

TRIALOG

A newsletter on EU Enlargement and NGDOs No.1 2002

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Editorial

Development issues in the context of EU Enlargement

The promotion of communication between all relevant existing and potential actors of development policy and development cooperation in an enlarged European Union is one of the most important tasks of the TRIALOG project. The integration of the first new member states is becoming more and more concrete and underlines the urgency with which we meet this task. Accession countries are in a unique position to assess problems of poverty and democratisation from both the recipient and donor perspective, and this could be a very valuable contribution to development cooperation.

The TRIALOG project foresees as one of its planned measures the regular publication of a newsletter. We feel that a written communication will on the one hand complement the information we provide in an electronic format through our web page and on the other hand reach people and groups who might not have access to the TRIALOG homepage.

Reflecting more than a year of implementation of the project, it is with some modest pride that we (and with "we" I mean all who have contributed

in one and another way to the project) can claim that TRIALOG has achieved, as a result of our joint efforts, a recognised performance and profile, which give us good prospects for the second half of the on-going project.

This newsletter gives you an impression of the range and wide variety of the realised activities. Special thanks in this context to the staff in the Vienna office whose professional performance and personal commitment has contributed decisively to the good development of the project. We are very happy that with the contracting of Sinéad Duffy as representative of TRIALOG in Brussels (located in the Liaison Committee secretariat), the project staff has now reached full capacity. We are also lucky to have the able assistance of Léna Krichewsky, who is currently doing an internship with the project. But the project itself can only initiate and act as a catalyst for debate, exchange and cooperation; civil society in the "East", "West", and "South" has to put life to a true dialogue.

Robert Zeiner

Austrian National Delegate to the LC,
Director of HORIZONT3000, the lead agency of TRIALOG

Progress report:

The TRIALOG Project has completed its first year

The co-ordination office of TRIALOG officially opened its doors in October 2000 in Vienna¹. It is a decentralised project of the Liaison Committee (LC), co-financed by the European Commission for a period of 3 years with the aim to raise awareness of North-South issues in the context of the enlargement of the European Union and to systematically intensify cooperation and the exchange of experiences, views and perspectives between NGOs in accession countries², EU countries and the South. Here follows a short overview of its main activities.

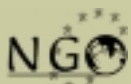
Website and online database

The starting point for the networking activities is



Participants from Hungary, the Czech Republic, France and Poland share ideas at the TRIALOG seminar on EU development policy in Vienna 2-4 April 2001

an NGO database and the website (<http://www.clong-trialog.at>). The addresses of the participants of previous conferences³ and seminars on development and enlargement issues that have paved the way to design the TRIALOG project have been updated by means of a questionnaire, and intense research has been carried out in order to identify more NGOs active or interested in international development cooperation. It is an ongoing process to contact



Project of the
NGDO-EU
Liaison Committee

¹ Liaison News n°10, November – December 2000

² Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia.

³ "The enlargement of the EU and the role of NGOs" Vienna, November 1998; "Globalising Solidarity – from Dialogue to Trialogue" Berlin, June 1999

NGOs in the accession countries who work in related fields like environmental protection, churches, women and gender issues, human rights and democratisation, as well as general NGO resource centres who often can provide a wide-ranging directory of civil society actors in their countries.

Furthermore the project has been presented at several seminars and conferences all over Europe. The online-database is structured so that users can search for and contact partners in the EU, accession countries and the South by means of various search criteria. Since May 2001 database members have information on

events, financing avenues, campaigns, cooperation offers etc. forwarded to them on a weekly basis.

Other important services provided by the website include: information about TRIALOG with background material in 15 languages, a sub-site with events organised by TRIALOG and its partners, an extensive list of links, and basic

documentation on development cooperation and enlargement. There are currently about 300 signed-up NGOs in the database receiving regular information. To join the online-database sign your organisation up by filling in the online-questionnaire (go to "NGO database" on the project's website: www.clong-trialog.at) or contact TRIALOG at office@clong-trialog.at

Translations

In the course of the first year the following two documents were translated into the accession countries' eleven languages: The NGDO Charter on the Basic Principles of Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs in the European Union and the Declaration of the Council and the Commission on the European Community's development policy. The selection of documents for translation is made according to the thematic focus of the seminars organised by TRIALOG and the general development policy agenda at the EU level. Translations are important for any awareness raising activity.

