



## **Seminar for Dialogue and Capacity Building of Local and Regional Authorities in Eurasia in the Fields of Development and Local Governance**

**Date: 14 – 15 May 2014**  
**Venue: Holiday Inn Tbilisi**

### **Overview**

Local governments in the Eurasia region have faced major challenges over the last 20 years due to the rapid adjustment to a diminished size and role of government.

This problem became even more complex given the concurrent attempt on the part of most national governments to retain responsibility for the large numbers of social services that usually were provided by local governments during the Soviet period.

At the same time, local governments across the region have been coping with a dramatic urban growth. This has resulted in a redistribution of service needs in relation to these positive and negative net-migrations, which no longer match the existing infrastructure. At the same time, the social infrastructure (schools, hospitals etc.) in localities that have lost population has been preserved in order to reduce social tensions, as budget-supported institutions have become almost the only area of employment.

In the early 1990s, despite the fact that Eurasian countries developed local self-governments from a common framework, different countries have responded to those challenges in their own way and have selected their own model of local self-governance and intergovernmental fiscal relations. Kazakhstan has adopted a system of deconcentrated state bodies for local administration, a rather centralised hierarchical system of public authorities was selected in Belarus, and a two-tier system of local self-government was implemented in Moldova. In between, there are states where local self-governments exist autonomously (Armenia, Georgia) or alongside state bodies of local administration (in Ukraine at the oblast and raion level, in Kyrgyzstan at the raion level).

### **PLATFORMA**

It seems important in this framework that PLATFORMA partners try to help reinforce the institutional and operational capacities of Local and Regional Authorities in Eurasia countries, particularly in the field of good governance and local development.

In that sense, our project hopes to strengthen the working areas developed in the framework of the Structured Dialogue to promote good governance, and to further develop the strategic reflection on enabling environment so as to make local LRAs development actors with their own identity and role.



## Objectives

- ▶ to have an exchange on the content of the Communication “Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes” published by the European Commission in May 2013;
- ▶ to exchange information on the challenges and opportunities to support decentralisation in the Eurasia region;
- ▶ to understand the support mechanisms available to LRAs, with recommendations to better tailor them, including those specifically for the region that come from the Neighbourhood Policy;
- ▶ to discuss views of LRAs of the region regarding the global local agenda (SDGs, Habitat III, climate);
- ▶ to encourage LRAs from the region to be proactive in looking for development cooperation.

## Participants

50-60 participants from the region will be invited:

- ▶ representatives of LRAs (elected local and regional representatives and local representatives in charge of international cooperation);
- ▶ representatives of civil society;
- ▶ representatives of national governments;
- ▶ representatives of the European Union Delegations from the targeted countries.

## Programme

After the introductory session, a presentation and discussion of the Communication of the European Commission “Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes” will take place in order to provoke an open debate on the issues and problems affecting the region and the possible role of local governments, with an evaluation of the political background.

The sessions will touch different topics:

- ▶ The EU Commission Communication “Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”;
- ▶ A dialogue on the needs of the region regarding the global post-2015 development agenda, Habitat III and others;
- ▶ Support mechanisms available to LRAs;
- ▶ Decentralisation in Eurasia.



## Documents

The seminar will be an active and participative experience for the participants but it will have as reference material the following:

- ▶ **European Commission** (2013) Communication “Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”
- ▶ **SKL – PLATFORMA** (2014) Draft document on “Decentralisation in Eurasia; International comparison and current trends within local self-governance, local finance and service delivery”
- ▶ **AEBR – PLATFORMA** (2014) Draft document on “Support mechanisms available to LRAs with recommendations to better tailor them, including those specifically for the region that come from the Neighbourhood Policy”
- ▶ **UCLG** (2013) GOLD III Eurasia



