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## Editorial

# Enlarged EU

### New priorities, new methods for European development cooperation

1.5 years after enlargement, even those who follow the international development activities in the New Member States (NMS) and Accession Countries (AC) of the EU will be surprised by the speed of transformation from aid recipient to aid donor.

In all the NMS and AC there are strong civil society organisations (CSOs) working for international development cooperation. In most countries, they have convinced government to increase funds for development cooperation, and integrate global priorities (the Millennium Development Goals) into bilateral aid systems. All NMS and AC governments have promised to devote 0.17% of GNI to international development cooperation by 2010, and 0.33% by 2015 (current levels are between 0.02 and 0.14%). Civil society networks are active in most NMS to make sure they make the serious year-on-year spending increases this will require.

At the European level, NMS CSOs are often more active than their governments, helping to shape European development policies, particularly towards the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. From Bosnia to Chechnya, NMS CSOs are also among the most active on the ground, and the best able to build relationships with local stakeholders.

The results would be even better if the EC would adapt its restrictive funding rules – most NMS CSOs are ineligible for EuropeAid co-financing, even for the development education projects which are so badly needed in their countries. For the moment, most NMS funds for development cooperation are coming directly from the citizens and companies, and from foreign donors. Though national governments are also rapidly developing their bilateral funding mechanisms, many of which will be more civil society-friendly than in most 'old' member states.

Enlargement is changing the focus of European development cooperation. Most aid from the post-communist NMS and AC goes to support democratisation, economic reform and good governance in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. That is not incompatible



*Czech campaigning activities within the Global Call to Action Against Poverty, September 2005*

with an overall poverty-reduction focus for European development cooperation, but governments and CSOs in the 'old' member states will have to rethink how and where Europe should concentrate its development cooperation. Meanwhile, 2006 will bring many opportunities for CSOs from NMS and AC to use their expertise and contacts to support EU efforts to find lasting solutions in the Western Balkans.

Other NMS and AC CSOs will continue their humanitarian activities and some will continue their aids awareness, job creation and education support projects in countries ranging from Sudan and Angola to Cambodia and Georgia. And very importantly, across the NMS and AC, a massive effort will be made to explain international development cooperation to the public and to promote acceptance for this new area.

In other words, it is time to change the way we think about the NMS and AC. As far as international development cooperation is concerned, enlargement no longer means helping the weaker NMS to reach the European average. Rather, enlargement makes it possible for CSOs and governments from all parts of Europe to work together for peace and human development outside the EU, and make sure the European Union has coherent trade, agriculture and security policies that help, rather than hinder that process.

*Adam Novák*

*TRIALOG Project Manager*

# Priorities and Challenges for TRIALOG

TRIALOG supported civil society organisations (CSOs) and their networks in all New Member States (NMS) and Accession Countries (AC) over the last 12 months. Our decentralised programme of capacity building, information services, and policy support was well received by CSOs across the region in what was a year of rapid growth in experience and activities for the sector.

Representative civil society networks from all NMS except Cyprus participate regularly in **CONCORD** activities, and there are observers from Bulgaria and Romania. **Working Group Enlargement** (for which TRIALOG is the secretariat) piloted a CONCORD campaign to integrate development priorities into the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). NMS and AC participation in the **FDR (Funding for Development and Relief) Working Group and Development Education Forum** also helped NMS and AC CSOs develop their activities, and identify areas where the EC and national governments should do more to support public awareness of development issues in the NMS and AC, as well as allowing CSOs from these countries fair access to EC funds for CSO co-financing.

Almost all platforms of development CSOs in NMS are more representative, more articulate and have more diversified funding than a year ago, and there are exciting new **networks** such as the local campaigns of the Global Call to Action against Poverty, or the growing fair trade networks in the region.

TRIALOG also provided training and networking support for three-month **volunteer-placements** in the global south for young people from the NMS, **internships** for project officers from NMS and AC CSOs, and other forms of capacity building for CSO networks across the region. **Training**, particularly in new forms of public fundraising, and in development education, was well received in all countries.

