

Welcome

Conference
"The Road To
EU Integration
- Removing
barriers,
unlocking our
potential"

Fair Opening

NEXPO
Workshops

Cultural
Programme

Booth Exhibition

NEXPO 2013
Declaration

NALAS newsletter



NALAS
International
Municipal
Fair

**WHERE
IDEAS
COME
TO MEET**

Rijeka &
Opatija,
Croatia
25-27
September 2013

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- Removing
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Declaration



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All NEXPO participants, exhibitors and workshop
organizers

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WELCOME

**Dear colleagues,
guests and participants to NEXPO 2013,**

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Second NALAS International Municipal Fair, NEXPO 2013! Rijeka and Opatija opened their doors for over 2000 participants, representing over 300 local governments, businesses and development agencies from South East Europe (SEE).

Under the motto: «Where Ideas Come to Meet», they all take part in the rich NEXPO 2013 programme, including: opening conference, exhibition of municipalities, businesses and development agencies, over 25 workshops on different topics relevant for the local government, a designated space for Mayors' interaction and rich cultural program from Croatia and SEE. The Fair will also host match-making meetings between municipalities and the business sector in energy efficiency and renewable energies.

We believe that NEXPO 2013 provides something for each and every participant. On behalf of the organizers, the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS), the Association of Cities in the Republic of Croatia, the Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Croatia and the Cities of Rijeka and Opatija we wish you a pleasant time during NEXPO 2013. We hope you enjoy the programme and bring great memories from Rijeka and Opatija.

See you again in Plovdiv in 2015!



Anton Peršak
President of NALAS
Mayor of Trzin Municipality,
Slovenia



Vojko Obersnel
Mayor of the City of Rijeka



Ivo Dujmić
Mayor of Opatija



134 nexpo in numbers

1 conference
with 16 VIP
speakers and 450
participants

27 workshops,
organized by 32
partners, including
82 speakers

81
booths

1723
individual
participants
so far

Over
50 companies,
2 sponsors,
3 media sponsors

392
entities
present at
NEXPO

Facebook
page
with
2088
likes
so far

230
Mayors from 270
Local Governments
from 16 countries

134
17 groups
performing in the
cultural programme,
from 4 countries

journalists

Online matchmaking platform with 162 profiles, 5816 views, 52 meetings

NEXPO 2013 CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE "THE ROAD TO EU INTEGRATION-REMOVING BARRIERS, UNLOCKING OUR POTENTIALS" EMPHASISED THE KEY ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS



The Conference „The Road To EU Integration - Removing barriers, unlocking our potential” held on 25 September 2013 in the Croatian Cultural Dome on Sušak, Rijeka, launched the largest municipal event for South-East Europe, NEXPO 2013 International Municipal Fair. Over 450 Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Presidents of City Councils and Local Government Association Managers took part in the Conference, confirming that local governments could provide a significant contribution in the EU integration process.

The Conference showed that only progress towards the goal of enhanced integration with and within the EU, together with regional cooperation, can enable South-East Europe to develop and solve economic and social problems the region is facing. In that sense, Croatia’s membership in the EU is an important achievement and gives particular insight to other candidates and potential candidates as well as lessons to be learnt.



In his welcoming speech, Mr. Vojko Obersnel, the Mayor of Rijeka said: "Rijeka is often called Europe in small, due to its cultural diversity. We have the pleasure to welcome 16 European countries to NEXPO 2013. This conference will open very important topics, and provide valuable answers to many of them. Croatia, as the newest EU member has rich experiences that will be shared during this Conference and the three days of NEXPO 2013. But,

NEXPO 2013 CONFERENCE

we also want to hear about your experiences and learn from you. We have tried to be good hosts and to give you the possibility to feel our city and the Region".

From the perspective of the European Union, the Vice-President of the European Parliament, Mr. Oldřich Vlasák, stated "I would like to share with you two thoughts. EU reality is quite complex. Being in Europe is not only receiving European funds, but also obeying to EU regulations, which impact our lives. By my Czech expe-

”

The role of local governments in EU integration has to be appropriately addressed by the EU, but also by national governments, as life of citizens happens in local communities

“

Mr. Anton Peršak, President of NALAS



rience, local governments are the most affected by the EU regulations. Therefore, they must to be actively involved in creating policies on national and EU level. The second thought I would like to share, is about the common responsibility for a better world. We all have to engage for better European Union".

