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Editorial

Challenges of Enlargement for Development Cooperation

2004 is the YEAR of Enlargement. NGOs in the acceding countries have been preparing hard for this year, through their involvement in the TRIALOG project or otherwise. The capacity building programmes, workshops and seminars that these NGOs participated in during the last years will find them more prepared to understand the challenges and opportunities that enlargement will bring with it. Hopefully this same capacity building will also find the NGOs in the acceding countries more confident in their own strengths, more able to contribute through their own particular experiences, more aware of the wider European dimension, and more prepared to work in synergy with other NGOs.

This does not mean that 2004 is a year where the path to tread is chartered ground - on the contrary it is a departure into largely unknown ground. But then good travellers do not need chartered ground, but rather open eyes and an uncluttered mind. These "open eyes" will be looking for the real participation of NGOs preliminary to any new policy, institutional, legislative, or budgetary development in the field of development cooperation and education, both at national and EU levels. This real participation will ensure that the expertise and mandate of the NGOs in acceding countries and their contribution to the shaping of government policy and public opinion will be duly recognised, and further developed to ensure that they can play a more effective role with respect to national and EU development discourse. The practices of acceding countries of working with the "near abroad", as well as their own experiences of political transition, are a valuable contribution towards poverty reduction, and an opportunity to take account of the poorest citizens of the "near abroad" within existing EU governmental and non-governmental strategies.

One particular issue that NGOs will be advocating for is what concerns the transition from recipient to donor countries. There is a moral imperative for the EU to take the lead in honouring ODA commitments, and this will re-

quire quite some lobby work to set up a comprehensive and realistic agenda in order for New Member States (NMS) to reach the ODA target of 0.33% of GNI by 2006. The part of EU budget dedicated to development policy and to NGOs should also be increased consequently to the accession of the ten NMS, with a



NGOs discussing EU development policy and the integration of New Member States at a TRIALOG Seminar in January, 2004.

view to tackling the new priorities brought forward by them, and to responding to the growing challenges of poverty and inequality in the world. Funds should also be set aside for Development Education and public awareness activities in acceding countries, to take account of the particular challenges associated with winning popular support for development amongst the 76 million new citizens of the EU, and the complexities associated with acceding countries' challenge in adjusting to their role as donors rather than recipients of aid.

The enlargement of the European Union to ten NMS thus represents an opportunity for reinforcing European development policies and the role of the EU as a global player, with a view to promoting human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and sustainable development throughout the world, and to eradicating poverty.

*Vincent Caruana, Kopin, Malta
Chairperson of the CONCORD Working
Group Enlargement*

TRIALOG - Phase II

When TRIALOG had started as pilot project in March 2000, the New Member States (NMS), at that time called "candidate countries", were not much more than a white sheet of paper for the EU NGDO community; enlargement was even seen as a threat to cooperation with the South. Against this background the project pursued the pro-active approach to establish first contacts with NMS NGOs, to promote mutual exchange and cooperation, to raise public awareness of development education and cooperation between an enlarged EU and the global South and to support the process of building alliances and platforms on a national level. Among the various measures of the project, the different means of communication (website, newsletters, studies), the seminars organised in Vienna (200 NMS NGOs have been trained) as well as the 13 bilateral seminars and study visits to 8 different EU countries have laid the ground for the success of the project. By the end of 2003, in Malta, Slovak and Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, National Platforms (NPs) were established, similar processes are ongoing in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and even in Bulgaria and Romania.

