

Project Title: Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society in Malta, Cyprus and Slovenia to engage effectively in dialogue with the European Institutions over Sustainable Livelihoods in the Mediterranean and the Barcelona Process.

Implementing Organisation: Kopin- Koperazzjoni Internazzjonali

Country : Malta

Project Manager : Vince Caruna

Total Budget: 45 000 euros

Total Request from Fund: 45 000 euros

Present Scenario

The European Union is often perceived by Civil Society Actors as neglecting "the cradle of Europe". As someone once said the "ambitions of the continent do not coincide with the expectations of the coast". Decisions crucial for the Mediterranean are made elsewhere, or without its representatives, breeding mistrust and discontent. At the end of November 2005, European and (some) Arab leaders met in Barcelona to mark the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona process. This meeting confirmed the clear gap between the rhetoric of policy makers and the economic, social and environmental reality on the ground as experienced by grassroots civil society organisations. Kopin's dialogues within the Mediterranean area during the recent years (including a number of bilateral contacts, the Civil Forum meeting in Luxembourg this year, as well as through the Mediate network www.mediatenet.org) indicate that little change has taken place in the region in the last ten years, and that the difference between the southern and the northern parts of the Mediterranean is getting even bigger.

There is a clear need to promote the social, environmental and economic development in the region with real cooperation between civil society and European Public Institutions, revising the ways of intervention and the specific functions of each one, and bridging the current gap between the rhetoric of policy makers and the reality on the ground. This requires the strengthening of the capacity of Civil Society to engage in policy dialogue regarding the Euro-Med process.

The principal objective of the project is to engage Civil Society in Malta, Slovenia and Cyprus in a European Dialogue about the future of the Euro-Med Region and influence an effective EU development policy.

Kopin and its collaborators believe in a vision of the Mediterranean in which the promotion of social, environmental and economic well-being is undertaken in real cooperation between civil society and the public institution, revising the ways of intervention and the specific functions of each one, and bridging the current gap between the rhetoric of policy makers and the reality on the ground. Kopin together with its collaborators intends to create an action plan, based on the concerns of their partners in the South, to advocate for progress in the Barcelona Process that has a real impact on Poverty Eradication and that contributes to sustainable livelihoods at the local grassroots level.

The ownership for defining what constitutes sustainable livelihoods will be entirely in the hands of the local CSOs in the Southern Mediterranean. These definitions will then be used by NGOs from Malta, Cyprus and Slovenia to advocate that European Institutions include these concerns in future evaluations of the process and in any new negotiations related to the process. In doing so Kopin will support the capacity building of its partners in Slovenia and Cyprus, as well as facilitate their engagement in a European Dialogue over the future of the Euro-Med Region toward influencing an effective EU development policy.

Kopin will share the skills and experiences it gained during its year's participation in activities at European level (especially those supported in the recent years by Trialog, CONCORD, Eursolep, and the different presidencies) and help bring the collaborators of the project (Slovenia and Cyprus) at least on its same level, while also strengthening its own capacity. The timing is right since Slovenia has recently taken a renewed interest in Mediterranean issues, not least through forming a focal point in Mediate. Cyprus is in the process of forming. Specifically the strengthened capacities are expected to include:

1. Engage effectively in the EU Development Policy Debate vis-à-vis EuroMed issues.
2. Enhanced skills in advocating for and participating in debates to influence an effective EU development policy, especially vis-à-vis EuroMed issues.
3. The capacity to engage in, co-operate on and execute actions that contribute to a strengthened EU Development Co-operation, including the ability to engage in the debate on the implementation of EU development co-operation and Europe's commitment to the International Development Agenda vis-à-vis the EuroMed Region.
4. The capacity to elicit commitments from governments, MEPs, EuroMed Parliamentarians and the EU Commission on EU development policy vis-à-vis the EuroMed region.
5. Strengthened relationships with the political actors to facilitate their recognition of the role of NGOs and other civil society organisations in EU Development Policy vis-à-vis the EuroMed region.
6. The Capacity to work in partnership with other Civil Society Actors across Europe to achieve EU Development Policy objectives.
7. The Capacity to engage with civil society actors from developing countries leading to actions and activities that include perspectives from the Global South countries, within the context of strengthening EU Development Policy.
8. The Capacity to increase the awareness of political representatives of perspectives from the Global South countries, within the context of strengthening EU Development Policy.
9. Enhanced partnerships and coalitions with other civil society actors involved in development, and the creation of new ones.
10. The capacity to access EU institutions.

The project methodology is participative, and the budget will ensure that the collaborators and subcontractors (Mediate and its focal points) will be given the necessary resources to participate fully in the actualisations of the project. Two very concrete results of the projects are the Local Participative Sustainability Indicators and the Advocacy kit, which will provide a framework and tool for the annual review of the various EuroMed processes and therefore guarantee the sustainability of the project after the one year cycle. The creation of an advocacy action plan and its implementation is a crucial stage, and it is here that it is expected that more CSOs, political actors and the media will commit themselves to International Development Agenda vis-à-vis the Southern Mediterranean, and in particular to Europe's contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.