Mr. Gerhard Schumann-Hitzler, Director, IPA Strategy, European Commission, emphasized "All your countries that tend to join the European Union have to develop strategies for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, in line with the EU2020 Strategy. Local authorities have a very important role to play in this process and NALAS has rightly been selected as one of the coordinators in the development of the SEE2020 Strategy. I would like to thank you already now for your engagement".

The representative of the Committee of the Regions, Mr. Luc Van Den Brande said "I don't like the term enlargement, I want to speak about re-unification. The role of local authorities should not be limited to implementation of decisions at local level or dissemination of information about the EU policies. We, the local and regional authorities, are responsible partners in this process".



” All your countries that tend to join the European Union have to develop strategies for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, in line with the EU2020 Strategy. Local authorities have a very important role to play in this process and NALAS has rightly been selected as one of the coordinators in the development of the SEE2020 Strategy. I would like to thank you already now for your engagement “

Mr. Gerhard Schumann-Hitzler,
Director, IPA Strategy

The discussion from the perspective of South East Europe regional institutions revealed that the intra-regional cooperation is the imperative for successful EU integration. In that light, the Strategy South East Europe 2020 is a crucial document which sets the path for an organized effort of the countries and local governments of South East Europe.

The local government perspective was in particular expressed in the Mayors' Roundtable discussion. It was dedicated to the challenges and potentials of SEE local governments. The President of NALAS, Mr. Anton Peršak stressed *"Although after the economic crisis EU is undergoing difficult times, both from economic and social perspective, it remains an important, unavoidable goal for the region. Local governments have to play a vital role in this process. All over the SEE region, local governments use this momentum, their voices become heard more and more and their Associations take the lead in many important initiatives. The role of local governments in EU integration has to be appropriately addressed by the EU, but also by national governments, as life of citizens happens in local communities"*.

NEXPO 2013 OPENING

Zamet Center opened its doors for all NEXPO 2013 participants



The exhibition part of the second NALAS International Municipal Fair, NEXPO 2013, was officially launched at the Opening Ceremony, starting at noon on 26 September, at the main stage of Zamet Center in Rijeka.

The Mayors of Rijeka and Opatija wholeheartedly opened the doors of the Fair and their cities to the thousands of NEXPO participants from South-East Europe. "Both Rijeka and Opatija are happy to welcome our fellow Mayors and their staff", said Vojko Obersnel, the Mayor of Rijeka and the President of the Association of Cities welcoming all NEXPO participants. "We have many municipal best practices that we would like to show and exchange experiences in the areas of energy efficiency, transparency, citizen participation... But, I also believe that you, as our guests, will enjoy the beauties of this part of the Adriatic coast".

Ivo Dujmic, the Mayor of Opatija added: „Opatija and Rijeka have a long-lasting cooperation, this is an occasion to confirm this once again with the organization of NEXPO. We are looking forward to the opportunity to exchange our experiences with colleagues from SEE, network better and create conditions for a wider collaboration. Rijeka is one

of the most important cities in the country, while Opatija is the leading tourist centre with new capacities, so this synergy brings a strong potential for the future".

"I believe that mutual cooperation between NALAS members' states is necessary, it benefits each country individually and contributes to achieving the strategic goals and mobilizing development potential. Implementation of structural reforms, opening as many jobs as possible and support of the real sector (in the region which can't be quite proud of its stable economy) are important prerequisites for the further progress of our countries. We want to contribute to all that by organizing NEXPO fair, by giving months of effort, knowledge and commitment. I thank all people involved in this exhausting, but rewarding activity", concluded Djuro Bukvic, the First Vice-President of NALAS and President of the Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Croatia.

The opening ceremony also illustrated part of the rich Croatian culture, with the dancing performance of the First Majorettes of Rijeka and the traditional Croatian a capella singing by Klapa Luka. The ceremony was moderated by the journalist Ivica Vrbic.