Seminars and Workshops

The core element of TRIALOG's activities is to organise a series of seven thematic seminars. Two three-day seminars "EU Development Policy" (March 2001) and "Environment and Development" (October 2001) have taken place and participants came from NGOs in ten candidate countries and several EU member states. At the environmental seminar experts from the South (Brazil and Senegal) were involved, a crucial factor for promoting a real dialogue. The objectives of the seminars are primarily two-fold: to transfer know-how on global development issues and to intensify the exchange of information, experiences and perspectives

between "East", "South" and "West".

Accordingly two methodological approaches have been chosen: lectures and discussion in plenary on one hand, and working groups on the other. Comprehensive documentation is available for downloading from the website.

Bilateral seminars

Given that the approach of the project is Europe-wide and decentralised, it aims to involve as many national platforms as possible. In the first year the Swedish as well as the Finnish Platform (see report page 8)

With an interactive website (www.clong-trialog.at) and a series of Seminars and Workshops, TRIALOG creates a network of partners in the global south, the candidate countries and the EU member states.

organised events in co-operation with and with the financial support of TRIALOG. In April 2001 the Swedish Platform and Forum Syd ran a two-day Round Table on EU Enlargement in the context of development cooperation and invited government representatives and NGOs from the Baltic States, Poland and the South to take part.

The main issues for discussions were the involvement of NGDOs in the design, implementation and evaluation of a national development cooperation policy, as well as the need for cooperation between the future enlarged EU and the South. The report from the discussions is available for downloading from the website.

NGO participation in events in EU countries

At all meetings it was clear that contacts, relations or links between East and South are still very weak. Therefore it was decided to use a small part of the project's travel budget for the financial support of the participation of NGOs in the accession countries in events with participants from the South. For example, several NGOs were given the opportunity to attend the NGO Forum during the UN LDC III in Brussels, the Annual Conference of WIDE (*Women in Development Europe*) in Madrid and the International Symposium on Sustainable Development (*Rio+10*) in Antwerp (the latter was one of the numerous NGO activities related to the Belgian presidency of the EU).

Steering Group

One of the purposes of the steering group is to guarantee the project ownership for the national platforms as well as to monitor and evaluate the implementation. The group is made up of delegates from accession and EU countries; the "Western" representatives are delegated by their national platforms (A, D, GR, I, NL, P, S, SF, UK). The meetings are held twice a year and are an important factor in the project's European dimension.

Policy paper

One of the motivations for the design of the

project was to prevent a "play-off" between development cooperation and enlargement. So far, development issues appear as a poor relation in the accession negotiations.

The arrangements by which the applicant countries are preparing to participate and contribute to the realisation of the objectives of the chapter "Development cooperation" in the EC Treaty, in particular the struggle against poverty, remain unclear. By means of a policy paper, TRIALOG has set itself the objective of calling upon the European Institutions and the EU Member States to encourage them to promote a political dialogue with the accession countries on development issues. More details see page 3.

Experiences and outlook for 2002

In summary, all the measures and activities have the overall aim to encourage and promote exchange and cooperation. There is a huge need for discussion, transferral of know-how and exchange on development issues in the field of terminology ("development education", "South"), the functioning of the European Institutions as well as in the field of common goals and objectives. In a seminar in Warsaw for example, NGO participants from EU member states and Poland found they had strongly differing views on Cuba as a model of development. In this process of getting closer to each other, the project can only initiate and facilitate contacts, meetings and discussions, but not organise the follow-up to the different events. This must be done by the participants themselves. An excellent example in this respect is the following: Several participants of the seminar on EU development policy were interested in learning more about sending personnel abroad. Consequently in February 2002, one of our consortium partners, AGEH in Germany, will take the initiative to organise a workshop on this specific topic, focussing on recruiting, preparation, supervising, evaluation, reintegration and legal issues.

Another possibility for NGDOs to be more involved in the debate on enlargement and development cooperation is to invite NGOs from the candidate countries to their regular events. This would, in addition to specific seminars, contribute to the development of global thinking as well. One of the specific aims of the project is to support the creation of National NGDO Platforms or networks in the accession countries. BOND, the UK Platform and its East European Working Group have responded to this need of "newcomers" to get to know how a platform works and how NGOs work in diverse fields, and they will offer a 2-week study visit to UK for 3 persons from the accession countries. This will be a wonderful opportunity to learn from each other and to deepen the contacts between civil society actors of the future enlarged Europe.

