TRIALOG Study Visit to Brussels

with a focus on Development Education and Awareness Raising

2\textsuperscript{nd} – 5\textsuperscript{th} March 2015
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I. Introduction

Every year, TRIALOG organises study visits for a group of CSO representatives from EU13 development CSO platforms. The objectives of this year’s study visit were to:

- increase participants’ understanding of European development policy;
- increase participants’ understanding of DEAR-related policy issues in European development policy;
- increase participants’ understanding of the advocacy role of NGOs in European development policy-making;
- give participants access to contact points in the European institutions that could support their daily work.

List of participants:
1. Dimitar Lazarov, Project Manager, Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE), Bulgaria
2. Lana Jurman, Conflict transformation and affirmation of non-violence program member, Centre for Peace Studies, Croatia
3. Ela Naranda, Liaison Officer of CROSOL, Centre for Peace Studies/Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity
4. Petros Florides, Executive, World Vision Cyprus
5. Theocharis Michail, Project Manager/Researcher, Center for the Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology (CARDET), Cyprus
6. Petra Skalicka, Director of educational programmes, People in Need (PIN), Czech Republic
7. Pavel Zwik, Lecturer/Project Coordinator, ARPOK, Czech Republic
8. Eero Janson, Policy Expert/Project Manager, Estonian Refugee Council
9. Edina Taran, Program Coordinator, Artemisszió Foundation, Hungary
10. Renata Kalivod, Co-chair of the Board, Youth Development and Cooperation Multicultural Union (JASMA), Latvia
11. Roderick Agius, Coordinator, Solidarjeta u Koperazzji (SKOP), National Platform of Maltese NGDOs
12. Katarzyna Jarecka-Stępień, Volunteer, Polish Medical Mission (PMM), Poland
13. Aleksandra Klosinska, Project Coordinator, Fundacja Inna Przestrzen (FIP), Poland
14. Adina Marina Calafateanu, Project Manager, Partners Foundation for Local Development (FPDL), Romania
15. Florina Diana Potirniche, Program Officer, Assistance and Programmes for Sustainable Development – Agenda 21 (APSD – Agenda 21), Romania
16. Bogdan Mihai Radu, Executive Board Member, Romanian Association for International Cooperation and Development (ARCADIA Network)
17. Simona Gembicka, PR/Project manager, Pontis Foundation, Slovakia
18. Maja Ladic, Project Coordinator, Peace Institute, Slovenia

Organisers: Mirjam Sutrop, Leila Younis and Rebecca Steel-Jasinska from TRIALOG, Belgium

All Study Visit participants are members of EU13 development CSO platforms that are members of CONCORD Europe – the European NGO confederation for relief and development.

This report is compiled of the meetings’ notes provided by the study visit participants. TRIALOG does not take the responsibility of the facts and statements presented in the report.
II. Meetings with Civil Society Actors

II.1. CONCORD Policy & Advocacy, Sabine Terlecki, Head of Policy & Advocacy

Sabine Terlecki started her presentation by stating that one of CONCORD's (CONCORD: the European NGO confederation for Relief and Development) missions is to develop leadership for its members. She explained how the working structures of CONCORD help to achieving this aim. Inside CONCORD the members work in different working groups or task forces. The working groups have long-term strategies and goals, while the task forces focus on specific short to middle-term situations. For each working structure there needs to be a representative mass of members. One or more members should steer the work on the issue, while in the Secretariat there is a focal point for most structures. Decisions are taken at working group level but important decisions always pass through the CONCORD Board, which has to vote on that specific position. However, the process of work and decision-making is different from group to group depending on the nature of their work. CONCORD’s key tool is the annual planning process which takes about three months and through which the external and internal priorities are decided. For 2015, CONCORD’s annual priorities are:

- The Europe we want
- Post-2015 and financing for development
- Strategic Alliances and Partnerships and an enabling environment for CSOs
- Setting up the Strategic Plan for 2016-2022

Participants asked for more details on CONCORD decision making, the annual strategy and how TRIALOG members could be more actively involved in the work of CONCORD’s governing structures.
II.2. CONCORD Advocacy & Beyond 2015, Katie Davey Dalsgaard, VSO International

Please find the presentation of the session here. VSO International (Voluntary Service Overseas) is a member of the European Steering Group of the Task Force on Post-2015 advocacy with the focus on health, education and gender. During her presentation Katie Davey Dalsgaard stressed the importance of Advocacy on local level: while there are discussions taking place on supranational and on international levels, there is a need to engage on local/national levels because the Post-2015 framework will be an intergovernmental agreement

The Beyond 2015 campaign was presented, as well as the decision making process within the steering committee of 10 people that meet once a month. As a successful advocacy tool the publication ‘Putting people and Planet first’ was presented (http://www.concordeurope.org/publications/item/234-report-putting-people-and-planet-first-concord-beyond2015-tf).

The main meetings taking place this year to decide on Post-2015 agenda were highlighted, such as: United Nations high level events, the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in Paris.

Most successful advocacy methods and strategies of the Beyond 2015 European Task Force were discussed, such as collaboration, lobbying the local ministries, organising public events, sending lobby letters and press statements, and organising informal meetings.

