

Volume 1

January 2004



Summary of activities for the year 2003:

- Second Election Assembly Meeting on 29th October 2003
- Visit of AMK in Council of Europe
- Municipal Property and its Management
- Analysis Groups of AMK
- Mayor of New York Visit
- AMK Council Meeting on 16th December 2003
- European Agency Project -Support to AMK

Association of Kosovo Municipalities Newsletter

Announcement

Dear friends,

The Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AMK) has started from the month of January 2004 with the publication of a Newsletter.

AMK was formed on 30 June, 2001 and is a representative of interests of all Kosovo Municipalities. The Association is committed to see the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government implemented in Kosovo. AMK has its Statute, Objectives and Strategy of work for realization of its objectives. AMK has a President, Vice-President, Board and also its Assembly. The AMK Assembly is composed from members of Municipal Assemblies and representatives of each municipality are elected according to the system 1 delegate for every 10 elected members in the Municipal Assemblies. AMK is a non political and multiethnic organization.

The aim of this Newsletter is to inform Municipalities and also local and international Organizations regarding the work and activities of AMK in a one month period. As well as work publications and AMK projects, this Newsletter will have space for important activities of Kosovo Municipalities and also for interviews with Municipal presidents.

For the moment AMK is in the process of increasing its capacity. During the month of February 2004, AMK will complete its administrative staff. In this first Newsletter will be shown the most important activities of AMK during 2003.

I hope that in the future, the Newsletter will be a very important instrument for promoting the work of AMK and all the Municipalities in Kosovo.

Sazan Ibrahim

Executive Director (designate)

Second Election Meeting of AMK

On 29 October 2003 the Second Election Meeting of AMK was held. In this meeting participated the Presidents and members of the Kosovo Municipalities and also guests from the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, delegates from from the Council of Europe, Diplomatic Offices in Kosova, OSCE, and the European Agency for Reconstruction.

In the name of Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the meeting was greeted by Mr. Yavus Mildon—Vice President of the Congress. He said that AMK is represented in Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe with observer status and it will have this status whilst the international community stays in Kosovo.

Mr. Fridheml Frisenchlager OSCE/ Director of Democratisation Department also greeted the meeting and he said that the work of AMK is very important and he wished luck to AMK for its work in the future.

Mr. Alan Packer—Team Leader of IFES Ltd for support of AMK also complimented the work of the Association Assembly and he also mentioned the role of IFES Ltd in supporting AMK and the role of AMK in democratisation of Kosovo society.

Mr. Lutfi Haziri, President of AMK submitted to those present the work of AMK during 2003 and also objectives of AMK for the future. Also Mr. Haziri



With open votes the Assembly elected Board Members of AMK where the future Board members of AMK are elected:

1. Mr. Lufi Haziri—President of Gjilan Municipality (LDK)
2. Mr. Ismet Beqiri—President of Prishtina Municipality (LDK)
3. Mr. Faruk Spahija—President of Mitrovica Municipality (LDK)
4. Mr. Ramadan Gashi—President of Skënderaj Municipality (PDK)
5. Mr. Fehmi Mujota—President of Shtime Municipality (PDK)
6. Mr. Mazllum Kumnova—Member of Municipal Assembly of Gjakova (AAK)

For the president and vice-president for the next mandate are elected: Mr. Lufi Haziri, President and Mr. Ramadan Gashi, Vice president.

In the end of the meeting, Assembly of AMK elected late Mr. Ukë Bytyqi, former-President of Theranda municipality and also one of the founders of AMK, as a president of honour of the Association of Kosova Municipalities. Also, Assembly of AMK deprecated the case of incident that hapened in village Prekaz, Skënderaj Municipality, where French KFOR provoked Jashari family, and requested to not repeat this kind of cases.

