

Edition 2

January – February 2004



## **Përmbajtja:**

- Analysis Group on Public Places**
- Analysis Group on Local Economic Development**
- Association's webpage**
- AKK Council meeting of 18th February 2004**
- Meeting with Mr. Francesco Bastagli DSRSG regarding management of municipal property**
- Link with Council of Europe, Local democracy Agency**
- Research on "Standards"**
- Visit to municipalities of Jesenica and Kranjska Gora of Slovenia**
- Revised translation of the European Charter on Local Self Government**
- AKK in support to petition for missing hostages**
- **Visit of Mr. Lutfi Haziri, President of AKK in Brussels**
- Visit to Association of Self Government Units in Macedonia**

# Association of Kosova Municipalities Newsletter

## **Municipal Analysis Group — Public Places**

During the month of January Municipal Analysis Groups worked on Public Places. After a number of meetings that IFES Ltd staff had with municipal officials, they visited the municipalities of Deçan and Gjakova. In Deçan they were informed about the achievement attained from Municipalities own initiative. Here we can mention the regulation of the town centre. For a long time Deçan citizens have lived with an unattractive town centre and flooding of the main street. This has been replaced with an attractive central public place with a roundabout to regulate traffic flows, pavements, seating areas and attractive parks.

On the other hand IFES Ltd staff met with a very touching case. The village called Meja—municipality of Gjakova, suffered the loss of 500 persons during 1999. The grief of this is made worse because land is not available to build a proper cemetery. The adjacent land has been transferred to the Kosovo Trust Agency and their mandate prevents them from releasing it. AKK is seeking a way by which decision an land use should also consider the fundamental social needs of municipal citizens. After these case studies the Analysis Group compiled a policy statement which is waiting for AKK Board approval



Roundabout in the centre of Deçan



Cemetery in Gjakova

## **Municipal Analysis Group—Local Economic Development**

As a result of the work of this group there were issues which came out from point of view of civil servants and elected officials from municipal assemblies, that are dealing with local economic development. More significant issues or problems which municipalities emphasized during the work of the group were regarding the issue of taking back from central level, respectively Ministry of Trade and Industry, the right of municipalities to undertake business registration, the right which earlier was belonging to municipalities. According to municipal representatives while this registration was a municipal competence all the parties were satisfied, including the business community. Also municipalities were having a better picture regarding the economic developments in their respective municipalities. One other important issue which came as result of the work of the group was the idea of setting up a professional economic commission in AMK with representatives of the municipalities. The task of this commission will be to form a local level strategy for economic development. Also this analysis group agreed on compiling one document so called "strategy of joint principals", to be considered by the Government and the AMK.



### Association website

One of this year's AKK projects is also development of a website for the Association of Kosovo Municipalities. This project is funded by OSCE and implemented by local NGO called CPSR.

Aim of this project is to increase the transparency of Municipalities towards citizens and efficiency of inter municipal communications.

Electronic governance is very important for Kosovo citizens and for Kosovo Municipalities.

## AKK Council meeting of 18th February 2004

On 18 February 2004 was held the first AKK Council meeting in the year 2004. In this meeting Mr. Hysni Bajrami, director of Department for Local Administration, Ministry of Public Services represented the work of MPS regarding the compilation of a draft Law on local self governance.

Those present agreed that this law is very important for Kosovo Municipalities.

The meeting was presented with the draft Analysis Group policy statements on Public Places

and Local Economic Development. Council agreed for these policy statements to be distributed in Municipal Assemblies and after discussions to be considered for approval. Allowances of municipal presidents and vice-presidents was one of most discussed item in this meeting. AKK proposals were approved after some changes. These changes were included a separate allowance for Prishtina Municipality President, difference between salaries of presidents and vice presidents to be

150 Euros. Agreement was not reached on allowances for opposition leaders of. Also in this meeting were presented some of AKK projects for this year:

- Web page of AKK
- Baseline research on how far Kosovo Municipalities are fulfilling the standards requested by the international community
- Visit of 4 presidents of Kosovo Municipalities in Slovenia
- Support of AKK regarding collection of petition for lost persons.

## Meeting with Mr. Francesco Bastagli, DSRSG in regard to the management of municipal property

In January 2004 was held the first meeting between UNMIK and AKK regarding municipal property issues in the office of DSRSG, Mr. Francesco Bastagli.

AKK on July of 2003 presented in written to UNMIK concerns regarding property issues. Historically, municipalities used to administrate social property and distribute it to the community, including to social enterprises. AKK in this meeting presented opinions of its members, from which according to the UNMIK Regulation 2002/12 on the establishment of the Kosovo Trust Agency, is taken the right to manage social property. AKK said that transfer of the rights for administration brought drastic restrictions in municipalities, preventing the possibility of carrying out responsibilities that aim to provide public services, e.g. building schools, hospitals, libraries and other public buildings. Municipalities no longer have access to sufficient land for fulfilment of their needs.

In the end of the meeting Mr. Bastagli requested the Office of Legal Adviser (OLA) and Board of Directors of KTA to approve draft procedures for KTA to work with municipalities concerning land needed for the public good, this draft is to be delivered to AKK and all municipalities for consultation.

Next step will be the approval of OLA and Board of Directors of KTA regarding the procedure mentioned above, KTA will send to AKK and to all municipalities a procedure document that will explain the process by which municipalities can petition to KTA for access to land held by social enterprises.

