



TRIALOG Information Service (TIS)

(11/04/2006)

The TRIALOG Information Service (TIS) is addressed to NGOs and individuals who are interested in development issues in the context of EU enlargement.

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1. TRIALOG News

1.1. TRIALOG visit to Bulgaria supporting the creation of the NGDO platform

Information provided by Lada Parizkova, TRIALOG

From March 20 - 24, 2006, one month after a similar action in Cyprus (see TIS from 07/03/2006), TRIALOG, Christine Bedoya and Lada Parizkova, organized a trip to Bulgaria in order to help Bulgarian NG(D)Os to create links with each other and to prepare a creation of their national platform. The increased initiative of Bulgarian NGOs was a result of the TRIALOG study trip in November 2005, where participants from Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania visited the national platforms in Austria, Hungary and Slovakia (see TIS 23/12/2005). Since then participants from Bulgarian NGOs maintained a very intensive contact with TRIALOG in order to prepare the follow-up TRIALOG visit, which would enable a larger number of NGOs to get familiar with development cooperation and development education topics and eventually to decide about the creation of a common platform.

During the first three days in Sofia, TRIALOG visited a substantial number of NGOs in order to have a better understanding of their activities and to discuss their interest in development cooperation/education projects. The situation within the NGO sector in Bulgaria is similar to the situation in New member states (NMS) before their accession to the EU – there is a large number of NGOs working on social issues, integration of minorities, rural development, gender issues, human trafficking etc. on national level. Their daily work is very closely linked to the basic need to fight poverty and to promote all-inclusive society living in a sustainable environment (in ecological terms, but also in social and economic terms). Their activities very often take them outside the borders of Bulgaria to those countries, which might be considered as priority countries in the future Development Policy strategy of Bulgaria (mostly neighbouring countries in the Western Balkans, but also for example to Azerbaijan), but so far this is not done under the label of 'development cooperation'. A specificity of the Bulgarian NGO sector is a high percentage of gender- and women-related NGOs, which are often linked to other like-minded NGOs within international and European networks. The meetings with the NGO sector were followed by meetings with the representatives of the national administration – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy.

In cooperation with Bulgarian NGOs TRIALOG organized a one day seminar on the process of platform building in order to enable the interested NGOs to meet each other and to discuss the main issues linked to the creation of the platform (objectives, membership, advocacy etc.). To

facilitate the task and to give some concrete examples, TRIALOG invited the coordinator of the Hungarian NGDO platform (HAND) Reka Balogh, who shared her experience. The discussions were very intensive and according to many participants this event was an important step in moving forward. The platform-building seminar was followed by a conference on International Development, where speakers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy shared their vision about a future Development Policy strategy of Bulgaria and discussed with NGOs the role the latter could play in the implementation of the policy. Representatives of several NGOs then presented their work related to development cooperation. A speaker from the European Commission (EuropeAid), Aristotelis Bouratsis, was invited to offer a comprehensive summary of the historical evolution and fundamental objectives of the EU Development Policy. The last session of the conference was dealing with the possibilities of cooperation the Bulgarian NGOs have within European networks and last but not least, the topic of development education/awareness raising (DE/AR).

It is too early to evaluate the impact of this trip, but some of the planned actions and commitments from the side of the national administration, give already very positive signals. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs for example showed willingness to have a consultation process for the Development strategy with representatives of the NGOs in May 2006, and also supported the suggestion of TRIALOG to allocate a certain amount of ODA funds for the co-financing of projects of Bulgarian NGOs financed by the European Commission.

1.2. Romanian MFA strategy seminar

Information provided by Adam Novak, TRIALOG

Romanian NGOs appreciate the strong focus on poverty reduction and democracy in the recent policy outline presented by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), but would like to see a greater attention to development education, as well as a clear and transparent mechanism for the deployment of Romania's bilateral assistance. While most NGOs support the MFA focus of Romanian ODA on the Republic of Moldova, West Balkan countries and those ex-Soviet and middle east countries with which Romania has a history of cooperation, some NGOs believe that Romania should already include on its bilateral ODA target country list at least one country from the Least Developed Countries, preferably in Africa, as this would help anchor Romanian development cooperation within the strong European commitment to poverty reduction. NGOs also stress the importance of development education and awareness raising, both towards the Romanian public and towards decision-makers and opinion-formers.

These were among the main discussions at the first of three strategy seminars organised by the Romanian MFA, held recently in Bucharest. TRIALOG facilitated a pre-seminar brainstorming of Romanian NGO participants, to ensure that the civil society perspectives are well articulated. In preparation of the next seminars, TRIALOG will also support a series of regional information days and thematic trainings, to enable NGOs outside the capital to engage with these issues, and hopefully to join the national working group of NGOs interested in international development cooperation and development education.

Romania (and Bulgaria) are receiving more support from the EU in the area of development cooperation than the 10 countries which recently joined the Union. The Commission, and several member states, particularly Germany, are providing technical assistance to the Ministries responsible for ODA, while TRIALOG is increasingly focusing on these countries. The Polish NGO Platform (Polish NGOs Abroad Group/Grupa Zagranica) has also secured funding from the US National Endowment for Democracy for an initiative to support the NGDO platforms in Bulgaria and Romania. TRIALOG's own activities make increasing use of the know-how and experience of

NGDOs in the new member states, with Maltese participation in our Cyprus support activities, Hungarian and Polish input into our Bulgarian and Romanian activities.