TRIALOG will continue to support this process in 2006, with most of our efforts focused on those NMS where progress has been slowest, and obstacles are greatest.

But the main focus of TRIALOG activities over the next year will be in **Romania** and

**Bulgaria**, where governments still need to develop Official Development Assistance (ODA) policies, mechanisms and budgets, and where external support can help CSOs upgrade their strong local and cross-border development cooperation, and participate more in European-level networks and activities. The central axis of TRIALOG strategy is to support direct links between Bulgarian and Romanian CSOs and networks with their counterparts in the NMS and across the EU. We will also work with key CSOs in

dialogue on international development themes. Proposals can be made by CSOs in all NMS.

**Weblink:** [www.presidencyfund.org](http://www.presidencyfund.org)

Similar regional and thematic activities are under discussion in other areas, with NMS and AC CSOs taking the lead, and TRIALOG providing advice and technical assistance in the set-up phase.

Finally, TRIALOG is cooperating with the CSO Platforms of Austria and Finland to make sure enlargement is a cross-cutting issue during international development events connected to the rotating EU Presidency.

Our current workplan finishes in September 2006, but a new three year proposal has been submitted to the European Commission, to provide continued support for enlargement issues until 2009. As the other articles of this newsletter show, enlargement is already bringing enormous benefits to European development cooperation. Let's keep going!

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*Seminar on Development Cooperation in Bucharest, May 2005*

Bulgaria and Romania to increase discussion of international development issues, and to create a representative network of CSOs engaged with these issues. A dialogue will also be established with CSOs and their networks in **Croatia** and **Turkey**, since these countries have now begun accession negotiations with the EU.

TRIALOG has also worked with other stakeholders to develop new instruments to support NMS and AC development CSOs in areas where existing structures and resources are insufficient.

■ The **Regional Partnership Programme** provides core funding for national Platforms of development CSOs, as well as small CSO projects in development education and development cooperation. The fund works in Central Europe (Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia) and encourages cooperation between CSOs in this region. Regional discussions on common priority themes will also be facilitated.

**Weblink:** [www.eu-platform.at/english](http://www.eu-platform.at/english)

■ The **Presidency Fund** provides small grants for activities that strengthen policy

## TRIALOG Structure

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

### Consortium partners

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

### Visit the TRIALOG website

<http://www.trialog.or.at>

Sign up for our monthly electronic newsletter TIS.

Read our country reports on NMS and AC development sectors.

Keep informed about our activities.

Join our NGO database.

Contact us and get connected with our partners in NMS and AC.

## WORKING GROUP ENLARGEMENT: PAST AND FUTURE LOBBYING ACTIONS

The main focus of the CONCORD Working Group Enlargement (WGE) in 2005 has been on the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which will from 2007 onwards replace the current TACIS and MEDA programmes in the EU neighbouring countries including Russia. In spring 2005 the WGE set up a ENPI task force which elaborated a list of recommendations concerning the September 2004 Commission's proposal for the ENPI. In May 2005 Aprovev, Eurostep and TRIALOG organised a workshop on the ENPI in Brussels and gave the participants from non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) a chance to discuss this issue with the main EU stakeholders in this area. The ENPI task force elaborated a policy paper based on this fruitful discussion and started its lobbying campaign targeting the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In spite of a heavy campaign supported by the majority of the national NGDO platforms of the WGE, the most important amendments were not accepted by the Eu-

ropean Parliament (EP) on 23 November 2005.

In autumn 2005 the focus of the WGE was broadened in order to include other important issues such as the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), concerning the candidate countries Croatia and Turkey and the potential candidate countries from the Western Balkans. Aprovev in cooperation with TRIALOG already prepared a set of recommendations concerning the EC proposal. The WGE set up a IPA task force that will be following the procedure of consultation within the EP and the Council. A strong lobbying action is planned especially on the level of Council representatives from the various Member States.

