

The results of the International Conference on "European integration, knowledge, innovation and democratic governance of development" held in Tirana, Albania

February 2011

The international meeting on *European integration, knowledge, innovations and democratic governance of development. The strategic role of decentralized cooperation in economy, environment, services and capacity building* was held in Tirana on 13th and 14th of January.

The meeting was organized by UNDP Albania, in the framework of the UNDP ART GOLD Albania Program, in cooperation with the Government of Albania. The ART Program aims to support national policies for local development as part of the process of European integration, with a particular focus on democratic governance.

Zineb-Touimi Benjelloun, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, the Albanian Deputy-Prime Minister Ilir Meta and the Ambassador of Italy Saba D'Elia, opened the conference in which more than three hundred people took part, representing national and international institutions.

The Albanian Government chaired and moderated the entire conference, with the active participation of the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Ferdinand Poni. The different panels were chaired by the Minister of European Integration, Majlinda Bregu; the General Director of Development and Integration in the Minister of the Interior, Roland Bejko; the Minister of Environment, Fatmir Mediu; the Deputy Minister of Labour, Filloreta Kodra; the Deputy Minister of Education, Nora Malaj; the Deputy Minister of Economy, Enno Bozdo and Agron Xoxa, Cultural Advisor in the Office of the President of the Republic of Albania.

A considerable number of representatives of Albanian Regions and Municipalities, central and decentralized institutions, universities, local economic development agencies of Vlora (Auleda) and Shkodra (Teuleda) participated in the panels, bringing in their local development experience accumulated over the past few years in the country.

The Acting Head of Delegation of the European Union in Albania put the emphasis on the important initiatives that the European Union is carrying out in the country and expressed his interest in supporting international cooperation initiatives together with Regions and local



European bodies.

It is important to underline the participation of the Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Embassy of the Czech Republic, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, the Royal Danish Embassy, the Embassy of the Arabic Republic of Egypt, the Embassy of France, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Embassy of the Hellenic Republic of Greece, the Embassy of the Republic of Hungary, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, the Embassy of Romania, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Embassy of Switzerland and the British Embassy.

From abroad, participants included the coordinator of decentralized cooperation of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the representative of the National Association of Greek Regions (ENAE); the representative of the European Network of Regional Development Agencies (EURADA); representatives of the Spanish (NGO APRODEL); the Director of the Kraguyevac Development Agency (Serbia), the Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Office in Europe.



The UNOPS Services for International Partnerships of Rome mobilized and accompanied 40 representatives of Italian decentralized cooperation actors. In particular the following local authorities and stakeholders participated in the conference: Abruzzo, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Marche, Molise, Puglia, Toscana and Veneto Regions, the Regional Agencies for Public Health and for Economic Development of the Lazio Region; the Provinces of Cagliari, Cosenza and Lecce; the Local Action Groups (GALs) of Valle del Crocchio, Cropani (Catanzaro, Calabria), Terre Aquilane (Avezzano, Abruzzo) and "Molise verso 2000" (Campobasso, Molise); the Development Agency of Roman Hills (Lazio); the Territorial Pact of Marsica (Avezzano, Abruzzo); the Public Health Agencies of Trieste (Friuli Venetia Giulia) and Bari (Puglia); the fair trade consortium "Altromercato"; the "South

East Women" Association (Conversano, Puglia); the "Project Music" Association of Monfalcone (Friuli Venezia Giulia); the Association "Network of Albanians in Tuscany – RAT" (Florence); the School of Advanced Training for the Third Sector (ForTeS) of Siena (Tuscany); the Universities of Bologna, Cagliari, Calabria (Cosenza), Perugia, Siena and Urbino.

All participants agreed on the essential role that local Authorities and local social actors play in the European integration process and expressed their appreciation for UNDP's and other UN agencies' efforts to create a operational framework, in agreement with national policy orientations, in which all these international and decentralized cooperation actors are able to participate and harmonize their actions.

In particular the event focused on the three main points listed below:

- The quality and governance of territorial development: from fragmented projects to integrated development plans agreed with local actors and open to international and European partnerships.
- Governance and instruments of territorial economic development: role of LEDAs in elaborating concerted strategies for employment generation and for enhancing environmental and cultural resources.
- Training development professionals: towards an International School for Millennium Development and its territorial laboratories

The Conference considered the UNDP ARTGOLD2 Albania Programme one of the most effective tools available to the Albanian Government for promoting good governance and human development in the target regions.



Italy especially appreciated the performance and the results achieved by the ARTGOLD Programme, which has successfully facilitated effective synergies between local and international actors.

In particular, the participants underlined:

- The need to overcome past patterns of cooperation considered fragmented and self-referential and the need to move toward actions and processes in line with the Millennium Development Platform. Everybody required that the strategies and content highlighted during the conference should be supported by the international community, as follow up of the actions carried on by the multilateral PASARP Program over a decade ago, and more recently by the ART Programmes.
- The relevance of the innovations, the capacity building activities, the Local Economic Development Agencies and the decentralized cooperation that are active in Albania with the respective support of IDEASS, Universitas ILS LEDA and SIP Programmes that mobilize European actors in projects with a strategic value for Albania and that are based on locally-determined priorities and the national policy framework.
- The role, acknowledged by the Albanian Government, played by the Local Development Agencies as crucial for national and regional economic development, on the basis of the reports presented by the agencies of Auleda (Vlora), Teuleda (Shkodra), Redasp (Kragujevac – Serbia), ILS LEDA / Eurada, and UNDP ART GOLD Albania.
- The proposal of the KIP Scientific Committee (*Knowledge, innovations and policies for human development*) to establish the committee for the creation of the Balkans International Development School in Albania, as a tool for promoting innovations, reforms, and for training development agents in line with the principles of the Millennium Platform. The conference underlined the innovative quality of the Albanian “Human Development Laboratories” of the International School in the regions of Shkodra and Vlora, viewed as an integral tool in the advancement of decentralized cooperation in Albania.



In concluding, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Alfredo Mantica, expressed his willingness to establish links with the European Commission and other European countries to support the follow-up to this Conference, as part of the Adriatic-Ionian Macro Region, which could take up the methodology applied by UNDP's ARTGOLD2 Programme.

For more information

[UNDP Albania web site](#)

Albanian newspapers

<http://www.standard.al/index.php/ekonomi/15978.html>

Ambassador D'Elia: Decentralization in Albania, progress for the EU Integration

<http://www.mapo.al/index.php?z=lexo&category=1&id=7104&titulli=decentralizimi-projekti-ne-shkoder-e-vlore>

Decentralization, the project in Shkodra and Vlora

<http://www.gazeta-albania.net/news.php?id=31346>

Meta: Regional development encouragement towards EU Integration

<http://www.hermesnews.org/rubriche/6989---.asp>

Conference for European Integration

<http://www.gazetatelegraf.com/index.php/ekonomi/7302.html>

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