Go to the website of the Romanian MFA to read the Romanian strategy for development cooperation: http://www.mae.ro/poze_editare/2006.03.30_Strategia_eng.pdf

For more information on TRIALOG's Romania activities, please contact Mirela Oprea at stagiairetrialog@concordeurope.org

1.3. Report on Working Group Enlargement (WGE) meeting in Budapest

Information provided by Lada Parizkova, TRIALOG, WGE convener

After welcoming participants from countries not yet having an NGDO platform (Cyprus, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey) the meeting on March 8, 2006 offered an overview of upcoming events both in New Member States (NMS) and Old Member States (OMS). An important part of this information session was devoted to the actions planned by the Austrian and Finnish presidencies concerning several major topics, such as the Coherence of the Development Policy, the EU-Africa Strategy (conference planned in June in Vienna) or the EU- Asia relations (a meeting planned in September in Helsinki). The information part was followed by the election/nomination of a Chair, Vice-chair and members of the Steering Committee of the WGE. While WGE has now a new Steering Committee, the election of its Chair was postponed for the next WGE meeting. In the meanwhile the Chair remains Mr. Vince Caruana, from the Maltese platform.

One of the most debated topics of the meeting were the eligibility criteria for the NMS NGOs in EC Calls for Proposals and the upcoming opportunities for projects in the area of Development Education. Members of the WGE see that the current eligibility criteria are difficult to attain by a large number of NGOs from NMS and they would like to see a larger percentage of contribution from the EC (at least 85% instead of 80%) and a smaller minimum size of grants provided by EC (ideally 15.000 EUR). The WGE members also discussed possible activities linked to the monitoring of the Action Plans of the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and decided to start with a case study on Moldova (a special subgroup 'ENPI monitoring' was created).

The afternoon session was devoted to those countries that are now striving to build up their national platforms (Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus). These countries provided a summary of their efforts in building up national interest and consensus on the need of having a platform and on the importance of getting involved in development cooperation projects. An opportunity to present an overview of the situation concerning the national (development) NGOs sector was also given to a representative of a Turkish NGO. A number of WGE members expressed their interest to follow the question of accession and candidate states more closely, so a special subgroup on this topic was created. In the final phase of the meeting the participants received an update on the last calls for proposal within the Regional Partnership Program and within the Presidency Fund. The next meeting will be held in Vienna on 20-21st June 2006.

1.4. TRIALOG Central Training documentation on the website

Information provided by Anita Bister, TRIALOG

The main topic of this year's TRIALOG Central Training was Advocacy and Policy Dialogue on the national and international level. The seminar took place in Budapest on March 9 - 10, 2006 with

around 70 participants from the 10 new member states, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. It started with an exchange between national NGDO platforms on their past and planned lobbying activities and continued with input from experts on theoretical issues related to advocacy and policy dialogue as well as on practical examples of advocacy work related to development cooperation and development education. This input, together with the information given at the training on news from EuropeAid and from the NGO confederation CONCORD, was very much appreciated by the participants and led to good discussions in the working groups of the event and the development of concrete ideas for further actions, especially with regard to strengthening the dialogue with policy makers at the national level.

Special attention was also drawn to the topic of EC NGO Co-financing in the field of development education/awareness raising. Within the EC annual budget 2006, 10 million EUR are reserved for NGO projects on awareness raising on development issues in new EU member states (NMS) and in Accession countries (AC). The Call is expected to be published in autumn and NGOs from NMS and AC are encouraged to already start preparing for the Call (for more information see the related article 3.1. in the section "Information on EU and EU Enlargement issues" of this newsletter).

Find all handouts and presentations given at the TRIALOG Central training at the following link:

<http://www.trialog.or.at/main.asp?m=4,24,212>

At the same link, the minutes of the event will become available soon.

2. Events

2.1. April 18, 2006: Seminar on EU-Africa strategy; Brussels

Information provided by Ester Asin Martinez, CONCORD

The seminar "The Europe-Africa strategy: between vision and reality" organized by the CONCORD Cotonou Working Group and the Belgian platform, will take place next week on the 18th April in Brussels.

Find the invitation and programme at the following link:

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/eu_africa_brussels18042006.pdf

If you would like to register to this seminar, there are still some places available. Please contact Salimata Kabore at: Salimata.kabore@cncd.be

TRIALOG will consider to support the travel and accommodation costs of participants from new EU Member States which were not eligible for participation in the recent RPP Bratislava workshop (The Bratislava workshop was open for Slovenia, Hungary, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic) and the Accession Countries, from NGOs already working on this theme. Applicants should complete the TRIALOG Application Form for Participation in events

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/application_for_events.doc and urgently send it to TRIALOG Policy Officer Lada Parizkova at trialog@concordeurope.org, by Thursday this week, April 13.

2.2. April 20, 2006: MIND THE GAP! Coherence Conference; Vienna

Information provided by Stefan Kerl, Austrian EU Platform

The Austrian EU-Platform of development NGOs is organising a conference in Vienna entitled: "MIND THE GAP! The European Commitment to Policy Coherence for Development - Current shortcomings and the way forward."