The European position on the Means of Implementation (MOI) for a transformative Post-2015 development agenda was further explained, together with the timeline of current advocacy efforts by the Task force. The drafting phase of the EU position will be over in March, during March and April the European Union position will be discussed among Member States’ ambassadors, and in May the draft will be adopted by EU Ministers. CONCORD is drafting a reaction and paper on the European Commission Communication on MOI stating that the text
is not concrete enough (e.g. gender), not transformative enough (climate change, growth, inequality) and that it lacks inclusion (e.g. how are people going to facilitate and participate in development?).

II.3. DEAR and EU Advocacy, Tobias Troll, CONCORD DARE Forum

Please find the presentation of the session here. Tobias Troll is the project manager of the DEEEP project, a project of the DARE Forum set up by CONCORD. The DEEEP project is co-financed by the European Union and it has been running since 2003. The project is developed for a period of three years; this is why at the moment DEEEP is in its 4th phase, from 2013 until 2015. The slogan of the DEEEP4 project "Global citizens can change the world" reflects the more holistic vision on the development that the DARE Forum suggest, perceiving development education as encompassing the answer to two questions: what kind of world do we want to create and how can citizens get involved?

The objectives of the project reflect the five pillars it is founded on:

- **development of a global coalition** - which is done mainly through a series of conferences
- **discourses** - challenging the old vision on development which portrayed it as something that is happening elsewhere and raising up questions of justice in Europe
- **quality and impact** - DEEEP4 recently published a study report
- **European coordination** - which refers to the introduction of a multi-stakeholder process through which the workgroups are made up of experts from national governments, European institutions, international organisations, academic research institutes and civil society
- **identity & concept** - a new identity of development and a more holistic approach to the concept, stating that development education is not about public relations but it is about civic engagement.

For the past 36 months DEEEP4 has included 96 single activities, divided into 5 major areas of work: communication, capacity development, advocacy, global movement and research. The
research work is a new area in which the project was not active before 2013, but at the moment in this area there are a number of research papers and reports published. There are two ongoing research projects at the moment: a piece of research on (re)conceptualising development education from the grassroots and the creation of an online resources library.

Concerning advocacy work, the DARE forum has two main focuses currently. Firstly, the focus is to include Global Citizen Education (GCED) in the Post-2015 framework. In the Open Working group suggestions on the Sustainable Development Goals GCED is included in the education goal under target 4.7. The DARE Form is working on advocacy concerning how the goal will be measured and through which indicators. Secondly, the DARE forum is focused on advocacy around the conditions for the European Commission Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) call for proposals. The Forum is working now on picturing the ‘perfect call’ trying to come up with suggestions in order to shape the next Devco-EuropeAid call in 2016.

II.4. European Year for Development Messages Francesca Romana Minniti, CONCORD EYD Project and Luciana Almeida, DEEEP Project

Please find the presentation of the first part of the session here. The main idea of this meeting can be found in the words of Luciana Almeida saying that “Citizens are actors for change”. A short presentation prepared by Francesca Romana Minniti briefly explained the main information about the idea of the European Year for Development (reasons, plans, actions etc.) and reasons why the various NGOs should work together for development. There were several questions raised about the EYD connected to measuring the impact of the EYD and the possibility of more engagement in the EYD especially in the context when we don’t have a support from our country governments. All of questions received a comprehensive response.

In the interactive session led by Luciana Almeida participants had to answer and group themselves according to whether they agree that the EYD messages are appropriate for citizens
or not. A discussion followed where participants tried to convince those not in agreement of their viewpoint. The session ended with small group work focused on local action plans for EYD. This meeting introduced the participants to the basics of the European Year for Development campaign and allowed them to exchange their own planned local activities.

II.5. Campaigning & Citizens’ Involvement in EU Advocacy, Isabelle Brachet, ActionAid

The organisation’s history and shift in goals was presented - ActionAid’s work originally started from seeing development as charity work and over the years it has changed towards understanding development through a human rights based approach.

Two major campaigns were presented:

- **Against land grabbing** (since 2014): Different methods of lobbying were used - from meetings with MEPs to campaigning in front of the European Parliament. As a result the narrative has changed: from biofuels being seen as mainly an environmental issue to building connections with food security issues. One of the methods used during the campaign was a ‘Twitter-storm’: at the same time when the EU biofuels directive was discussed and it was not sure if the text would be approved in the version favourable to the campaign’s goals, a web page was created with pictures of rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs of this file and the list of all the MEPs working on the issue in the EP committee. By clicking on an icon of an MEPs an automatic ready-made tweet in their national language would be send to the selected MEP. Thousands of tweets were sent through this webpage and in the end the directive was voted for in favour of the campaign’s goals. The dilemma around the method was expressed by participants saying that this method can be perceived as kind of misuse of twitter.
• **Tax power:** A campaign with an aim to make corporations pay taxes in the countries where they operate (namely, in developing countries), and in general to bring an end to harmful tax incentives, tax avoidance of all kinds, and the tax havens and lack of transparency that make tax avoidance possible.