Built in line with the achievements and experiences accumulated in the first phase (final report: www.trialog.or.at), the overall aim of the second project period from October 2003 till September 2006 is to ensure smooth and full integration of NMS NGDOs into the EU NGDO community.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES ARE:

- To increase awareness in NMS of development issues, development concepts, its international discourses and the role of NGOs in development policies
- To strengthen capacities of NPs in order to participate actively in development policy debates (EU and national) and to be able to use the financial External Aid opportunities available at EU and national level
- To build the institutional capacity of NGDOs through strengthening national coordination bodies
- To facilitate the inclusion of NGDOs into CONCORD, the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development and links with other relevant networks and key partners in the South
- To provide opportunities for increased networking, information exchange, mutual learning, partnership, joint projects be-

tween NGDOs from old and new Member States and the South

ACTIVITIES

The project encourages the full and active participation of NMS NGOs in different CONCORD Working Groups, on the one hand through financial support for travels, on the other through development policies related trainings. The CONCORD Working Group Enlargement is convened by TRIALOG. This working group has been founded in June 2003 and can build on the experiences of the project's Steering Group in phase 1; it was composed of NGO representatives from EU and accession countries and thus the first forum where NGOs from "East" and "West" have shared their views and worked towards a common vision of an enlarged Europe committed to achieve the Millennium Goals. In close cooperation with the TRIALOG Policy Officer, the WG Enlargement analyses the impact of enlargement on development policies and stimulates debates on development objectives, priorities and concepts between old and new members (see p. 3).

Through training TRIALOG will create a group of experts in NMS able to act as multipliers and focal points for development-related activities. Most of the trainings will take place in NMS organised by the local NGDO Platforms. Out of a proposed list of subjects (strategic planning, role of NGOs, EU structures and policies, development education, fair trade, fundraising strategies and opportunities, PCM, project design, campaigning, advocacy, lobbying) each country selects its annual priorities. As part of the training programme, the consortium partners of the project will offer the opportunity to 6 people from the NMS to participate in their direct-learning programmes based on projects in developing countries.

TRIALOG will encourage and facilitate joint projects between NGDOs from present and future EU members and the South. For example, the German training programme ASA will allow 15 young people from Poland, Czech and Slovak Republic to realise a 3 months work and study visit in development projects in the South. This direct contact and "learning on the ground" between "East" and "South" will lay the ground for reinforced development awareness activities in these 3 New Member States. Another activity in this field of initiating concrete links and genuine partnerships is the cooperation with the Development Edu-

cation Forum and DEEEP (www.deeep.org) with the aim to develop "Development Education Partnership" (DEPART) projects.

Furthermore, TRIALOG will continue to carry out activities related to information and communication: Update and adapt the database created during the first phase, extend the website, produce a monthly email update, an annual printed newsletter as well as other reports and studies (the next one to be published on NGDOs in the NMS).

With this second phase, TRIALOG expects to increase knowledge of EU development cooperation policies in NMS NGDOs and their ability to be active players of the development discourses at EU and national level. The project will also have an impact on the European NGDO community represented in CONCORD in which NMS NGDOs will be effectively and fairly included thanks to the work of cultural and procedural mediation operated by TRIALOG. On the long run, the full and active participation of NMS NGDOs will reinforce the role of the European Union as major player of development cooperation.

Elisabeth Förg

*TRIALOG Project Manager
(May 2000–February 2004)*

TRIALOG Structure

A project in association with CONCORD
Financed by the European Commission (84,1%), Consortium partners and CONCORD (15,9%)

Consortium partners

HORIZONT3000 (Austria) - Lead agency
Christoffel Blindenmission (Austria)
AEC (France)
AGEH (Germany)
Brot für die Welt (Germany)
Cordaid (Netherlands)

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TRIALOG BRUSSELS OFFICE IS WORKING AGAIN!