AMK in Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe—Autumn Session

On 24—26 November 2003, in Strasbourg, France was held a Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. In this meeting the Kosovar delegation: Mr. Lufi Haziri-President of AMK, Mr. Fehmi Mujota-board member of AMK, Mr. Sazan Ibrahimji-Executive Director (designate) of AMK and Mr. Alan Packer-International Adviser of AMK, represented AMK.

The meeting lasted two days most interesting items from this meeting were:

Association Network of Chief Executives

Spring session of CLRAE is going to be held on 22-24 of March 2004

Local Democratic Report in Armenia

Liberalisation of water supply in Europe

Draft of European Charter for Regional Self Governance

Support of European Charter work regarding Reforms in Kosovo

Encouragement of the dialog Pristina—Belgrade

On the second part of the meeting, process of Reforms in Kosovo and the Report of Council of Europe were the theme of discussion.

Mr. Mildon said that elected people from Kosovo indicated to him that they were not informed and consulted about Council of Europe, Mission of Decentralization process.

We have to have discussions regarding this matter in Council of Europe Congress—he said.

Mr. Masters highlighted some problems in Balkans and he supported the report of Council of Europe regarding reforms in Kosovo.

After this Mr. Lufi Haziri, in the name of the Kosovo delegation greeted all present and especially complimented Mr. Yavus Mildon and Mr. Owen Masters for their work and their contribution in Kosovo. After that he read a Statement regarding the recommendations of the Decentralization Mission. This Statement has raised a great interest and is considered to be very important. The Statement that was read in Strasbourg was distributed to all Kosovo Municipalities through Presidents in the Council Meeting on 16 December 2003.

On 24-25 November 2003, in Strasburg of France is held the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of Europe, where AKK has observer status.



Municipal Property and its Management

Year 2003 was the year when process of privatization started in Kosovo. The Authority which is implementing this process is the Kosovo Trust Agency. Social and public enterprises will be privatized according to the Spin-off and Bankruptcy Process.

In this case, from the Kosovo Municipalities is taken the right of managing Municipal Property.

This right is taken from them arbitrarily from Kosovo Trust Agency. Because of this AMK has reacted against taking this right. The Policy Statement "Management of Municipal Property", which is published from AMK, stated the dissatisfaction of Kosovo Municipalities regarding the management of municipal property and also problems which Municipalities will have in the future because of removing the Municipalities as the legitimate institutions which represent the rights of citizens.

Regarding this, the working Group of AMK on Municipal Property met with highest personalities of Kosovo and also with Mr. Francesco Bastagli, DSRSG for Civil Administration.

Regarding Municipal Property and Privatization, Association of Kosovo Municipalities has three key messages:

Privatization is important for Economic Development of Kosovo
Municipalities have the right to be consulted regarding privatization of small enterprises that are inside their municipal boundary
Municipalities have the right to object to special cases when their legitimate interests are violated.

Association of Kosovo Municipalities Analysis (Working) Groups

IFES Ltd which is supporting the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AMK) in its development, in close cooperation with AMK organised a number of meetings with analysis groups (working groups). Analysis groups are composed from municipal civil servants and also from members of Municipal Assemblies. The main discussions of these meetings are issues which are very important for Municipalities. With help of IFES Ltd are brought international experts which together with working groups of AMK made Policy Statements. Starting from the end of 2003 until now are made Policy Statements regarding Administrative Reform, Public Utilities and Local Economic Development.

After the Policy Statements are drafted by the Analysis Groups, the Council of AMK will debate and if these statements fulfil standards, then they will be approved as draft Policy Statements of AMK.

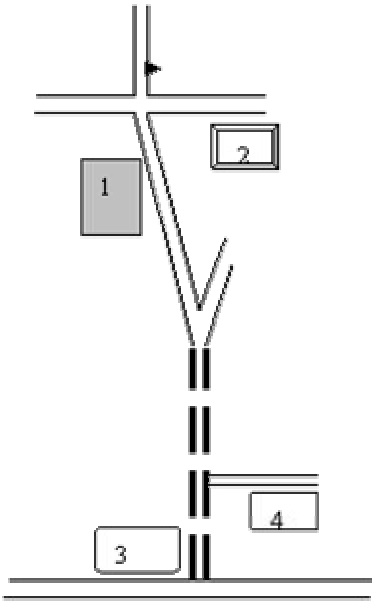
After approval, statements will be distributed in the municipalities and then the consultation process with Municipal Assemblies will start.