As an example of citizens’ involvement in advocacy initiatives the involvement of citizens in the processes around Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) was explained. In 2014 an online consultation by the EC opened, asking for citizens’ opinions. An ActionAid campaign produced a link with ready-made answers which was available to citizens with one click aiming to raise citizens’ concerns and doubts about the TTIP negotiation process. Around 150 000 answers were sent, and the EC had to read through all of them and in the end they reached the conclusion that a lot of citizens do not trust the negotiation process. The initiative to cancel the negotiating mandate for TTIP was registered as a European Citizens’ Initiative, but it got refused. Therefore a new independent initiative was organised by a group of CSOs which gathered more than 1 000 000 signatures.

• **Better regulation agenda** – a process aimed to minimize the burden of regulation on the private sector, and thus help create growth and jobs in Europe but trade unions and CSOs fear that it will result in less protection for public health, consumer rights, etc. The ‘Better regulation watch dog network’ was established in April 2015 in order to follow all the processes and inform/mobilise citizens, when needed (because that agenda is discussed behind closed doors).

*A question* on the relationship between the watchdog and advocacy function was asked, and the answer was that it depends on the local realities in each country. In some countries critics are welcomed while in others they are not. Also, when there are many members in a coalition it is possible to play ‘good cop – bad cop’ cards.  e.g. in the biofuel campaign ActionAid was the bad cop.

**II.6. Campaigning and Citizens’ involvement in EU advocacy, Angela Corbalan, Oxfam EU office**
Oxfam is an international confederation, covering 90 countries, and focusing on both development and humanitarian aid. They run programmes on the ground (long term development) and offer humanitarian assistance. They engage citizens in EU advocacy efforts by creating discussion opportunities and mobilizing the public. Discussion took place on how participants mobilize people for a cause in their home countries. Mobilization for development is realized by making it less abstract and finding common elements that unite us all, also by ensuring continuity and consistency. When working in advocacy, engaging people is at least as important as fund raising. A strategy that is also used is identifying a common enemy (e.g. perceptions of threat from Russia for people in Estonia), using something that is already familiar, and by engaging in story-telling and organizing community events.

Communication strategies have changed since social media became so prevalent – now it is two way communication. Oxfam often wants the public to take action, so not only to be aware – people should tell governments to do something about a particular issues. Oxfam uses popular mobilizers – *pop mobers*, for example, in the campaign for the Robin Hood tax (tax on financial transactions). There are also offline tools to reach the general public: signature collection – mostly done with allies, online campaigns, work with celebrities, media work.

**Questions and answers:**

Q: Advocacy is political, how can Oxfam stay neutral in terms of partisanship? How can you be political but not partisan?

A: Oxfam is political but it is not partisan, it engages with everybody and treats parties equally.

Q: Is it your experience, are people working in the NGO sector more on the left of the political spectrum? Or is it that issues are looked at from a neutral position?

A: Oxfam tries to be a-political, but most individuals will tend to lean to the left. Oxfam aims for neutrality.

Q: Did Oxfam and their allies also have campaign allies from Eastern and Central European Countries for the campaign on Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen?

A: Oxfam were in touch with Czech Republic (Glopolis) and other organizations, through CONCORD

Q: Advocacy is notorious for being difficult to measure in term of its impact. How do you measure it?

A: It is easier to evaluate the media – a proxy for impact. Lobby activities are most difficult to measure.

Q: What is the most effective advocacy method?

A: It is all about power analysis – talk to MEPs, work with allies, go to Strasbourg; it also about doing creative things – the example of the fake Economist/the Egronomist. There is a lot of lobbying in Brussels, and the private sector has huge resources for this. It is difficult for NGOs to compete with those and therefore creativity is needed to be noticed.

It is also important for Oxfam to bring the voices from the South to the realities of decision makers.

Q: How can you compensate for the risks of governments misusing the gains from the Robin Hood tax?
A: It needs to be very transparent. If governments decide to sink the money in things that are not useful, the tax should be slashed. Governments make public statements about how they will spend the money. The money gets earmarked. It needs to be monitored by national NGOs.

II.7. Meeting with CONCORD Director Seamus Jeffreson

Discussions with the director of CONCORD were very informal and friendly. Mr. Jeffreson started the meeting by explaining some of the main reasons why it is important to be a member of CONCORD:

- **Argument for Europe** – there is an increasing minority in the UK which thinks that doing things through EU makes sense in the globalized world. The logic as we do thing as a group of states in EU make sense because we are doing it globally. We need to tackle some issues as a continent that we cannot tackle as individual nations. We have global problems and therefore doing things on the EU level is logical.

- **Discussions with EC regarding the framework agreement** – CONCORD has the reputation that CONCORD is the voice of civil society of the EU because it represent all the EU countries and development cooperation community. We have to continue working on that.

