

Albanian mayors committed to making a change



Durres, 23 November 2016 - While sharing their experience with international peers, Albanian mayors realised that when leading change, similar challenges arise as in other European countries. Congress member Miranda Rira (Albania, SOC) pointed out that "Citizens are expecting mayors to change". All 15 participants agreed with Majlinda Bufi (Albania, SOC) that dialogue with citizens is a must for enhancing local policy making. "Speak with your people, don't stay with your peers and establishment" recommended Congress member Lelia Hunziker (Switzerland, SOC) while Mary-Hanna Hourigan (Ireland, EPP) encouraged them to "listen to the people and never give up. If you believe in something, you must keep on fighting. Perseverance is key". Ethical dilemmas in decision-making and the importance of citizen participation were also among the key-topics discussed.

The workshop "Mayors, Leaders for Change" was organised on 22 and 23 November 2016 in Durres, within the framework of the project "Strengthening local government structures and co-operation of local elected representatives in Albania - Phase II, Line of Action II: Building a sustainable, pluralistic and unified platform of dialogue for local government in Albania", implemented by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, with financial support provided by the Government of Switzerland.

Albania joined the Council of Europe in 1995 and ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 2000. Countries which have ratified the Charter are bound by its provisions. The Charter imposes compliance with a minimum number of rights, which are the European bedrock of local self-government. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe ensures respect for these principles.