



PRESS RELEASE TRIALOG
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Civil Society on the right track to handle global problems? **Conference to set future direction of development cooperation**

From May 14 - 16, 2008, Prague will host the first EU wide meeting of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in international development cooperation. The question "ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK?" will be put on the table to initiate a review of paradigms which underlie the development work of CSOs. Speakers and participants will come from the entire EU as well as from developing countries in the South (Africa, Latin America, Asia) and the East (Eastern EU neighbourhood). The conference, initiated by TRIALOG and co-organised by CONCORD, FoRS and the Ecumenical Academy Prague, aims to be a forum of exchange on the current "nature" of development work and a place to find the most promising development approaches for the future.

Celebrities such as Chico Whitaker (Brazil), member of the World Social Forum International Council, Rebecca Tanui (Kenya), Building Eastern Africa Community Network (BEACON), T.Rajamoorthy (Malaysia), Third World Network, and many others will come to Prague to challenge development paradigms and give an insight into the specific context of CSO work in development.

The main issues

The conference will be the moment to speak about recent trends in development assistance and to discuss how CSOs can make sure to find the best answers to these trends.

- What "development" are Civil Society Organisations looking for?
- Do CSOs from West, East and South identify the same needs and challenges?
- What are the differences and common positions on development approaches in the member states of the EU? How can CSOs learn from their different perspectives?
- What do CSOs from developing countries expect from European CSOs?

Participants will work in 6 workshops to debate issues such as local/global approaches, rights based development, self determination, societal/political models, migration, empowerment and change.

The impact of EU enlargement

The EU enlargements of 2004/2007 enriched European civil society. The 12 new EU member states brought new priorities and target countries to European development cooperation. Since 2000, TRIALOG has been supporting CSOs from these countries to integrate into different European networks. *"The conference will be a further possibility to look for common answers to global problems within the EU, the world's largest donor. Civil Society is ready to meet the current challenges and to listen to the needs of the partner countries"*, says Christine Bedoya, Director of TRIALOG.

Follow up and future outlook

This year's conference will provide a basis for a second conference during the Czech EU Presidency in 2009, which will focus on practical steps and the resources civil society needs in order to reach development aims. The 2009 conference will actively engage donors, government officials, multinational agencies and others, responsible for shaping EU and global development policies.

For further information please go to www.trialog.or.at or contact the co-organisers in Prague:

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