

SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

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Western Balkans Democratic Participation



National WEB.DEP Workshop

ATA

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Introduction

The ATA WEB.DEP Workshop took place in Tirana International Hotel & Conference Center, Tirana Albania, on the 23rd of October 2008. The event was carefully planned ahead as the most important dissemination activity, in terms of participation and publicity, carried out so far in Western Balkan Countries. The Workshop venue was chosen to be the biggest Conference Center in Albania, located in the very center of the city and easily reachable by the participants.

1. WEB.DEP Workshop Tirana - Agenda and Objectives

1.1. Agenda

Time	Conference/Workshop day Subject	Organizations
09.45 -10.00	Arrival/ Registration of Participants	ALL
Session I		
10.00– 10.20	Conference opening - Welcome by ATA The ATA status and Relation to WEB DEP	ATA General Director
10.20-10.40	Welcome by Project-Coordinator An overview on WEB.DEP project /objectives/results	ATC -Triantafillou/Kalligeris
10.40-10.55	Online Medias as Opinion- shapers in Albania	Parliamentary Commission of Media Gezim Karapici
10.55-11.20	Presentation of the ATA WEB.DEP platform/ its focus areas and expectations	ATA- Technical Department
11.20-11.30	Questions from journalists & audience	ALL
11.30-12.00	Coffee Break	
Session II		
12.00-12.15	The Role of Journalists in enhancing public participation: the WEB DEP example	ESIEMTH
12.15-12.30	The advantages of E-communication solutions for raising awareness on EU integration process	Ministry of European Integration Dep/Minister Albert Gajo
12.30-12.45	Young people E-technologies and e- participation in Albania	University of Journalism Tirana Prof. Rrapo Zguro
12:50-13.00	Regional media co-operation within WEB.DEP and further as nowadays necessity.	ATA Editor-in-Chief Celo Hoxha
Session III		
13.00-13.15	Application of successful E-government & e- participation solutions in Albania	National Agency of Information Technology – Olsi Karapici
13:15-14:00	Bringing Experience of similar initiative: - The Forum of Top –Channel Media - “Monitor Magazine” Forum : Serving the Business community	Top- Media /Sokol Balla Monitor /Ornela Liperi
14.00-15.30	Lunch	
15.00- 15.45	Open Forum	Chaired by ATA

Time	Conference/Workshop day Subject	Organizations
	Discussion with the invited guests, involved journalists, experts, citizens, Web.Dep partners, governmental representatives, NGO's, Students	
15.45-16.30	WEB-DEP Platform real life experimentation	ALL
16.30 – 16:45	Closing	ATA

1.2. Workshop Objectives

First Session – Media conference /Project Publicity

- Informing participants, especially Media on WEB.DEP project, presenting the objectives and the results of ATA WEB.DEP so far.
- Drawing attention of the journalists, Albanian media and potential actors to become part of WEB.DEP initiative.
- Promoting WEB.DEP to a wider Albanian public through TV, Newspapers, Radio, etc.

Second & Third Session - Interacting with WEB.DEP stakeholders Albania /Open Forum

- Building/ Strengthening connections and collaboration with local Albanian Civil Society and Government Representatives, Academics, Universities, etc.
- Bringing ideas /Exchanging experience with similar eParticipation initiatives in Albania
- Brainstorming on raising participation, success factors and issues relevant to WEB.DEP.
- Hands on the ATA WEB.DEP products

A) The initial session of workshops aimed at attracting the interest of editors and other media with the purpose to promote the WEB.DEP direct lines and main objectives. National and local media was invited; leaflets, flyers, posters and press releases were produced to visually inform the Albanian audience. WEB.DEP project was presented as a new experience worth trying and participating.

B) The second session of Workshop Tirana brought on the stage important figures from Albanian stakeholders speaking on WEB.DEP initiative in order to show their support and participation on WEB.DEP initiative.