Given the fact that European policies that negatively affect 'developing countries' are still one of the main obstacles undermining development politics, the conference aims at creating a constructive dialogue between representatives of civil society and delegates from the European Commission, Members of the European Parliament and national decision makers in order to discuss other European policies' effects on poverty eradication and to examine the extent to which current European and national approaches, which aim to improve 'Policy Coherence for Development' live up to their promises.

When: April 20, 2006; 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Location: Herrensaal, Herrengasse 17, 1010 Vienna, (opposite Cafe Central)

Contact and registration: office@eu-platform.at

Registration deadline: April 14, 2006

Conference Programme: http://doku.cac.at/programme_mtg.pdf

Registration Form: http://doku.cac.at/registrationform_mind_the_gap.doc

For more information please turn to: <http://www.eu-plattform.at/english/start.asp>

TRIALOG may reimburse the travel and accommodation costs of participants from the 10 New EU Member States and the Accession Countries. Applicants should complete the TRIALOG Application Form for Participation in events

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/application_for_events.doc and urgently send it to

TRIALOG Policy Officer Lada Parizkova at trialog@concordeurope.org by Thursday, April 13.

See also: http://doku.cac.at/financial_assistance_nms_mind_the_gap.pdf

2.3. May 5-6, 2006: Promoting Democratic Values in the Enlarging Europe; Tartu, Estonia

Information provided by Krista Baumane, Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS

The conference "Promoting Democratic Values in the Enlarging Europe: The Changing Role of the Baltic States from Importers to Exporters" is organized by the EuroCollege and the University of Tartu. The objective of the conference is to facilitate the learning of transition process, using the experience gained in Estonia and the other Baltic states. The programme touches on development cooperation subjects such as the transformation of the Baltic countries from democracy importers to exporters as well as expectations and needs in the target countries.

Find the agenda and more details on the background and aim of the conference at:

http://ec.ut.ee/conf06/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=5

For more information please contact Krista Baumane at: krista@providus.lv

2.4. May 21-24, 2006: Seminar on Globalisation, Sustainable Development, Trade; Prague

Information sent by Barbara Specht, WIDE

The Glopolis - Prague Global Policy Institute is calling for participation in a Regional - Central Eastern European - Capacity Building Seminar on issues of Globalisation, Sustainable

Development and Trade which is designed for NGOs active in the area of policy making and advocacy and will take place in Prague, Czech Republic, on 21-24 May 2006.

Find the invitation, programme and the application form at the following links:

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/cee_call-for-applications.pdf

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/cee_preliminary-programme.pdf

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/cee_application-form.doc

Please note that the deadline for applications is the 23th of April 2006.

For more information, please go to <http://www.glopolis.org> or contact Ondrej Kopecny at: kopecny@glopolis.org

TRIALOG will consider to support the travel and accommodation costs of participants from the new EU Member States and the EU Accession Countries (up to two per country). They have to come from NGOs already active on these issues. Applicants should also complete the TRIALOG Application Form for Participation in events

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/application_for_events.doc and send it to TRIALOG Policy Officer Lada Parizkova at trialog@concordeurope.org as soon as possible.

2.5. June 1-3, 2006: WIDE Annual Conference: What 'state' are we in?; Warsaw

Information provided by WIDE and KARAT

The WIDE Annual Conference "What 'state' are we in? Women's lives, changing states, expanding markets." will be hosted by KARAT in Warsaw, Poland 1-3 June 2006. Its aim is to initiate a discussion between women from East, North and South on their experience and expectations regarding states and markets. The conference will start with a capacity building day, followed by a two-day international conference. The conference is open to all organizations and individuals interested in its topic.

In order to find out more about the conference background, the agenda and the possibilities of participation etc, please visit: http://www.karat.org/wide_conference.html
For further information, please contact Emilka Danilowicz at: office@karat.org.pl.

The event will have a special focus on women's NGOs in New Member States which are active in development cooperation. TRIALOG will provide financial support for a limited number of New Member States and Accession Countries participants. For more information contact WIDE or KARAT directly (office@karat.org.pl).

Read the latest WIDE News N.3/2006:

http://www.eurosur.org/wide/Newsletter/2006_News_3.pdf

Read the latest KARAT News N.3/2006:

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/karat_news-march-2006.doc

2.6. June 8, 2006: Conference on Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights; Vilnius

Information provided by Marie-Ange Kalenga, EuroNGOs Coordinator

The EuroNGOs 2006 Conference will be held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 'Advancing Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights Internationally: What Role for the Enlarged EU?' This meeting is hosted by the Family Planning and Sexual Health Association (FPSHA), Lithuania on behalf of EuroNGOs. The overall goal of the EuroNGOs Conference is to build a more complete

understanding of the challenges and benefits of EU leadership in advancing Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) internationally.

Read the invitation to the conference at:

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/eurongos_invitation.pdf

Find the draft agenda, concept note and registration form on the EuroNGO website:

<http://www.eurongos.org/Default.asp?ID=2882>

Deadline for registration is 27 April 2006.

This year, the EuroNGOs network is also celebrating its 10th anniversary. In addition to the conference, a closed meeting for members, partners and invited observers will be held on 9 June. If you also wish to attend the Membership Meeting please contact the EuroNGOs secretariat at makalenga@eurongos.org.