In order to help the NGOs from Bulgaria and Romania to prepare for the accession, the WGE decided to establish a Bulgaria-Romania task force. Last but not least, lob-

bying action on the eligibility criteria for the New Member States (NMS) NGOs for applying to the European Commission's Calls for Proposals is planned. This issue of fundamental importance needs to be addressed in order to ensure the possibility of access to EU financing for the NMS NGOs in the programming period 2007-2013. The CONCORD working group "Funding for Development and Relief" (FDR) elaborated a position paper concerning the future EC funding of NGOs, which mentions the problems of the NMS NGOs. In order to increase the impact of our lobbying actions, closer cooperation between the various CONCORD Working Groups will be ensured by our TRIALOG Brussels officer. As you can see the lobbying plans of the Working Group Enlargement are quite ambitious, but there are no achievements without ambition.

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### Useful Weblinks:

ENPI: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/index_en.htm)

IPA: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/ipa\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/ipa_en.htm)

WGE: <http://www.trialog.or.at/main.asp?m=4,32>

## ESTONIA OPENING DOORS TO EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURS

Estonia is among the New Member States most actively supporting cooperation between the EU and its neighbours in the East.

Almost 15 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the successor states find themselves in very different economical and political positions. For Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which became EU Members, their former "brother countries" Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan turned into "EU neighbourhood countries" according to EU terminology. Discussions on the biggest enlargement in the history of the EU in 2004 and questions of further expansion of the EU have been rather an issue for Estonian intellectuals, politicians and NGO networks than a "hot topic" within the Estonian population. However, Estonians still take a high interest when the question of EU relations with the immediate neighbours is raised. In this context, Estonia would like to have an important stake in shaping and implementing the EU policy.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) covers 17 countries in the East and South of the enlarged EU. So far Estonia has focused its efforts towards Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Armenia,

increasingly also towards Azerbaijan. Russia, which has a separate "Four Common Spaces Agreement" with the EU, remains as well an important partner for the Estonian business, local governments and Estonian non-state actors (e.g. environmental NGOs).

According to a recent study on possible impacts of Estonian civil society organisations on the democratisation of the Eastern neighbours, conducted by the European Movement in Estonia and the Open Estonia Foundation, the role of Estonian NGOs in the ENP can be envisaged as follows:

- transfer of Estonian democratisation experience to Eastern ENP countries in form of study trips, trainings, seminars;
- multi-annual support to civil society organisations in Eastern ENP countries as most of the international donors do not provide institutional support to NGOs;
- de-concentrated policy of support since support to local and small actors is urgently needed;
- teaching of English in Eastern ENP

countries since the level of English is relatively low and since it is the main communication language in the enlarged EU;

- support to NGOs tackling social problems since the public sector in the ENP countries is still too weak to provide sufficient social services;

- refresh the know-how of the Estonian public and stakeholders on the situation in these ENP countries and spread this know-how within the EU since for a majority of EU citizens the ENP countries are unknown.

At the same time some of these countries have started a social and economic catch-up with EU standards (e.g. Ukraine, Georgia). Therefore there has to be adequate monitoring of the socio-economic development by being present in the region via both diplomatic missions and joint NGO projects.

*Aivar Roop*

*Board Member*

*European Movement in Estonia*

*Estonian Development Cooperation*

*Roundtable*

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### Useful Weblinks:

Eastgate Network: <http://www.eastgate.org.ee>

Study paper mentioned above: [http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/study\\_estonia\\_en.pdf](http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/study_estonia_en.pdf)



# TRIALOG Capacity Building Activities

## TRAININGS

The trainings TRIALOG organised in 2004 mainly focused on building up the capacity for obtaining EU funding within the NGOs in the New Member States (NMS). In almost all NMS TRIALOG conducted trainings in EU funding possibilities, project cycle management and applications for EU Calls for Proposals. With the entry of the 10 NMS into the EU in May 2004, the NGOs were allowed to apply for EU funding in development cooperation and they could gain practical expertise mainly in proposal writing as part of joint projects with NGOs from 'old' EU member states. In 2005 the focus of the trainings changed. In order to rise to the big challenge that for all EU funds provided NGOs need to raise private funds as a co-financing measure, a series of regional trainings in private fundraising was conducted. Another important topic for the trainings in 2005 was development education and the increasing of public awareness of development issues. There is now a special need in this area which represents a quite new activity field for NMS non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs).