- **CONCORD membership** – hybrid of national platforms and big national organizations. It does not matter whether if it is a small or a big organisation, in CONCORD everybody has one vote and everybody is equal in membership. Another significant reason is that we need to ensure the dialogue between smaller platforms and the more established platforms. TRIALOG was one manifestation of more support for the new EU countries. The next challenge is to ensure the active engagement of the EU13 platforms after the end of TRIALOG. Bigger members do not understand the context in smaller countries and therefore CONCORD has to encourage mutual understanding. The diverse membership ideologically (in economic and political terms) brings stronger agreements because we can get a mutual agreement despite our differences.
- **CONCORD has power in the SDGs** – the SDGs are a great opportunity to be engaged and influence the policy agenda. The heart of CONCORD is the working groups and that is the space where people can come together and work on agreements.

Later on, the discussion focused on **DEAR funding** and how small platforms should approach this issue. Mr. Jeffreson pointed out that now; when TRIALOG ends there is a moment to look at the platforms whether it is sustainable to have national platforms in all countries. Does the architecture of the development community work in all countries? We know that the logic of EU is to get in big blocks – consortiums – but the question is whether it is good.

The director of CONCORD highlighted the importance of our advocacy job in development. If we do not work on public opinion, there is no political commitment form the politicians. If there is no public support then we do not have development policy. Therefore, the advocacy job needs to be done because without public support we should not be surprised if the politicians will not support the 0,7% GNI to go the official development assistance. CONCORD needs to pick up some of the work of TRIALOG in its new strategy (2016-2022).

### III. Meetings with EU Institutions

#### III.1. Commissioner for Development Mr. Neven Mimica’s Cabinet – Paolo Berizzi, Cabinet member responsible for Civil Society and Local Authorities

The role of the Commissioner for Development and of his Cabinet is to prepare policy decisions. In their work they follow the principle of policy coherence for development which means that every policy the European Commission works on should take into account impacts on development. This is why they have to analyse decisions outside development and look at what aspects are related to development and what other concerns these decision raise. At the moment the Commissioner's major focus is on the post-2015 framework, the new SDGs and on
the post-Cotonou agreement which regulates EU's relation with the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) countries and which expires in 2020.

In order to achieve the new SDGs, there needs to be investment in developing capacity and in mobilizing domestic public financing. In addition to this, trade, science, technology and innovation are key factors in achieving SDGs as policies in these fields have huge potential to eradicate poverty.

In the long term the Commissioner on Development focuses his work on two major topics: gender issues, having declared that he wants to be "the most feminist male commissioner" and inequalities. He believes that all people must first have access to the basics: access to education, access to water and access to proper sanitation.

On the topic of financing for CSOs from the EC DEAR programme, Paolo Berizzi said that the Commissioner’s Cabinet is preparing an answer to the letter he received from TRIALOG partners and some CONCORD members.

Questions and answers:
Q: In the EC Communication on the Global Partnership for the SDG implementation there is lack of peoples’ factor – how does everything in the Communication effect people on the ground?
A: You are right, important to talk about the effects on the people and on the planet.
Q: How will you make sure SDGs will be achieved, when MDGs were not entirely achieved?
A: We don’t decide on SDGs, it is the UN leading this process. It is true that not all MDGs have been achieved. For SDGs – “not to promise too much”, monitor them well.

Q: What are the Commissioner’s thoughts about the letter sent to him addressing the concerns of smaller CSOs in participating in the EC DEAR Call for proposals? A: We are preparing the reply now.
A question for CSOs concerning this issue: “was capacity really created in EU13? Has the money that previously was accessible for EU13 been spent well in these countries?” Mimica is from Croatia and therefore is familiar with the situation; however they asked DG Devco for more information on the issue.
Q: Regarding EYD 2015 – what would be a success for Commissioner Mimica?
A: The best success would be if people are talking about the EYD, media would report about it.
Q: Migration was mentioned as one of the priorities of the Commissioner – how does the Commissioner see this in terms of PCD (protecting borders of EU and not human lives)?
A: We do not have a problem in Europe, look at IOM figures - most of the global migration is South-South migration; the priority of Juncker is to “fight illegal migration and to regulate legal migration” in order to better manage the migration flows; in future in EU we will need migrants
to keep our economy going and pay our pensions, but we would like to “choose immigrants and train them”.

III.2. European Commission DG Devco – EuropeAid Civil Society, Local Authorities section - Valentina Auricchio and Markus Pirchner

Please find the slideshow presented in the beginning of the meeting here. Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) was the focus. The Eurobarometer results on Awareness on Development were presented. The main aim of the DEAR programme is developing citizens' awareness and critical understanding of the interdependent world. Budget lines for 2014-17 for CSOs and local authorities are within 30 million EUR/year and consist of: Calls for proposals, direct grants, joint management agreements, framework partnership agreements and other.

A DEAR policy evolution was presented As the main orientation it was pointed out that the means of development education have to be complementary (informal and formal); that in education it is crucial to have cooperation with ministry of education with CSOs; and that awareness raising has to be scaled up to the European level: 'No more patch work, but coherence – big projects move the scale'. As guiding principles and added value, pan-European dimension and alignment were pointed out, and as main achievements from 2014: a new strategy, finalization of 2013/2014 calls for proposals - 22 projects in support for the EYD 2015 were highlighted.