NEXPO WORKSHOPS

NEXPO 2013
workshops discuss important topics
for local governments



The second day of NEXPO 2013 featured 12 workshops, organized by NALAS partners, all on topics relevant for the SEE local governments. These workshops initiated important discussions and provided a real platform for knowledge and experience exchange among the different stakeholders. The workshops focused on:

- Local Economic Development
- The Energy Transition of Cities and Towns. How to Support It in South East Europe?
- Local Government Assets Management
- Cities without Corruption – Cities with Future
- Findings from Municipal Finance and Urban Planning and Land Management Self-Assessment Tools and Piloting Urban Audit
- Raising Citizens' Awareness on Existing e-Government Contents and Services
- Rural Development and Sustainable Tourism
- BFC SEE Certification - Regional Impulse for Effective Local Development
- On the Way to Building an Attractive SEE Region
- Fiscal Decentralisation Issues and public Financial Management (Own Source Revenues – Albanian Case)
- Green Public Procurement -Public Procurement for Energy Projects
- Financing Municipal Sustainable Energy Projects

Energy is one of the key topics of NEXPO. When it comes to energy efficiency and renewable energy, the role of local authorities via policies and actions is becoming more and more recognized not only in Europe but in the Balkans as well. In Europe, some Member States have been asking for reducing the EU's energy and climate ambitions, whilst cities and towns across Europe and beyond are still regularly joining the Covenant of Mayors. While the political will to engage in an energy transition is getting stronger, municipalities in the region face numerous obstacles in translating it into action. Inter alia they often lack the capacities (both human and financial) to design and implement energy efficiency measures. Support schemes on the national level are often underdeveloped and the municipalities in SEE do not enjoy access to most of the EU support schemes which are open for their peers in EU Member States. Hosted by Energy Cities, the European association of local authorities in energy transition, also leading the Covenant of Mayors Office, GIZ – Open Regional Fund Energy Efficiency and REGEA, the workshop "The energy transition of cities and towns. How to support this in South-East Europe?" highlighted the indispensable role of local authorities in the long-term European strategy for climate and energy.

Presentations from EU experts and representatives from local authorities allowed for a better understanding of the EU policy framework as regards energy and climate and the role allocated to local authorities. In the following panel discussion existing gaps and needs of support for municipalities in Southeast Europe were further analysed and possible support schemes discussed.



* * *

The Local Administration Facility (LAF), an assistance programme under the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX), managed by the Directorate-General Enlargement of the European Commission, organized a workshop on **Local Economic Development** within NEXPO 2013, from 25-26 September, in Rijeka City Hall. As regions and municipalities are important actors to achieve sustainable growth, the workshop provided guidelines on how to develop a successful strategy for Local Economic Development. The participants also learnt about good practices related to LED that will demonstrate the benefits of the EU integration.

* * *

The World Bank Institute hosted the workshop "**Cities without corruption – Cities with future**". The workshop shared an innovative and practical approach on how to treat and prevent the vulnerability to corruption in local governments, which has been implemented in a number of municipalities in South-East





Europe (SEE) as part of the World Bank-Austria Urban Partnership Program (UPP). The approach implies a strategic and participatory process conducted inside local governments. The process follows the strategic planning steps, from diagnosis to solutions' elaboration and implementation, focuses on changing corrupt organizational systems and supports Mayors to act as institutional reformers rather than judges or prosecutors. Mr. Ronald MacLean Abaroa, a Former Mayor of La Paz, Bolivia shared his experiences in combating corruption. Ronald MacLean Abaroa explained his metaphorical formula which he finds useful for explaining the level of corruption: $C = M + D - A$. The meaning is that corruption (C) equals monopoly power (M) plus discretion by officials (D) minus accountability (A). The audience responded with huge interest! SEE experiences in combating corruption were shared by speakers from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Romania.