2.7. June 22- 23, 2006: International Conference on the EU-Africa Strategy; Vienna

Source: <http://www.richpoorworld.at/english/start.asp>

The international conference "SOUND OF AFRICA. EU-Africa Strategy - a way out of poverty?" which will take place on 22 and 23 June 2006 is organised by the Austrian EU-Platform of Development NGOs and CONCORD, the federation of European NGOs in Development. For the first time, all stakeholders of development cooperation will discuss the impact, opportunities and challenges of the EU-Africa strategy and develop recommendations for making this strategy work for all of the people in Africa.

For more information check the website of the Austrian NGDO presidency project

<http://www.richpoorworld.at> or contact Sabine Rehbichler at: sabine.rehbichler@eu-platform.at.

The programme will become available soon.

TRIALOG will consider to support the travel and accommodation costs of up to two participants per country from the new EU Member States and the EU Accession Countries. They have to come from NGOs already working on this theme. Applicants should complete the TRIALOG Application Form for Participation in events http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/application_for_events.doc and send it to TRIALOG Policy Officer Lada Parizkova at trialog@concordeurope.org

2.8. Summer 2006: European Capacity-Building Programme for Development Cooperation

Information sent by Katharina Ochse, SLE

This summer, the European Capacity-Building Programme for International Development Cooperation at the Seminar für Ländliche Entwicklung (SLE) – Centre for Advanced Training in Rural Development, Humboldt University Berlin, is offering three courses. The first course is on "Project Management Cycle" (31.7-11.8.2006). The second course deals with "Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management" (14.08.-25.08.2006). And the third course - "Leading People" (28.8.-8.9.2006) - aims at the enhancement of leadership skills.

Find more information in the following documents:

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/sle_letter.pdf

<http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/sle-eu-programme2006.pdf>

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/sle_eu-application-form.doc

3. Information on EU and EU Enlargement issues

3.1. 10 million EUR for Development Education in New Member States

Information provided by Christine Bedoya, TRIALOG

News from the European Commission, Budget 2006, Budget Line 21-02-03 for NGO co-financing: In the annual workplan of EuropeAid it's foreseen to launch a separate Call for Proposals on Development Education/Awareness Raising (DE/AR) to be allocated for activities in new EU member states (NMS) as well as in Romania and Bulgaria with a budget of 10 million EUR.

Background: The basis of this decision is a declaration of the European Council: "With a view to implementing the ODA [Official Development Assistance] commitments undertaken by Member States in May 2005, the Council re-emphasizes the importance of stepping up development education and awareness raising in the EU, especially in new and future Member States. It invites the Commission to strengthen activities in this area from 2007 onwards, and, within the existing budgetary framework for 2006, to enhance coordination of activities which are financed from different budget lines; and to devote any additional allocations to these activities, particularly in the new Member States." The European Parliament agreed to increase the 2006 budget for DE/AR in the NGO co-financing budget line by 10 m EUR.

For the allocation of the 10 m for DE/AR there will be the following conditions (as communicated by EuropeAid):

- There will be a special Call for Proposals (expected to be launched by Sept/Oct 06)
- The projects can only take place in the 10 new EU member states as well as in Bulgaria and Romania
- In all other countries (non-EU and non-developing countries, like other Accession Countries) only ad-hoc activities (such as a seminar) are possible.
- Applicants, consortia partners and "normal" partners can be NGOs from old and new EU member states (all 25) but not from Romania and Bulgaria
- Romanian and Bulgarian NGOs can only be associated and/or target group. Associates according to the Guidelines in the CFP 2005: „Other organisations may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant (with exception of per diem and/or travel costs). Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria.”
- The minimum amount of financial EC contribution is 15.000 EUR (instead of 50.000 EUR as usual)
- The maximum % of EC contribution will be 85% (instead of 75% as usual)

In order to have the 10 m for DE/AR been absorbed in NMS, there is the need of joint projects between (eligible) NGOs from old and new member states NGOs. Even with these improved conditions (85% of EC contribution, 15.000 minimum EC contribution) it is not possible for many NGOs in NMS to apply for funding. Most NGOs from NMS are still not eligible for EC funding under this budget line and thus they are not allowed to be applicants or consortium partners. For them, the only possibility to join is as "normal" partners which would allow them to get funding and capacity building on how to access EU funding. Joint projects would assure the quantity and quality of project proposals, also EuropeAid sees this as the most preferable option.

TRIALOG is offering trainings in NMS on EC funding and applications but additionally, wants to stimulate collaboration between old and new member states NGOs. Therefore, TRIALOG will offer support to joint projects by organising some kind of market place for finding partners. This could be done physically (by organising a mega event and/or direct approach) or virtually (via website or list or...). We will inform you as soon as possible about our possibilities and what we can offer. The information will also become available on our website at <http://www.trialog.or.at>

This is the first time that the EC gives a special budget for DE/AR in NMS (even with better conditions as usual) and we should use the opportunity and try to suggest enough good quality proposals to the EC. 10 million EUR is a lot of money and we should mobilize all NGOs that might want to take part in this effort.

In order to prepare the project proposals in time, we strongly recommend NMS NGOs to already start with the preparation:

A) Analyse what type of DE/AR projects are useful for your country? what priorities of the EC you will meet with this projects? Find the priorities of the last Call for Proposals at the link below, they will probably remain the same for the next call. Draft a short concept note on your project idea/s. You can find a good description on what DE/AR is about on the DEEEP website at <http://www.deeep.org> Find a lot of good ideas on successful DE/AR projects / best practice projects at: http://www.deeep.org/english/what_is_de/projects/index.php

B) Analyse if you are eligible (see eligibility criteria in the guidelines at the link below). If yes, you can go ahead with the project preparation.