## Link with Council of Europe, Local Democracy Agency

AKK is closely linked with Local Democracy Agency (LDA) of Council of Europe based in Gjilan. LDA is part of the network for south– east Europe, and they work to encourage development of democracy based in materials and principals of Council of Europe. AKK, IFES Ltd and LDA are discussing how to increase number of resource materials of local governance in Kosovo-in Albanian and Serbian language. We hope that in time, a library of European important documents will be formed—starting with the European Charter of Local Self Government, the European Urban Charter and the Draft European Social Charter.

## Research on Standards

One of AKK project is a baseline research as to how much Kosovo Municipalities are fulfilling the standards designated from the international community. Research is done by a team of 3 people visiting Kosovo municipalities and interview municipal and civil society structures regarding fulfilment of Standards. Interviews will be done with:

- Political representatives of Municipality ( President or vice president)
- Municipal Administration representatives (Chief Executive)
- Community representatives (President of Community Commission)
- Representatives of Civil Society (different NGO-s and KLMDNJ)

Development of the project is continuing in the best way. End of all visits is foreseen for last week of March and the final report regarding this research is expected to be finished in the end of April.

## Visit to municipalities of Jesenica and Kranjska Gora of Slovenia

On 21 of January, with AKK initiative and support of Kosova Foundation for Open Society (KFOS), president of Vitia municipality Mr. Musa Misina, President of Shtime municipality Mr. Fehmi Mujota, President of Deçan municipality Mr. Ibrahim Selmanaj and President of Klina municipality Mr. Ramë Manaj visited city of Jesenica and Kranjska Gora in Slovenia, with aim of exchanging experiences between Kosovar and Slovenian municipalities.

4 Municipal presidents met with president of Jesenica Municipality, who informed them about system and organisation of state government in the level of Slovenian state, number of municipalities, level of their development, structures of self governance and their functioning, and also they where informed in details about budget issues, economic development of Jesenica and for organisation and functioning of public services.

Besides Jesenica president they also met with Kranjska Gora president, Mr. Jure Zherjav. With president of Kranjska Gora they talked about organisation of public services, concession, investments in this field, management and problems and difficulties. They also heard about urban planning and urbanism, budget incomes and resources, and also about taxes.

Presidents of Kosova Municipalities besides these meetings visited museum of Jesenica and Planica, well-known ski centre in Slovenia.

The Association of Municipalities of Slovenia helped to make the visit successful.



## Revised-translation of the European Charter on Local Self-Government

The European Charter on Local Self Government was translated in Albanian language, however, after the project of the European Agency for Reconstruction started (Support to decentralisation to the municipal level) the translation of this Charter was closely studied. The translation had many mistakes and has therefore been revised by the IFES Ltd translator.

## **AKK in support to petition for missing hostages**

Coordination Council of Associations of families of hostages and lost persons and families with war victims in Kosova (KKAF) and Kosova Action Network (KAN) organised a petition for missing hostages in Kosova. Collection of signatures started on 1st of November 2003 and lasted until 1st of February 2004. This was done by putting petitions in different public places in all Kosova and also by going door to door in citizen houses.

Association of Kosovo Municipalities is very strongly supporting this initiative. Activist of KKAF, KAN, KMDLNI, UPSUP and a large number of other organisations achieved to collect over 150.000 signatures. But, most of signatures are collected in cities. Villages mainly could not be included. For covering villages too, and for collecting a greater number of signatures in general, AKK helped a lot.

Is known that most of Kosova Municipalities have good relations with leaders of villages. This brought to a very good opportunity to support this petition. Based in good relationships between municipalities and leaders of villages, AKK together with municipalities helped a lot in collecting the signatures in most of Kosova villages.

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## **Visit of Mr. Lutfi Haziri, President of AKK in Brussels**

President of Gjilan Municipality and also a president of AKK Mr. Lutfi Haziri, was invited in a official visit in Brussels on 23rd and 24th of February 2004. Mr. Haziri in this visit was invited as the president of Gjilan Municipality.

Mr. Haziri on 23rd of February met with Mr. Stefano Sanino—adviser of Mr. Romano Prodi. Also, in the same day Mr. Haziri met with Mr. Stefan Lehne—Director for west Balkans, Council of Europe. Mr. Haziri was also participant in a round table organised from Think Tank Foundation of Brussels. In this meeting participants exchanged ideas and experiences regarding the cross boarder initiative of Gjilan-Preshevo-Kumanovo (GJPK), for priorities of West Balkans and also for politic-economic-social implications of the cross boarder collaboration of this area.

On 24th of February Mr. Haziri had a meeting with Council of Europe and the East—West Institution regarding planning and coordination of GJPK cross boarder collaboration and also a short session in Stability Pact regarding the GJPK project.

Mr. Haziri met representatives of Albanian Community which act and work in Brussels.

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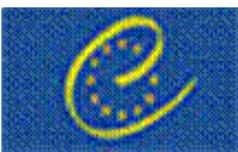
## **Visit to Association of Self -Government Units in Macedonia**

Executive Director (designate) of AKK, Mr. Sazan Ibrahimimi stayed for one day visit in Skopje. In this case he visited the Association of Units of Self-Government in Macedonia (ZELS) where he met with his counterpart Mrs. Dusica Perishiq. He was informed about projects and work and also about the role of the Association in Macedonia.

Mr. Ibrahimimi informed Mrs. Perishiq about the work and activities of AKK in Kosovo.

Both parties are very interested for collaboration between the two associations.

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