* * *

One of companies present at NEXPO 2013, Libusoft Cicom from Croatia, hosted a workshop on **"Local Government Assets management"**. The workshop focused on the organization of assets management in local government, assets management by PRLS methodology, IT solution REGISTAR NEKRETNINA (Register property) and SPI/GIS (geographic information system). The workshop presented the case studies and best practices of assets management of the City of Opatija, Primorsko-Goranska County from Croatia and Novi Grad, from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* * *

NEXPO 2013 host city, Rijeka, organized a workshop on **"Raising citizens' awareness about existing**

e-government contents and services". The workshop shared innovative and practical approaches on how to raise citizen's awareness about existing E-government contents and services. Participants had the opportunity to learn from the City of Rijeka experience and good practice about how ICT technologies can be used to maximize the transparency and openness of the city administration, to facilitate communication between citizens and the city administration, to reduce costs and increase efficiency in the promotion of the city administration, to attract the city government to citizens and facilitate their greater share in decision-making and finally to include socially excluded groups of citizens in the use of the city's e-services.

Mr. Danijel AntoniĆ, Senior Information Security Advisor and System Architect, IT Institute, City of Rijeka concluded: "Lower costs and greater efficiency is what we have to aim to and that is very appealing concerning budget costs everyone is facing. The other important task is citizen participation and inclusion we think city of Rijeka is managing to achieve."



NEXPO CULTURAL PROGRAM



FEEL CROATIA AND SEE

During the first day in Zamet Centre, NEXPO Cultural Program provided a unique opportunity to feel the cultural mosaic of the host cities Rijeka and Opatija, the host country, Croatia, and South-East Europe. From folk dancers to choirs, bands and contemporary artists, they all left

their artistic footprint at NEXPO 2013 stage.

Participants had the opportunity to see the dancing performance of the First Majorettes of Rijeka, the traditional Croatian *a capella* singing by Klapa Luka and the Trsat City Music City Brass Orchestra.

Lüleburgaz Municipality from Turkey presented the





exceptional Trockyablues Band, who provided a perfect match of traditional and modern sounds. Lüleburgaz also brought their Folk Dance Team, who made the audience feel the spirit of traditional Turkish dances.

The Gala Dinner, hosted by the Mayor of Opatija in Hotel Kvarner in Opatija, was enriched by the performance of the guitar player Đani Stipanicev, singer Katja Budimcic and the classical dance group of Istvan Varga. The evening was hosted by the TV host Barbara Kolar.



NEXPO EXHIBITION



NEXPO 2013 fair exhibition showcased 81 booths. Local governments, businesses and development agencies from South East Europe put their efforts to arrange their booths so that they attract attention, present their organization, provide useful information and facilitate establishing new contacts and partnerships. Being around during the first day of the Fair, we provide you a visual snapshot what caught our attention.



NEXPO 2013 booths



Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia
Milieukontakt Macedonia
Association of municipalities and towns of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Association of municipalities and towns of Republic of Srpska
World Bank Institute
NALAS
Council of European Municipalities and Regions Nessebar
SIV.BG
Tomislavgrad
Prilep
Travnik
Gračanica
Luleburgaz, Kirklareli
ORF MMS
NAMRB on behalf of a group of Bulgarian municipalities
Albanian Association of Communes
Association of Albanian Municipalities
Geodetski zavod Rijeka/Geodetic survey
MICRODYN-NADIR GmbH
Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality ISPARK
Development Consulting Group
Union of Municipalities of Marmara
CALM Moldova
City of Zagreb
Eltec Petrol
City of Rijeka
City of Ivanić-grad
Arnavutköy Municipality / İstanbul
ACoR Romania
LIBUSOFT CICOM d.o.o.
Tesanj Municipality
Yildirim Municipality, Bursa
Karposh Municipality, Skopje
City of Opatija
REDAH Regional Development Agency for Herzegovina
Plovdiv
BFC SEE
Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
Radoboj
Schneider Electric d.o.o.
Plovdiv
Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of the Republic of Serbia
Bornova, Izmir
Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (for a group of Montenegro Municipalities)
GDi GISDATA GROUP LLC
Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality- İSTAÇ Inc.
Association of Municipalities Croatia
Association of Cities Croatia

MAYORS CAFFÉ

THE PLACE TO BE FOR
MEETING FELLOW MAYORS



Mayors' Café, the dedicated environment where Mayors meet fellow Mayors, was full of life, talks and sharing during NEXPO 2013. During the first day, more than 200 Mayors visited the Mayors' Café, and had face to face discussions on cooperation, investments, donations or twinning.

