, Istanbul

NALAS representatives participated at the General Assembly meeting of the Union of Municipalities of the Marmara Region on 28-29 April 2009 in Istanbul. NALAS Executive Director presented NALAS network and its activities to participants.

AAM Municipal Fair

Association of Albanian Municipalities organized a municipal fair called “Best Practices Conference” on 17-18 September 2009. NALAS had a booth to present and disseminate information coming from NALAS Task Force Activities.

NAMRB General Assembly

NALAS Executive Director participated at the Bulgarian National Association of Municipalities NAMRB at their Annual Conference of Local Authorities held in Sandanski from 8 to 10 October 2009. This event marked the Bulgarian national day of municipalities and it gathered about 800 participants from municipal administration, including Mayors, Chairs of Councils, deputy Mayors and municipal experts from all over the country as well as the Prime Minister and several Ministers from the Government of Bulgaria. The main topic of discussion was how to use the EU funds to alleviate the consequences of financial crises as well as topics related to improvement of municipal services especially in social, education and other sectors.

3.5.3. Events organized by NALAS partners

CLRAE Plenary Session in Strasbourg on 3-5 March 2009



CLRAE Plenary Session was held in Strasbourg on 3-5 March. Several members of the NALAS network, associations from Turkey, Bulgaria, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo, attended the event. In his quality of Vice-President of NALAS, Mr. Vladimir Moskov, mayor of Goce Delchev, Bulgaria, contributed to the debate on the global economic crisis by presenting the recommendations to local authorities elaborated by the NALAS Fiscal Decentralisation Task Force lead by NAMRB. He stressed that NALAS recommends that in these circumstances the central governments should intensify their dialogue with local government authorities and their associations, and be open for new, innovative and even informal forms of dialogue. The Congress also discussed the need for cooperation at local and regional level in the Black Sea basin and the recently created Black Sea Euro-region platform (BSER). The UMMR representative suggested setting up a network of associations of Black Sea local authorities, along the lines of the NALAS network.

Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Board, 5 March 2009, Sarajevo

In the framework of its regular meeting Board Meeting held on 5 March, RCC organized the exchange of views between RCC Board (composed of RCC members financially contributing to the RCC Secretariat’s budget) and the representatives of relevant regional co-operation taskforces and initiatives in South East Europe. NALAS Executive Director was present at the meeting, which offered an excellent opportunity for reviewing the state of affairs and examining the way ahead in developing relations between the RCC and various regional initiatives in South East Europe.

CEMR General Assembly, 22-26 April, Malmo



NALAS participated at the General Assembly of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), from 22 to 24 April 2009, in Malmö, together with over 1,000 representatives of municipalities, towns, cities, provinces and regions from 40 countries. The speech on *the EU and its neighbors: co-operation for peace, stability and integration* was given on behalf of NALAS by Mr. Refik Rugeja, AAM President and NALAS delegate. The round table on *EU and its neighbor* was moderated by Dusica Perisic, ZELS Executive Director. The final resolution adopted at this occasion spells out the

views of local and regional authorities on a number of issues such as climate change, demographic changes, international relations and gender equality.

Seminar on methods and tools on territorial development: Western Balkans, 25-26 May 2009, Sarajevo



The Mediterranean Commission of United Cities and Local Governments organised its first regional seminar for local and regional authorities in Sarajevo on 25-26 May 2009; in partnership with the Piedmont Region, the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South Eastern Europe (NALAS), the Commission of UCLG on Decentralisation and Local Autonomy chaired by the Diputació of Barcelona and

Cités Unies France. NALAS members actively participated at the event: representatives of the associations of Republic of Srpska, Turkey, Slovenia, Macedonia and NALAS Secretariat had key speeches and moderated 2 round tables organized at this occasion.

The seminar dealt with the methods and tools for the development of territories. It aimed at:

- ▶ Exchanging experiences on common problems and issues in the field of the development of territories in the Balkan region in particular decentralisation and self local government, strategies and methodological tools offered to local and regional authorities for the development of their territories and decentralised cooperation.
- ▶ Encouraging cooperation with European and Mediterranean local and regional authorities and present the opportunities for local authorities in the Mediterranean region through decentralised and multilateral cooperation (programs, projects, networking).
- ▶ Contributing to the preparation of the second Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean, to be held in Barcelona in 2010

Course on Sustainability and Action, in Budva, Montenegro from May 24 to 31, 2009



In the reporting period, NALAS has continued to develop cooperation with the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC): REC was organizing the new Course on Sustainability and Action in Budva, Montenegro from May 24 to 31, 2009. The course gathered representatives of national governments, cities and local communities, associations of towns and municipalities, NGOs, regional and local development agencies from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Poland and Slovakia and Kosovo. At this occasion, NALAS activities were presented to participants through lecture on local networking for sustainable development.

Meeting of the Working group of the Western Balkans of the EU Committee of the Regions, 12 June, Pržno, Montenegro

The Meeting of the Working Group on the Western Balkans was devoted to Montenegro and held on 12 June. NALAS President, Mr. Tarzan Milosevic presented NALAS on this occasion and gave speech on the use and implementation of EU funds and programmes at local and regional level.

The impact of the economic downturn on local government, Council of Europe, LGI, 2 September 2009, Strasbourg

Mr Mladen Ivanovic from the Croatian Association of Municipalities represented NALAS at the roundtable organized by European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) and OSI's Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative (LGI).

LGI did a research on impact of global economic crisis to local governments in few European countries. Six presenters were highlighting different aspects of impact, and were opening space for discussion about possible solutions for local governments.

