Report on the activities of the project

August 2006
The Euro-African Partnership for Decentralized Governance is an initiative promoted by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Regional Assembly of Tuscany and CALRE, the Conference of European Legislative Regional Assemblies. Such project aims at leveraging the forces of decentralized cooperation from Europe and Africa with a view to encourage the development of the debate around the strategies and the models of decentralized governance; to support decentralization processes in Africa as a mean for achieving peace and development through the reinforcement of good governance, democracy, and the rule of law; to create a strategic partnership and strengthen the existing relationships among European and African local actors.

The project is the follow-up of the first Conference of European and African Regional Assemblies held in Florence in September 2004. In the final declaration of the conference, the participants, over a hundred representatives of sub-national assemblies of Europe and Africa, suggested the foundation of an Observatory “as a focal point for the exchange of information and best practices in the area of decentralization and decentralized cooperation, and for the training of regional and local officials and staff in partnership with all the relevant international actors”.

The Partnership implements key activities within the framework of the recommendations made by the Conference, in order to achieve the final establishment of the Observatory. It operates through the creation of networks; information and experiences exchange; researches and monitoring on the issue of decentralization and decentralized cooperation; and specific actions in some focus areas.

In the framework of these activities, the present state of the project’s work plan is as follows.

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<th><strong>a) strengthening and facilitation of the dialogue among the involved actors</strong></th>
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<td>- A small Secretariat was set up in Florence. The office which includes computers, fax, Internet service, equipment and communication expenses is hosted by the Regional Assembly of Tuscany (free of charge).</td>
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<td>- Contacts were established with a number of local institutions in Europe and Africa</td>
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<td>- Contacts were established with some Universities and centres of excellence in order to identify possible cooperation, and with others actors to support activities of research and monitoring.</td>
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<td>- A web site was established with a view to act as linkage among all partners.</td>
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<th><strong>b) creation of a network among the partners</strong></th>
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During the first months, the Partnership’s task was to inform about the aims and the activities of the project and to involve additional partners, among local institutions, NGOs, businesses, and other actors. Until today, the statements of agreement signed are general, in order to define afterwards a specific engagement of each partner.

The organisations who have already signed are:
Anci Toscany (National Association of Italian Municipalities)
Burkina Faso – Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization
Rwanda – Ministry of Local Government, Community Development and Social Affairs
Association of Municipalities of Mali (AMM)
Eastern Province (Rwanda)
Province of Lucca (Italy)
Municipality of Bafang – (Cameroon)
Municipality of Bakou (Cameroon)
Municipality of Banwa (Cameroon)
Municipality of Bouloua (Burkina Faso)
Municipality of Bucine (Italy)
Municipality of Capannori (Italy)
Municipality of Civitella Val di Chiana (Italy)
Municipality of Dissin (Burkina Faso)
Municipality of Gallicano (Italy)
Municipality of Gore Gorom (Burkina Faso)
Municipality of Nanoro (Burkina Faso)
Municipality of Terranova Bracciolini (Italy)
Municipality of Ziniaré (Burkina Faso)
Municipality of Val di Cornia (Italy)
District of Butare (Rwanda)
District of Gatsibo (Rwanda)
District of Gicumbi (Rwanda)
District of Huye (Rwanda)
District of Nyagatare (Rwanda)

The following organisations showed their interest in the initiative through collaboration in activities and meetings about the project. In many of the cases below, the agreement between the Partnership and the organisations will be signed in a few weeks time:

AMBF - Association of Municipalities of Burkina Faso
ANCI – National Association of Italian Municipalities
Conference of Presidents of Italian Regional Assemblies
MDP – Municipal Development Partnership
RALGA (Rwanda’s Association of Local Government Authorities)
UPI – Union of Italian Provinces
URPT- Regional Union of Provinces of Tuscany
Parliament of Canaries (Spain)
Province of Bolzano (Italy)
Province of Livorno (Italy)
Province of Milan (Italy)
Province of Pisa (Italy)
Province of Roma (Italy)
Province of Siena (Italy)
Municipality of Bagnacavallo (Italy)
Municipality of Barberino di Mugello (Italy)
Municipality of Capannori (Italy)
Municipality of Cecina (Italy)
Municipality of Cerreto Guidi (Italy)
Municipality of Crespina (Italy)
Municipality of Dori (Burkina Faso)
Collaborations or contacts were established with associations and NGOs, most of all with the ones which work with municipalities and other local institutions in the framework of decentralized cooperation projects (i.e. Partners of Working Group on “Africa” – Region of Tuscany; Movimento Shalom; Water Right Foundation; UCODEP; COSPE; LVIA).

c) capacity building and training

Some trainings and study tours in Europe for local development actors and local authorities were organized in order to enhance the knowledge and the capacities in the local governance. The subjects of the trainings were identified as priorities by the beneficiaries. These visits in Europe were also useful to facilitate the exchange of good experiences and to build up or strengthen relationships with European local institutions.

Specifically, the following activities were organized:

- Africaform Niger: November 2005
  The training, organized by the “Istituzione Centro Nord Sud” from the Province of Pisa, involved a delegation of 7 local authorities from Niger, hosted for 10 days by some Municipalities and other local institutions of Tuscany.

- Africaform Rwanda and Burkina Faso: July 2006
  The training was organized in collaboration with the “Istituzione Centro Nord Sud” from the Province of Pisa. A delegation of 11 local authorities from Rwanda and Burkina Faso (10 mayors and the president of the Easter Province of Rwanda) were hosted from 1st to 13th July by some Italian municipalities.