Is important to highlight that IFES Ltd, brought experts which have experience in their homelands and that with their experience they contributed a lot in development and compilation of policy statements.

Meeting of Municipal Presidents with Mayor of New York

On 23 November 2003, in Kosovo came for one day visit, the Mayor of New York, Mr. Bloomberg. Besides the meetings that he had with President of Kosovo Mr. Ibrahim Rugova and Prime Minister Mr. Bajram Rexhepi, he had a special meeting with president of Pristina municipality Mr. Ismet Beqiri, who at the same time is also a board member of AMK. For this case a reception was organized where all Municipal Presidents were present.





Location of the new Association Office:

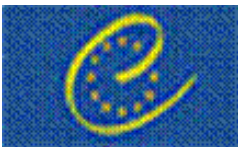
1. New Office
2. Monument
3. Mega Sport (Slovenia Sport)
4. Old Office

St. Robert Gajdiku, Nr.113

Tel: 038/ 248 941

Fax: 038/ 248 941

Email: komunat_akk@hotmail.com



Observer status

Council meeting of AMK on 16 December 2003

Association of Kosovo Municipalities held the first Council meeting after October second elections. This meeting was held in "Grand" Hotel on 16 December 2003.

In this meeting participated Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Kosovo Municipalities and also representatives of different offices like: OSCE, UNDP, USAID, etc.

In the beginning Mr. Lutfi Haziri, President of AMK, greeted all present and congratulated Ferizaj Municipality for 130 years of establishment. Mr. Sazan Ibrahim, Executive Director (designate) of AMK presented some of the most important projects of AMK for the year 2004. Some of the projects of AMK are: establishment of AMK and Kosovo Municipalities Webpage, research about "Baseline Assessment of Municipalities of Kosovo in relation to the International Community 'Standards'", two working visits in Balkans, commitment of Chief Executives in AMK Panel. Besides this AMK will organize round tables regarding Kosovo Municipalities key issues. With the support of the European Agency for Reconstruction, where IFES Ltd is implementer, there are some other projects like Analysis Groups that will work with Kosovo Municipalities on key issues.

In this meeting also is discussed about business and civil registration. Municipal presidents complained that they do not have this competence and that according to European Standards they should have. In this meeting Presidents requested that these competences should be brought back to them because Municipalities have the knowledge to practice these competences. Regarding this subject, President of Pristina Municipality Mr. Ismet Beqiri, was very concerned because responsibility of somebody else's employees is not Municipal Competence, like Civil Registration. Our Municipalities are being criticized and in reality Municipalities simply provided the offices for this matter – said Mr. Beqiri.

Property tax also was a theme of discussion in this meeting. Mr. Lutfi Haziri said that Municipal income from this tax is too small. It would be good if all Municipalities unify policies and make bigger pressure on citizens regarding this tax.

Naming of residences (Cities and Villages) is a very important issue for municipalities. Council of AMK supports the names of residences which are given according to Municipal Statutes.

European Agency Project

Projects from the European Agency for Reconstruction contribute to high-level social goals that promote the development of Kosovo. In the 'good governance' sector the following goal is stated for this project:

"To contribute to the building of a democratic Kosovo, with strong effective institutions, that respect human rights and the rule of law, whilst serving the entire population in an efficient, fair and pluralistic manner".

The project title is 'Support for Decentralisation to the Municipal Level' and the focal organisation for the project is the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AMK).

Implementation of this project is done from IFES Ltd organization. As well as direct support to AMK, IFES Ltd will work with Analysis Groups which until now worked in Administrative Reform, Public Utilities and Economic development.