C) The third session proceeded as an open Forum – round table with the Albanian stakeholders discussing on how to enhance the project performance and involve more actors, bringing new ideas on WEB.DEP related issues, etc. The discussions have been followed by a practical activity -a live experimentation of ATA WEB.DEP platform in two corners of the Workshop room. Eight computers have been used from present participants to have trials on ATA WEB.DEP Forum and ATA's staff encouraged them to register in.

2. Publicity for ATA WEB.DEP Workshop

Two weeks before Tirana WEB.DEP Workshop, ATA had created, produced and widely distributed the following publicity materials:

- 250 Leaflets on WEB.DEP project & event
- Press releases in Albanian/English for invited Media
- 100 Flyers/ Invitations distributed via mail to main local organizations

- 2 big Banners (3m x 1m)
- 60 Posters set on the traffic points/ popular places of Tirana city.
- Pens with WEB.DEP logo for workshop participants
- 50-60 Public Relations officers of different organizations were contacted through an e-mail base list / phone calls

During the Workshop day, ATA WEB.DEP team has provided publicity services such as:

- 90 clients of ATA received by e-mail, the News published on WEB.DEP conference
- 2.000 mobile phone msg. were sent to mobile users of Eagle Mobile Albania.
- Electronic Billboard of the Entrance Hall in Tirana International Conference Center was announcing all day long the WEB.DEP Workshop.
- Good Media Coverage on national & local level:
 - 2 Foreign News Agencies present in event
 - 3 Daily Newspapers reported the event
 - 3 TV stations (1 National Public /2 locals private)
 - 1 Radio station (Public)

Obtaining media coverage, at national and local level, aimed increasing the profile of the Albanian Telegraphic Agency, WEB.DEP project and reaching out a wider audience in Albania.

* The reports in Albanian media such as Newspapers articles, broadcasting news on TV-s and Radio and the publicity materials used for the event will be found attached to this document.

3. Participants

On October 23rd, 2008 Tirana WEB.DEP Conference gathered some 68-70 participants, representing many Albanian organizations with an interest in WEB.DEP issues such as Government, NGO-s, Academics, Business Community, Students and Citizens. The list of participants reveals the audience's group composure:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| • 11 journalists from Media | 15,7% |
| • 5 members from NGO-s | 7% |
| • 6 representatives of Governments | 8,5% |
| • 12 citizens | 17% |
| • 10 students | 14% |
| • 7 academics | 10% |
| • 2 memb. of Union of Professional Journalists | 2,8% |
| • 1 parliamentarian | 1,4% |
| • 8 WEB.DEP partner representatives | 11,4% |
| • 6 repres. of Business Community | 8,5% |
| • 1 repres. of European Organizations in Albania | 1,4% |

* The original list of the workshop participants is attached to this document

3.1. Workshop Speakers and Presentations

Speakers

The invited speakers of the WEB.DEP Workshop Tirana were keynote figures coming from local media, government agencies, academia, parliament, WEB.DEP partners and business community. Our target was to bring in front of the audience, well-distinguished people in Albania in order to serve as good publicity and enhance the chances for a successful event.

In addition, each of them has specific interest in the field of media, e-technologies, e-democracy, European integration or was somehow interested in issues related to WEB.DEP. The Conference revealed to be the perfect opportunity to establish some communication or relationship with the high-level representatives for reaching the people or the community where they're coming from.

Name of Speakers	Organisation	Positions & CV
Olsi Karapici	National Agency of the Technology of Information	IT Director of e-Government Initiative
Albert Gajo	Ministry of the European Integration	Deputy Minister & Researcher
Rrapo Zguro	University of Journalism, Tirana	Professor of Journalism On-line
Ornela Liperi	" Monitor" Magazine (econ.-weekly)	Editor-in-Chief
Antoneta Malja	Albanian Telegraphic Agency	General Director ATA
Gezim Karapici	Parliament of Albania	Chairman of Media Commission Dean of Tirana Polytechnic Univers.
Anna Triantafillou Andreas Kalligeris	Athens Technology Center	WEB.DEP Project Co-ordinator
Nevila Bejleri	Eagle Mobile Albania	Director of Value Added Services & Marketing
Vasso Kouidou	ESIEMTH	Union of Greek Journalists TH & M
Celo Hoxha	Albanian Telegraphic Agency	ATA Editor-in Chief