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TRIALOG Brussels office

TRIALOG gained a Brussels-based representative in September of last year, with the appointment of Sinéad Duffy as Policy Officer. Sinéad's background is Human Rights and development fieldwork, having worked in Africa and the Middle East.

The Brussels representation is based in the Liaison Committee in Square Ambiorix and from here, TRIALOG works to increase the visibility of its activities and on the implementation of the TRIALOG policy paper of January 2001.

The two over-arching objectives of the Brussels office are as follows:

1. To **promote policy dialogue** between the parties concerned about EU development policies in the enlargement process.
2. To **make TRIALOG highly visible** at the EU level (*particularly with the EU institutions*) and at national level in the current and future member states.

An important function of the Brussels office is to ensure that the various development policy processes going on at the European level take into consideration the future landscape of Europe. Two of these processes are – the Liaison Committee's Development Education Forum and the current restructuring of NGO representation in Europe.

With the passing of the Development Education resolution by the Council on November 8th, the Development Education Forum has a firm base from which to take its policies forward. From the TRIALOG perspective, it is crucial that out of the 14 points of the Resolution, 4 of the points mention the candidate

country involvement explicitly. The Development Education Forum met in Rome last November and the TRIALOG Policy Officer was invited to attend. The Development Education Forum is very aware of the work of the TRIALOG team. A task group has been set up to work to monitor the implementation of the Development Education Resolution and to take the Resolution forward at the NGO level. This group is committed to the systematic involvement of the candidate countries as called for in the Resolution. The Policy Officer will be liaising with this group to facilitate this cooperation.

The Liaison Committee of NGDOs to the European Union is currently going through a period of change. On September 27th last, there was a widely represented meeting to review the needs of European NGDOs with regard to their position vis-à-vis the European Institutions. Several possible models for a future NGDO representation were explicated, and work-groups drawing on individuals from NGDOs around Europe, including representatives of the National Platforms and the Families (*eg Save the*

Children) and the Networks (*eg APRODEV, EUROSTEP*) worked on the issues arising from these possible models. Following the outcomes of this meeting, a Task Group was set up to take this process forward. From the TRIALOG perspective, it is vital that, notwithstanding the ramifications of this period of change, the NGDOs and fledgling NGDO platforms in the candidate countries are

consulted in this process and get the chance to put forward their own perspectives in the shaping of the future Brussels-representation of NGDOs. The Policy Officer is liaising with this group to ensure that this happens.

Another on-going process that is very important for the TRIALOG project's objectives is the reform of the European institutions, more specifically the publication of the Commission's white paper on governance. The Commission website <http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance> is a useful tool in shaping this process and the TRIALOG Brussels office invites individuals or groups to participate either directly or by contacting trialog@clong.be

Meanwhile the process of further European integration continues and concurrently, the Policy Officer attends seminars and fora to highlight the role of civil society in this process, to increase the awareness of the on-going activities of the NGOs and NGDOs in the candidate countries and to put enlargement in a global context to keep the actors mindful of the larger issues of the EU's role in reducing poverty and achieving the International Development Targets. This links in with TRIALOG's strategic objective to prevent a play-off between enlargement and the EU's development programme. We are seeking to ensure that the political importance of the South is not in diminished by the new relationship with the candidate countries and that development cooperation finance will not be diverted to the candidate countries. TRIALOG is most concerned by the reduction of the EU's budget in funds going to Least Developed Countries with an increase going to middle-income countries. TRIALOG wishes to ensure that the EU's development cooperation policy and programme will benefit financially and politically from the enlargement process.



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Calendar for TRIALOG activities in 2002

January 14 – 17	Seminar "Debt, debt relief and SAPs" in Vienna
February 18 – March 1	Visiting programme to BOND/UK
February 26 – 28	Seminar on personnel sending, AGEH, Cologne, in Germany
March 11	Steering group meeting
April 25 – 28	Seminar "Human Rights and Migration" in Vienna
July*	Seminar on capacity building
September*	Steering group meeting
October*	Seminar "Labour issues and Globalisation" in Vienna
October*	Finnish-Estonian seminar and exposure visit
November*	Seminar on Global education in the Netherlands

*exact dates to be confirmed

Development Policy in the Candidate Countries



Participants prepare their country reports at TRIALOG's seminar on EU development policy

In the negotiation process with the candidate countries, development policy and humanitarian aid are discussed under chapter 26, the external relations chapter. In July 2001, the negotiations on this chapter were closed for each of the candidate countries. According to the Commission, all countries have accepted the *acquis* and there is a good level of alignment to basic principles⁴, so that no transitional agreements have had to be signed.