The future plans, post 2015 include:

- Multi Annual Action Programme 2015/17 - If endorsed, it will mean one financing decision covering three budgetary years. This would improve long-term planning but would allow less flexibility
- There is a plan for a new Call for proposal in 2016 with a combined budget of 2016 and 2017.
Participants raised the concerns many of them face concerning the application criteria for the EC calls for proposals. Different examples were given concerning the problematic aspects of having very large consortia for the project application when national realities are so different and a lot of resources are required to coordinate the project. Also, examples about financial difficulties to participate were given where annual co-financing from some states in development project is smaller than necessary to even participate in one DEAR project.

III.3. European External Action Service – Development Cooperation Coordination Division - Adele Orosz

The role, tasks and decision making procedures within the Service was presented. The importance of compromise between the EEAS, Commission and member states in decision making was stressed. The EEAS was showcased as leading in matters of human rights. A discussion took place around the strategy of the EU towards Post-2015 issues. Questions were raised around the issue of EU and member states’ position ahead of the UN negotiations around the SDGs and what the position should look like. Elements covering trade, science and technology, funding etc. should be included.

A meeting between the EEAS and CONCORD was held two weeks ago where cooperation between the EU delegations and CSOs on the ground was discussed. Civil Society needs to organise itself to be able to interact effectively with EU delegations because it is impossible to deal with all the individual requests from different CSOs for meetings. Collective input has weight, so EU delegations will pay attention to it. Organised CSO platforms are a good way forward as they provide a good way of hearing representative views. When relating to decision making it was stressed that Member States have most impact when voting and that nothing can be done without their approval. Therefore, advocacy needs to be carried out on national levels as well. The EEAS as a body is leading in questions of human rights instruments and the EU Delegations set up road maps for dealing with CSOs. Delegations determine due to security
concerns which parts of findings will be published and who the contacts are, and the CSOs should provide feedback on whether the road maps are working and how to improve.

Joint programming was highlighted as preferential model of cooperation and the aim is to have as many joint programmes as possible because that model is more efficient and effective. Migration is described as a very sensitive issue that has a divergence of views amongst the Member states which makes it hard for progress to be achieved.

### III.4. European Economic and Social Committee, External Relations Unit – Bellon Gomez Rafael

Mr. Rafael introduced himself and talked about his professional background in the Committee of the Regions. The meeting continued with a short presentation of the structure, mission and way of operation of the EESC. Mr. Rafael explained that the EESC has over 300 members in all EU member states, nominated by their national governments, who are not paid, but who contribute to the work of the Committee with their expertise.

Focusing more on development, Mr. Rafael explained that the EESC has a specific external relations section dealing with specific issues, which is quite unique for an EU body. Through its external relations, the EESC is working with CSOs around the globe.

After a question from the group, concerning the activities planned by the EESC in the framework of the EYD 2015, Mr. Rafael explained that the Committee has a practice of conducting yearly regional seminars. The issues discussed on such seminars are determined by a joint committee composed of both EU representatives and regional actors.

On 20th March 2015 the EESC will have a meeting on the role of economic and social actors for development, which is their flagship activity for the EYD 2015. The EESC will also be represented in the financing for development conferences in Addis Ababa and in the UN General Assembly addressing the SDGs in New York.
Answering a question Mr. Rafael said that the most challenging task of the EESC is to mediate between the three groups that it is working with (employers, employees and various interests), as all parties need to come up with a common opinion on each topic they discuss. Mr. Rafael suggested that there might be a change in the structure of the EU relations with African Caribbean and Pacific countries in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, as the encompassed region is too large and will probably be subdivided. He also said that the trend in the European Development Fund in the future will be towards supporting programmes, rather than projects.

III.5. European Parliament, Development Committee Secretariat – Tristan Stubbs and Joao Moura

Mr. Stubbs is a national expert appointed to the European Parliament by a member state. He works as an administrator at the Development Committee and is also in charge of communication with CSOs. Some of the committee members, the coordinators, usually meet with CONCORD twice a year. The Development Committee has various tasks, including organising election monitoring in developing countries, organising visits of delegations to developing countries, monitoring the implementation of the Cotonou agreement.

Once of the focuses of meeting was the presentation of the issues covered in a report that is being prepared in the development committee on the topic of tax avoidance and tax evasion in developing countries and challenges for governance, social protection and development. On the same topic the EP recently organised a seminar with different stakeholders and the same issue will be addressed during the European development days on June 3rd - 4th in a high level panel.

There was a longer discussion about the interaction of the committee and individual MEPs with civil society actors. Different advocacy process and opportunities available for CSOs were explained, including the encouragement to give input through national MEPs or through the Development Committee secretariat.
The main topics discussed during the meeting were the Latvian Presidency’s role and priorities, the practicalities of a council meeting, and also some development issues.

The priorities of the Latvian Presidency are the following: competitive Europe, digital Europe and engaged Europe. Connected to this last issue, one of the six priorities is development, and the main focus is on the Post-2015 framework, the financing of development cooperation and gender issues. Gender equality in development seemed particularly important, as a new gender action plan is to be agreed on soon, and this might set the scene for an overall focus on gender. In Latvia, there is a high level of gender equality; however, this is often not the case in development cooperation.