Presentations

The First Session of the WEB.DEP Tirana Conference/Workshop started with a welcome speech held by General Director of Albanian Telegraphic Agency (ATA) Ms. Antoneta Malja. At first she thanked present participants and she said that "Today we are gathered here because we want to cooperate with each-other in order to improve our society. Actually we live in a globalization era and the information is a key factor. It is a fact that our region is getting slowly but steadily integrated into European structures and in the meantime the Balkan News Agencies are exchanging their daily information out of prejudices and jealousy".

□ Then ATA's Director made a short description of ATA's basic products and the way they were enriched and modernized recently, the plans and challenges of ATA in the Albanian market of the near future. She stressed that Albanian Telegraphic Agency is still the sole National News Agency and it has the reputation of an official and reliable source of information.

Mentioning the WEB.DEP project among the other new products and services of ATA Mrs. Malja added:

"There are almost two years we are collaborating with other regional agencies, ATC and universities in the framework of the WEB.DEP project. The project itself aims not only to report the events as our daily routine but also to include/involve as much as possible actors such as government, civil society, experts and journalists, students and citizens. So the role of news agencies within the WEB.DEP project it is not the traditional one. This new role requires more coordination between involved target groups. ATA WEB.DEP Forum is a place where Albanian people exchange their ideas and hopefully their opinion is getting as strong as to be heard by our politicians and urge them for a change. That's why our journalists choose as their motto **"For your Voice to be heard"**.

□ The second speaker was Ms. Anna Triantafillou, WEB.DEP project coordinator from Athens Technology Center (ATC). She presented an overview of WEB.DEP project, its concept, the WEB.DEP partners and main objectives. She said for the audience that:

"WEB.DEP aims to establish an online initiative, consisting of national thematic portals & community forums to enable sharing of news, public information & views. The Portals & Forums are operational since few months ago and they are hosted by the National News Agencies of three Western Balkan countries. The Communication Network in the three Western Balkans Countries, currently involves in total:

- 3 National News Agencies
- 18 Governmental Organisations
- 30 Journalists

The agencies should focus is involving a larger number of citizens, experts, governmental representatives in this public dialogue.

□ Mr. Andreas Kalligeris (ATC) followed further speaking on the innovative role and the image of WEB.DEP project in our region. He emphasized that "Among the challenges faced by WEB.DEP is finding the balance between language inclusion and international reach, building an identity based on trust and convincing /involving local stakeholders, citizens and government."

In WEB.DEP project, the role of News Agencies changes drastically as media organizations, news agencies act as go-between Government/ Citizen. Closing his speech he said that "What we hope will be achieved in the future is that WEB.DEP creates a new roles for the media in e-Governance and e-Democracy as well as a permanent structure between Agencies expanding to the rest of the region".

□ The presentation of Mr. Gezim Karapici (Parliament of Albania) started with a description of the current agenda of the Parliamentary Commission of Media and informing the audience that some acts affecting media sector have been listed for amendments such as:

- Law on Journalists' Ethics
- Media Digitalization
- Law on Albanian Public Television

According to him main Challenges for Albanian Media are:

- Revealing mysterious sources of Media Financing
- Lack of Transparency on Media Ownership

Today, Albanian society is being developed and democratized even due to Internet Communication Technology. The access to different kind of information is growing rapidly and most of Albanian media have their own portals. ITC is playing a specific role in young people education and the approach toward the European future. Albanian government has recognized the importance and supported ICT development as an important tool to be used in non-formal education of Albanian citizens.

E-government uses the ICT to make government organizations more efficient.

E-democracy uses the ICT to make the government "reachable" for public and make its activity more transparent.