A special event taking place every year is the TRIALOG Central Training where participants from all NMS and the Accession Countries (AC) gather. The Central Training 2005 focused on the development of national NGDO platforms in NMS and AC, on the presentation of the CONCORD Working Groups and other EU networks and on the EU Development Policy debate. The event benefited from a high international involvement. The 2006 Central Training will be held in Budapest in March and will focus on national advocacy and lobbying. It will provide a space for NGDO platforms to share their experience regarding lobbying activities towards their Ministries for Foreign Affairs (MFAs) and other national stakeholders.

It is worth mentioning that as a result of the growing capacity in the NMS, TRIALOG has increasingly been able to decentralise the activities and to support the seminars and trainings proposed and organised by NMS NGOs in addition to the trainings already facilitated by our Vienna office.

## NETWORKING, INTERNSHIPS AND STUDY VISITS

Apart from trainings TRIALOG supported a wide range of other capacity building activities such as internships within projects in the global South and in Europe and the participation in European networking meetings of the Global Campaign Against Poverty and of the Global Education Network of Young Europeans (GLEN) as well as in other important European events.

At the end of November 2005 TRIALOG organised a one week study visit for NG-



*GLEN Development Education Seminar, Kostelecké Horky (CZ), September 2005*

DOs and MFAs from Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus to Austria, Hungary and Slovakia. The purpose of this study visit was to share experiences with counterparts in the visited countries, which might eventually support the building of national NGDO networks, of national development policies and of administrative ODA structures.

In May 2005 a one-day conference on the opportunities for civil society to get involved in Romanian international development cooperation was held in Bucharest. Over 70 NGOs as well as EuropeAid and government representatives participated. TRIALOG will organise a similar seminar on development cooperation involving all national stakeholders in Sofia, Bulgaria.

In 2006 TRIALOG will also reinforce its capacity building programme for NGOs from Cyprus. In comparison to other NMS, Cyprus is the least integrated into existing European networks and finds it hard to establish a network of NGDOs located not only in the South but also in the North of

the island. A planned mapping mission to Cyprus in addition to a study visit for Cyprus NGOs to Brussels are expected to increase the internal cooperation and the international contacts of Cyprus NGOs and ensure their participation in EU development debates.

## NEW MEMBER STATES NGOS APPROACHING EUROPEAID FUNDS

Following EU Enlargement in 2004, NGOs from NMS were for the first time eligible to participate in the calls for proposals of EuropeAid's development cooperation budget lines. However, for a majority of NGOs that eligibility remains highly theoretical. The strict eligibility criteria for applicants, the minimum size of project budgets (50.000 EUR), the own budget contribution of 25%, the long and complicated procedures and the lack of funds for project design are the main problems encountered. As these are common problems TRIALOG undertakes a lot of lobbying activities within CONCORD and towards the EC in order to achieve a weakening of the eligibility criteria for NMS NGOs for a transition period of some years.

In 2004 as part of the main Call for Proposals for European NGOs, the "NGO co-financing budget line (21-02-03)", only:

- about 20 NGOs from the NMS submitted a project proposal for projects in developing countries (PVD) as an applicant, a lead agency or a consortium partner;
- about 40 NGOs from the NMS participated in consortia proposing projects for development education and awareness raising on development issues (ED).

TRIALOG will make an analysis of the recently published results of the 2004 Call with regard to the success of the NMS proposals.

For more information about the TRIALOG Capacity Building programme or for making suggestions about local trainings and capacity building activities in NMS and AC please contact:

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# The Global Education Network of Young Europeans (GLEN)

## A CHANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS FROM WEST, CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE TO GAIN FIRST EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Since 2003 the ASA Programme of InWEnt (Germany) is cooperating with NGOs in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary and the three Baltic countries Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Teams of two or three young people from different European countries are working together in three months work and study stays in a developing country. In 2006 the GLEN projects will for the first time take place also in countries which are target countries of New Member States (NMS) development assistance programmes, e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Vietnam or Zambia.