Fabienne Bédéchian (French) started to work for TRIALOG on 5 January 2004. Based in Brussels, in the CONCORD building, Fabienne ensures the representation of TRIALOG and its partners in the CONCORD family and more broadly at EU level. She is notably responsible for convening and managing the CONCORD Working Group Enlargement (next meeting 25-26 March 2004). Together with the Steering Committee of the WG Enlargement, she will propose a work plan and coordinate the actions decided by the Steering Committee (position papers, lobbying actions, organisation of meetings, study visits etc.). She represents the WG in the Convenors Forum, but she will also take part in other CONCORD Working Groups, as well as in seminars and conferences, in order to raise the views and to present the activities of the

"THE CHALLENGES OF ENLARGEMENT" – FIRST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE WORKING GROUP ENLARGEMENT

The CONCORD WG Enlargement (composed of about 20 members from current and new Member States' NGOs) wrote a paper on the challenges of enlargement for development cooperation, that will be adopted as a CONCORD statement at the next General Assembly on 20 February. This paper is not exhaustive but aims at providing CONCORD members and other Working Groups with a ground-based perspective on accession countries' development cooperation and education frameworks and NGOs' priorities. It is neither a response to the EC study on "Consequences of enlargement for development policy". As a whole, this document aims at stimulating the debate among the NGO community, national governments and EU decision-makers on enlargement-related challenges for European development policies, considering all the dimensions.

This enlargement is indeed the biggest that the EU has ever faced. Even if the accession of ten new Member States in May is a huge challenge for the European construction, it should not be seen as a "threat" to the existing policies.

Certainly, new Member States will bring forward new priorities and may influence development policies at EU level. Actually, this was always the case in the past. The first enlargement in 1973 to the United Kingdom led to the signature of the

WG Enlargement members and TRIALOG partners.

She closely follows the activities of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, monitors the decision-making processes on enlargement and development cooperation, and informs the members of the WG about the political and institutional developments in the fields in order to stimulate the debate on EU issues and to reach common positions. She will then prepare policy papers and promote the WG positions within the European Institutions.

Finally, she will organise a Conference on Enlargement and Development in October in Brussels, that will gather together NGOs, MEPs, and officials of the European Commission, with a view to further discussing the role of the enlarged EU in the world and the aims of development policies.

Lomé Conventions with former French and British colonies mostly. The accession of Spain and Portugal increased EC cooperation with Central and Southern American countries. It would be natural that new Member States want to improve living conditions in their near abroad, considering some situations of extreme poverty in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean area. This does not necessarily mean that the EU will switch priorities. EU involvement in poor neighbour countries should be additional, not detrimental to existing EU commitments to reduce poverty in least developed countries. In other words, enlargement could reinforce, rather than weaken, the Community development policy.

This will depend of course on the political will of new (and old!) Member States. There, NGOs have a key role to play. They have the power to raise awareness among decision-makers, but also the media, and the citizens, with a view to keeping a strong development policy, totally independent from political considerations.

This paper is actually a first milestone in the WG Enlargement "history". In the future, the Working Group will concentrate on some more specific issues, in order to contribute to CONCORD advocacy work and campaigns on ongoing European debates and policies. For instance, the Working Group could conduct a study on

Calendar for 2004:

- 18 February:** Steering Committee of WG Enlargement (Brussels)
- 19-20 February:** CONCORD General Assembly
- 27 February - 1 March:** TRIALOG Capacity Building Training (Malta)
- 12-14 March:** NEWS! World Shop Conference (France)
- 15-17 March:** TRIALOG Capacity Building Training (Slovak Republic)
- 25 March:** TRIALOG Advisory Group (Brussels)
- 25-26 March:** Working Group on Enlargement (Brussels)
- March:** TRIALOG Capacity Building Training (Hungary)
- 22 April:** Dutch Platform Conference on Enlargement and Development (The Hague)
- April:** TRIALOG Capacity Building Training (Hungary)
- 1 May:** Enlargement
- 31 May:** Irish Platform Event with new Member States NGOs (Dublin)
- 10-13 June:** Elections of the Members of the European Parliament
- Summer:** Internship at HORIZONT3000 Co-ordination office in Ecuador
- 5-12 July:** Summer School (Belgium)
- July - September: 15 study and work visits to the South
- September:** TRIALOG Advisory Group
- September:** Working Group on Enlargement
- Autumn:** Internship at AGEH project partner in the South
- October:** TRIALOG/WG Enlargement Conference on Enlargement and Development (Brussels)
- November:** ATTAC Conference (Slovak Republic)
- November:** Development Education Forum (Netherlands)

the budgetary impact of enlargement (particularly on the development budget) with a view to bringing forward proposals in the discussion on the future Community financial perspectives. The participation of New Member States in cooperation agreements (for instance in the Cotonou agreement) as well as in trade agreements with developing countries should also be further assessed. There is no need to explain how busy the agenda of the Working Group will be in the coming months!