Now that external relations (*and with them development policy*) are not on the agenda for negotiation anymore, particular attention has to be paid to the progress of the candidate countries in implementing the *acquis* and preparing for participation in the EU's development policy. In the Regular Reports 2001⁵ on individual countries (*annually describing all the progress achieved*), this issue nevertheless occupies

a very modest place. The reports are more or less detailed, according to the very different situations found in each country, but generally the emphasis is placed more on commercial policy.

Reading these reports, the question arises of what the EU concretely wants the candidate countries to achieve in the field of development policy up to their accession. A comparison of the different country reports does not reveal a coherent set of criteria with which to determine the progress made by each country in this field.

First, it seems that the EU requires, at a minimum, an administrative infrastructure (*participation in EU committees and working groups*) for development cooperation to be in place upon accession (*case of Bulgaria, but the Cyprus Report uses similar wording*). Second, the flow of funds to the EC budget should be organised with regard to the future contribution of the countries to the European Development Fund (*this issue is addressed separately for each country in the chapter 29 on financial and budgetary provisions*).

Concerning the administrative infrastructure,

the reports give no details. Very different aspects of development cooperation are pointed out from country to country. The budget allocation for development and humanitarian aid, the target countries and cooperation with NGOs are addressed only in a few reports. In the report about the Czech Republic for instance, none of these three topics is mentioned, despite the fact that this country actually had spent money on humanitarian aid and development cooperation in the years 2000/2001.

As the November reports are published, it is clear that no coherent set of criteria has been set for determining the progress of candidate countries in their ability to take part in the development cooperation programmes and policy of the EU.

Finally, an important element of the preparation process is completely ignored in all of the reports from 1999 to 2001. That is the question of capacity building and information. Although administrative infrastructure is addressed in each case, no special comment is made on the training of civil servants or on the exchange of information on European development policy for instance.

Despite the lack of a coherent presentation with clearly identified criteria, which makes a comparison difficult, it appears that since 1999 some countries have made great progress towards the establishment of a national development policy and an infrastructure to participate in the EU's development policy. Five out of the twelve candidate countries have adapted/are in the process of adapting their development practices to the principles laid down by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (*Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia*). In some others, discussions are going on between government and civil society in order to elaborate a development policy, even if this isn't always mentioned in the reports (*cf. article on Malta*). For Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania the reports are very short, as these countries have not in essence begun to establish a development policy as yet. They only point out the need to upgrade the administrative capacity also with a view to participating in the EU's development and humanitarian aid policies (*Report 2001 on Latvia*).

To derive a first conclusion, we might say that however interesting the

Regular Reports 2001 are in the case of a few countries, they fail to give an exact idea of the state of preparation for participation in all the candidate countries. This has to be traced back to the lack of a focused interest of the EU in the topic, and therefore the lack of a coherent strategy to help the countries prepare.

In order to achieve a more complete picture of the progress made and the work lying ahead in the field of development policy and humanitarian aid, a more systematic study is needed. Therefore, TRIALOG has undertaken research on the development policy of the twelve candidate countries. This research is based on written documents (*such as national reports, laws etc.*) on one hand, and interviews of actors involved in this policy on the other. These actors come from governmental institutions and from civil society (especially from NGOs and academic institutions).

The first part of the research looks at the structures necessary for the management of development and humanitarian aid. It describes these structures that are made up of, at the same time, the administrative infrastructure, the legal framework and the financial means for these policies. In the majority of the candidate countries, the establishment of these structures has not been completed. This is why particular attention is given to short- and medium-term projects and on-going discussions on this topic. In the second part, the emphasis is put on a study of development practice. It is not an evaluation in the sense of the regular evaluations of the OECD. It is too early for such an exercise. The goal is instead to show how the various actors are using these new structures; what sort of actions are being carried out in the framework of development policy, how the governmental institutions are cooperating with the other actors (*particularly the NGOs*) and if development training exists. The report on the establishment of a development policy in the candidate countries will be available on the TRIALOG website next month under www.clong-trialog.at

Léna Krichewsky is graduating in European Policy and International Relations at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences-po). Presently she is doing an internship with TRIALOG, where she is responsible for the research on development policy in the candidate countries.