C) If you are not eligible (in our estimation this will be about 90% of all NMS NGOs for DE/AR), you have to look for one or more partners as applicant in order to be accepted as partner for the EC funding. TRIALOG is willing to support your partner search and we already heard about big interest from eligible NGOs from old EU member states to create partnerships and joint projects with NMS NGOs for this Call for Proposals. Therefore, it's really necessary that you are clear about what you want and need. If you search for a partner for a joint project proposal, please send your concept note(s), one per each project idea, to TRIALOG Capacity Building Officer Christine Bedoya: c.bedoya@trialog.or.at as soon as possible.

Consult the Guidelines of the 2005 Call for Proposals for your preparation:
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/tender/data/d51/AOF62951.doc>

3.2. New Member States results in 2004 EU Calls for Proposals for NGO co-financing

Information provided by Christine Bedoya, TRIALOG

For the first time in 2004, the EU calls for proposals for NGO co-financing (EC budget line 21-02-03) were open for NGOs from the 10 new EU member states (NMS). The results from these calls were only communicated in 2006 but are still not officially published on the EC website (only the provisional results). Not surprisingly, due to the strict eligibility criteria which did not consider the realities of the NMS development NGO scene, the results in terms of submitted applications and contracts for new member states are disappointing. Actually, they are even behind the (already low) expectations.

A look at the statistics shows the following:

A) Development education/awareness raising projects (DE/AR):
41 NGOs received a contract for projects in DE/AR - among them no single contract with an NGO from NMS. The explanation for this is that NMS NGOs didn't fulfill the eligibility criteria to be applicants, so only 2 applications were submitted, none of them was approved. However, 6 NMS NGOs are consortium members in approved projects of NGOs from old member states (OMS). 25 NMS NGOs are "normal" partners in approved projects of OMS NGOs. Only after this disappointing result of NMS participation in the 2004 call, it was decided that for the 2005 call

(which had its deadline in March 2006), the NMS partner does not have to fulfill the same hard eligibility criteria.

B) Projects in developing countries (PVD):

242 contracts were signed for PVD projects - again no contract was given to a NMS NGO. The explanation is the same as for the DE/AR projects: strict eligibility criteria which de facto prevent NMS NGOs from applying for funds. In PVD, 4 proposals were submitted from NMS NGOs, none of them was approved.

For more information on the results of the 2004 calls in NGO co-financing, read an analysis of the Irish NGDO platform Dochas at the following link:

http://www.dochas.ie/Documents/EU_Dev_Co-op/EU_funding_2004.pdf

TRIALOG is actively involved in different lobby and advocacy activities which call for better eligibility criteria and framework conditions for NMS NGOs in order to facilitate NMS participation in the NGO co-financing calls.

In view of the 2004 results, it is very important that NGOs from NMS make use of the opportunity of the upcoming 2006 call for proposals for development education and awareness raising projects (DE/AR) which will reserve 10 million EUR for projects in NMS and will provide better conditions for NMS participation as well as allow all NGOs to participate at least as partner (see article 3.1. on this topic).

3.3. European vote on a Development Co-operation Instrument

Source: eCNVOS, March 24, 2006; <http://www.eurostep.org>

The European Parliament's Development Committee voted in favour of establishing a separate legal instrument for the EC's co-operation with developing countries. This was also what NGOs strongly lobbied for. The Committee is proposing a Development Co-operation Instrument by splitting the Commission's original proposals for a single instrument combining the EU's co-operation with developing and industrialised countries into two separate and distinct instruments. Supported also by the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Parliament, this sends a strong signal to the Commission and the EU's member states on what Parliament expects.

Read the Eurostep Press Release from 21/03/2006 on this issue at:

<http://www.eurostep.org/docs/200603212157314387.pdf?&username=guest@euro>

4. Information on activities of European NGDOs

4.1. Press Release: Austrian Presidency half time

Information provided by Sabine Rehbichler, Austrian EU-Platform

Since the Austrian EU-Presidency has already reached the half-time mark, the Austrian EU-Platform, Austria's network of Development NGOs, is looking back at what the Austrian Government together with the Member States as a driving force has done (or not) up till now to promote development issues on the EU's agenda.

The press release issued on March 23, 2006 is entitled: The halfway-mark: A weak verdict! At the beginning of the EU-Summit, a milestone check of the Austrian EU-Presidency's efforts concerning development issues has proven to be less than promising.

Read the full document at:

<http://www.richpoorworld.at/english/start.asp?showmenu=yes&fr=&b=764&ID=10573>

Find more information in an article from the Austrian EU-Platform for the latest CONCORD Flash:

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/concord-flash_halftime.doc

For further information contact Sabine Rehbichler at: sabine.rehbichler@eu-platform.at

4.2. Slovenian participation in Regional Partnership Programme assured

Information provided by Marjan Huc, Slovenian NGDO platform SLOGA
(Source: Governmental public relations and media office)

At its 66th regular session on March 22, 2006, the Slovenian government has adopted the participation of the Republic of Slovenia in the Regional Partnership Programme (RPP) and consequently the co-funding of the selected Slovenian projects. Among other foreign affairs issues, the government discussed the cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia in the Regional Partnership Programme, which includes Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, and which provides support for the development of NGOs that are active in international development cooperation and/or education for development.