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Update on NGO Cooperation in New Member States

THE MALTESE NGDO PLATFORM – A GOOD IDEA HAS TURNED INTO A MEANINGFUL STRUCTURE

During the past year the Maltese NGDO Platform has changed from what seemed to intuitively be a good idea into what most members consider to be a meaningful and important structure. Membership has grown from eight to ten organisations, with possible others joining in the near future. The sense of belonging of the Platform members has also increased considerably, and this is exemplified by more and better real participation than when founded.



William Grech and Vincent Caruana, Kopin, Malta

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AT EU AND GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL

On an European level, the Maltese NGDO Platform has been active in CONCORD since its founding, and has since

participated actively in three Working Groups (Enlargement, Development Education, and Finance for Development and Relief). On a more local level, the Maltese NGDO Platform is recognised as a focus point for consultations between the Foreign Ministry officials assigned with Development Cooperation duties and the NGOs. The Platform is currently sending a number of recommendations and suggestions to the Foreign Ministry, that will hopefully be eventually integrated in the national development policy and action plan when published.

CAPACITY BUILDING OF MEMBERS

An important priority identified by the Platform members at the end of 2003 was the internal training of members. Kopin, the NGDO currently co-ordinating the Platform, has taken up this priority seriously, and set up a training programme. The first training session was held in January 2004, during which William Grech gave an overview of the European Institutions, while Vince Caruana outlined the principles and major issues concerning Development Education. This is an effective way of making sure that the experiences that individuals have gained through various TRIALOG supported workshops and meetings will be effectively shared with the other Platform members. In February, Mariella Stivala will give a half-day seminar on Project Cycle

Management. This will be followed up by the first local TRIALOG training seminar at the end of February.

CHALLENGES

The Maltese Platform is also learning to apply in practice lessons learnt about the functioning of the European Institutions. In January it raised the issue of the lack of a legal framework for non-governmental organisations in Malta in the European Parliament, through Arnold Cassola of the local Green Party and the Finnish Green MEP Matti Wuori, who is a Constitutional and Human Rights lawyer. The Parliamentary Question states that Malta "has no legal framework for the regulation of non-governmental organisations. This is hindering established NGOs, including non-governmental development organisations with an excellent track record, from developing their full capacities. Such a framework would enable them to participate meaningfully in partnerships with other European NGOs."

Apart from a lack of legal framework, the other major problem still faced by the Platform is the fact that it has not managed to find the necessary financial resources to scale up its operations. All work is done on a voluntary basis, with no paid secretarial or administrative support. This means that at times things move at a slower rate than desired by the committed staff.

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NEW MEMBERS, EXPERTISE AND PRIORITIES – THE IMPRESSIVE GROWTH OF THE SLOVAK NGDO PLATFORM

The past year was a very progressive one for the Slovak NGDO Platform MVRO. In October 2003, the Platform was officially registered after a long lasting process. The accomplishment of the goals and tasks started to be easier when the first full-time person was appointed and an own office established.

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF MVRO?

The number of member organisations has doubled in the past year and currently, the Platform has 15 ordinary members and 3 observers. Eight of the members provide humanitarian assistance, some are working in the field of democracy building in coun-

tries such as Serbia and Montenegro, Belarus or Uzbekistan. Development education and public awareness raising of development issues are on the agenda of several member organisations. There are a few NGOs implementing development cooperation projects (in some African countries) in partnership with local organisations and some with NGOs from EU countries.