4. <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/contacts/chapters.htm>
5. <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/docs/index.htm>

The Maltese NGDO National Platform

With neither the support of the EU nor their own government, a group of Maltese NGDOs paved the way for other countries by coming together to form a National NGDO Platform.



Members of Maltese NGDOs meet to form the National Platform

The Maltese NGDO Kopin (*Koperazzjoni Internazzjonali - Malta*) which was set up in June 2000 has taken the initiative to set up the National Platform of Non-Governmental Development Organisations in Malta. Presently in Malta there is no comprehensive national development policy related to issues such as international cooperation, poverty reduction, humanitarian aid and education. The government does help in certain circumstances but there is no clear policy about development issues. Until now individual organisations have pressed individually for certain demands with the government, and decisions are sometimes taken on an ad hoc basis.

Capacity Building

Kopin saw the importance of bringing together other NGOs operating in the development sector to work together on a common front. Bruno Neri (Italy's then representative in the NGDO Liaison Unit to the European Union and an expert in Capacity Building) was brought over to Malta for a seminar about NGDOs in Europe. The setting up of the National Platform was also discussed. The aims in establishing the Platform were to strengthen civil society participation; to initiate a participative process in the setting up of a local development cooperation policy; to take part in Mediterranean, European and international cooperation initiatives; to promote and facilitate debates on NGO legislation in Europe and other countries and to coordinate local initiatives in development work. Finally, if Malta succeeds in joining the European Union, this Platform would seek to become a member of the Liaison Committee of Development NGOs.

The Members

An invitation was sent to NGDOs to join the Maltese National Platform and a first meeting was organised in June 2001. Initially five local Non Governmental Development Organisations (NGDOs) contributed to the setting up of the National Platform. These organisations were Kopin (*Koperazzjoni Internazzjonali - Malta*), Third World Group, Koperattiva Kummerċ Ġust (*Fair Trade Co-operative*), the Jesuit Refugee Service (*Malta*) and Centre for Faith and Justice. Two other NGDOs: Voluntary Lay Missionaries and Graffiti joined the Platform at a later stage. These NGDOs are mainly voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental organisations working within the framework of international development cooperation. They are concerned with poverty reduction, social justice, human rights, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, refugees, fair trade, voluntary service and volunteer sending and with the problems of marginalisation within society, especially with regards to women. The above-mentioned organisations have been working within these fields for a number of years.

NGDO cooperation

In the first few meetings the working method of the platform was discussed. Each organisation will keep its autonomy and visions while cooperating together in jointly identified priorities. There was a session on how best to use the services offered by the TRIALOG team. The Platform has already received help and advice from TRIALOG with regards to existing European development policies. The members agreed to build on foreign experiences while giving the Maltese Platform a local perspective. The platform will also provide opportunities for capacity building and networking with other international development organisations. The platform's development policy will be designed and implemented with the ideal of International Solidarity, in line with other existing policies, aiming at protecting and promoting fundamental human rights.

A Draft Proposal for Policy

In November 2001, the Platform discussed a working document prepared by Kopin, focusing on the possible content of a development policy as well as the strategy of lobbying for such a policy. A database of the countries with which local groups are cooperating is to be established to have a clearer picture of the present situation and needs. The Platform agreed to focus on countries where the organisations have already established contacts and already have knowledge and relationships because it makes more sense to consolidate what has been started. International solidarity is more than ever a necessity, since the gap between the rich and poor, rather than shrinking is continuously increasing. The government is urged to take the necessary steps for the introduction of a coherent legislative framework to regulate issues of development cooperation. The Platform feels that it needs to work with the existing political structures to change the present situation, and it was decided to investigate what presently exists in the different ministries. A single official body responsible for development cooperation should support the NGDOs as it is the government's responsibility to support civil society organisations. The Platform is lobbying the government to put development cooperation on its agenda and eventually adopt a development cooperation policy. There should be lobbying for a budget for funding NGOs in general, as well as NGOs working in the field of development cooperation. A national draft policy on voluntary non-governmental organisations is to be presented by the Maltese Ministry for Social Policy during this year.

