



## **Epilogue**

**Assessing the implementation of the  
Presidency Fund for New Member States**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Presidency Fund was established on 1 July 2005 to strengthen the capacity of NGOs from the 10 Countries that acceded to the European Union on 1 May 2004 to engage in debate on the EU's development co-operation policy. The operations of the Presidency Fund were effectively completed by the end of 2008, although some of the actions undertaken by NGOs under the latter Calls for Proposal, particularly the fifth and last Call, continued to be implemented during 2009.

Given that the entry of 12 new Member States, most of who come from a different recent political and social heritage, was likely to have a significant impact on some of the policy areas of the EU, the early opportunity to influence thinking about development policy was important. Early indications in the life of the Presidency Fund suggested that the support being provided to a number of organisations was playing a role in helping to build relationships between civil society and government administrations. There were also suggestions that the Presidency Fund was enabling a more rapid involvement of NGOs from the 12 to participate in the broader EU development NGO community.

The final substantive report – *The Final Analysis: A report on the implementation of the Presidency Fund* – was produced in 2009 and submitted to the donors. This report contained all the detailed analysis of the work and methodology of the Presidency Fund during the 40 months of the duration of the Fund.

The purpose of the activities that were pursued during 2009 was to finalise the ongoing actions that were being supported by the Fund, and to make the assessment of the achievements made, and experiences gained in the implementation of the Presidency Fund. It was also hoped that in capturing the experiences of the Fund it would contribute to the overall learning process for managing such initiatives.

For the NGOs in the new member states one of the key issues that they wished to see addressed was how the work of the Presidency Fund could be followed up. The Fund had been a short term initiatives that was geared towards a specific opportunity presented at the time of accession. The contribution was very welcome, but the time period was seen as being too short to have a real chance to achieve sustainability. The assessment was therefore asked to address the ongoing constraints and the potential for follow up mechanisms

This report covers final activities that were undertaken in 2009 to complete the Fund. In particular the report covers the undertaking of the assessment of the workings of the Fund and its achievements. The report of the assessment – *The Presidency Fund for New Member State: Capturing the experiences gained in the implementation of the Fund* – can be found as an annex to this report (Annex I). A final meeting was organised as part of the preparation of the assessment to which stakeholders of the Fund were invited. The agenda for that meeting can be found in Annex II, and the report can be found in Annex III.

This report also includes updated information regarding the final activities of the organisations that received support from the Fund, and a financial report for 2009.

## 2. FINAL IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS BY NGOS SUPPORTED BY THE FUND

Some of the initiatives that were supported by the Fund were not able to finalise their activities by the end of 2008. These were mostly projects that were supported by the Fund under the fifth Call for Proposals that had been published in early 2008. The *Final Analysis* included information on the focus and actions undertaken for most of these.

By the end of 2009 all of the initiatives being supported by the Presidency Fund had been completed, although in two instances the final reports were not received until early 2010. Of the 14 initiatives supported by the Presidency Fund for which there were outstanding issues at the time of the submission of the report last year all but 2 of these has been resolved and signed off. Details of these projects are set out below:

Call	Organisation	Outstanding issue	Resolution	Result
<b>First</b>	Estonian Round Table for Development	Clarity of status of the project after official investigation into the affairs of the host organisation	Following the conclusion of the official investigation clarity provided on use of resources provided in accordance with original proposal.	Project completed. Signing off pending
<b>Second</b>	SLOGA	Submission of final report was still pending	Report received, assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off
<b>Third</b>	EMLA	Final report was still being assessed	Report assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off
	HAND	Submission of final report was pending	Report received, assessed and approved pending refund of unused € provided by PF	Project completed and Signed off
	MiT	Final report was still being assessed	Report assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off
<b>Fourth</b>	FoRs	Submission of final report was pending	Report received, assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off
	IGPN	Final report was still being assessed	Report assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off
<b>Fifth</b>	ECIP	Submission of final report was pending	Report received, assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off
	FOND	Submission of final report was pending	Report received, assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off
	HAND	Submission of mid-term and Final reports pending	Report received, assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off
	Integra Foundation	Submission of final report was pending	Report received, assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off
	KOPIN	Submission of final report was pending	Final report still pending	
	SKOP	Submission of final report was pending	Report received, assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off
	SLOGA	Final report was still being assessed	Report assessed and approved	Project completed and Signed off

### **3. EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FUND**

In 2009 the last projects supported by the Presidency Fund were being completed, and the organisations that were running these initiatives were submitting their final reports. From the discussions that had been held with a number of the project holders it was clear that for many of them the Presidency Fund had provided an important opportunity for them to build capacity and gain experience at a crucial moment in their countries' integration into the EU, when the establishment of a development policy became necessary as a result of their accession to the EU. It was also clear that for many of them there were continuing constraints in their development and ongoing activities, amongst which the question of finance was identified.