PRIORITIES AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Once priorities were defined, 4 working groups were born: Development Projects, Development Education, Volunteer Sending and Humanitarian Assistance.



The communication with members and the wider public is mainly through the various meetings, a well functioning mailing list and the newly created website.

The Platform represents the Slovak NGOs in various international conferences and meetings with key players of EU development policy. Furthermore, it was one of the founding members of CONCORD. Different Platform members actively participate in the Working Groups of CONCORD such as WG on Funding for

Development and Relief (FDR), Development Education and Enlargement.

COOPERATION IN DESIGNING SLOVAKIA'S OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

MVRO has become a serious partner for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in designing the Official Development Assistance (ODA). There has been space to comment the main documents of development policy, further approved by the government.

Some of the project countries were selected on the basis of the experience of NGOs in these countries.

With the support of ODACE (Canadian Official Development Assistance in Central Europe), Slovak NGOs contributed their experience and suggestions to the Country Strategy Paper for Serbia and Montenegro.

The first call for proposal for twelve countries was recently closed. 39 entities,



The Slovak Platform family.

among them NGOs, private sector and state institutions submitted their projects.

The main challenges for the Slovak NGO Platform are: to lobby the MFA in order to launch the call for proposal for public awareness raising activities as well as to get co-financing for the Platform's activities. The long lasting process will be to

get the agenda of Humanitarian Aid from the Ministry of Interior to the MFA where it could be better co-ordinated with the agenda of development cooperation

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ZAGRANICA WORKING GROUP DEVELOPS INTO NGO PLATFORM OF POLAND

The "Zagranica" Working Group is a coalition of 27 Polish non-governmental organisations operating outside the borders of the country. The beginning of the coalition dates back to March 2001 and since then the Group developed several instruments of co-operation.

MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUP INCLUDE:

- supporting the exchange of information and experiences among Polish NGOs working abroad, introducing common standards for their work as well as acquiring public support for their activity;
- exerting an influence on the formulation and execution of Polish foreign policy and development aid towards countries in which Polish non-governmental organisations are engaged;
- establishing contacts and co-operation with similar groups of non-governmental organisations in other countries.

An important event was an appointment of the Council for Co-operation with NGOs by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, which took place in November 2002. The Council and contacts with MFA's officials create a space for discussion between government institutions and NGOs concerning Polish development policy.

Another important step was the establishment of a secretariat of the

Group. The Zagranica Working Group is not yet a legal entity – it works as an informal coalition. Nevertheless, in August 2003 the Group decided to create a secretariat that would carry out tasks that are of a common interest to the group members. The member organisations obliged themselves to pay a membership fee, which in total supports in 100% a yearly salary of a part-time (3 days/week) co-ordinator. The Stefan Batory Foundation received a grant from ODACE (Canadian Official Development Assistance in Central Europe) to support the development of the Group in 2003/2004.



Discussing NGO activities during the Irish EU Presidency: Justyna Janiszewska (Polish Platform Coordinator), Krzysztof Stanowski (Foundation Education for Democracy), Hans Zomer (Irish Platform), Grzegorz Gruca (Polish Humanitarian Organisation)

Due to spreading information about the Group and a website, which is being constantly improved, there is a growing interest of other NGOs working on development issues in co-operation with the Group. As basic means of co-operation we offer them a possibility to participate in the flow of information and discussions within the Group.

There seem to be two big challenges for 2004. The first one is connected with an on-going process of the Group's formalisation. At the moment the statutory commission is preparing a status of the Group and the project is being consulted with the Group members. It was agreed that a status would create a clear structure and decision making procedure within the Group. Another challenge is connected with the accession of Poland to the EU and also open possibilities to apply for funding from the European Commission. Not only demanding procedures that have to be learned and fulfilled, but also in many cases lack of co-funding resources make the EU development policy an important issue. What's important, many organisations in the Group conduct their projects with our Eastern neighbours, so it is our concern that the new external border of the EU won't close the gates for that co-operation.