Besides Mayors, this time the Mayors' Café also welcomed Deputy Mayors, Presidents of Councils, Directors of LGAs, Directors of Development Agencies and businesses interested to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

"NEXPO is a nice finalization of the business friendly certification process of my municipality, Sanski Most. Now, based on the contacts I have already had and will have tomorrow, we should just implement what we learned. I met many good people during NEXPO, some of which old friends. For someone who has been at many events and fairs, I can just say that the organization is perfect, vibrant and with youth spirit", said Primarijus dr Mustafa Ajdagic, Mayor of Sanski Most, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are keen to hear more about any possible partnerships born during NEXPO 2013!

MATCH- MAKING

FOR A GREENER SOUTH EAST EUROPE



One of the novelties that NEXPO 2013 brought is the Matchmaking Platform, which enables the municipalities and the private sector to meet, present each other and identify collaboration opportunities in the areas of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies.

The interaction started a few months before NEXPO, with the online Matchmaking Tool available at NEXPO 2013 website, where participants were able to post their profiles, learn more about other NEXPO 2013 participants and schedule matchmaking meetings during NEXPO.

52 meetings were prescheduled and took place in one of the matchmaking offices or at the exhibitor's booth. The talks continued beyond these meetings, at the Mayors' Cafe, workshops, business presentations and exhibition booths. "We set a goal to make 100 contacts during NEXPO, but we have achieved this during the first day. We are very satisfied with NEXPO, from what it offers and the whole atmosphere, which is great", said Jasna Radman from the company GDI Gisdata.

We would like to thank the Open Regional Fund for South East Europe, Modernization of Municipal Services (ORF MMS) for their support in developing the Matchmaking Platform.

MATCH MAKING CROATIA-UKRAINE

Representatives of three associations of local and regional governments in Ukraine and the Association of Municipalities in Croatia organized a meeting which resulted with the conclusion that the experience Croatia has in cooperation between local and central government should be passed to Ukraine in the appropriate way considering all differences but also all similarities two countries might have.



NEXPO 2013 DECLARATION

NEXPO 2013 – NALAS International Municipal Fair “Paving the Road to EU Integration”
Rijeka, 27th September 2013

DECLARATION

We, Mayors and elected representatives of the local and regional governments of South-East Europe, meeting together in Rijeka on the occasion of the Second NEXPO International Fair organised by NALAS and partners, have agreed upon the following Declaration:

Our region's European Future

1. We re-affirm our commitment to our common European mission and future, which we expressed as follows, at the first NEXPO, held in Sarajevo in 2011:
“The countries and peoples of south-East Europe need to take their proper place, very soon, within the European Union. This will mark another major step towards unifying our continent, and thereby enhancing our common goals of peace, stability and sustainable prosperity.”
2. We greatly welcome the fact that the Republic of Croatia, on 1st July 2013, became the 28th Member State of the European Union, and – amongst NALAS's membership – joins Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia within the EU. We also welcome the European Council's recent decision to open accession negotiations with Serbia. We look forward to continuing progress with other states. We further welcome the signing of Association Agreements in November 2013 with Moldova and Ukraine. We also hope for prompt resumption of discussions with Turkey on the *acquis communautaire*.
3. We emphasize that closer integration of all within our region with the EU is and remains a priority for all of us, whilst recognizing the different starting-points and stages reached to date. EU integration for our region is essential for both for ensuring peace and stability for the long-term, and for achieving stronger economic, social and environmental development for our peoples. In short we need to remove the barriers to integration and unlock our potential.
4. This is not just a matter for national governments and the EU institutions. It requires in particular the commitment of local governments, with their local communities, to the objectives of closer integration, as well as their capacity, through better governance, to deliver results on the ground.

Local democracy, self-government and decentralisation – essential factors for European unity

5. Local democracy, self-government and effective decentralisation are amongst the shared pan-European values at the heart of the European construction and integration process since its very beginning – they form the kernel of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. 2013 marks the 25th anniversary of the coming into force of the Council of Europe's Charter of Local Self-Government, which sets out the key elements that need to be respected by national governments and European institutions. We reaffirm our unshakeable commitment to these values and principles.