Michael Gatt - Kopin (*Koperazzjoni Internazzjonali - Malta*) <http://www.kopin.cjb.net>
Kopin was set up in 2000. The main aims of Kopin are to alleviate poverty and promote social and economic emancipation in the majority world, to combat environmental degradation, to promote a sustainable society based on alternative economic and social systems, and to work in partnership with other associations within the field of development. kopinmalta@yahoo.com

Evolution of Development policy of the Slovak republic

As the Slovak government approves the Charter on Active Development Assistance and Cooperation, NGOs come together to form a National Platform

Slovakia has provided assistance to developing countries for a long time in the form of financial, technical and humanitarian aid, as well as in the form of contributions to international organisations. In the past this aid was as much motivated by the political interests of the block of socialist countries as the development needs of poor countries. Like other CEE states, Slovakia belongs to the countries that are still receiving aid but is, according to the UNDP an "emerging donor country". In the last years there has been a need for a new, effective mechanism for providing development aid in the context with the main long-term priorities of Slovak foreign policy: integration to the EU, NATO, joining the OECD and further active impact of Slovak republic in the international organisations, especially in the United Nations. In July 1999 the Slovak government approved the Concept of Development Assistance provided by the Slovak republic. In the sense of the approved Concept, the Slovak Institute for International Studies worked out the Charter on Active Development Assistance and Cooperation of the Slovak Republic which was approved by the Slovak government in December 1999. The Charter is considered to be the basic political document and it includes basic objectives, principles, forms and means of Active Development Assistance.

The responsible parliamentary committee (*Foreign Committee*) reviewed the Charter and recommended that their remarks to be incorporated into it, along with a draft of the comprehensive mechanisms and procedures in the preparation, realisation, evaluation and audit of the Active Development Assistance. In March 2001 the Slovak government approved this material called "Proposal of Creation of Mechanism for Providing Governmental Development Aid of the Slovak Republic" with some tasks as follows:

- to create a coordination committee for development cooperation as an advisory body for the Minister of Foreign Affairs
- to suggest a budget line for development cooperation to the state budget for 2002

- to make a review of the Slovak development assistance in 1999-2000

NGOs were involved in creation of the material and should be involved in the official coordination committee for development cooperation. NGOs made also their recommendations to the official territorial and sectoral priorities of Slovak ODA. There has been no bilateral ODA program of the Slovak MFA as a result of budgetary constraints. Total ODA stands at 0.03% GNP and is composed of multilateral contributions (2/3), humanitarian assistance (less than 1/3) and some bursaries. The MFA has created a small unit for ODA in the Department of International Economic Cooperation. They have benefited from a small project support from the UNDP in the years 1998-2000, which allowed the Ministry to obtain policy/analytical support from the Slovak Institute for International Studies, a publicly funded research institution loosely attached to the MFA.

At present a new implementation scheme of the Slovak ODA is being considered in the MFA. According to this scheme the main responsibilities of MFA will be in the fields of:

- Policy Framework
- Budget proposals to the Government
- Program Priorities
- Bilateral Agreements
- Country Programming Frameworks
- DAC Statistics
- Public Relations, Information Strategies

The financial means for the Slovak bilateral ODA will be channelled through the UNDP, who will be responsible for the direct implementation of the Slovak ODA. Thus coherence with UNDP strategies for selected countries will be ensured. It is foreseen that NGOs will participate as sub-contractors to the UNDP implementation. There will be another possibility for the NGOs to participate at the Trust fund of MFA with UNDP in charge of Slovak consultants and volunteers, training and public relations for ODA.



The UNDP will assist in the fields of policy advice, technical assistance, UN co-ordination. The priority practice areas will be:

- Poverty Reduction
- Democratic Governance
- HIV-AIDS
- Conflict Prevention and Response
- ICT for Development
- Environment and Energy

There will be another possibility for NGO capacity building and projects to be supported by ODACE programme – a programme of the Canadian Development Agency CIDA to be implemented in V4 countries (the Visegrad four: CZ, PL, SL, H) from 2002.