In fact, the role of the Presidency is to chair and participate in different meetings. In relation to development cooperation this means chairing the council working groups’ work addressing development issues.. All the professional work and drafting is the outcome of co-working, and even if you are coming from a smaller or new member state, you have a voice. They work closely with the previous and the upcoming Presidencies to the Council of the EU (Italy and Luxembourg).

Even if Latvia does not have a long history in development cooperation and is considered to be quite a new donor, the people the group met with thought it is an advantage when leading these issues, as Latvia can be more efficient and more neutral in tackling these topics, as there is no hidden interest behind their activities. As for development issues, the Latvian Presidency works closely with CONCORD and with the Latvian NGO platform LAPAS.

Some questions were raised by the participants concerning issues such as migration, DEAR funding, policy coherence, Ukraine. Some discussion took place but with many of the issues other colleagues and other Council working parties deal with and the CODEV colleagues are not directly involved in but only following some related processes.
IV. Individual meetings of the Study Visit Participants

IV.1. Eero Janson from Estonian Refugee Council, Estonia

Meeting with MEP Marju Lauristin (S&D - Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, Member of Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs - LIBE and the Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee - D-UA) – since there was an unforeseen vote she had to attend, the meeting was kept brief and the talk was held with her two assistants instead. Since Marju is a member of the LIBE committee, the discussion with her assistants was mostly about questions related to asylum in Europe, in particular the alternatives to the Dublin regulation and the question of mutual recognition of positive asylum decisions inside the EU. Since there was great interest particularly in the latter topic a study conducted by ECRE was forwarded to them. A possible new meeting in March was discussed.

Meeting with MEP Kaja Kallas (ALDE - Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, Vice-Chair of Delegation the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee - D-UA) – in the brief 20-minute meeting only one topic was discussed: the question of access to ECHO funding for organizations from EU13 countries, especially regarding the current humanitarian needs in Ukraine. It was not a topic the MEP or her assistant was particularly knowledgeable in, but she promised to raise the question with her colleagues and dig deeper into the problem. After the meeting the study done by TRIALOG about ECHO funding for organizations from EU13 was forwarded to the MEP.

Meeting with Mr. Arvo Anton (attaché dealing with development issues at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU) – a rather informal discussion about the Estonian Refugee Council’s current humanitarian aid programme in Ukraine took place, as well as covering the topics of the development and humanitarian aid policy of Estonia, and current issues on the table regarding development and humanitarian aid in the EU. He provided several pointers and ideas on how to go about with further capacity building for provision of humanitarian aid in conflict zones (incl. EU Aid Volunteers initiative).

IV.2. Simona Gembická, Pontis Foundation, Slovakia

Meeting with MEP Miroslav Mikolášik (Group of the European People's Party - Christian Democrats, Vice-Chair of Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly – DLAT, Member of Subcommittee on Human Rights – DROI. The meeting was mainly about informing Mr. Mikolášik about what the Pontis Foundation is doing in the field of development
cooperation and trying to identify some joint activities for the future. Unfortunately Mr. Mikolášik does not have capacity to be more involved in development cooperation because his main area of interest is rather humanitarian aid. However, he agreed to stay in touch with the Pontis Foundation and to keep each other informed. Mr. Mikolášik also agreed that he will attend the biggest international development cooperation conference in Slovakia Development and Democracy which will take place in October in Bratislava and is being organised by the Pontis Foundation.

**IV.3. Adina Marina Calafateanu, Partners Foundation for Local Development (FPDL), Florina Diana Potîrniche, Agenda 21 (APSD – Agenda 21) and Bogdan Mihai Radu, Romanian Association for International Cooperation and Development (ARCADIA Network), Romania**

Meeting with Ramona Ghierga (Permanent Representation of Romania to the European Union, Middle East Gulf working party - MoG; Union for the Mediterranean Development cooperation and humanitarian aid). The dialogue was developed around the issue of financing development activities in Romania and the role that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFE) could have in supporting domestic CSOs. She knew about the letter sent by TRIALOG and she had discussed the issues raised in the letter with the Romanian national platform, FOND. She said that they were waiting for Commissioner Neven Mimica’s answer to the letter that they were going to discuss in their working group.

However, Ms. Ghierga advised us to also look at other financing instruments offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Romania. Her advice was to write concrete and clear projects of development together with external partners, especially partners from countries in which Romania could have genuine contribution such as Moldova and ask for financing from MFA. In the field of development she feels that Romania could be an example in areas such as the inclusion of minorities or children rights and that project should also focus on the creation of regional networks. As a conclusion, she advised us to try to create a more powerful voice for the civil society in Romania as she feels there is no pressure put on the state authorities by CSOs. She feels that Romanian CSOs should be more demanding, more pushy and louder in their requests.

