

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT- COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT

**PUBLIC HEARING ON NEW EU DONORS AND DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION POLICY**

**Presentation by Ambassador Marija Adanja, Head of International
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of Slovenia**

Brussels, 30 January 2007

Honourable Ms.Chairwoman, Honourable Members of European Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to be at this public hearing today and have the possibility to present the activities of the Republic of Slovenia in the field of international development cooperation.

In my contribution I'll try to present the legal framework, on which Slovenia's international development cooperation is based, our plans for internal institutional capacity building, as well as our geographical and thematic priorities in this domain.

Allow me, first, to share with you some general information on Slovenia's development cooperation.

General Information

Like other new EU members Slovenia is a novice in the field of international development cooperation. Through the transition process and after having become an EU member, our country turned from a net beneficiary into a donor of development assistance.

Slovenia officially became a donor country at the end of 2004, through graduation within the World Bank, and thus assumed the international standards of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Slovenia is well aware of its responsibility in the globalized world and is ready to assume it. As a consequence, during the last years it has been strengthening its activity with regard to development cooperation.

In 2005, Slovenia allocated 0.11% of GNI or EUR 29 million to Official Development Assistance (ODA). The largest portion of these funds, i.e. EUR 17 million, has been distributed through multilateral mechanisms of the UNO and its specialized agencies as well as through EU mechanisms. Only slightly less than EUR 10 million have been disbursed as bilateral assistance. The remaining EUR 2 million have been allocated to humanitarian assistance and administrative costs.

As in other donor countries, a portion of Slovenia's annual membership fees to the UN and its specialized agencies is accounted for as official development assistance. Slovenia contributes to regular budgets as well as to supporting specific programmes and projects.

A large part of Slovene contributions is allocated to EU budget for joint development assistance programmes. In 2005, Slovenia's financial part in joint development assistance programmes of the Union was EUR 13.2 million.

The remaining portion of Slovenia's public financing earmarked for development assistance, i.e. some EUR 10 million, was disbursed through bilateral development cooperation.

Following the commitments adopted at international level Slovenia – like all other new EU member states – will endeavour to allocate to development cooperation 0.17 per cent of its GNI by 2010, and increase its allocation to 0.33% of GNI by 2015. Slovenia will strive to meet these goals by progressively increasing its development cooperation funds. The planned increases of Slovene development assistance will be dealt with in more detail in the Development Cooperation Strategy which is being drafted. A large portion of these increased funds will be earmarked for the 10th replenishment of the European Development Fund, to which Slovenia will be contributing the amount of EUR 40,827,600 in the period 2008-2013.

Geographical focus of Slovene international development assistance

Slovene development cooperation is currently focused on the countries of the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Caucasus. We expect this to remain so also in the future. Slovenia will continue transferring experience and know-how that it acquired during its own transition process and drawing closer to the EU. We believe to have substantial comparative advantages in this field. Above all, our country is well acquainted with legal and economic frameworks that need to be adapted and brought in line with European standards. Furthermore, our advantages with regard to the Western Balkans comprise linguistic familiarity and traditional, historic ties that enable better communication and understanding.

Slovenia concluded bilateral agreements with several countries from the region, e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro (after the dissolution of the state community the legal status of the agreement with the latter remains to be regulated).

We are convinced that Slovene development assistance is most effective in the mentioned priority regions; however, we do not refuse to contribute in other regions that are defined as priorities by the Union. Achieving Millennium Development Goals in Africa and elsewhere is our common objective and Slovenia intends to contribute to it within both the UN and EU. Participating in the 10th replenishment of the European Development Fund, aimed at financing ACP countries, and in its implementation represent an important challenge for Slovenia – as well as for all other new EU member states. During its EU presidency Slovenia is planning to organise a special conference aimed at state administrations, non-governmental organisations and private sector in the new EU member states to acquaint them with the functioning of the EDF, present existing cooperation opportunities and link project providers from old and new member states.

In our International Development Cooperation Strategy, which is currently being drawn up, we will probably define one of African states as a priority. In spite of the

fact that Slovenia has only one embassy on the African continent, namely in Cairo, we do not entirely lack project implementation experience there. Our projects carried out in Madagascar through UNIDO are linked with the activities of Slovene missionaries in this country.

Of course, there are other possible forms of development assistance implementation, above all in conjunction with other donor countries. Currently, Slovenia successfully cooperates with several EU members, but also some non-EU donors in the Western Balkans.