## DRAFT AGENDA

Day 1 - 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014

Time	Session
09:00 - 09:45	Welcome and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <b>Ann-Sofi Backgren</b>, 1<sup>ST</sup> Vice-President of the European Border Regions (AEBR), Member of the Board of the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia</li><li>▶ <b>Boris Iarochvitch</b>, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Georgia</li><li>▶ <b>Sevdia Ugrekhelidze</b>, Acting mayor of Tbilisi</li><li>▶ <b>Mamuka Abuladze</b>, President of the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia - NALAG</li><li>▶ <b>Tengis Shergelashvili</b>, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Georgia</li><li>▶ Representative of Parliament of Georgia</li></ul>
09:45 - 10:30	Presentation of the EC Communication “Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes” <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <b>Elena Asciutti</b>, Representative of DG Development and Cooperation, Unit B2 - Civil Society and Local Authorities, European Commission</li></ul>
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 - 11:30	Presentation of “Decentralisation in Eurasia; International comparison and current trends within local self-governance, local finance and service delivery” <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <b>Anna Dzembak</b>, Institute for Urban Economics</li></ul>
11:30 - 13:00	Round table – Presentation of cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <b>Anna Dzembak</b>, Institute for Urban Economics</li><li>▶ <b>Leonid Pertsov</b>, Institute for Urban Economics, – focus on service delivery</li><li>▶ <b>Narmin Ibrahimova</b>, Center for Economic and Social Development, Azerbaijan</li><li>▶ <b>Marat Moldagulov</b>, Chairman of City Maslikhat, Kazakhstan</li><li>▶ <b>Alexandru Osadci</b>, Program Manager, Congress of Local Authorities, Moldova</li></ul> <p>Moderation by <b>Håkan Gustafsson</b>, CEO, SKL International</p>
13:00 - 14:30	Lunch



**14:30 - 15:30** Presentation of “Support mechanisms available to LRAs with recommendations to better tailor them, including those specifically from the region that come from the Neighbourhood Policy”

▶ **Martin Guillermo Ramirez**, Secretary General of AEBR

The participation of LRAs in conflict prevention across boundaries

▶ **Ignacio Sánchez Amor**, OSCE Special Representative for Border Co-operation

**15:30 - 15:45** Coffee break

**15:45 - 16:45** Round table – Presentation of cases

▶ **Natalie Nosa**, President of the International Association of Regional Development Institutions (IARDI), Ukraine - The Carpathian Euroregion: integration across five countries

▶ **George Abulashvili**, Director of Energy Efficiency Center-ECC

▶ **Emin Yeritsyan**, President of the Communities Association of Armenia and President of the Euro-Caucasus Euroregion – case from Armenia

▶ **Giorgi Meskhidze**, Representative of Civitas Georgica

**From 19:30** Dinner hosted by NALAG at *Funicular Restaurant*

## Day 2 - 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014

Time	Session
<b>09:00 – 11:00</b>	Round table on Governance for Development, Decentralisation, Service Provision and Post-2015 Agenda ▶ <b>Tatiana Badan</b> , President of the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova ▶ <b>Abdiraim Jorokulov</b> , Head of the Department on Industry, Entrepreneurship and External Economic Relations of the City of Osh, Kyrgyzstan ▶ <b>Rasikh Sagitov</b> , Secretary General of UCLG-Eurasia  Moderation by <b>Frederic Vallier</b> , Secretary General of CEMR
<b>11:00 - 11:15</b>	Coffee break
<b>11:15 - 12:00</b>	How to reinforce the relation EU – Eurasia LRAs: instruments for development cooperation ▶ <b>Elena Ascitti</b> , Representative of DG Development and Cooperation, Unit B2 - Civil Society and Local Authorities



- 12:00 - 13:00** Conclusions and wrap-up
- ▶ **Martin Guillermo Ramirez**, Secretary General of AEBR
  - ▶ **Emin Yeritsyan**, President of the Communities Association of Armenia and President of the Euro-Caucasus Euroregion – case from Armenia
  - ▶ **David Melua**, Secretary General of the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia - case from Georgia
  - ▶ **Frederic Vallier**, Secretary General of CEMR

**13:00 - 14:30**

Lunch