



International workshop

**“LEADERSHIP ACADEMY,
MACEDONIA-BULGARIA 2014”
MODULE III**

Sozopol, Bulgaria, September 04-08, 2014

Prepared by:



1. Introduction

Between September 04th and September 08th, a total of 20 representatives of the municipalities and the nongovernmental institutions from Macedonia and Bulgaria participated on the MODULE III workshop of the project "Leadership Academy, Macedonia-Bulgaria 2014", financially supported by the Hanns Seidel Foundation and organized by the international foundation Balkan Net and the National Association of Municipal Clerks of Bulgaria and supported by the Council of Europe. The event was opened by Mr. Valentin Lazarov, head of the National Association of Municipal Clerks of Bulgaria, Mr. Bogdan Mirchev, head of Hanns Seidel Foundation Bulgaria and Mr. Jean Stanoevski, president of the foundation Balkan Net. At the end of the seminar, Mr. Alfonso Zardi, representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe closed the event and gave the certificates to the participants.

Through interactive workshop sessions the following topics have been presented by both speakers Mr. Stanoevski and Mr. Lazarov:

- Personal leadership activities
- Change promoters
- Personal approach towards leadership
- Conflict management
- Inter-municipal cooperation (IMC)
- Maximizing the capacity of human resources
- Responsibility of local authorities and leaders
- Emotional intelligence

The participants were also able to recall the issues and gained knowledge from Module I and II of the "Leadership Academy 2014".

The third workshop consisted of the following chapters of the programme:

- Building a foundation for further learning
- Learning from the real leadership activities of the participants
- Understanding the leadership role in promoting changes
- Learning how to improve the personal leadership approach
- Understanding the importance of using a performance management approach
- Learning different approaches for solving conflicts
- Understanding the implications of IMC
- Gaining leadership skills while developing IMC projects

- Learning the necessary leadership skills for improving the performance of the employees
- Understanding how good leadership can strengthen the local responsibility and result in good performance
- Understanding the role of emotional intelligence in leadership

Comments from the participants

After the seminar, several participants shared their opinion about the whole project and the whole organization.

Mrs. Valentina Aleksovska, Secretary of the Municipality of Kumanovo, Macedonia, stressed that the leaders should express their authority in practice. She highlighted that it can be achieved with communication, mediation and compromises and sometimes against the interests of the group. “Here, we learned if we truly are leaders or not and what should we change.” – said Mrs. Aleksovska

Furthermore, Mr. Arsencho Alekov, Mayor of the Municipality of Kriva Palanka, Macedonia also expressed his satisfaction of the overall organization of the 3 modules of the “Leadershi Academy, 2014” and highlighted that the participants were able to gain knowledge that will help them to better understand the leadership role and make changes wherever is necessary in order to improve the governance and effectiveness of the local authority.

Address of Mr. Bogdan Mirchev, head of Hanns Seidel Foundation Bulgaria

Mr. Mirchev stated that from this kind of events man can learn a lot, they will broaden their knowledge on leadership, different problem approaches, cooperation between local authorities etc.

As an effective tool, Mr. Mirchev proposed the creation of an internet platform or blog for communication between the participants and mayors from the municipalities that will have the role to strengthen the communication, cooperation, learning and sharing experiences between local authorities and other institutions.

Closing address of Mr. Alfonso Zardi, Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Mr. Zardi thanked all for coming on the seminar and congratulated Mr. Lazarov, Mr. Mirchev and Mr. Stanoevski for the successful organization of the events regarding the “Leadership Academy 2014” and for the perseverance, the continuity that they have shown by developing this programme over the years.

He announced that at the beginning of this project the Council of Europe was keen to identify good partners that felt the motivation, that found the initiative important, that took it for themselves and would promote it in the Council of Europe’s member states. He expressed his satisfaction of finding such partners and he stressed that he believes that they have made the right choice because over the years this project has continued, has improved, expanded and continues to attract motivated people.

Mr. Zardi also thanked the participants for their commitment to this initiative.

He highlighted that the Council of Europe at the beginning of the project, also contributed financially and provided the basic materials and explained that the concept of Leadership Academy was primarily developed within the Council of Europe and then it was proposed to the national associations of local authorities and other partners. At the beginning, they engaged experts that took part in the events, but, over time, as they hoped and obviously worked, the ownership of this initiative moved from the Council of Europe to associations and to the mayors themselves.