Priorities of Slovenian international development assistance

Various forms of technical training and institution building represent a prevailing part of bilateral assistance to the Western Balkans. These projects are carried out by various ministries themselves or by dedicated institutions set up by the Slovene government with the specific aim of providing development assistance.

One of those is the Centre of Excellence in Finance (CEF), dedicated to the transfer of experience and know-how that Slovenia gained during the process of reforms concerning public financing, budget and public debt.

Another institution is the Centre for European Perspective (CEP) which is to coordinate expert and technical assistance of various Slovene governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations with regard to EU integration of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe.

Numerous programmes and projects are being carried out by the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF), which was established to help Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as other South-Eastern European countries. The Fund is currently expanding its activities to other regions.

Furthermore, we can be very proud with the work of the Foundation TOGETHER – Regional Centre for Psychosocial Well-being of Children, which is focused on child protection and improvement of their psychosocial situation in areas affected by armed conflicts, terrorist activities and natural and other disasters.

The Slovene government strives to support non-governmental organisations and encourages their activities also in the domain of development cooperation. A Slovene Platform of non-governmental organisations for development and humanitarian assistance – *SLOGA* has been created, which is also a member of CONCORD.

Our decisions on priorities within the framework of the Slovene International Development Cooperation Strategy will, of course, be based also on the expertise and experience of these institutions, and motivated by the desire to effectively provide our development assistance also through their channels.

International Development Cooperation Act

In June 2006, the Slovene Parliament adopted the International Development Cooperation Act defining the legal framework and goals of Slovenia's international development cooperation. The Act will serve as the basis for the drafting of a Resolution on international development cooperation, to be adopted by the Parliament as well. The Resolution on international development cooperation will define conceptual and regional priorities of Slovene international development cooperation, and set up the framework for its planning and implementation in the future.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs acts as the National Coordinator for international development cooperation. The Government has already appointed an interministerial working body, chaired by a representative of the Foreign Ministry, which is tasked with planning, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of international development cooperation.

At the moment our activities in the field of international development cooperation are rather dispersed. Each Ministry is planning the corresponding funds and carrying out relevant projects autonomously. At times, it appears difficult even to collect information on development assistance provided in the previous year. The objective of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as National Coordinator for development cooperation is to set up central planning of development cooperation through a dedicated budget fund. Furthermore, we believe that a special agency should be established to manage calls for applications, and project implementation and assessment. In this way we could guarantee the foreseen yearly increases of funds in accordance with the internationally accepted commitments. Such a mechanism would also assure that the priorities set in the Resolution are respected.

As you can see, we still have some work ahead of us as regards the establishment of appropriate development cooperation mechanisms. It is very positive that at this time a discussion is going on about the division of labour and the effectiveness of development assistance. The new members regularly participate in the debates on the division of labour and the definition of principles to allow effective development cooperation; at the same time, we can already enact the results in the devising of national strategies and mechanisms.

We are pleased with the fact that the effectiveness of development assistance and the division of labour are among the main priorities of the 18-month Trio presidency by Germany, Portugal and Slovenia; we will strive to move things forward in this area.

Allow me to point out here that our cooperation in the preparation of the 18-month programme together with two experienced member states – Germany and Portugal – is proving to be a really valuable experience.

Apart from the common priorities for the entire period of the Trio presidency, each of the countries has defined its own priorities. The Trio presidency coincides with the 10th replenishment of the European Development Fund, aimed at financing ACP countries. The Trio members will strive to fulfil and implement the

commitments adopted in the past, such as the Millennium Development Goals, the European Development Consensus and the Monterrey Agenda. The presiding countries will pay special attention to Africa, which is the priority of the European development policy, and sustain the implementation of the Union's Strategy for Africa. As regards the integration of ACP countries in the world economy, the Trio will strive to implement the Cotonou Agreement, fulfil the commitments within the trade assistance programmes, and conclude negotiations on EPA Agreements, which are to apply from the beginning of 2008.

One of Slovenia's presidency priorities will be the issue of children and women in armed conflicts.

We will work towards an effective implementation of EU Guidelines on children in armed conflicts, and – together with other EU members, the Commission and other players – try to give consideration to the situation of children also in development cooperation programmes. In addition to that, we wish to raise awareness of the issue of women in armed conflicts and their important role in development cooperation.

I wish to thank you for your attention and, of course, am ready to answer your questions.

Thank you.