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## USAID PROJECT REPORT ALBANIA: CIVIC EDUCATION AND PARLIAMENTARY TRAINING

January 1 to June 30, 1993

Contract No: EUR-0017-A-00-1064-00

### Background

Since February 1990, NDI has been active in supporting Albania's transition to democratic governance and political pluralism through training seminars directed at strengthening the People's Assembly and civil society. NDI was involved in both the 1991 and 1992 elections, and has worked with the People's Assembly on transitional issues.

For the March 1992 elections NDI focused on training the Society for Free Elections and Democratic Culture, which had been formed earlier in 1992. Training included volunteer recruitment, organizational and material development and parallel vote count techniques, and involved trainers from the United States, Bulgaria and Romania.

NDI's first program concentrated on parliamentary institutions such as committees, subcommittees, rules of procedure and staff organization. NDI returned to address important reform issues being considered in parliament. In November of 1991 and January of 1992, NDI organized two programs to advise parliamentarians on drafting the Albanian election law. These two programs helped NDI establish strong relationships with each of the parliamentary parties and the new government. By emphasizing the importance of working together, the programs also facilitated cooperation among the often polarized parties.

Since February of 1992, NDI has provided a total of three cooperative agreements for the Society for Free Elections and Democratic Culture. The first agreement, from February through April of 1992, aided in the creation of the Society, and allowed for them to observe and monitor the parliamentary elections in March of that year. The second agreement, from July to September of 1992, allowed for the Society to train observers for their upcoming local elections, and organize local town meetings in order to expose the public to the election processes as well as to the candidates themselves.

Under the SEED II contract, NDI has undertaken 3 programs in Albania. The first of these programs was completed in 1992. The second NDI program in Albania was effectively closed out in June of 1993, with the remaining funds being reprogrammed to the program presently underway in Albania.

The signing of Amendment No 4 to the Cooperative Agreement No. EUR-0017-A-00-1064-00 in February 1993, enabled NDI to return to Albania for the first time in over six months to conduct an assessment of the political situation and prospects for NDI program work over the coming year.



## **Program Activity**

From April 17 to 21, 1993, Tom Melia, NDI senior associate for governance; Susan Atwood, NDI senior program officer for East and Central Europe; and Jason Keiles, NDI program assistant for the region visited Albania to hold a series of meetings with representatives from the Society for Free Elections and Democratic Culture as well as with representatives of the parliamentary parties, parliamentary staff and leading members of the government.

Melia, Atwood and Keiles met with both national regional leaders from the Society for Free Elections and Democratic Culture. Though evolving in its directoral and staffing membership, the NDI team was satisfied that the Society remained a viable vehicle for on-going NDI civic education programs in Albania. It was agreed that the Society would relaunch its activities at a national conference on July 18, 1993. The 37 clubs around the country would all be contacted and asked to elect representatives to the conference. These representatives would be responsible for electing a new national leadership team and adopting the 1993 program of activities. The NDI team also explored possibilities of conducting a parliamentary program later in the year.

From June 6 to 14, Robin Freedman, the NDI Romania in-country representative, and Alina Inayeh, the Executive Director of Pro Democracy in Romania travelled to Albania to assist the Society in preparations for the national conference.

In May of 1993, NDI signed a third cooperative agreement with the Society for Free Elections in order to continue the work that the Society has been pursuing in civic education, parliamentary and local leader debates, seminars on the medias role in a democracy, polling and seminars on local and regional civic participation. The agreement is to last through the month of October.

## **Actual Results/Accomplishments**

As a result of the aforementioned assessment mission, NDI decided to proceed in signing a cooperative agreement with the Society for Free Elections and Democratic Culture. The agreement, for \$35,500, enabled the Society to hire a full time program director and a part time secretary, to rent an office, install a telephone and undertake preparations for the national conference.

In the meantime, as envisaged in the original proposal, NDI has hired an in-country representative for seven months, from July 1993 to February 1994. The representative, Jonas Rolett has had considerable campaign and training experience in the United States and speaks Italian, the second common language of Albania.

Mr. Rolett will arrive in Albania on July 13, 1993 after having attended a training program for the clubs of the Bulgarian Society for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR).

**He will be accompanied by Tom Melia and Jason Keiles who will attend the national conference and introduce Jonas Rolett to the various groups and parties with which he will be working in the coming months.**

**In addition to his civic education work with the Society, Rolett will be charged with the development of a parliamentary training program. This program will be coordinated by Tom Melia, senior associate for governance who has extensive contact with a number of European institutions that are planning to conduct parliamentary training programs in Albania in the course of the next few months, including the Council of Europe.**

**Through the permanent presence of a field representative, NDI will seek to ensure that these programs are coordinated with those of other institutions to avoid duplication and to maximize their impact of such activity.**