The proposal for an assessment was presented during 2009 to see to what extent the Presidency Fund had achieved its objectives, and to identify the ongoing needs that continued to exist. The aim of the assessment was established as being to:

- i. Make a comprehensive analysis of the achievements and impact of the actions of the Presidency Fund, including the methodology of the Fund itself and the individual initiatives supported with financial assistance from the Fund.
- ii. Identify the current context for development NGOs from the New Member States in order to assess the objective constraints and opportunities for their work, and in particular to building on the results they have achieved with the support of the Fund.
- iii. Propose strategies and actions that could be considered to enhance the ability of New Member State development NGOs to address the constraints identified and to make use of the opportunities.
- iv. Make the results of the analysis widely available and accessible to a broad range of relevant actors both inside and outside the New member States.

Joyce Haarbrink, a senior analyst with considerable experience in development issues, who was working with Europe External Policy Advisors, carried out the assessment. In carrying out the analysis the consultant was asked to address three specific issues:

First the methodology used for the implementation of the Presidency Fund. This would seek to identify the effectiveness of the methodology and its implementation with a view to reaching conclusions on its strengths and weaknesses.

Secondly to assess the results of the individual initiatives funded by the Presidency Fund so as to identify the results in terms of the impact on the intended target group(s) and to make a comparison with the original objectives established for the project. The impact on the implementing organization was also to be covered, as well as the future sustainability of outcomes achieved. The actions were also to be assessed with respect to their contribution to the overall objectives of the Fund.

Thirdly the current context for the ongoing work of the NGOs that benefitted from the financial support of the Fund, including the current and expected constraints and opportunities for the NGOs community as a whole

The analysis drew on the materials that have been produced during the implementation of the Presidency Fund's activities, particularly the project proposals and the reports on implementation, as well as on interviews with various stakeholders.

The assessment was carried out over the period of October to December 2009, with the draft results being presented to a meeting of stakeholders in December 2009. The assessment was finalized in January 2010.

## **4. MEETING OF STAKEHOLDERS**

The meeting of stakeholders was scheduled to contribute to this assessment and to test the validity of its findings. The draft assessment report was provided as a substantive input into the meeting so as to provide the basis for reflection and discussions. The agenda for the meeting can be found in annex II.

Invitations to participate in the meeting were sent to:

- all organisations that received support from the Presidency Fund in one or more of the five Calls for Proposal;
- members of the Advisory Board for the Presidency Fund;
- representatives from Irish Aid, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from BMZ were also invited to participate;
- representatives from the Permanent Representations of EU Member States.

There were 22 participants in the meeting, which included 13 representatives of organisations that had received Presidency Fund support for 18 of the 29 projects. The Presidency Fund Advisory Board was represented by the Acting Chair. Germany's BMZ was represented by a participant from the German Permanent Representation, and there was a participant from the Slovenian Permanent Representation. In addition there was a participant from Social Watch, an international coalition of civil society organisations which includes membership from within the New Member States, and a representative from the Global Policy Forum.

The objective of the meeting was to involve the different stakeholders in finalising the assessment. At the time of the meeting the Assessor, Joyce Haarbrink, had undertaken a detailed desk study of the Fund's implementation, followed by a number of The draft assessment was presented to the meeting, and the participants were invited to respond to the critique made. As part of this process a number of the organisations participating in the meeting presented some of their own experiences in establishing their initiatives, its implementation, and their own conclusions.

Many of the participants suggested that the critique of the assessment was too critical in many respects as they felt that many of the actual achievements were not reflected in the report. In general the participants from the organisations that had managed projects felt that the Fund had given them potential to take forward their own organisational development.

The report of the meeting is contained in annex III.

## 5. FINANCIAL REPORT

The *Final Analysis* submitted in 2009 provided the financial report for the activities of the Presidency Fund covering the period 1 July 2005 to 31 December 2008. The period covered by this financial report is for the calendar year 2009. The budget for the activities covered in 2009 was set out in a proposal submitted in May 2009 that covered the costs of a making an assessment of the impact of the work of the Fund, and to set out the experiences gained in the process.

In comparison to the proposed budget of € 35.000, the actual expenditure for this final phase of the Presidency Fund was € 31 427.13. In addition Eurostep continued to employ the Fund Administrator for 6 months to follow up the actions that were continuing, and to assess the reports that were received in 2010, at a cost of some € 12 000.00.