In September 2001, six Slovak NGOs (active in humanitarian assistance and development aid/cooperation) met and decided to create a platform of Slovak Non-Governmental Development Organisations with the aims of advocating common interests of NGO member organisations in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, dissemination of information on development cooperation activities, co-ordination of common projects and creating partnerships with governmental institutions and international partners and organisations. These organisations are the following: Slovak Catholic Charity (*Caritas*), Slovak Humanitarian Council, Slovak-South African Society, Slovak Academic Information Agency - Service for the Third Sector, People in Peril, eRko (*Movement of Christian Children Communities*) and N.E.W.S – North-East-West-South cooperation. At present a draft of statute of the platform has been discussed via a newly created e-mail conference of Slovak NGOs and we intend to adopt it at a common platform meeting in early 2002.

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Emerging donor – Poland. Role of Polish NGOs.

As a country moving from being a recipient of aid to being a donor, Poland begins to find its own place in international development cooperation.

The term 'development' is neither meaningful nor even well-known to Polish NGO community. Knowledge of Western assistance mechanisms and terminology is not yet here but undoubtedly it will come as Poland along with other Central European countries become increasingly aware that as a future EU member it is turning from a beneficiary to a donor country. Despite the lack of that background, nearly 100 Polish NGOs focus on international projects - predominantly related to Eastern Europe. Our interest probably goes back to the communist times. Firstly, many people in the NGO community share a sense of moral debt and obligation in relation to massive assistance that the underground Solidarity movement and Polish society received from Western European people during martial law in 1980s and the support offered to Poland after 1989. Secondly, there has been a deep-seated fascination with Poland's Eastern neighbours which was a mixture of fear and a sense of mission to promote democratic values and overcome an often painful history of conflicts between Poland and its Eastern neighbours. The number of Polish NGOs mushroomed after 1989 and these immediately started to build links with the partners in the region. The former communist system, with all its rhetoric of friendship between the people of socialist bloc was quite successful in preventing them from making these contacts. The initial aim of Polish NGOs was therefore simply to bring societies in the region closer to each other to overcome decades of isolation and layers of negative stereotypes and prejudices. With the progress of reforms in Poland, sharing the experience of the political, social and economic transformation with partners in the region has become the increasingly distinctive feature of our international activities. Furthermore, it turned out that NGOs from Central Europe have a comparative advantage – that is a better understanding of the current realities in the post-communist world of the former Soviet Union and the Balkans.

Due to limited financial resources some traditional development projects such as infrastructure projects are not very feasible. The Polish contribution is more on 'soft'

side of working with people and sharing experience.

- Civil society development: training for NGO activists, advice and help with establishment of NGO support centres, study visits and internships of NGO persons to Poland (e.g. *activity of Civil Society Development Foundation*)
- Local government development and reform (e.g. *network of support centres in Bosnia established with the support of Foundation in the Support of Local Democracy*)
- Support to independent, in particular, local media (e.g. *Foundation IDEE*)
- Human rights education and monitoring (e.g. *Helsinki Foundation*)
- Technical assistance on economic reforms (e.g. *Foundation CASE*)
- Civic education (e.g. *Education for Democracy Foundation*)
- Relief aid (e.g. *Polish Humanitarian Organisation and Caritas*)
- Health education (e.g. *Batory Foundation addictive therapy and palliative care training courses*)

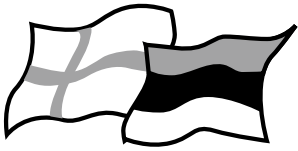
There were also first attempts to move toward field based projects: Polish Humanitarian Organisation run a community development project in Southern Kosovo and a water supply operation for inhabitants of Grozny in Chechnya. More organisations are considering long-term commitments in various areas. The majority of activities described above is funded directly or through Polish organisations (such as Batory Foundation) by public and private US donors. An encouraging sign was a grant programme launched by the Polish government designed to fund projects in former Yugoslavia (under the Stability Pact) though with the current crisis of public finances, the prospects of more government involvement is bleak. There is considerable funding from the Polish public but this is generally restricted to humanitarian causes. European funding is not an option as Polish NGOs do not fall into the rigid framework of existing EU schemes. The Polish NGOs that run international projects are

currently working on a set of proposals for better dialogue and cooperation with the government as well as a voluntary code of conduct concerning cooperation with foreign partners.