In the past two years, TRIALOG supported internships of several NMS GLEN participants as well as seminars and network meetings. In 2006, TRIALOG will focus its support on strengthening the national GLEN focal points and helping them to obtain governmental funding for their activities.

TRIALOG asked 3 NMS volunteers to report on their deployment in the field:

### **SOUTH AFRICA: DARINA MAŇUROVÁ, FAIRTRADE SLOVAKIA**

#### **HOW DID I EXPERIENCE SUSTAINABILITY IN CAPE TOWN?**

My project was called „Sustainability through Innovative Projects“. My German tandem partner Kathrin and me worked for the Local Agenda 21 (LA21) Office in Bellville. The City of Cape Town faces various serious social, economic and environmental problems. My most important task in the project was to find a perspective

on how to include Fair Trade in the Local Agenda 21.

I came to South Africa with a certain idea of Fair Trade and with a not very clear idea of LA21 or let's say with a relatively superficial understanding of it from the Slovak context (which turned out to be something quite different in the South African context). Through my research work on the Fair Trade topic and participation in other activities I not only deepened my understanding of Fair Trade but also extended my knowledge of sustainable development as such. It gave me more self-confidence and energy for my work and my studies in Slovakia. I was impressed by the enthusiasm and the good will of the people to work towards building up strong Fair Trade organisations and communities in order to ensure a better future. This is a long way to go and I keep my fingers crossed!

### **MALAWI: RIINA OTTI, ESTONIAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION ROUNDTABLE**

#### **NEW PERSPECTIVES ON EVERYDAY LIFE IN EUROPE**

My two colleagues from Germany and me all work with children and youngsters in Europe. Our first task as volunteers was to build up relationships between ourselves as the basis of a good working team. Our project dealt with pre-schools in rural areas of Malawi and we started collaborating with the APPM (Association of Pre-schools Playgroups in Malawi) immediately after our arrival in Blantyre. By holding workshops about "Learning-by-Playing – Creative Children Education" we intended to give caregivers a new impetus for their work with children.

Even if we cannot tell if the contents of our workshops have been implemented by the caregivers in their work with children today, we know that we left a mark through our work and our behaviour. Often we experienced that much more attention was given to us and to our contributions to the work of the APPM than to the contributions of the APPM staff, only because we were the Azungu (whites). To experience that what three young white women say is higher valued than what local professionals say was very weird. We had to learn how to deal with these situations.

What else did I, did we learn? We returned home with a much more critical attitude towards the mass of toys in Europe. Generally, our point of view on problems in developing countries changed: they now seem to us as being less isolated, more complex and closely interlinked with our own society and economy. Concerning the success of "development projects" we now attribute much more relevance to the aspect of "cultural understanding". Our stay in Malawi provided us three with invaluable experiences. It gave us a high level of self-awareness, learning possibilities, a lot of joy and a new perspective on our own life-style and our own everyday life and work.

### **TANZANIA: KORDIAN KOCHANOWICZ, POLISH HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATION REINFORCING DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AT HOME**

My partner and me worked together on a project with national youth leaders in Tanzania. The internship provided us with an insight into the social and political situation of the country which is very challenging and often hindering development. We also got to know and to "feel" global interdependencies. At the same time, we experienced quite a difficult situation with our host organisation and very difficult relations with local authorities. This had partly to do with the difference in mentalities and with the difference in attitudes towards NGOs. Although we came into intercultural conflicts (within the team and with local partners), I still consider this experience as being a very valuable one and an opportunity to learn how to deal with such conflicts.

Even if my stay did not fulfil all my expectations and we suffered from different conditions such as heat, I stuck to my "GLEN philosophy" and used the internship to learn more about the different stakeholders in development cooperation. I also gained a wider perspective as well as a motivation to work in development education in my home country with the aim of further spreading the idea of a fair world and of solidarity and of establishing strong networks of motivated people across the globe. Following my internship in 2004, I was involved as a tutor in the 2005 GLEN cycle which gave me the chance to contribute to the next participants' preparation.

