



PROJECT ON MODERNIZATION OF ADDRESS AND CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEMS IN ALBANIA

e-NEWSLETTER

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Message from the Project

The OSCE Presence in Albania supports the Government of Albania to create a functioning address system, modernize its civil registration system, and introduce a personal data protection framework. The Technical Assistance Project is implemented with funding from the European Union, OSCE and the United States Government. The Project started in February 2007 and will continue until December 2010.

With pleasure the Technical Assistance (TA) Project introduces this first issue of

the e-NEWSLETTER. The aim is to inform the international community in Albania as well as government institutions on the latest developments regarding the modernization of Albania's civil registration and address systems.

The e-NEWSLETTER will be issued on a monthly basis and hopefully serves as a means of increasing the visibility and highlighting the activities and results of the TA Project as implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and its General Directorate of Civil Status (GDSCS).

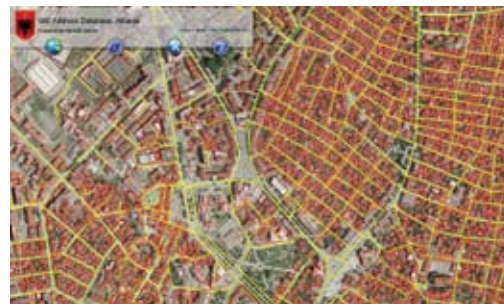
Albania's GIS Address Database

In December 2009, Albania's new GIS Address Database was launched by the TA Project in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior. The event was attended by Minister of Interior Basha, EU Delegation Ambassador Lohan and OSCE Head of Presence Ambassador Bosch.

This GIS Address database is based on digital maps that show images of the streets (including street names) and buildings (including building numbers) in a local government unit. The digital maps are created in a joint effort between local urban planning offices and the GDSCS of the Ministry of Interior.

The GIS address database is web based and will in the near future provide for online searches of addresses. Searches in a specific local government unit by streetname and building number will show the corresponding building, or clicking on the building will show the corresponding address. In addition it will be possible to

select a specified area on the digital map and the GIS Address Database will show all corresponding addresses within the selected area. This last feature, especially when connected to the civil registration system, can be helpful to emergency services for instance in the case of evacuation but also for local government units to identify the number of required polling stations in a specific voting area.



At the moment address data from some 25 Local Government Units are already uploaded.

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BACKGROUND

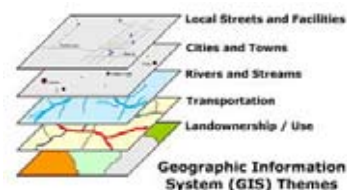
What is GIS?

The National Register of Addresses is GIS based. But what is GIS exactly?

GIS is short for Geographic Information System and is a computer-based tool for integrating common database operations such as query and statistical analysis with the visualization benefits offered by maps.

The key word to this technology is Geography – this means that the data (or at least some proportion of the data) is spatial, in other words, data that is in some way referenced to locations on the earth (coordinates) and coupled with tabular data (in this case of addresses - streets and buildings).

GIS uses layers, called "themes," overlaying different types of GIS information. Each theme represents a category of information, such as streets, rivers or forest cover.



On the most basic level, GIS is used as computer cartography, i.e. mapping. The real power of GIS is using statistical methods to analyze the tabular and spatial data for the purpose of territorial planning.

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The GIS address database will deliver the base material for what will become the National Register of Addresses. The National Register of Addresses will be a central database containing the local address data of all 373 local government units in Albania.

The National Register of Addresses will be connected to the already existing National Register of Civil Status which will provide

every registered person with an address. This database is expected to improve the delivery of public services in sectors such as health, taxation, property, social security, education, the postal services, and will facilitate court proceedings and the enforcement of rulings.

If you want to know more about the GIS Address Database and its functioning, contact the Project.

Address System development in Albania

The development of the Address System in Albania is roughly divided in three parallel stages. First, collecting GIS and tabular data, meaning data on streets, streetnames, buildings and building numbers. Second, the development of the National Register of Addresses. Third, the development of the connection between the National Register of Civil Status and the National Register of Addresses.

The TA Project is providing assistance to the Ministry of Interior for all three stages. For the data collection all Local Government Units (LGUs) will receive assistance from GIS experts, hired by the TA Project, and the GDCS. It is planned that by the end of September 2010 data collection for all LGUs will be completed. In parallel with the data collection process

the National Register of Addresses is being developed by the company as contracted by the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with expert assistance of the TA Project and the GDCS. When the system development is completed, all local maps and address registers will be merged and uploaded to create the National Register of Addresses.

Finally, the connection between National Register of Addresses and the National Register of Civil Status will enable linking every registered citizen with a registered address.

The National Register of Addresses as well as the connection to the National Register of Civil Status is aimed to be operational by December 2010.

Spotlight on... Municipality of Saranda

In December 2009, the Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, Ambassador Robert Bosch, and the Mayor of Saranda, Edmond Gjoka, signed a Memorandum of Understanding for an EU funded project to install street name signs in Saranda.