**IV.4. Katarzyna Jarecka-Świępieni, Polish Medical Mission (PMM) and Aleksandra Klosinska, Fundacja Inna Przestrzen (FIP), Poland**

Meeting with MEP Bogdan Brunon Wenta (Group of the European People's Party-Christian Democrats, Vice-chair of the Development Committee in the European Parliament-
DEVE, Rapporteur on the report on conflict minerals). The meeting was focused mainly on Mr Wenta’s last activities around the issue of conflict minerals' legislation. The report on the issue was adopted on 9 March by the Development Committee members. The DEVE Committee's opinion contributes to preparing the Parliament's position on this legislation proposed by the Commission in 2014 in view of setting up a ‘system for supply chain due diligence self-certification of responsible importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas’. The issue of Polish presence and visibility in European Parliament as well as in EU development policy in general was discussed. That topic had connections to the latest changes made by EC in NGOs funding policy. The MEP emphasised his support for NGOs engaged in development aid and global education. Mr. Wenta is firmly convinced about the necessity of keeping Polish NGO engagement at the international level. During the meeting the TRIALOG letter concerning DEAR funding was passed to him, as well as the press release published by our national platform Grupa Zagranica concerning the low levels of global education provided by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Wenta seemed very sympathetic to the cause and underlined that the governments of EU13 need to contribute more funds to international development.

**IV.5. Maja Ladić, Peace Institute, Slovenia**

Meetings with MEP Tanja Fajon (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D)- Vice chair, Member of Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs - LIBE and Delegation for relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo - DSEE) and MEP Igor Šoltes (Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance, Vice chair of Delegation to the EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee - D-RS). The work of the platform SLOGA and the Peace Institute which is member of the platform were presented. Challenges that NGOs in Slovenia are facing were discussed, especially after changes regarding EC DEAR call conditions. The importance of DEAR was emphasized, and the planned activities in EYD 2015 were mentioned. The question was posed if the MEPs too will plan any events this year or if they would be interested to attend the events that NGOs will organise. They both showed understanding for NGO sector and for the challenging situation NGOs are in, especially in EU13 countries, and agreed to address the question regarding changes in EuropeAid DEAR call and the consequences for EU13 NGOs to the EC.
**IV.6. Ela Naranđa and Lana Jurman, Center for Peace studies, Croatia**

Meeting in the EP with **Ivona Milinovic** (Accredited Parliamentary Assistant of Davor Ivo Stier). Topics presented included an introduction to the CROSOL Platform, its work and activities as well as the future projects that platform plans to undertake (e.g. in Palestine), a discussion about future calls for proposals where CROSOL will be applicant or partner (like MFA call, CONCORD call – project with SLOGA etc.). Also, relations with the MFA and with Commissioner Mimica were discussed which received positive feedback from both sides. The study visit participants asked more details about MEP Stier’s work with: CONCORD, NGOs, Commissioner Neven Mimica, the MFA and CROSOL. The participants handed Ivona a copy of the 'EC DEAR call Advocacy letter' and explained in details the problem. Commitments were made to stay in touch about further steps, like MEP Stier possibly asking the Commission a question about the EC DEAR call. Result of the meeting was agreement on further support and cooperation, MEP Stier fully supports CROSOL’s work and will come to local events.

**IV.7. Petra Skalická, People in Need and Pavel Žwak, ARPOK, Czech Republic**

Meeting with **MEP Jan Keller** (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament - S&D, Member of Committee on Employment and Social Affairs - EMPL). The discussion points were: EuropeAid DEAR financing and study visit to Brussels for members of FoRS (national platform). Outcomes: Jan Keller was very surprised about the new EuropeAid rules for granting. He will send a letter to EC and ask for explanation and change of the rules. ARPOK in cooperation with FoRS will provide him with detailed background information about the issue. Jan Keller is willing to support a study visit to Brussels for members of FoRS and teachers interested in development education in the spring 2017. He will cover travel costs for the whole group.

Meeting with **MEP Michaela Šojdrová** (Group of the European People’s Party- Christian Democrats, Vice chair Committee on Culture and Education- CULT). The discussion points were: EuropeAid DEAR financing, study visit for members of FoRS (national platform), development education in the Czech Republic. Outcomes: Michaela Šojdrová was very surprised about the new EuropeAid rules for granting. She will send a letter to EC and ask for explanation and change of the rules. She will also share this information with other Czech MEPs during their regular informal meeting in Strasbourg. ARPOK in cooperation with FoRS will provide him with detailed background information about the issue. She is not able to support any study visit for FoRS members and teachers, since she is overwhelmed. She has a very conservative and rigid opinion about development education since she thinks it is frustrating for pupils and teachers and it should not be brought to the schools. She also does not want to support ‘small players’ in
education since it should be done by the 'big players’ such as the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, she asked to be provided with more materials, press releases about our (ARPOK) activities in the Czech Republic.

Meeting with MEP Jiri Pospíšil (Group of the European People's Party - Christian Democrats, Member of Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection - IMCO and Delegation for relations with Iran - D- IR). The issues addressed during the meeting included: introduction of CONCORD as an umbrella of national platforms working in the area of development cooperation and development education, introduction of the EYD 2015 and key events in 2015, presenting key challenges faced by the Czech Republic in the area of development and commitments of the EU and the Czech Republic. Mr. Pospíšil was very interested in this topic, but the majority of the information provided was new for him. Discussion about educational activities in the area of global development education was held. Mr. Pospíšil strongly agreed with the importance of focus on education of young people. Mr. Pospíšil promised to submit a written question to the EC concerning the EuropeAid DEAR Funding conditions. Discussion was held about possible support from Mr. Pospíšil which resulted in an offer of supporting a study visit for students and teachers.