6. Recent research for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has shown that decentralisation is positively associated with higher levels of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per head of population, with better educational outcomes, and with higher investment in physical and human capital. Yet since the financial crisis broke in 2008, followed by economic contraction in many countries, the process of democratic decentralisation in our region has effectively stalled – with a generally worsened fiscal and financial position for local governments. What is particularly damaging is the stalling of the financial decentralization processes in many countries with a combination of both reductions in own resources and in intergovernmental transfers. This leads to severe limitations in local governments' capacity to provide and improve public services and the quality of their peoples' lives. It also undermines the necessary predictability of resources for local governments' planning.

Local government looking to the future – South East Europe 2020

7. The European Union has adopted its integrated 2020 Strategy, with five key sets of targets covering employment rates, research and development, climate change and energy sustainability, education, and fighting poverty and social exclusion. This is paralleled by the South East Europe 2020 Strategy, developed under the auspices of the Regional Cooperation Council, which identifies the key issue for region being much stronger economic growth as “the fundament of prosperity and job creation as well as for further catching up with the EU”, and subdivided into its 5 pillars.
8. We note and warmly welcome that NALAS is strongly involved in the development of the SEE 2020 Strategy, in particular the “governance for growth” pillar, with a focus on improving public administration, and creating a business-friendly ‘environment’ of public services and support.
9. We highlight, in this context, the need to ensure effective consultation of LGAs at all relevant stages. There is only one rule: no decisions and no laws concerning local governments without local governments. We also agree that there must be effective monitoring.. of how commitments are implemented. Such monitoring should include that undertaken by the Council of Europe through its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.
10. We also support and underline the proposal for a SEE regional policy dialogue between national and sub-national governments and the private sector, to address common issues and obstacles for growth of enterprises – in particular for SMEs - from a regional perspective.

EU FUTURE FOR THE WHOLE REGION

11. Finally, in this regard, we stress the importance of the territorial dimension of policy-making for economic growth. This includes smart, resource efficient and inclusive policies for territorial development; the efficient and effective allocation of resources between different levels of government; and monitoring and regional benchmarking on the implementation of the principles of subsidiarity and “connectivity” (i.e. ensuring that responsibilities at sub-national level are “connected” with the necessary resources).

The role of the European Union in promoting closer integration

12. Since 2008, the EU enlargement process, in particular to the countries of SEE, has sometimes appeared to be almost frozen, with a certain “enlargement weariness” on the part of some Member States, as well as weaknesses in some SEE states. With the accession of Croatia, we are confident that more positive progress can be made. For this to succeed, we must ensure that all stakeholders are active and engaged – civil society, governments at all levels, and the business community. For this to succeed, the role of financing instruments to support the enlargement and integration processes is key. We note in particular the importance of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.
13. To date, however, only a very small proportion of the IPA financing has been in practice available to local governments, even though they need to play an important part in the preparation for accession, e.g. in implementing locally the “acquis communautaire”, the EU’s rulebook.
14. We therefore call on the EU and our national governments to ensure that a substantial part of IPA and ENI financing is open to local governments, and to ensure that IPA- and ENI- related programmes are geared to the roles played by local governments in the pre-accession process. We stress the importance of a more prominent role for Local Government Associations in IPA and ENI programming.

Paving the bumpy road to EU integration

15. A draft of the SEE 2020 Strategy says that “Progress towards EU membership has been uneven and some of the countries still face a long and bumpy road towards EU accession... It is becoming more and more clear that South East Europe need to “change gears” by accelerating socioeconomic reforms and speeding up measures to modernize the economies, create more new jobs, and deliver the population better living standards.”
16. The title of this NEXPO, “Paving the Road to EU Integration”, also uses a motoring metaphor in looking at our tasks for the coming years. We want to ensure that the “bumpy” road is well paved, to make the journey to EU integration as smooth as we can, and make our “vehicles” (our local governments) as roadworthy as possible.
17. To this end, we express our commitment to improve our own capacity to provide effective, modernised public services that help to achieve the objectives of our 2020 strategies for growth, and to accelerate the EU integration process in all our countries.
18. To succeed more fully, we also call on our national governments, the Regional Cooperation Council and the

European Union to work more closely with us, through our national associations and through NALAS as our regional network, to help strengthen the legal and financial frameworks for decentralisation in all our countries, and to ensure that pre-accession funding programmes are geared to our needs and responsibilities.