The Slovenian government allocated SIT 24,000,000 (EUR 100,000) for co-financing the programme from 2006 to 2008. The sum provides co-funding for individual projects carried out by Slovenian NGOs. The purpose of the Regional Partnership Programme, a project of the Austrian EU-Platform, funded by the Austrian Development Agency ADA (67%), by the MFAs of the participating New Member States (23%) and by a 10% NGO contribution, is to provide joint support from participating countries to non-governmental development organisations that promote international developmental cooperation and education for development.

Visit the RPP website at <http://www.regionalpartnership.at>

Visit the Slovenian Global Action - SLOGA website at <http://www.sloga-platform.org>

4.3. Catholic Malta - Racist and Xenophobic?

Information provided by Mario Gerada, Maltese NGDO platform

The topic of racism and xenophobia has recently become one of the most discussed subjects in Maltese newspapers, talk shows and personal debates. It is clear that for the past few years, the perception that the Maltese are Catholic to the core has been seriously challenged by the immigration issue.

There are varying opinions on the issue of helping immigrants and asylum seekers, mainly: denying them help; detaining them with a view to repatriate; assisting them to move on to mainland Europe; enabling their integration within mainstream Maltese society. However, the most striking of all is the far-from Catholic attitude of Maltese extremists against immigrants and asylum-seekers, which is their resorting to violence and intimidation to express their objection to helping the immigrants. Recently, two Jesuit communities of the Maltese Province were subject to the setting on fire of a number of their cars by unidentified vandals (see photos at the link below). This occurred in two separate incidents, both of which followed a public statement

against racism and xenophobia by the communities that were targeted. Another act of vandalism was perpetrated against a prominent NGO activist who is renowned for his work towards the integration of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in Malta. The door of his home was set on fire. Other threats are commonly posted on a notorious far-right internet forum. A number of refugees who have been living outside the detention or open centres, have been individually attacked physically. It is common knowledge that more attacks have taken place that have not been reported.

In December 2005, Integra Foundation proposed a change in legislation by introducing provisions against hate-crime and hate-speech. This proposal created much debate in the mass media. If such legislation were to be enacted, certain articles appearing on Maltese newspapers and on the internet would need to be stopped or removed. However, encroachment on the freedom of expression is always cited to strengthen the argument against such amendments.

The National Platform of Maltese NGOs has publicly condemned the abovementioned acts of vandalism and expressed its solidarity with all those Maltese citizens and organizations who are acting in favour of an inclusive, diverse and multicultural society. Moreover, the Platform asserted that it is unacceptable that individual persons or organizations spread messages of hate and fear, irrespective of whether the message is direct or not, as such messages tend to instigate acts of violence. Such messages should not be allowed to be broadcasted through the media.

The Maltese Platform urged the Country's authorities to step up the action being taken against those who are spreading messages of hate, terror and those who are committing intimidating vandal attacks.

For further information please contact the National Platform of Maltese NGOs on ngdo@maltforum.org

Photos of the recent acts of vandalism: http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/malta_photos.pdf

4.4. Official visit of Slovak MFA - NGO - Business delegation to Sudan and Kenya

Information provided by Marian Caucik, eRko, Slovak NGO Platform

In the period Feb. 4th-11th 2006 the official Slovak delegation led by the state secretary of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Jozsef Berenyi visited Khartoum and Nairobi. Both countries – Sudan and Kenya – belong to the priority countries of Slovak development cooperation and therefore the main goal of the visit was to explore possibilities of further cooperation. Meetings with the official representatives of Sudan and Kenya as well as visit of the projects already realized by Slovak organizations were included into the programme of the visit. The programme was organized by the Slovak Embassies in Egypt (responsible for Sudan) and in Nairobi.

Besides the official meetings with the government representatives of Sudan and Kenya, the main value from an NGO point of view was exposing the Slovak senior officials who are responsible for Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the reality of life and needs in these African countries. The visit to a refugee camp at Khartoum and also the visit to the projects of the NGO-local partners in Nairobi and Eldoret were valuable in terms of influencing the views of the delegation members away from a sole focus on large infrastructure and business type of cooperation towards ways how to tackle poverty differently and towards a development cooperation which affects the lives of the real poor people and enables them to live in dignity.

In the frame of the programme in Kenya a reception at the residence of the Slovak Embassy was held with the attendance of ambassadors from Poland, Austria, a representative of the Czech embassy and the representative of the EC in Kenya. The Slovak delegation and their meetings

were seen as a proactive step forward to start deeper cooperation in Kenya, also possibilities for cooperation e.g. with the development projects funds given by the Polish embassy or by SlovakAid and ADA (Austrian Development Agency) in the next future have been explored.

For more information please contact Marian Caucik, chairman of eRko Slovakia and chairman of the Slovak NGDO Platform at: maros@erko.sk

4.5. Joint Finnish - Latvian EC awareness raising project

Information provided by Mirikka Mattila, Väestöliitto

Vaestoliitto, the Family Federation of Finland, together with the Latvian Association for Family Planning and Sexual Health, Papardes Zieds, started a joint European Commission funded project in January 2006 to raise awareness on global sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Finland and Latvia with partners from Georgia and India. It is one of the very few joint new-old member states projects financed in the 2004 EC Call for Proposals.