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HUNGARIAN ASSOCIATION OF NGOs FOR DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AID

Hungary's coming EU and OECD membership have made urgent the development of an effective national ODA policy. While the Hungarian MFA started to develop a new ODA concept, Hungarian NGOs have recognised the need of setting up an NGDO Association. The initially informally established Association after defining its basic goals, principles and ethical charter, was legally registered in November 2003 with 12 ordinary members and 5 observers.

The principal mission of the Association is to contribute to the formulation of an effective, transparent and sustainable development policy by becoming a co-operative partner of the Hungarian governmental bodies.

OBJECTIVES:

- promoting common interests; active co-operation, communication and partnership with all national and international stakeholders
- raising public awareness on humanitarian issues, sustainable development and voluntarism
- providing partnership assistance and exchange of information

COMMON PRINCIPLES:

- promoting democratic institutions and the civil society at a local level, with respect to the protection of peace, human rights and social justice
- stress on the development of educational and health care systems at local level, through the involvement of NGOs
- not to serve economic interests
- development should be both ecologically and socially sustainable
- initiating debates involving civil society actors to define the target territories and activities
- enforcing the UN Millennium goals

NATIONAL ODA POLICY

While the organisations naturally welcome the overall growth in Hungarian ODA activity NGOs feel that they did not have significant input into the formulation of the new ODA mechanism. The Platform would like to initiate further dialogue between the NGOs and the government. It has already defined its position concerning the national ODA concept and the current call for proposal in the hope that these were only the first steps in further elaborating the national ODA program.

EU ENLARGEMENT

The next big challenge for NGOs in accession countries is participating in the EU funding mechanism. Through advocacy and campaigning at local, national and European level the Platform wishes to help the organisations to take full advantage of the opportunities after May 2004.

ACTIVITIES

- preparation basic identity materials
- elaboration of a detailed communication strategy
- launching a public awareness raising campaign to improve the currently low awareness of NGDO activities
- management of training opportunities, internships, study visits etc. (mainly provided by the ODACE program and partly by other international organisations) and in the future, also initiating and organising such programs
- creating working groups in order to make the process of formulating concepts and strategies more effective, to define necessary steps and to gain more influence on governmental decisions.

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CZECH FORUM FOR DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION IN THE YEAR 2004 – NEW CHALLENGES, NEW STRUCTURE



FoRS has undergone significant reform in the last few months. The process started at the end of October 2003 when the former Board at the General Assembly proposed changes in FoRS structure so that the representativeness and impact of FoRS would increase. After vivid discussion the new model of FoRS was adopted. There are now eight members of the Board, all from different member organisations. The Board is responsible for visions and strategies, and also for general management issues. The newly created structure within FoRS is the secretariat, which now consists of an acting director and administrative assistant but in the future should be enlarged. The secretariat is responsible for policy (approved by the Board), for international relations and for

day-by-day operational issues.

FoRS got bigger as well – it has now 17 members, three new acceded in October. For the list of members see the FoRS website www.fors.cz.

RELATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FoRS delegation met with the National Coordinator of Czech ODA with purpose to share NGO point of view with her. Even though the established relations seem to be promising, in reality there has been very limited progress and so far most of the expectations remain unfulfilled. Czech Republic still doesn't have an instrument for co-financing NGOs, which will have negative impact on chances of NGOs in the next round of call for proposals at the European Commission's B7-6000 budget line. Czech ODA itself remains rather untransparent. And bilateral ODA remains shattered – it is still not feasible to carry out real coherent programme with local partners at certain territory.

INVOLVEMENT AT CONCORD LEVEL

FoRS would like to be more active on CONCORD level. It has been decided that representation is needed in the Working Groups, especially Enlargement, FDR (Finance for Development and Relief) and Development Education. The problem of limited personnel will hopefully be solved. With coming date of accession the importance of active role on European level increases.