The enlargement process is sometimes perceived by European NGOs as a threat or competition to the EU development agenda. I truly believe that in a long run the spirit of European solidarity with the outside world will be further reinforced by the new members. Both governments and civil societies in accession countries will clearly have a lot to learn to become mature and responsible donors in the international scene. Furthermore, they may hopefully avoid the mistakes that Western European countries have made over past 30 years. Their contribution however will not just follow the current regional priorities of EU member countries. Unlike many of current EU members, accession countries did not have colonies. They have therefore neither the sense of obligation vis-à-vis a particular developing country nor the expertise and first hand knowledge to act effectively there. The new members' contribution to European solidarity with the outside world will be much more effectively utilised if it is focused on the area where they have a comparative advantage – that is a knowledge and interest in the countries of former Soviet Union that are painfully struggling with various aspects of transition. I believe that such a scenario is a legitimate expectation as the bureaucratic logic of dividing EU external aid to 'development aid' to ACP countries and aid to other regions is hopefully giving way through establishment of Europe Aid to a more integrated approach in planning and management of European aid efforts.

In conclusion Polish NGO community is ready to be increasingly involved in the efforts of European NGO community but for reasons of realism and efficiency we should expect that they focus on Kazakhstan rather than Rwanda and on Ukraine rather than Algeria.

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Finnish-Estonian cooperation

The cooperation between Finnish development NGOs (through the Finnish LC Platform) and Estonian NGOs interested in development cooperation and development education started in 1999 and has been a part of the TRIALOG project since the beginning. One of the aims of the Finnish NGOs has been to encourage Estonian NGOs to take part in the European discussions on development cooperation and coordinate actions between Finnish and Estonian NGOs on development issues.

During the year 2001 we focused mainly on two activities: Estonian NGO representatives visited Finnish NGOs in March, and in May we organised a joint seminar on development cooperation in Helsinki. Together with NENO (*Network for Estonian Non-Profit Organisations*) the Finnish LC Platform invited two representatives from Estonian NGOs to visit different Finnish development NGOs. Development cooperation is a new area for Estonian organisations and therefore one of the aims was to give a view of Finnish NGO development cooperation activities, which could give concrete ideas for Estonian NGO work. We also wanted to give the Finnish NGOs an insight into the situation and the external environment of Estonian NGOs, and through these mutual contacts build a stronger partnership between Finnish and Estonian NGOs.

During two weeks our Estonian guests visited more than 10 organisations ranging from church based development NGOs, through student organisations to disabled peoples associations. They also visited e.g. the Centre for Development Studies at Helsinki University and took part in a course organised by our Foreign Ministry aimed at development workers. The result was very encouraging, and both the Finnish and Estonian participants were very happy with the visits. It gave the Finnish organisations a new insight into how Estonian NGOs work and the Estonian representatives saw a broad spectrum of different kinds of development organisations and got useful information and ideas for future work. Both parties gained good contacts for future cooperation. Despite the heavy program we also had time to enjoy *noche Latina* at Helsinki cultural centre with music and good food as a conclusion for a busy week.

In May we organised a bilateral seminar on development

cooperation with financial help from the TRIALOG project. Participants from around 15 Finnish and 15 Estonian NGOs were introduced to the theme of development cooperation, heard about the cooperation between the Finnish government and NGOs in

With Estonian NGO representatives visiting Finnish NGOs and presenting their NGOs in the World Village day in Helsinki, Finnish-Estonian cooperation shows other countries how such an exchange can benefit both countries.

development cooperation and got an insight into development cooperation activities in Estonia. During the seminar we also worked in three working groups and discussed among other things how to influence the public opinion to become more positive towards development cooperation, how to activate people to take part in the activities of our organisations and how to promote trilateral cooperation between a Finnish and an Estonian organisation and an

organisation from a developing country. After the seminar the Estonian representatives participated in the World Village festival, which gathers about 20 000 people in the centre of Helsinki. At the festival there was the possibility to enjoy food and music from different parts of the world, meet people interested in development cooperation and to get acquainted with NGOs working in this field. The Estonian organisations presented their work in a stand at the festival; two representatives were interviewed in the speakers' corner, Finnish and Estonian NGO representatives met with each other. In short: we enjoyed the day.

All in all, the seminar and festival were successful and I believe that both the Finnish and Estonian participants enjoyed the weekend and found it useful. The World Village festival was an interesting experience for the Estonian participants and the Finnish audience learned that there are NGOs interested in development cooperation in Estonia, and that there would be possibilities for trilateral cooperation in the future. At the moment we are jointly planning for next year and look forward to a fruitful cooperation.

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