Mr. Zardi also stated that the Council of Europe is very pleased by the involvement of the Hanns Seidel Foundation and that they are quite happy to see that their partnership keeps continuing and growing. It is important that the participants have identified and summarized the meaning of good leadership because it means effective local authority, and that the management of the local authorities is functional, makes the right decisions, involve the right people, motivate collaborators, have results and is accountable for those results to the community.

He also concluded that what matters indeed is that an effective local authority means an effective democracy because that is democracy in action because as he said: “You are elected, you are appointed, you take up your responsibilities, but in the same time, you execute your responsibilities in the right way, involving people, responding to the people’ needs and after three to five years you go back to the people and say: Here are my results, would you elect me again? - That is the outcome. That is good for the democracy. Effective leadership and good management at local level means effective democracy. In that way, people believe in democracy because they practice it, they see

it in action and they see what it brings at local level. And effective democracy at local level is the foundation of democracy at all levels because if you believe in democracy at local level, of course, you believe in democracy as such, you take part in elections, you motivate yourself, you may also take part in the political life, you are member of a party, you take initiatives... It is essential that the citizens have access to democracy at local level through effective local democracy, through your effective leadership.”

The local authorities play an essential role to make democracy functional and he explained that the Council of Europe is broader than the European Union and has 47 member states including the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. So, they bring that message to a broader audience than the 28 member states of the European Union and they do it because they are an organization that promotes the human rights, the rule of Law and democracy and they believe that across the whole continent it is essential that those values are upheld, that those principles are constantly reiterated and when problems and difficulties arise (at local levels, but also at higher levels), ofcourse, dialogue and cooperation enable6 to overcome those difficulties on behalf of the fundamental principles that bring us and keep us together.

“When the Council of Europe was established 65 years ago, it was established with a purpose of creating greater unity between the peoples of Europe, to promote the social and economic well being and protect and maintain peace. 65 years later I think that these goals remain as valid as they were 65 years ago. We need greater unity between our peoples, to promote their social and economic well being and still, we have to maintain peace across this continent.” – explained Mr. Zardi

He also stated that it is normal that people have different views in a municipal council or other municipal authorities, and the leader who was elected on a platform is the one to mediate. On the higher level between nations it is alike, and he believes that the goal of harmony, stability and peaceful coexistence has to be renovated constantly because it is not acquired once and for all.

According to Mr. Zardi, that is also a question of generation because those who fight for freedom then bring freedom to those who come after them for whom freedom is obvious and is a fact of life. If the difficulty arises, the next generation has not the experience of the previous one, and has to fight again for making these principles prevail.

Mr. Zardi said that the leadership has to be constantly renovated in front of new challenges and that major goal is operating at a local level, promoting maturity of local authority across Europe and not only in Bulgaria and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, but also in other countries, because in order to achieve the goal of democracy for our nations we have to constantly renovate and improve the quality of democratic governance at a local level.

He highlighted that the reason why the Council of Europe is “behind” or “ahead” in this process and why he, as a representative, is present on the events is to support the work

that the participants and organizers are conducting and confirm that this remains a priority for the Council of Europe but also to congratulate everybody for gaining new knowledge, new ways of understanding issues, for the practice that participants have exchanged and learned from each other, and for the network of trusting and friendship among themselves.

Mr. Zardi supported the idea of Mr. Mirchev for an internet blog or platform that will ease the communication between local governments and other participants in this process and will encourage the leaders to talk and comment on a variety of topics.

Mr. Zardi expressed his excitement because every participant will leave the seminar with new knowledge, new strategies and new experiences and they will know that Europe supports them.

Finally, Mr. Zardi quoted the words of Jean Monet (the first president of the high authority of the coal and steel community): “We do not put together the states, we make people work together, we are not creating an alliance of states, we are creating a community of men and women”.

“And not by chance we call ourselves a Council. The next creation was a community (European Coal and Steel Community), so it is important to understand that what we are doing in Strasbourg and you on a local level, is the following: ***creating Europe of women and men that believe in the same ideas and strive to achieve the same goals.***

Conclusion

On the third event of the "Leadership Academy 2014", the participants were able to round up their knowledge gained during the three workshops of the project i.e. deepen their knowledge about leadership through active participation in practical exercises that will contribute to the exploitation of the gained knowledge into practice in the management of their own municipalities.

Participants expressed their satisfaction for the information, techniques and knowledge received and have demonstrated the desire to continue their learning in another part of the project or in the framework of the internet platform that was proposed to be created as a result of the needs of the stakeholders.

Photographs

During the event, photographs were taken. They are listed below.