FoRS hopes to deepen its activities in the year 2004. It submitted a proposal for support to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it prolongs the co-operation with Development Centre, with ODACE and last but not least with TRIALOG. The membership fees increased significantly (they are four times higher than they used to be) because members realized the necessity of this step for the future.

Thanks to ministerial support one of the FoRS members launched a new website (<http://www.rozvojevka.cz>) specifically aimed at development co-operation and at both Czech institutions and public.

Jan Plešinger, Acting Director of FoRS

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Let's make trade fair!

The concept of Fair Trade was discussed during a TRIALOG seminar on labour issues in November 2002. As a follow-up of the TRIALOG seminar a Fair Trade Workshop for NGOs from New Member States was organised in Italy in June 2003. The next opportunity for an exchange and new co-operations will be the annual World Shop Conference organised by NEWS! in March 2004, where TRIALOG supports the participation of Fair Trade representatives from the New Member States.

MALTA – THE PIONEER OF FAIR TRADE IN NEW MEMBER STATES

A small shop in Reggio Calabria (Italy) and a group of enthusiastic young people saw the birth of an initiative which led to the setting up of the first and only Fair Trade organisation in Malta.

Koperattiva Kummerċ Ġust (KKĠ) was set up in 1996 by the Third World Group (TWG). The TWG is one of the oldest development NGOs in Malta. In 1997 KKĠ received full recognition by the Maltese state under the Cooperative Act. Run on a voluntary basis, KKĠ is today one of the largest cooperatives in Malta with nearly 100 members.

In the beginning of summer in 1997 KKĠ purchased a small shop in Valletta. The shop was purchased through the financial backing of CRIC, a leading Italian NGDO and Banca Etica of Verona. In September 1997, KKĠ opened the first

World Shop in Malta called L-Arka (The Ark). With over a thousand different products this small shop, has established a niche in the market for extremely original gifts and delicious food items. In these last few weeks the food items have been increased.

In 2000, KKĠ became a member of CTMaltromercato (Coperazione Terzo Mondo), Italy's largest Fair Trade organisation. CTM is a consortium of World Shops with more than 120 member organisations and over 200 points of sale. Since then KKĠ members have participated in seminars and general assemblies organised by CTM.

KKĠ is also a member of the International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT). KKĠ members have participated in the last two general meetings, in 2001 in Arusha, Tanzania and in 2003 in

Newcastle, UK. During these meetings representatives developed further trading relationships with other Fair Trade organisations and producers from the South.

In these last two years KKĠ has organised national events. For these events KKĠ has invited over to Malta people directly involved in Fair Trade.

Throughout these years KKĠ has sought to increase its sales by participating in various events on a national and local level. Whenever and wherever we have been our products and the whole initiative has been welcomed enthusiastically.

Fair Trade in Malta and Europe has only one direction and that is to grow. I invite other organisations in the New Member States to take up the challenge. Fair Trade has proved itself to be a concrete way to reduce poverty in the global South.

Roderick Agius,

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WORLD SHOP IN PRAGUE, DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN BRNO – A PARTNERSHIP IS PROMOTING FAIR TRADE IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Similarly to some other accession countries Fair Trade in the Czech Republic is gradually taking its course. Recently two non-governmental organisations and one company have started to form an informally cooperating group, expecting other NGOs and companies to join them in their efforts to make trade fair in the Czech Republic. Who are these three?

Already four years ago a World Shop in Prague was established by several local church organisations. A group of volunteers sell fair traded non-food-products – handicrafts imported from the distributors German gepa, El Puente and Dritte-Welt-Partner. The World Shop became a member of FoRS, the Czech Platform of NGDOs, in 2003.

Much younger and more awareness raising focused is the Society for Fair Trade and Development Education in Brno, which has been active since March 2003. The main field of activities is awareness raising of Fair Trade issues through media, the organisation of workshops, information stands and lectures. Furthermore, a small sales point in Brno was started. The second major task is addressing potential importers and distributors in order to make Fair Trade goods available to consumers.