□ The following speaker Mr. Sokol Ymeri - Technical Department ATA presented the technology, the ways and functions of ATA WEB.DEP platform, its basic components:

- ATA WEB.DEP News Portal – Functions & News Categories
- ATA WEB.DEP Forum – Discussions and Comments
- Interaction with partners' WEB.DEP portals and Central Forum

He simply explained for the audience the WEB.DEF registration procedure for posting comments, quick polls, news topics, journalists' functions and forum discussions.

□ The speech of Mr. Albert Gajo Deputy Minister (Ministry of European Integration) was focused on the advantages of **e-communication** as a tool for raising awareness on European integration process.

He said that the energetic activity of all involved actors in the integration process would not have any value in case that the majority interested in the process would not have the information on what is done so far and what's to be done till the final point.

I see WEB.DEF platform as a tool that aims direct communication "straight to the point" and manages a big quantity of information for Western Balkan Countries. The Integration process is often understood in Albania only as "the free movement" and not in the entire complexity.

The official site of the Ministry of European Integration provides good information on European structures, the European Community activity related to Albania, approximation of the Albanian legislation in different sectors, regional integration, etc. but the journalists could make this information more attractive for public by bringing people's success stories, personal experiences, etc.

□ Afterwards, Ms. Vasso Kouidou (ESIEMTH) spoke on behalf of the Union of the Greek Journalists of Thrace & Macedonia. Her topic concerned the role of the journalists as the promoter of public participation in decision-making process. People from Western Balkans –she said- want their countries to be part of the European Union. The specific role of the reporter/journalist in today society has transformed him into a "speaker of public" who articulates the opinion of the society.

Starting from this point, WEB.DEF project and the involved journalists should find the proper ways to:

- stimulate the positive impacts for democratization of their societies.
- provide citizens with opportunities to express their opinions.
- promote ongoing collaboration between journalists of our countries.

□ The presentation of Mr. Rrapo Zguri – Professor of Online Journalism in Tirana University was a very interesting one in respect of detailed analysis on the existing relationship between young people and E-technologies / e- participation in Albania.

The reasons which make Albanian young people, the most active age-group in using ITC services and a significant target group for WEB.DEF to consider, are:

- 1 Young people spend a lot of time in online communication
- 2 They like instant communication, interaction and anonymity provided by ICT
- 3 They get easily familiar with digital devices and soft wares
- 4 They like online entertainment
- 5 They prefer globalization

The professor presented a list of most visited Albanian Youth Forums & Blogs, their topics & interests. He mentioned that a survey have been carried out by the University and it has shown that unfortunately the politics, social problems and the actuality are less favorite topics in those Forums & high traffic Blogs.

In order to attract more young people on online debate for important issues of everyday life in our country is necessary for the owners /moderators of the websites to use intriguing ways and tools for withdrawing the attention of young age-groups and keep them continuously interested. At the end of his speech Mr. Zguri invited ATA WEB.DEF team to make a presentation for his students and wished WEB.DEF a lot of success in this initiative.

□ Mr. Celo Hoxha, ATA Editor-in-Chief held a short speech on regional cooperation of media in WEB.DEF framework and further as a nowadays necessity. He stressed the fact that "the success of

individuals or today societies depends upon various factors but information stands in top of this list. The influence of due information in everyday life of our societies is so tangible in people movement, investment, capital circulation, arts, sports, ect. That was the reason, the National news Agencies and Media were the first to get in contact with their colleagues from other countries and organized themselves into regional professional associations such AMAN, (Mediterranean) ABNA, (Balkan) BSANNA (Black Sea Countries) where our news agencies adhere and freely exchange their valid information.

Not far from today Western Balkans will function as a geographic unit, without its historical divergences, led by economical interests, profits of integrating structures and supported by a positive and constructive national media. Due to communication and exchange of information people of this region will get to know better each-other and our Western Balkan countries one day will see each other as the closest houses of their common neighborhood.

The National Agency of the Technology of Information – Mr. Olsi Karapici 's speech brought updated information regarding to telecommunication infrastructures, internet penetration, ICT services in Albania and development of several projects and government investments in this field.