Mr. Ivanovic expressed the NALAS interest to get involved in the survey on impact of global crisis, and disseminate the results to all countries in the region, even those who were not included in the survey. It was also discussed about the NALAS interest to develop a methodology that will enable local governments to measure impact of crisis. Mr. Gabor Peteri who presented the survey results at the roundtable, stated that the survey itself covered a relatively small sample, and that only now the right questions can be designed to look for right data.

Climate Neutral Cities Forum, UNECE, 23-25 September, Geneva, Switzerland

The forum was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The motivation behind the forum was the significant potential available for reducing housing related greenhouse gas emissions across Europe, but also the accrued benefits of improved comfort, employment opportunities and fuel security of supply that can arise. There were represented policymakers and authorities from various countries and cities, who presented relevant policies as well as the challenges to governance posed by this concept. Experts from the public and private sectors addressed the technical hurdles and provided practical solutions for reducing urban GHG emissions (including land-use and transport planning, infrastructure, energy efficiency and overall building performance). In this forum NALAS was represented by the Program Officer on Urban Planning and Energy Efficiency.

4. Other NALAS activities

Committee of Liaison Officers Meetings in Skopje, 19-21 February 2009

At the CLO meeting held on 19-21 February in Skopje, the project proposal to Dutch Government was revised and approved, composed of 2 main components: establishment of the network of Knowledge Center Coordinators and launching of the Grant Program for local governments. Besides, the next GA meeting was discussed and UMMR volunteered to host it, while 2008 Financial report, as well as 2009 Action Plan and budget were approved. The approval of new project ideas was done electronically after the meeting.

Committee of Liaison Officers Meetings in Portoroz, 14-15 May 2009

At the CLO meeting held on 14-15 May in Portoroz, NALAS has accepted the application of the Association of Municipalities of Croatia for full membership. The other topics discussed were: NALAS 2008 Financial Audit Report, membership fee adjustment (to be approved at the following GA meeting), preparations for the 2009 General Assembly (to be hosted by UMMR) and next meeting of NALAS Presidents (to be hosted by AOM).



In addition, the mandate of the Executive Director was extended for another 2 years, and three points where NALAS can help NLAMM were identified: Statute amendments, developing services to members, developing project proposals.

Committee of Liaison Officers Meetings in Dubrovnik, 14-15 May 2009

The meeting of the Committee of Liaison Officers was held on 11 July in Dubrovnik. 2 new project ideas were presented and discussed at the meeting: purchasing of video-conferencing equipment and project on energy efficiency. Besides, the initiative for establishing Water Working Group within the Task Force on Solid Waste Management was presented.

Executive Bureau Meeting, 14 October, Strasbourg

Executive Bureau met in Strasbourg to discuss NALAS financial sustainability, next General Assembly preparations, NALAS internal policies and procedures and other topics. Executive Bureau proposed that the next GA is open to a wider number of Mayors from SEE to attend if interested in topic of EU integration and the role of local government which will be discussed in the roundtables preceding the main GA session.

Committee of Liaison Officers Meeting, 7 November, Podgorica

The meeting of CLO held in Podgorica on 7 November was mainly dedicated to preparations for the following General Assembly, as well as to possible scenarios of the NALAS financial sustainability. The Romanian association of Communes was accepted for a new NALAS member,

Liaison Officers were updated on NALAS activities and finances, and the action plan and budget for 2010 were approved. Finally, NALAS prepared comments on the Committee of the Regions' White Paper on Multilevel Governance, in order to make local governments of South East Europe and its members more visible to EU partners.

Western Balkans

How residents view their local authorities



Brochure "Western Balkans: How residents view their local authorities"

In cooperation with CEMR and Gallup, NALAS has prepared a brochure "Western Balkans: How residents view their local authorities". It presents the most important findings from the Gallup Balkan Monitor survey at a local level, that will be published in Autumn 2009. The report summarizes findings relevant to local governments in the Western Balkans, collected in the 2008 wave of the Gallup Balkan Monitor (GBM) - a multi-year project undertaken

by Gallup and the European Fund for the Balkans (EFB). It examines how changes in various aspects of life in the Western Balkans are perceived over a period of time (www.balkan-monitor.eu).

NALAS Celebrates Fifth Anniversary

Ministries, Embassies and relevant international and national organizations in Macedonia learned more about the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the network.

The event took place at the Secretariat in Skopje, Macedonia on 27 May 2009, marking the date when the Executive Directors of local government associations of SEE signed the statute which laid the foundation of the Network.

"Our network is becoming stronger and more successful every year", said Tarzan Milosevic, president of NALAS and mayor of Bijelo Polje (Montenegro). "It is obvious that local governments in the Balkans are facing similar problems; furthermore they share similar systems of governance and public administration, which facilitates replication of good practices within the region. The vision we had 5 years ago is gradually being implemented, NALAS is on the way to becoming the main knowledge center for local governments in the region".



"The vision we had 5 years ago is gradually being implemented, NALAS is on the way to becoming the main knowledge center for local governments in the region".

The guests were also addressed by the Macedonian Minister of local self-government, Mr Musa Xhaferi, the ambassador of Montenegro, Mr Dusko Lalicevic, the ambassador of the United States in Macedonia, H.E. Philip Reeker, as well as other representatives of organizations which cooperate with NALAS.



NALAS acknowledged the dedication of several individuals to the process of decentralization in the region. Gratitude was expressed to Mr Goran Angelov, the first president of NALAS in the period 2004 and 2005, to Mr Romain Darbellay from SDC and to Mr Jeremy Smith, the General Secretary of CEMR for their personal contribution in enhancing the NALAS network.