- Visit of a delegation from Cameroun: July 2006
  A delegation from 3 municipalities of Cameroun (Banwa, Bafang and Bakou) took part in some activities and meetings in the Province of Arezzo (Tuscany, Italy), in the framework of twinning agreements and cooperation projects.
The presence of the representatives of African local institutions in Europe enhanced relationships and pacts of friendship as the one signed between Nyagatare District (Rwanda) and the Municipality of Capannori (Italy) or the one between the Eastern Province of Rwanda and the Province of Rome (Italy). Moreover, a course was undertaken to build new relationships among local institutions.

d) pilot project Rwanda and Burkina Faso

The Euro-African Partnership envisages the possibility of actions to support local institutions in some focus areas. Specifically, the initiative includes training of the local authorities and the exchange of good practices. Another important action is the coordination among a group of European local institutions, in order to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation actions and to mobilize additional resources.

Above all, the pilot project aims to support the local development plans in some focus areas. The European institutions involved collaborate to provide human and material resources to the African partners and foster a solid network.

The focus areas selected for this year are 10 districts of Rwanda and Burkina Faso, suggested by the Ministries in charge of Decentralization and Local Authorities in their countries.

During the month of July, representatives of the abovementioned local authorities were involved in a study tour. A working group was created with all the European partners of the pilot project in order to coordinate the activities. Until today it has involved about 20 actors, both from provinces and districts.

This working group met on 2nd February and 2nd May of 2006 and it organized the welcoming of the delegation from Rwanda and Burkina Faso in July.

The search of additional resources for this pilot project has begun intensely.

e) research and monitoring

The Partnership will benefit from the scientific support of CIRPAC – Interuniversity Centre for the Research on Peace and Conflict Resolution, which will cooperate at different levels during the implementation of the initiative.

On the other hand, a research/study will be carried out by an international team on decentralized governance and its relations with the current level of “decentralized cooperation” between African and European local authorities.

f) exchange of good experiences

A website about the initiative is on line at the address www.euroafricanpartnership.org

On the web site relevant documentation and analyses, as well as links and other materials about decentralization and decentralized governance are posted in order to facilitate the experiences and information exchange, and coordination of the activities among the stakeholders.

The web site has an English and a French version.

The e-mail address is info@euroafricanpartnership.org.

g) collaborations ad hoc connected to the aims of the project and mobilizing of additional resources.
The Euro-African Partnership has established collaborations with other projects or initiatives in order to mobilize additional resources, to achieve agreement among other potential partners and to support activities aimed to similar targets.

In particular collaborations exist with:

a) a project to support and reinforce rural organisations and local institutions in Niger, in the framework of the Italian Found – CILSS - Fight against the desertification and the poverty reduction in Sahel (LCDRPS)

In order to continue the engagement envisaged in November 2005, during the study tour of the delegation from Niger, a collaboration with the NGO Cospe was outlined. The main targets were the collaboration in the training of local institutions; the exchange of human resources and expertises between local institutions from Europe and Niger.

b) a project aimed at building capacity of local institutions in Mali

Such project continues the relationships created by a delegation of Italian local institutions during the Social Forum in Bamako, January 2006.

c) support to the institutional building in Ivory Coast

The Partnership is considering a possible collaboration with UNDP – Ivory Coast and ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) on the theme of post-conflict institutional building in Ivory Coast and the supporting of the next administrative elections through material resources and tools’ supply.

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**h) organisation of public initiatives, workshops and seminars**

- “Europe – Africa: a new partnership for democracy and good governance”: 29th November 2005, Florence

The workshop was one of the events during the Days for the Italian Cooperation promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Among the presents there were Representatives of Italian and European Regions, NGOs and the General Directorate for Development of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- “Mobilizing sub-national institutions for Africa’s development in the framework of 2005 UN World Summit Outcome”, Florence, 15th March 2006

The Minister of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Local Development of Rwanda, Mr. Musoni, and the Minister of Local Government of Burkina Faso, Mr. Sawadogo participated among other important personalities to this international dialogue.

The Euro-African Partnership took also part in the following events:

- “Twinning today between European municipalities. The engagement of local institutions and the Region of Tuscany”, Castiglioncello (Italy), 21st April, 2006. Promoted by AICCRE (Council of European Municipalities and Regions – Italian Section).
- “Eyes on Africa”, Piombino (Italy), 25th May 2006. Promoted by the Province of Livorno

On this occasion, all the municipalities of the Province of Livorno signed a statement of intents where the adhesion to the *Euro-African Partnership* initiative was envisaged.

- “From the memory of the war to the engagement for the peace”: initiatives in the framework of the week for peace in the Municipality of Bucine (Italy), on the occasion of the visit of a delegation from Cameroun. San Pancrazio (Italy), 27th June – 4th July 2006. Promoted by AICCRE (Council of European Municipalities and Regions – Italian Section).

- Regional Conference of the Region of Tuscany about Decentralized Cooperation in Africa: 19th June 2006, Pisa. Promoted by the Region of Tuscany.

### i) next activities

In order to enlarge the number of actors involved in the *Euro-African Partnership*, in the next months the initiative will be presented on the occasion of the following meetings:

- the Pan African Conference of Ministers of Local Governments: 28th and 30th August 2006, Maseru – Lesotho

- the General Assembly of CALRE: Venice, October 2006.

The *Euro-African Partnership* is also considering to participate in November 2006 to the Local Forum in Mali on the issue of local authorities and decentralization and in January 2007 to the Social Forum in Nairobi.

The *Partnership* is also working on the following meetings:


- “the women’s contribution to the local democracy and development”, International Conference on the theme of decentralization and on the role of women in the growth of regional democracy with the participation of European and African women in charge of the local administration: February- March 2007.

Concerning the activities aimed to the capacity building, a study tour of a delegation from several African countries is scheduled for the next autumn.

The *Euro-African Partnership* will promote also a research achieved by an international team on the issue of the decentralization and the decentralized cooperation, with the focus on some study cases.