**Weblink:** <http://www.glen-europe.org>



*GLEN volunteers at Thandi Farm Kitchen. Thandi is one of the producers of fair trade wine in South Africa.*

# Update on NGO Cooperation in New Member States

In our previous newsletter issues, we reported on the NGDO platforms in Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland and the Slovak Republic. In this issue two of the "younger" New Member States platforms present themselves.

## THE LATVIAN NGDO PLATFORM LAPAS GOT STARTED AND DEVELOPS ITS PROFILE IN EUROPE

By joining the EU Latvia took on new obligations. The civil society as well as the government understood that after a certain transition period it was time to share knowledge and expertise with countries that were standing aside both in terms of economic and democratic development. Since early 2004 the Latvian society has faced new challenges in connection with this changing role of being a donor rather than a recipient of aid.

With TRIALOG support, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Latvia had started already in 2001 to raise awareness of development cooperation issues within different groups of civil society. Aiming at developing an appropriate development co-



operation framework, UNDP Latvia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) have initiated a joint project on "Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Development and Implementation of the Development Cooperation Framework of the Latvian Government". The Soros Foundation Latvia has been an active partner in this process since 2003. More than forty NGOs have so far shown their interest and willingness to work in the field of development cooperation, assistance and humanitarian aid.

In June 2004 twenty one NGOs came together to establish the Latvian NGDO platform LAPAS. A common understanding of development cooperation was achieved. The overall aim of LAPAS is to ensure Latvian NGOs a favourable environment and opportunities for being active in development cooperation at national and international levels. One of the target countries the platform chose is Georgia. An NGO forum was organised in Tbilisi in October 2005 with the aim of strengthening Georgian civil society. Further common projects will be developed. Both NGOs as well as high-ranking politicians and government officials stressed the necessity of close cooperation in supporting Georgia evolving towards the EU.

From the very beginning, LAPAS has closely cooperated with the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of the most gratifying developments is that up to 80% of LAPAS comments and suggestions were taken into consideration in the process of elaborating the Latvian National Development Cooperation Policy and setting up long term and short term Official Development Assistance (ODA) goals. Unfortunately no growth in official Latvian ODA spending (0.06% of GNI in 2004) has been achieved so far. However, public information activities on this issue have been initiated by the platform in cooperation with the MFA and UNDP Latvia. The Latvian platform truly believes that the message will be heard not only by the general public but also by the Latvian government.

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Speech of Ingrida Skuja at the NGO Forum in Georgia, October 2005

### TRIALOG Country reports

Read TRIALOG Country reports on Development NGOs in Slovenia, Hungary, Slovak Republic and Czech Republic at: [www.trialog.or.at/start.asp?m=2,123](http://www.trialog.or.at/start.asp?m=2,123) Reports on the other New Member States will become available during 2006.

Traditionally there were no NGOs devoted purely to development issues in Latvia. By now only ten organisations in Latvia have been involved in development cooperation activities. They have been working mainly as partners together with Western NGOs or have sent their experts as short term consultants to development or neighbouring Eastern countries. Although Latvia had no pure non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs), there were experienced national NGOs looking forward to actively work in the development field.

### ODA priority countries

Find a table on ODA priority countries of EU New Member States and Accession Countries at:

[www.trialog.or.at/docs/oda\\_priority\\_countriesnov05.pdf](http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/oda_priority_countriesnov05.pdf)



## LITHUANIAN NGDO PLATFORM WORKING TOWARDS INCREASED DEVELOPMENT AWARENESS AND INTER/NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

During the EU accession process, development cooperation was not an issue in Lithuania. Some experiences had been gained under the old international cooperation system of the Soviet area. With its accession to the EU Lithuania has committed anew to provide development assistance. However, the broader public still does not know what development cooperation is about.