Albania suffers the lack of infrastructure for ICT expansion

- Only 4,6 % of population used ICT services in year 2005
- 20% - was the Internet penetration in 2005
- 75% of high schools offered internet service in 2006

From year 2005 the Albanian government is working to change this situation undertaking several initiatives as the establishment of a National Agency of Information Technology, increasing the number of operators/ internet providers, supplying computer laboratories in the schools, etc.

Mr. Karapici listed some successful projects that have been financed / supported by the government and today are partly or completely operational such as:

- 1 E- procurement
- 2 E- government
- 3 E- taxes
- 4 E- cabinet meeting

A similar initiative to ATA WEB.DEP Forum being present in Albanian media is the "Monitor" magazine, the only weekly economical in Albania which was first issued in December 2000. Its Editor-in-Chief, Ms. Ornela Liperi was invited to ATA WEB.DEP workshop to speak on her experience and the challenges of an **e-participation** process in the Albanian media. She described the initial idea of "Monitor" magazine to be transformed into an on-line media and slowly adding up components as Forums, polls, e-consulting, investments, human resources & Labor market, etc.

" Monitor" magazine faced problems which have been faced by most of media Forums in Albania:

- Low Internet penetration in Albania
- Low participation from representatives of SME
- Poor experience of users in e-participation /Forums
- Lack of massive education in economical issues
- Poor Marketing

Her suggestions to new Albanian media Forums:

- Finding the Right Topics to involve people and making them actors
- Not being discouraged from first months results
- Well selected e-mail base list / Contacts

4. Open Forum with Albanian stakeholders

4.1. Albanian WEB.DEF Stakeholders

The Albanian stakeholders' group consisted of representatives from the National Governmental Organizations, Albanian NGO-s, Academics from main universities, National and local media, Business community, Research Centers, Students, Citizens, etc.

With regard to target-groups involvement, the WEB.DEF Tirana Workshop aimed establishing links to newly contacted Organizations and consolidating the relationship to those already involved in the earlier phases of the WEB.DEF project. The representatives of participating organizations will be used in the future as contact points.

List of Organizations, participating in ATA WEB.DEF Workshop, Tirana.

No.	Name Surname	Organization
1.	Irma Sinemataj	INSTAT Albania / National Inquiry Center
2.	Benet Koleka	Reuters Albania
3.	Lulzim Lika	Reuters Albania
4.	Ornela Liperi	"Monitor" weekly Magazine
5.	Gezim Karapici	Member of Parliament of Albania
6.	Albana Agolli	"Koha Jone" Daily Newspaper
7.	Erilda Kola	"Celesi" Magazine
8.	Briseida Mema	AFP Albania
9.	Liljana Shehu	NGO –Environment
10.	Alma Lahi	Ministry of Environment
11.	Rajmonda Prifti	NGO- "Women & Children"
12.	Jola Cuka	KPMG - Business
13.	Eneida Osmanaj	Ministry of Justice
14.	Olsi Baze	University "Cristal"
15.	Nora Malja	Study & Research Institute "Cristal" -NGO
16.	Rrapo Zguri	State University of Journalism, Tirana
17.	Daniela Hasa	State University of Foreign Languages, Tirana
18.	Suzana Tomini	Ministry of Labour and Social Issues
19.	Iris Kopani	Ministry of Labour and Social Issues
20.	Nini Mano	Association of Economic Journalists- NGO
21.	Murat Gurkas	Eagle Mobile- Business
22.	Nevila Bejleri	Eagle Mobile – Business
23.	Vilma Muca	UFO University
24.	Migena Kalthy	Ministry of Economy, Telecommunication & Energetics
25.	Olsi Karapici	Agency of the Technology of Information/e-Government
26.	Albert Gajo	Deputy/Minister – Ministry of European Integration
27.	Arben Hoshja	Youth Forum - NGO
28.	Aleksander Baka	Internet Centers - Business
29.	Rezarta Myderizi	Counsel of Europe - Albania

4.2. WEB.DEP Forum

The Forum with WEB.DEP stakeholders was an informal activity that started with the presentation of each participant and the organization they were coming from. It was a round table with exchanging opinions between ATA WEB.DEP team and the stakeholders, from the users' point of view.