Taking forward our agenda for EU integration

19. To achieve a positive EU integration process for SEE, all actors must be mobilised, involved and work together – European institutions, national, regional and local governments, civil society, the business community and others. All need to take measures to achieve results.
20. In conclusion, therefore, and to take forward the EU integration process together, we call in particular on:

Local governments and their associations

To commit ourselves to necessary institutional and governance reforms, in the interest of their local communities, tackling inefficiencies and corruption.

Local government associations to support local governments in enhancing their capacity to implement European legislation and standards and to use financing programmes effectively.

National governments

In full consultation and partnership with local governments and their associations, to take forward effective, democratic decentralisation and reform processes, ensuring that all transfers of competences are accompanied by appropriate and continuing levels of financial resources.

To put in place effective consultation processes at all stages of planning, programming and decision-making on all issues affecting local government, and to enable transparent monitoring of progress and results.

To ensure that, in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government, local governments have adequate resources to carry out their responsibilities, on a continuing basis, including access to appropriate credit facilities for capital investment and development purposes.

SEE Regional organisations

To recognize the essential role of local governments in the SEE 2020 Strategy and throughout its implementation.

International donors

To work closely with and support local governments in achieving successful local government reform and local development, including support for national LGAs and for our network NALAS at SEE regional level.

Business community

To see the local governments of SEE as natural partners for future development, investment, innovation and prosperity.

European institutions

To underline (notably to central governments) the fundamental importance of effective, democratic decentralisation and local government reform at all stages of the integration and accession processes.

To ensure that IPA and ENI funding is available in practice to local governments, and that a substantial proportion of IPA and ENI financing is dedicated to local governments.

NEXPO 2013 GALA DINNER



In the evening of 26 September 2013, in the beautiful Crystal Ballroom of Hotel Kvarner in Opatija, the Mayor of Opatija, Mr. Ivo Dijmic hosted NEXPO 2013 Gala Dinner. Over 240 Mayors and other high-level guests had the opportunity to feel Opatija with all their senses. Through a fabulous performance, including narration, songs and dances, our hosts led us through the history of this Adriatic pearl, leaving us breathless. The carefully selected food menu, composed of typical local specialties just completed the impression. This has been a night to remember!





NEXPO 2013

DAY 3



Seven more exciting **workshops and presentations**, focusing on:

- Preparing for EU Accession – Do's and Do not's
- Success Deserves to be Scaled up – from Pilots to Broad Change
- Equality for Women and Men in Local Life
- Create Your Future – the Challenges and Opportunities of Youth Integration in Local Government
- Wastewater Treatment and Recycling with Membrane Bio Reactors (MBR), the Key Technology for the Protection of Water Sources and Environment
- Your IT- solution provider for your business processes
- Discovering new earning and income opportunities in the regional and local government

Opportunity to enjoy **Croatian and SEE culture**, through:

- The dancing performance of the First Majorettes of Rijeka
- Moldavian Mayors performing traditional Moldavian music and costumes
- Music show by Taik Ganic and Selma Belegic from Travnik Municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Vocal group Rivers from Croatia performing gospel and traditional music
- Yildirim Municipality, Turkey Ottoman Military Band



NEXPO 2013

CLOSING CEREMONY



The Closing Ceremony on 27 September rounded up NEXPO 2013 International Municipal Fair. Ms. Dubravka Šuica, the Vice-President of the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities, Council of Europe and a Member of the European Parliament addressed at the Ceremony, emphasizing the importance of NEXPO for boosting regional collaboration in South-East Europe and the role local and regional authorities have in the EU integration processes.

This second NEXPO International Municipal Fair confirmed that SEE municipalities are committed to the decentralized regional cooperation in South East Europe and recognize NEXPO as an important event which supports this regional cooperation. During the Closing Ceremony, the President of NALAS, Mr. Anton Peršak handed Certificates of Recognition to the municipalities which remained loyal to NEXPO as the largest SEE municipal event, at both its editions. Congratulations to: Karposh, Travnik, Tomislavgrad, Istanbul Arnavutkoy Belediyesi, Gracanica, Bornova, Yildirim, Teshanj, and Luleburgaz!