The project aims at introducing the advocacy method and experiences of Vaestoliitto in Latvia, in order to increase the capacity of the partner organisation. The method has been to cooperate with Finnish parliamentarians, key government officials and the media to raise awareness on global SRHR and EU development policy in the enlarged Europe among the target groups.

The three-year project will focus on internal capacity building of the partner organizations, training of parliamentarians, government officials, teachers and journalists in the EU policy and global SRHR as a development issue. The youth perspective in the project is in strengthening the capacity and cooperation between the existing youth groups at Vaestoliitto and Papardes Zieds.

The first activity of the project was the Finnish-Baltic Roundtable on Development and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Riga, January 23–24.2006, which brought together parliamentarians, government officials working in development cooperation and representatives of civil society including young people from Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (see article 4.1. in TIS 03/02/2006). Cooperation between and within the countries between the three key actors was strengthened as a result of the Roundtable. The parliamentarians gave a joint statement of commitment for promotion of international development.

Read the Parliamentary Statement of Commitment at the following link:

http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/riga_statement_final.pdf

For further information, please contact the project coordinators:

Mirikka Mattila: mirikka.mattila@vaestoliitto.fi

Katariina Ylipahkala: katariina.ylipahkala@vaestoliitto.fi

Solvita Melne: solvita@papardeszieds.lv

4.6. Warsaw Regional NGOs Congress on Civil Society Involvement in Building Democracy

Information provided by Katarzyna Pisarska, Polish Forum of Young Diplomats

As a result of the 3rd Summit of the Council of Europe Heads of States and Governments (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005), the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe has introduced a new pilot project addressed to national NGOs of the 46 members states of the Council. The aim

of the project is to bring together representatives of leading national Non-Governmental Organizations for regional Congresses, in order to discuss the current situation of the civil society participation in building and consolidating democracy.

The first Regional NGOs Congress has taken place March 24-26th 2006 in Warsaw, gathering 150 NGOs' leaders from Belarus, Germany, Poland and Ukraine, a small number of NGO representatives from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia and Representatives of the Council of Europe.

The main goal of the Warsaw Regional NGOs Congress was to discuss the current developments and obstacles that the NGO sectors encounter, as well as to build a platform for cooperation between NGOs from neighboring countries. The objective was also to discuss the level of participation of the civil society in building democracy in the region and to present the practice of NGO involvement in policy making at the national level.

The Congress was organized by the Casimir Pulaski Foundation, the Polish Forum of Young Diplomats and the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe.

More information can be found at: <http://www.warsawcongress.pl>

For any additional questions please write to Katarzyna Pisarska, Head of the Organizing Committee at kpisarska@diplomacy.pl

4.7. The rise of Fair Trade in Estonia

Information sent by Sue Tack, Estonian Roundtable for Dev. Cooperation

In the end of 2004 the Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation initiated an awareness raising campaign on Fair Trade (FT) with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At that time Estonia had some FT coffee, chocolate and tea in ecological shops but the label was not understood by most of the customers and salespersons. Estonian Green Movement who was leading the project participated in FT Seminars in Finland and Brussels and organized one seminar in Tallinn. Leaflets and FT product were distributed on a large scale of events, from a woman's running day to the medieval markets in the old town. Today you can find a limited amount of FT products in big supermarkets and also in a couple of stores outside Tallinn. You can even enjoy a fresh cup of FT coffee or FT tea in one of the eco-shops for a regular price.

Next to special seminars on FT organized for salespersons and students, participants of different conferences and seminars were informed on FT during their coffee breaks. This first FT project in Estonia raised consumers' interest for FT which encouraged importers to order more and a greater variety of FT products for Estonia.

Last December Estonian opinion leaders visited FT coffee farmers in Nicaragua which was well covered by different media. In April 2006 a new, longer, bigger and more ambitious FT project will be launched. Together with Finnish partners Estonian Green Movement received EC support to increase the awareness and create commitment towards FT among supermarket staff, FT volunteers, and consumers.

For more information please contact Tiit Sullakatko at: tiit.sullakatko@mail.ee

Find a list of Fair Trade shops in new EU member states and accession countries on the TRIALOG website at: http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/fairtradeshopsnms_ac.pdf

4.8. Fair Trade Seminar held in Sofia, Bulgaria, in March

Information provided by Sylvia Pavlova and Svoboda Tosheva, DRC

After its participation in the International Meeting on Fair Trade Education in February in France (organized by the Federation Artisans du Monde), the Sofia based Development Research Center (DRC), held a Fair Trade Seminar in Sofia, Bulgaria on March 1, 2006. It took place in the lecture hall of the Fair Trade Shop "Ten Senses". Contributions came from the DRC director Svoboda Tosheva and Sylvia Pavlova, MBA economist. The event has been attended by NGOs, among them Integra, Agrolink, Gender project for Bulgaria, Pokrov Foundation, Bulgarian Association for Personal Alternatives, Gender Education, research, technology, small businesses – Bulven Ltd, students and others.

The following topics have been presented:

- Concept, definition of Fair Trade;
- Mechanisms of Fair Trade;
- Commodities traded and international bodies;
- Fair Trade education
- Fair Trade and Fair Trade education in the new EU member countries.