Ms. Stavri (ATA) mentioned that WEB.DEP project presents a new role for ATA, that of an opinion-maker and a social debate conductor which are far from its traditional role as official source of information. What's the innovation in this project is: To gather the opinion of the majority of Albanian citizens, enrich it with experts' opinions and further transmit it to governmental organizations as public requisition. The ATA WEB.DEP topics in Forum for discussion have been selected as they:

- directly concern and impact big groups of Albanian citizens or
- currently are Important Issues in public opinion, pending for some solutions.

Participants from the Ministries, Journalist's Associations, NGO-s, Universities and Labor Offices gave their impressions/ opinions/ suggestions on WEB.DEP project and how they see it could become more useful to their daily work. Their suggestions were mostly about:

- Ways to enhance the users' participation for different age groups through a careful elaboration of the news populating ATA WEB.DEP portal.
- To organize several round tables with interest groups from specific fields such as environment, economy, justice, education in order to have the opinions of the involved experts and define a kind of WEB.DEP National strategy.
- Involving more the young people as the most active group in Albanian chat rooms and forums/ possibly organizing event to speak on WEB.DEP in the Universities of main cities like Tirana, Korca and Shkodra. The project presents a special interest for the students of the Foreign Languages Universities, as they can use more than one WEB.DEP Forum.
- Raising the participation of the Governmental organizations and parallel institutions by providing them a space in ATA WEB.DEP portal for publishing that sort of information that impacts the everyday life of Albanian citizen such as: visa facilitation, European integration, taxes, legal migration opportunities, justice management, etc.
- Finding the ways & means that ATA's clients (mostly media) to become part of this initiative and contribute/enrich topics with their own information.
- Developing a stronger PR campaign for WEB.DEP project and the related Topics, publicizing the WEB.DEP link to the most popular youth forums, Diaspora forums.
- Coordinating/ Organizing a common topic of discussion in the same period for Three WEB.DEP Forums (MIA, ATA, TANJUG) (i.e.- women in decision-making)- in order to see the situation & given solutions for the very same problems in the neighbor countries.
- Supporting the NGOs which actually do not have a Webpage for delivering their own information to wide public by quoting the source, (e.g. some environmental NGO-s without financial means).

5. Experimentation live with ATA WEB.DEP Platform

Hands on ATA WEB.DEP platform was a special activity aiming to provide participants with some real interaction with the ATA forum and the whole WEB.DEP platform. The logistic was simple, 7-8 computers located in two corners of the Workshop room, cable/ wireless internet connection provided and two- three assistants who simply explained in Albanian the steps to be followed.

The present participants checked the WEB.DEP News portal and had several trials on ATA Forum. Our staff encouraged them to register in and leave their comments on the topic they were most interested in. The participants, able to speak English or the neighbors' languages visited in addition the other WEB.DEP forums.

6. Conclusions

- Participants of Tirana workshop found the WEB.DEP project and its idea interesting. Generally, the Albanian journalists welcomed the "new role" of ATA among media players and they said they would like to become part of this experience. They were confident this "process of news" will serve to better know each-other.
- The publicity on WEB.DEP project and workshop produced a good impact in Albanian public and media and it proved that promotion it is an effective tool which should be constantly used on such projects.
- The workshop (speakers) brought fresh information from different fields of interests. The data and facts will be used for defining the WEB.DEP topic priorities and the tools for approaching the different target-groups.
- Workshop was a useful forum to consult with our target audiences in a face-to-face capacity and to address issues relevant to the work of WEB.DEP project and have people feedback on ATA WEB.DEP platform.
- In addition, Tirana workshop provided a chance to assess and evaluate the results of the project so far. The participating organizations and citizens were asked to fill out WEB.DEP questionnaires, to assess the quality of existing information in ATA WEB.DEP platform as well as the status of the dialogue.