### Income and Expenditure report 2009

Item	Actual	Budget	Difference
<b>Income</b>			
Grants			
Germany	5 768.42	5 768.42	0
Ireland	12 657.49	12 657.49	0
Netherlands	12 657.50	12 657.50	0
Sub total	31 083.41	31 083.41	0
Other	343.73	3 916.59	3 572.87
Sub total	343.73	3 916.59	3 572.87
<b>Total income</b>	<b>31 427.13</b>	<b>35 000.00</b>	<b>3 572.87</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Assessment			
Consultant	11 616.00	6 000.00	-5 616.00
Communication	450.00	500.00	50.00
Travel	0	1 000.00	1 000.00
Sub total	12 066.00	7 500.00	-4 566.00
Report			
Editing	1 000.00	1 000.00	0
Layout	1 500.00	1 500.00	0
Printing	2 950.00	4 000.00	1 050.00
Dissemination	1 037.80	2 000.00	962.20
Preparations of website	1 500.00	1 500.00	0
Sub total	7 987.80	10 000.00	2 012.20
Meeting			
Coordinator	2 130.74	2 000.00	-130.74
Support	309.68	500.00	190.32
Travel	4 645.31	10 000.00	5 354.69
DSA	2 737.60	3 000.00	262.40
Rapporteur	1 500.00	1 500.00	0
Printing of report	50.00	500.00	450.00
Sub total	11 373.33	17 500.00	6 126.67
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>31 427.13</b>	<b>35 000.00</b>	<b>3 572.87</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

Notes to the financial report:

1. The income for the budget was based on the balances left from the commitments of support from the main contributors to the Presidency. There was also a small provision made from Eurostep to cover the projected shortfall in the budget.
2. The external consultancy was based on work being carried out over a period of 13 days. A review of progress of the assessment was made during the course of the work at which it was concluded that a further 3 days work would be needed for its completion.

The balance of resources committed by the three principal funding partners of the Presidency Fund are identified in the table below.

	Opening balance left of grant commitment as at 1 January 2009	Resources used in 2009	Balance as at 31 December 2009
Netherlands	12 657.50	12 675.50	0
Ireland	12 657.49	12 675.49	0
Germany	5 768.42	5 768.42	0
Total	31 083.41	31 083.41	0

The balance of funds for the Presidency Fund held by Eurostep at the 1 January and 31 December 2009 respectively are identified in the table below which illustrates the changes over the year.

	Opening balance of funds received as at 1 January 2009	Transfers in during 2009	Resources used in 2009	Balance of funds held by Eurostep on 31 December 2009
Netherlands	-12 659.50	13 238.00	12 657.50	-12 079.00
Ireland	12 657.49	0	12 657.49	0
Germany	5 669.42	0	5 768.42	-999.00
Total	5 667.41	13 238.00	31 083.41	-13 756.50

## 6. CONCLUSION

The Presidency Fund was established with a very clearly defined focus – the strengthening of NGOs from the member states that joined the EU in May 2004 and in January 2007 – and with a defined timeframe. It was initiated recognising that in joining the EU the New Member States were obliged to adhere to the EU's development policy since this was a part of the *acquis communautaire*. This meant that each of the countries that joined the EU in 2004 – as well as those joining 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> year later – would need to establish a development policy that was compatible with that of the EU. In this context a “window of opportunity” was identified in which to engage with the respective governments in the formation of this policy. Since NGOs in most of the 12 countries were relatively new, small, and lacking in experience of development themselves the aim of the Presidency Fund was to support actions of NGOs in each of the countries that would enable them to quickly engage in dialogue with state actors around development policy. A specific orientation was given to the way in which this would relate to EU development policy.

Indications from different sources, including the Assessment made as part of the 2009 activities, strongly suggests that the Presidency Fund was timely and did play a significant role in enabling the NGO community within the 12 New Member States to strengthen their position within their own countries, and to have an influence on the thinking of their government officials during the critical period when their national development policies were being established. The relationships between the NGOs and key officials continues in most of the countries concerned, with different kinds of mechanisms having been put in place for enabling the ongoing exchanges and dialogue.

The Presidency Fund also provided valuable opportunities for many small and medium sized NGOs, including national platforms, to gain experience in project management and in the general management of activities. This has been important for enabling them to gain credibility with their own countries, and towards the broader NGO community in Europe. From this basis it can be expected that the organisations will be in more advantageous position to secure future funding for their actions.

Of concern, however, to many of the organisations involved – and once again the national networks in particular – is the relatively few funding sources to which they can seek financial support. The principal two are the European Commission and their own national administrations. These two are playing important roles in most countries, but they do carry risks and constraints – particularly in relation to engaging in some of the policy activity. For the majority of NGOs the opportunity to raise funds from private sources is limited, and the current economic and financial context is not expected to be helpful.