Eventually, the first Czech importer came on board and joined the above mentioned NGOs to strengthen Fair Trade in the Czech Republic. The company Bio nebio imports organic Fair Trade chocolate, cocoa and nuts processed by the German organisation Rapunzel. The main challenges are to raise public concern for Fair Trade issues, to broaden the range and improve the availability of Fair Trade products and possibly to start a debate about a Fair Trade labeling scheme.

Any help from established Fair Trade organisations, networks or companies would be highly appreciated.

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THE FIRST YEAR OF FAIRTRADE SLOVAKIA

FAIRTRADE Slovakia was founded in February 2003. The initiative was started by the Association of Christian Youth Communities (ZKSM) that wanted to offer young people a possibility to participate in concrete development assistance. The Catholic Children's NGO eRko joined this idea and eventually an own organisation was set up. In May, PLOP, a development and awareness raising NGO focusing on Lusophone countries, got also involved. These three organisations back us up with their concrete activities.

The idea of Fair Trade is new in Slovakia. Therefore, the overall aim of FAIRTRADE Slovakia is to promote the idea of Fair Trade in our country, to raise people's awareness of Fair Trade and of problems and living conditions in developing countries. To achieve these aims we concentrate on various marketing activities, the sale of Fair Trade products and development education.

Lately, several Slovak NGOs have shown interest to participate in Fair Trade activities.

It is a new challenge for us to cooperate with these organisations, to coordinate the activities and to offer information services to all people who are interested in Fair Trade.

FAIRTRADE Slovakia held several presentations and workshops for young people gathered by ZKSM and eRko. There was a three-day workshop about Fair Trade during the music festival Verím Pane in July in Námestovo. Our guest from Angola, Carlos Daniel Miranda, contributed a lot of interesting information about his country. In September the conference „Fair Trade beyond the borders in Bratislava“ took place which was part of a larger Danube project „Europe is Meeting“. At this occasion we met interesting people from different countries with Fair Trade experience. Furthermore, FAIRTRADE Slovakia started to produce a column on a regular basis in the magazine „Lekno“ which is published by ZKSM.

Next steps will be the launch of our website and starting the sale of Fair Trade products in Slovakia.



Carlos Daniel Miranda and the FAIRTRADE team, Katarína Páľková, Darina Maňurová, Jana Slováková

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THE POLISH FAIRTRADE ASSOCIATION

There are many organisations in Poland interested in the global South. Some of them go back a long way, others are coming into being just now, for example The Fairtrade Association 'Third World and Us' registered in September 2003.

The idea of calling this Association goes back to 1998 when the news of Jubilee 2000 started to become available in Poland. Jubilee 2000 was an eye-opener for many people in Poland. It also allowed us to make contact with foreign NGOs including Fair Trade organisations in the UK. Our first contacts provided us with Fair Trade literature, which was immediately devoured by Polish website writers or just normal people interested in finding out more.

Another important source of information were the seminars organised by TRIALOG.

They have, after a number of years given fruit in the form of the first Fair Trade organisation in Poland.

Our aims are centred around activities focused on reducing poverty, promoting education, encouraging development in the global South in part through Fair Trade, protection of minority rights, ecological protection and dialogue between North and South.

We started with activities aimed at teachers and students alike. We prepared lesson guidelines and Polish versions of films brought from the UK or Germany. We are now preparing to sell Fair Trade goods. We are also looking for partners in other European countries that would like to work together with us. The first NGO to declare such cooperation is Inkota from Germany.

We also observe great interest in Fair Trade from Polish ecological groups as well as specialist tea and coffee shops. Most importantly, nearly everyone we talk to in Poland sees the point and is willing to participate by activity or purchase.

Poland is a huge market which consumes billions of Euros of products every year. If NGOs both side of the border can work together, this potential could be used to alleviate the position of millions of people who are less fortunate than us.

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