



Honorable Mayor of Leipzig,
Dear Dr. Rainer Goerdeler,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to represent NALAS. I would like to thank to the organizers for awarding this prize of the Karl and Annelise Goerdeller. Established in the honour of one of the most glorious citizens of Germany who is an example how a person from the local authorities can make difference for better and fairer life of all citizens. NALAS award comes in very important times when the connections between the local authorities need to be encouraged and the democracy and peace should be supported.

The award is a message that we are on the right path and that NALAS' actions in support to the LGAs and their municipalities are well accepted and welcomed.

NALAS exists for six years now. After its establishment by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities at the Council of Europe in the frame of the Stability Pact and with the support of the governments of Germany and Switzerland.

Our organization gained strength and today represents 14 associations, 4000 municipalities or around 80 million people. NALAS encourages the process of decentralization in the SEE and its dissemination to various places since its first day.

NALAS protects the common interests of the local self-governments in front of the central governments and the various organizations in the region and in Europe. The relations with Europe and the European integration are of major importance and that's why our network improvement of the legislative framework in connection with local self-governance and good governance at local level. NALAS works in partnership with the Committee of the Regions, the European Commission and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities at the Council of Europe.

Amongst NALAS' priorities are: better services for the citizens, urban planning, waste and water management, energy efficiency. We share experience, learn from each other, encourage expert activities and make it easier for our members to receive information about our region.

Strong democracy and good self-governance are features of strong municipalities and NALAS aims to channel the issue of the fiscal decentralization in the negotiations with the central governments. As we say today, the associations will use NALAS knowledge to change policies and legislation in their own states so they can offer better services to their citizens in the future. Our citizens' life can be improved only if there exist the right conditions this to be implemented.

The award from today is not only recognition but also obligation. NALAS will continue to support the local authorities in their effort to introduce good governance and local democracy so that the quality of life of the SEE citizens improves.

Thank you very much.