At the end of the Closing Ceremony, the Cities of Rijeka and Opatija passed on NEXPO hosting to Mr. Ivan Totev, the Mayor of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, the City that will host the next NEXPO, in 2015.

A GREAT TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF NEXPO 2013



NEXPO 2013 International Municipal Fair has been generously supported by the volunteer engagement of some 35 local volunteers, recruited by the City of Rijeka through the Volunteer Center. These great women and men worked long hours together with the NEXPO staff, investing their energy, time and commitment for the success of NEXPO 2013. **We thank them all!**



FUN AND LEISURE CORNER: WHAT NOT TO MISS WHILE IN RIJEKA AND OPATIJA

TOP THREE THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN RIJEKA

1. Trsat Castle

represents a strategically embossed castle on a hill 138 meters above sea level that dominates Rijeka. As a parochial centre it was mentioned for the first time in 1288. Trsat Castle is one of the oldest fortifications on the Croatian Coast, where the characteristics of the early medieval town construction have been preserved. Today Trsat Castle, beside the souvenir shop and the coffee shop, is enriched with new facilities – gallery space where art exhibitions are held as well as open-air summer concerts and theatre performances, fashion shows and literary evenings.

2. Korzo (promenade) and the City Tower

a symbol of Rijeka and a good example of a typical round tower access-point, which leads into the fortified town. Today the tower dominates the central part of Korzo and is often used as a meeting place for local people.

3. Museums

Maritime and Historical Museum of the Croatian Littoral, located in the beautiful Governor's Palace building, preserves a large part of Rijeka's history and maritime tradition. Besides its continuous ethnographic exhibition, visit their collection of furniture and portraits of people from Rijeka's public life.

Natural History Museum: Besides the botanical garden, the museum is a multimedia centre with an aquarium containing species from the Adriatic Sea. Besides fish, sharks and sea rays, the museum also conserves species of insects, reptiles, birds and amphibians. Ideal entertainment for both children and adults.

Rijeka City Museum includes eleven collections: fine arts, arts & crafts, numismatics, valuable objects, medals, arms from the Second World War, a collection of theatre and film material, philately, photography, press and technical collections.



TOP THREE THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN OPATIJA

1. Lungomare walk

While walking along the Lungomare, the famous 12-km long coastal promenade, one can admire many magnificent villas – prime examples of Belle Époque architecture, discover monuments commemorating people important in the local history or statues that have become symbolic of Opatija (such as the Girl with the Seagull), rest awhile on a secluded bench in the shade of hundred-year-old trees, remember how people here used to live in the past (the freshwater source in the small port of Dražica), be charmed by quaint coves and beautiful pebble beaches, or enjoy a drink or meal on a terrace right by the sea...

2. Villa and Park Angiolina and the Croatian Museum of Tourism

Villa Angiolina is the building that certainly marked the beginning of the tourist epoch in the history of Opatija. It was constructed in 1844 and fully renovated in 2000. Tourist can view the richly decorated hall with its painted ceiling, where numerous social events, concerts and romantic weddings are held. Park Angiolina is a true horticultural monument, with about 150 plant species from all corners of the world. The park was made from 1845 to 1860 when unusual plants from Japan, South America, Australia and China were planted here. In addition to various species of palm, bamboo, banana, cedar, the camellia (*Camellia japonica*) brought here from the Philippines has been given a position of honour and has since then become one of the symbols of Opatija. While there, you shouldn't miss the Croatian Museum of Tourism <http://www.hrmt.hr/en/about-the-museum/>.

3. Učka Nature Park

Within only a couple of hours, any of the park's numerous hiking trails will take you from the picturesque Mediterranean architecture of the coastal cities through the wooded slopes of Učka mountain up to its highest peak, Vojak, at a height of 1,401 meters. At the peak, a belvedere in the form of a medieval tower offers breath-taking view in all directions: the Istrian peninsula, the islands of the northern Adriatic, the mountains of Gorski kotar, Venice, the Italian Alps....





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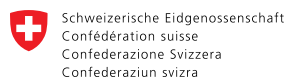
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