The issues discussed and questions raised during the meeting have been related to:

- Current status of Bulgaria and its role in the Fair Trade movements. Shall Bulgaria be part of it or deserve treatment as a Fair Trade source of products since there are similar problems as in many developing countries: disadvantaged producers, minorities and children that need protection.
- Ways to apply the experience of other countries, such as e.g. the Czech Republic.
- Building educational work – change people's vision of things, mind and attitude.
- The role of non-governmental organizations in promoting Fair Trade standards and transferring Fair Trade values and principles.
- Awareness raising among consumers about how international trade excludes the poor.
- Protection of human rights, promotion of social justice, environmental practices and economic security.

For more information on the seminar in Sofia please contact Svoboda Tosheva at: drc@dir.bg

5. Sources of information

5.1. March 2006 issue of the CONCORD Flash

Information sent by Adam Davies, CONCORD

The March issue of the CONCORD Flash - which reports the latest news from the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development - is now out.

In this issue:

Half way through the Austrian EU Presidency, the Austrian National Platform gives its assessment of what it has been achieved (or not) so far.

European Parliament Vote on the Development Co-operation Instrument

EU aid: no room for complacency

Looking ahead to the 10-11 April GAERC meeting

Towards a strategy for development education & public awareness raising in Europe

End of the DEEEP 1 Project: Looking back at the results

... and many other subjects!

You can download the CONCORD Flash in the version of your choice (PDF, Word, or Word without layout) from <http://www.concordeurope.org/view.cfm?idref=PUB37&tab1=publications> or by going to 'publications/CONCORD Flash' on the CONCORD website: <http://www.concordeurope.org>.

5.2. European Enlargement Newsletter - latest issue

Information provided by Anita Bister, TRIALOG

In the issue from April 10, 2006:

"The jury is still out for Bulgaria and Romania" – says Rehn
EU praises talks on free trade agreement for south-east Europe
Mandelson backs enlargement and targets doubters
EU-Croatia parliamentarians look for progress in negotiations
EESC supports social dialogue in the Western Balkans

Read more on: http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/docs/newsletter/latest_weekly.htm

At the same link, you can subscribe to this free newsletter to receive it regularly. The Enlargement Newsletter is prepared for the Information Unit of the Enlargement Directorate General of the European Commission.

6. Funding Opportunities

6.1. Second Call of the Regional Partnership Programme open

Information provided by Elke Gosch, RPP

The Regional Partnership Programme (RPP), <http://www.regionalpartnership.at>, launched its second Call for Proposals on March 9, 2006.

This call is open for initiatives in the field of development awareness/education and development cooperation. To generate a broad consensus between the participating countries, the core objectives of the international co-operation within the RPP are the Millennium Development Goals. As cross-cutting issues, the projects to be implemented should always meet the principles of gender equality, integration in the socio-economic background, environmental protection and the ownership-principle.

Eligible are NGOs from New EU Member States which participate in the RPP (Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia). Proposals have to be submitted in partnership with Austrian NGOs, but the lead agency has to come from a New Member State.

EUR 244.800,-- will be available for grants in development education and EUR 270.000,-- will be available for development cooperation projects. 78% of these funds come from the Austrian Development Cooperation and 22% from the respective national governments.

The deadline for submitting proposals is May 19, 2006.

The results on the appraisal of the proposals will be published on June 23, 2006. Approved projects can start in the beginning of July at the earliest.

Further information and all documents of the second call are available on the RPP website:
<http://www.eu-platform.at/english/start.asp?b=1178>

Use the RPP's support for searching an Austrian project partner. For more details see:
<http://www.eu-platform.at/english/start.asp?b=1181>

6.2. Support for Development Education projects in New Member States

Information provided by Christine Bedoya, TRIALOG

A separate Call for Proposals for Development Education/Awareness Raising (DE/AR) activities in new EU member states (NMS) as well as in Romania and Bulgaria with a budget of 10 million EUR is expected to be launched by the European Commission in Sept/Oct 2006. Please read the article 3.1. in this newsletter for more information on the background and conditions and on how to already start with the preparation of proposals.

7. Job vacancy

7.1. Job vacancy at the CEE Trust for program in Romania and Bulgaria

Information sent by Ewa Chelstowska, CEE Trust

The Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe invites applications for the position of Program Associate. The Program Associate will be responsible for the grant-making program of the CEE Trust primarily in Romania and Bulgaria. During the start-up phase, the Program Associate will be expected to work temporarily in the Sofia office, and later will be based in Romania. Deadline for applications is April 18, 2006.

For further details, please visit the CEE Trust website: <http://www.ceetrust.org/index.php?ar=491>

END

One of TRIALOG's aims is to intensify the exchange of information and experience between development NGOs (NGDOs) in accession countries, EU Member States and the global South. Through the TIS we forward you information on global development issues, conferences and seminars, NGO funding opportunities, enlargement issues and NGO activities in "East, West and South", provided to us by our partners. Please note that the views presented in articles or publications/weblinks not authored by ourselves are not necessarily those of TRIALOG.

You are welcome to actively participate in the networking of TRIALOG by sending us important information, documents, position papers, etc. which we can then spread to our partners.

Please feel free to forward the TIS to interested friends and colleagues.

If you have had this passed to you by a friend and want to receive the TIS yourself, you can sign in at <http://www.trialog.or.at/main.asp?m=2,124> or contact office@trialog.or.at

You can download this issue and earlier ones also from our website
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