Meeting with MEP Dita Charanzova (Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe - ALDE, Member of Delegation to the Cariforum — EU Parliamentary Committee – DCAR, Delegation for relations with Mercosur – DMER, Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly– DLAT). Short Introduction of CONCORD and key events in 2015 took place. Mrs. Charanzova was already informed about the area of development cooperation (she used to work in this area). Discussion took place about educational activities in the area of global development education. On the issue of EC DEAR funding – Mrs. Charanzova was willing to submit a written question to the EC. In further discussion about the possible support from Mrs. Charanzova, she said that she is willing to offer possible support to Czech NGOs, she agreed with a possible study visit for students and teachers to the European Parliament and she also suggested an internship for a student in her office.

IV.8. Petros Florides, World Vision Cyprus and Theocharis Michail, Center for the Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology (CARDET), Cyprus

Meeting with MEP Demetris Papadakis (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament - S&D, Member of Committee on Foreign Affairs – AFET). Of biggest surprise to the participants was the statement by the MEP that he was unfamiliar/ unaware of civil society in Cyprus and the issue of development or development education. This provided us with the opportunity to explain what it was and the issues now
concerning smaller NGOs regarding the awarding of EC DEAR grants. He said he is willing to ask a question on this issue in the European Parliament. Topics relevant to the work are of Commissioner for Humanitarian Assistance and Crisis Response (the Cypriot Commissioner) and how NGOs in Cyprus can support his brief as a European hub for MENA were discussed. MEP Papadakis also agreed to sign-up to the Child Rights Manifesto and CRAG intergroup.

Meeting with **MEP Takis Hadjigeorgiou** (Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left, Vice chair of Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee - D– TR). The meeting was informal and friendly. The MEP was briefed on development issues and also agreed to ask the same EC DEAR funding-related question in the European Parliament. After also being briefed on the issue of developments the conversation veered into possible causes of the on-going crises. At this point, partisanship became more prominent. The participant thanked MEP Hadjigeorgiou for having already joined CRAG.

**IV.9. Roderick Agius, National Platform of Maltese NGDOs (SKOP), Malta**

Meetings were held with **MEP Therese Comodini Cachia** (Group of the European People's Party- Christian Democrats, Member of Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean– D-MED) and **MEP Miriam Dalli** (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament- S&D, Member of Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety- ENVI and Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries and the Arab Maghreb Union- DMAG). The agenda was: a short introduction of SKOP and the issues for discussion were funding for small NGOs and DEAR financing for 2015-03-20. Both MEPS showed great interest in SKOP’s work. After explaining the issues both MEPs offered to follow up on them through a parliamentary question and if necessary with meetings with the people concerned from the directorate.
V. Agenda of the Study Visit

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<th>Monday 02.03</th>
<th>Tuesday 03.03</th>
<th>Wednesday 04.03</th>
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<td>9.30-10.00</td>
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<td>Morning coffee &amp; informal networking for participants arriving early or on Sunday</td>
<td>Preparation meeting II</td>
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<td>Welcome &amp; Opening TRIALOG Team</td>
<td>Commissioner for Development</td>
<td>European Parliament Development Committee Secretariat</td>
<td>Campaigning and Citizens’ involvement in EU advocacy</td>
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<td>10.45-11.30</td>
<td>Mr. Neven Mimica’s Cabinet Paolo Berizzi, Cabinet member responsible for Civil Society and Local Authorities</td>
<td>Tristan Stubbs and Joao Moura</td>
<td>Angela Corbalan, Oxfam EU office</td>
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<td>CONCORD Policy &amp; Advocacy Sabine Terlecki, Head of Policy &amp; Advocacy</td>
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<td>CONCORD Advocacy &amp; Beyond 2015 Katie Davey Dalsgaard, VSO International</td>
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<td>Discussion with CONCORD Director Seamus Jeffreson</td>
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<td>CONCORD Advocacy &amp; Beyond 2015 Katie Davey Dalsgaard, VSO International</td>
<td>European Commission DG</td>
<td>Devco - EuropeAid Civil Society, Local Authorities section Valentina Auricchio and Markus Pirchner</td>
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<td>DEAR and EU Advocacy Tobias Troll, CONCORD DARE Forum</td>
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<td>13.30-14.30 Lunch</td>
<td>14.30-15.30 European Year for Development Messages</td>
<td>14.00-16.00 Evaluation and Future Plans</td>
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<td>14.30-15.45</td>
<td>European External Action Service Development Cooperation Coordination Division Adele Orosz</td>
<td>Participants: Interactive Session</td>
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<td>European Year for Development Messages Luciana Almeida, DEEEP Project Francesca Romana Minniti, CONCORD EYD Project</td>
<td>15.00-16.00 Participants: Interactive Session</td>
<td>16.30-17.30 Latvian Permanent Representation to the EU CODEV delegate Sintija Rupjā, and Liva Stokenberga</td>
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