Moves towards establishing a Lithuanian NGDO platform were made in 2004 with the support of the Canadian ODACE programme and TRIALOG. A mandate to work

Lietuvos  
vystomojo bendradarbiavimo  
NVO Platforma  
(LT VB NVO Platforma)

platform is expected to rise considerably in the next few years.

The main tasks of the platform are to create a working structure for information exchange between members, to provide a member capacity building program and to represent the interests of Lithuanian devel-



*Lithuanian delegation at the TRIALOG Central Training in Bratislava, March 2005.*

towards the obtention of a legal status was given at the stakeholders meeting in October 2004 and the platform aims to officially register by 2006. Fifteen Lithuanian NGOs have joined the network so far. They are all very different in terms of their activities, capacity and experience. The women organisations and ethnic minorities associations have accumulated experience in working with refugees (mostly from Chechnya) and/or established excellent connections for cross-border cooperation. The New Connections (a coalition comprising seven educational NGOs), the Lithuanian Red Cross, the Church-related organisations such as the Lithuanian Caritas, the Lithuanian Kolping society and the Life and Faith Institute are members of well established international institutions. The Environmental Information Centre via the GLEN network sends volunteers to Asian and African countries. The membership of the

opment NGOs at national and EU level. The platform is actively involved in the dynamic process of building up Lithuania's Official Development Assistance (ODA) architecture and pushing for the establishment of a

transparent ODA system and a policy that prioritises development education and is committed to reach the agreed target of 0.33% of GNI by 2015. In 2004, the Lithuanian ODA spending represented less than 0.04% of GNI. Even MFA representatives sometimes acknowledge a lack of information and coordination among state institutions with regard to the Lithuanian ODA. In the parliament Seimas there has still not been any substantial discussion about the Lithuanian development policy. With regard to NGO-government relations, 2005 has been a positive year of increased and improved cooperation. The MFA has signalled willingness to involve all stakeholders, also from the non-governmental sector, in improving the national ODA system and in participating in the new but crucial area of public awareness and development education. New ODA policy guidelines for the next 6 years are in preparation. The NGDO platform has already started to lobby the MFA to include eight areas where Lithuanian civil society organisations are already active, e.g. education, help for Ukrainian and Belorussian Chernobyl victims, volunteers sending, modernisation of psychiatric services, civil society capacity building, human rights.

In terms of international partnership, the growing cooperation with the Irish NGDO platform Dochas is expected to lead to valuable support in strategic planning and to provide the Lithuanian platform with advice on how to secure financial sustainability. Mid-term financial sustainability may be achieved through a platform development education project which should start in 2006, supported by the Lithuanian MFA.

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### Weblinks to NGDO platforms in New Member States

Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (FoRS): <http://www.fors.cz>

Estonian Development Cooperation Roundtable (AKÜ): <http://terveilm.inspiral.ee/eng>

Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid (HAND):  
<http://www.hand.org.hu>

Latvian NGDO Platform LAPAS: <http://www.lapas.lv>

Lithuanian NGDO Platform: <http://www.sei.lt/index2.php>

Maltese NGDO Platform, hosted by Kopin: <http://www.ngdomalta.org>

Slovak NGDO Platform (MVRO): <http://www.mvro.sk/index-en.html>

Slovenian Global Action Platform (SLOGA): <http://www.sloga-platform.org>

The Zagranica Group (Group of Polish NGOs working abroad):  
<http://www.go2east.ngo.pl>

# FAIR TRADE SHOPS IN NEW MEMBER STATES AND ACCESSION COUNTRIES

compiled by Boriana Marinova, TRIALOG intern, Brussels office. [stagiaire.trialog@concordeurope.org](mailto:stagiaire.trialog@concordeurope.org)



Stand of the Hungarian Fair Trade Association at the Hegyalja Fesztivál, June 2005

## SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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*For a more complete list and contacts to organisations working in Fair Trade in the New Member States or Accession Countries please visit our website:*

[www.trialog.or.at/docs/fairtradeshopsnms\\_ac.pdf](http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/fairtradeshopsnms_ac.pdf)

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