

Project Title:	Enhancing EU Development Policy Debate in the Czech Republic through debate facilitation, networking, lobbying, resource mobilisation, and awareness raising.
Implementing Organisation:	People In Need
Country:	The Czech Republic
Project Manager:	Šimon Pánek
Total Budget:	54 250 euros
Total Requested Budget from Fund:	31 300 euros

The **principle objective** of the proposed project is to contribute to bringing the level of the EU Development Policy awareness of the Czech development stakeholders, decision-makers and public to the level common in the old EU member states and in so doing, to generate a public demand for increasing the Czech Official Development Aid (ODA) and willingness of Czech constituency to be a significant player at the European level.

Currently, the EU Development Policy Debate in the Czech Republic seriously lags behind the similar debate in the old EU-member states.

There are several reasons for this:

1. The **politicians and government** employees lack adequate knowledge about development issues in general and EU Development Policy in particular.
2. There is little space dedicated to the issues relating to the EU Development Policy in the **media**, and there is little awareness about and interest in these issues among Czech journalists. Although development issues relating to the Global South have been gaining importance in public debate, it is not always in an informed manner and in the direction supportive of development policies aligned to the EU Development Policy or the International Development Agenda.
3. **Civil society** engagement in the debate is atomised, especially given the limited capacity of Czech NGOs especially in terms of restricted budgets and human resources. Moreover, only few opportunities for such debate exist, as the Czech NGO development network FoRS is young and still relatively weak. As a result, Czech NGOs are unable to participate in development debates at the European level or do not have opportunities to learn from more involved development actors.

The consequences of this are at two levels:

1. A lack of public debate and awareness about the role of the Czech Republic in development activities in general and EU development policy in particular.

2. **There is a lack of public support to development** activities aligned to the EU Development Policy and a lack of pressure on the government to increase ODA (which is currently at 0,12 % of GNI).

People in Need (PIN) has been engaged in the EU Development Policy Debate for several years but the impact of this engagement has been marginal to date, corresponding with our limited capacity to engage in debate facilitation and lobbying. In this context, PIN has recently recognised **the importance of networking**. In 2002, PIN – as one of three founding members - initiated the creation of a Czech NGDO platform FoRS, in 2003 PIN joined Eurostep and Alliance 2015, and in 2005 the Czechs Against Poverty campaign. However, once again the PIN the human resource capacity to effectively deal with all issues on the network agenda has been limited upto now and there is a clear need for strengthening this capacity.

People in Need (PIN), as perhaps the most influential development NGO in the country, must play a major role in initiating and promoting the EU Development Policy Debate in the Czech Republic. In doing so, PIN can draw on its previous experience in awareness raising, lobbying and advocacy, on the know-how and back-up provided by several departments of the organisation (especially the Media, Relief and Development, and Development Education Departments), and perhaps most importantly on its stability and the trust bestowed in it by the Czech decision-makers, journalists, and general public. **Strengthening the structural capacity of PIN** so that the organisation is able to deal with the challenges and complexity of the development debate is thus key to intensifying and energizing the EU Development Policy Debate, by lobbying the government, networking with civil-society, and mobilising resources on behalf of the poor in the Global South vis-à-vis both EU and Czech stakeholders, decision-makers and public.

The proposed project will address the above problems by a combination of activities targeted at Czech politicians, decision makers, government officials, journalists, Czech public, and also a number of staff members of PIN. The selected approach is fourfold:

1. **Initiating the EU Development Policy Debate** at the decision-maker level through acting as a focal point organising meetings with Czech MEPs, Deputies, Senators and Governmental Officials
2. **Motivating and prompting active networking** of NGOs at the Czech, European and international levels
3. **Raising public awareness** about the EU Development Policy Debate through direct media work, creation of a focal point for Czech journalists, and co-organising public debates on EU development issues.

These activities are not new for PIN. It has tested the proposed approaches in a number of programs in the past, the Development Awareness Program being a good example. PIN has also been a part of the major European development networks: in 2002, as one of the founding members PIN initiated the creation of a Czech NGDO platform FoRS, in 2003 PIN joined Eurostep and Alliance 2015, and in 2005 the Czechs Against Poverty campaign. **However, the impact of these efforts has been limited by the limited capacity of PIN in terms of human and financial resources available.**

Project Sustainability

Being fully oriented to capacity-building and awareness-raising this project clearly outlives the implementation period.

Information dissemination and awareness raising, lobbying, networking, and fund-raising – all of this must continue after the contract period if the impact is to be significant and lasting. The funds for continuation of the project will be sought from other resources available in Europe and in the Czech Republic (i.e. Regional Partnership Programme, Support Programme of Czech MFA for NGOs, private foundations) and from PIN core budget, which is expected to be less strained than it was in the year 2005 due to growth of PIN and limited budget available for covering human resources.