Saranda is one of the first cities in Albania to start street signs installation in line with uniform nationwide standard adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2008.

Street signs will enable local residents to start using street names as opposed to rely solely on landmarks. Since Saranda is a prime tourist destination, it will also enable visitors to better orientate themselves in the city and surrounding tourist sites.

Work started in February 2010 and installation of the street signs in Saranda was completed in early March 2010.



The aim of the TA Project is to support more municipalities on installation of street signs.

Highlights

GDCS staff trained on management and IT

An agreement has been reached between the TA Project and the General Directorate of Civil Status (GDCS) to implement a development programme for the GDCS staff. The GDCS staff will be trained on management, computer and specialised IT skills.

In January 2010 the GDCS Address System Unit was trained on general and specialized GIS skills. In February 2010 the GDCS employees started a computer skills training. A specific IT training is scheduled for the second quarter 2010 for the GDCS IT department.

Training will lead to improved skills at the central level which will in turn contribute to better service for citizens. Continued training will be provided to both Civil Status Office staff and the Urban Planning Office staff on specific topics related to their respective tasks.

Service Management System for GDCS

As part of technical assistance activities a modern service management system will be provided to the GDCS by the TA Project to support the internal procedural management.

The IT based system is comprehensive and fully integrated software that will enable the GDCS to improve service levels, balance resources, control costs and mitigate risk exposure to the organization through proper incident and change management procedures.

The system will enable the GDCS to streamline communication with local Civil Status Offices and Urban Planning Offices and provide immediate support to technical and procedural questions or problems if occurring, to disseminate information, and prepare reports on services issues.

Raising awareness on data protection

Under the auspices of the TA Project and in cooperation with the Council of Europe, a framework of data protection principles was introduced in Albania in line with European standards. A new Law was approved, a data protection commissioner appointed and a Data Protection Authority (DPA) introduced.

The DPA is now fully established. As part of its effort to raise awareness on privacy issues, the DPA has prepared a number of informative leaflets that will be distributed to institutions which are processing personal data. Informative material will also be targeting public in general and will inform them about privacy considerations when using social networks on the internet or online banking.



The TA Project will continue to support the DPA and has produced two TV spots on data protection that will be broadcasted on local and national channels in March/April 2010.

Website GDCS

In the context of citizen information, the TA Project is assisting the GDCS with the establishment of its own website. The website is a tool for the GDCS to communicate to local offices and inform the general public. Albanian citizens will also be able to download or find information regarding procedures and required documents for registration of birth, marriage, death and place of residence or application for biometric IDcard and Passports. The information is 'only one click away'. The GDCS website will become available in April 2010.

BACKGROUND

What is NRCS?

NRCS stands for National Register of Civil Status. The NRCS is the national database responsible of registering civil status events of Albanian citizens.

The General Directorate of Civil Status (GDCS) of the Ministry of Interior is maintaining the NRCS. Collecting and updating of civil status data in the NRCS is done on local level and online by Civil Status Offices.

The NRCS will improve the standard of identifying citizens (in combination with the National Register of Addresses which is under construction), contribute to improved quality of property data and ownership relations, support judicial reform, support a modern financial (banking) system and many other activities vital for Albanian society.

The NRCS will deliver quality voter lists for elections and NRCS data will be used to produce secured documents such as certificates, biometric ID cards and passports.

The overall principle of the NRCS will be 'register once, multiple use of data'. This means that data will be made available to other institutions to improve public services to citizens.

EVENTS

BRUSSELS – 22 APRIL 2010

1st EUROPEAN ADDRESS CONFERENCE – “Addressing the Future”

EURADIN (EUropean Address INfrastructure) Conference aims at constituting a Best Practice Network in order to promote the European Address harmonization regarding the definition, registration and access to the European Address Data.

BERLIN – 6-7 MAY 2010

5th CONFERENCE ON e-SERVICES IN EUROPEAN CIVIL REGISTRATION

The 5th Conference on e-Services in European Civil Registration aims to debate the present and future challenges of European population registration focusing on new developments in population and civil status registration in Europe and abroad.

KRAKOW – 22-25 JUNE 2010

4th EC INSPIRE CONFERENCE – “INSPIRE as the Framework for Cooperation”

INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe) Conference aims to build bridges addressing common policy issues focusing in particular on applications and implementation of Spatial Data Infrastructures.

FEEDBACK

Send us your comments

We thank you in advance for your feedback and hope to receive your contributions regularly. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you find the e-NEWSLETTER informative and /or what kind of information you would wish to see in future issues.

For comments and other information regarding this e-NEWSLETTER and activities of the TA Project, please contact us.

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IN THE NEWS

Civil Registration brings new opportunities to vulnerable communities
<http://www.un.org.al/subindex.php?faq=news&newsid=213>
(go to newsroom - archive)