

Local Governments of South East Europe Responds to Global Crisis

Round table discussion on the response of the local government associations to the global crisis

* *Current status:*

- *NALAS roundtable on "Fiscal Decentralisation in SEE in the context of Global Economic Crisis" held in Tirana on 23 November 2008 resulted with a Policy Brief "Local Governments of South East Europe Respond to Global Economic Crisis: NALAS Recommendations".*
- *CEMR collected preliminary analysis (during March 2009) from 24 CEMR member associations on "The economic and financial crisis – Impact on local and regional authorities".*
- *Council of Europe and LGI currently assessing the actual impacts of the economic downturn on local budgets. Their study will contribute to the 16th session of the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for local and regional government (Utrecht, 16-17 November 2009)*

Purpose: The purpose of this workshop is to assess the current situation, collect good and bad practices, develop and disseminate recommendations to local governments and LGAs in SEE. The NALAS position will be presented at the Council of Europe Ministerial Conference in Utrecht.

Also, the draft methodology for assessing direct/indirect impacts of the crisis on local budgets is to be discussed and offered to LGAs in order to help them monitor the situation as it develops and successfully negotiate with central governments about necessary preventive measures.

Workshop setting:

OPTION 1: A podium with chairs for facilitator, keynote speakers and free chairs for participants who want to join discussion.

In front of the podium are two rows of hemi-circles for the audience. The audience also takes part in the discussion using the mobile microphone.

Keynote speakers will deliver brief presentations. All other participants will be invited to ask questions and actively participate in the discussion.

Facilitator: Tony Levitas

Possible discussion questions:

1. Examples of implemented NALAS Tirana Recommendations.
2. What is the current situation? To what extent are LGs in SEE affected? Did the government cut transfers or took any other restrictive measure? Is the central government preparing an arrangement with IMF? Are there any conditions being discussed?
3. What actions did LGAs take to support local governments in these circumstances?
4. Actions by central governments with the goal to support local governments in facing the crisis?
5. How to utilize available funds to alleviate effects of crisis? In particular IPA, EU funds? What are the possibilities of transforming project funds into on-budget support in response to crisis? Any examples? Is it feasible? Who should we lobby?
6. How to minimize expenditures?
7. Future actions for LGAs and LGs in SEE.