

Press Release

Bulgarian Mayor Vladimir Moskov is the new NALAS President

The Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe - NALAS elected its new presidency at its General Assembly meeting held in Istanbul on 10 and 11 December 2009: Mr Vladimir Moskov, Mayor of Goce Delcev (Bulgaria) is the newly elected NALAS President, Mr Refik Rrugeja, Mayor of Kavaja (Albania), Mr Özgen Keskin, Mayor of Yildirim, (Turkey), and Mr Anton Peršak, Mayor of Trzin (Slovenia) are the new Vice Presidents. Mr. Tarzan Milosevic was granted an Honorary President title in recognition to his service of NALAS President in the past 4 years.

Over 120 Mayors, executive directors of local government associations, experts and many distinguished guests took part in the series of events organized at this annual NALAS gathering. Mr. Yavuz Mildon, the President of the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of the Council of Europe, Ms Ludmila Sfirloaga, President of Congress Chamber of Regions, Ms. Tanja Fajon, Member of the European Parliament, Mr Faruk Çelik, Minister of State of the Republic of Turkey and Mr Recep Altepe, UMM President recognized the important role of NALAS in the European integration of the region and political stability.

The meeting was hosted by the Union of Municipalities of Marmara (UMM). UMM became member of NALAS in 2008, joining the family of local government associations from the region which nowadays counts 15 members.

NALAS delegates unanimously approved a joint Declaration which resulted from roundtable discussions on the EU integration as a challenge for local governments in South East Europe. The Declaration states that the timely and active involvement of local governments in EU integration processes is of highest importance for efficient implementation of EU standards, and consequently for provision of high quality services to citizens. The so-far experience of the countries that are already EU members, showed that local governments should better use opportunities given by national governments and EU institutions to get involved in negotiations and decision-making processes, and that they should initiate EU related activities in their communities, among other by appointing municipal EU officers and get prepared for efficient use of available EU funds. National governments, from their side, should acknowledge and channel the interests and capacities of local governments in implementation of EU legislation – as around 70% of it is implemented at local and regional level, but also support them to access available EU funds and ensure co-financing of municipal projects. Additionally, EU institutions and organizations should deepen the ties with the local governments in the non-EU countries in SEE using the potential of the trans-national networks and associations of local authorities in the region thus providing grounds for spreading the principles of good governance in Europe.

NALAS has been established in the frame of the Stability Pact and the support of the Council of Europe. Its mission is to actively encourage the decentralization process in South East Europe through strengthening and connecting Local Government Associations and thereby contribute to democracy and stability in the region, and subsequently to faster and successful EU integration.