In this context many of the organisations strongly urged Eurostep to work towards follow up activities that would help to continue supporting the activities of NGOs in the 12 new member states. While funding is one potential aspect of this there is also considerable interest in support for the policy perspectives on development. Eurostep is already increasing the opportunities for these organisations to take part in its activities, including through a formal association. The involvement of Eurostep within Social Watch provides additional opportunities for an engagement with a global civil society community that many of the organisations have yet to engage with in any substantial way.

## **ANNEX I**

### **The assessment report**

The Presidency Fund for New Member States  
Capturing the Experiences gained in the Implementation of the Fund.

The report is a separate document.

## ANNEX II

### The contribution of the Presidency Fund to EU dialogue on development

Brussels, 16 December 2009

14.00 – 18.00 h

#### Agenda

Hotel du Congrès  
Rue du Congrès 42-44  
1000 Brussels

Tel: +32 (0)2/217.18.90 – Fax: +32 (0)2/217.18.97

[www.hotelducongres.be](http://www.hotelducongres.be)

- 14.00 – 14.10 Welcome and introduction to the objectives of the meeting  
*Simon Stocker, Director Eurostep & Managing Director of the Presidency Fund*
- 14.10 – 14.25 Presentation of the findings of the evaluation report  
*Joyce Haarbrink, Senior Project and Programme Manager of EEPA*
- 14.25 – 14.35 Presentation of some websites developed with PF support  
*3 recipient NGOs*
- 14.35 – 14.55 Presentation of some innovative actions:  
*Exhibition in train stations*  
*Postcard campaign (PHO)*  
*Twinny (EMLA)*
- 14.55 – 15.30 Discussion
- 15.30 – 16.00 Break
- 16.00 – 16.20 Changes in the EU institutions following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty  
*Verena Winkler, Policy Advisor Eurostep*
- 16.20 – 16.30 Possible consequences for a future Presidency Fund  
*Simon Stocker, Director Eurostep & Managing Director of the Presidency Fund*
- 16.30 – 16.40 Recommendations for a future PF following from the evaluation report  
*Joyce Haarbrink, Senior Project and Programme Manager of EEPA*
- 16.40 – 17.30 Discussion
- 17.30 – 18.00 Draft proposal PF and wrap up  
*Simon Stocker, Director Eurostep & Managing Director of the Presidency Fund*

## ANNEX III

# The contribution of the Presidency Fund to EU dialogue on development Brussels, 16 December 2009 Report of the meeting

### 1. Participants

#### Representatives of New member States NGOs supported by the Fund

BUSSARD Allan	Integra	Slovakia
CEPONYTE Zita	Lithuania Consumers Institute	Lithuania
HADIJISOFOCLI Demetris	Cardet	Cyprus
HUC Marjan	Sloga	Slovenia
KACMARSKA Paulina	Polish Humanitarian Organisation	Poland
KALWEIT Dominik	Kopin / Skop	Malta
KOCKANOWICZ Kordian	EMLA	Hungary
PANDZHAROV Valery	ECIP	Bulgaria
RUSU Adela	FOND	Romania
SAVOVSKA Marija	IGPN	Czech Republic
SIMANE Mara	Lapas	Latvia
SLADKOVA Zuzana	FoRs	Czech Republic
TARASIEWICZ Malgorzata	NEWW	Poland

#### Presidency Fund Advisory Board

TOWEY Olive	Concern	Ireland
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#### Government representatives

GOLOB Peter	Permanent Representation	Slovenia
SCHLOMS Michael	Permanent Representation	Germany

#### Author of the assessment report

HAARBRINK Joyce	EEPA
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#### Fund secretariat and Eurostep

AURIAN Justine	Eurostep secretariat
STOCKER Simon	Eurostep secretariat, Managing Director of the Presidency Fund & Director of Eurostep
WINKLER Verena	Eurostep secretariat

#### Observers

CARDONA Natalia	Social Watch
ADAMS Barbara	Global Policy Forum

## **2. Introduction to the meeting**

Simon Stocker introduced the meeting setting out its objectives. It would be the final meeting of the Presidency Fund as all of its activities were due to be completed by the end of 2009. Some of the projects supported had continued to be implemented during 2009, but all of these were now completed, with some final reports being finished.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the implementation of the Fund, and to have some reflections on the sustainability of the actions that had been implemented over the past four years with the support of the Fund. This should include identifying any perceived ongoing needs by NGOs from the New Member States.

The meeting was reminded that the purpose of the Presidency Fund being established was to help strengthen the capacity of NGOs from the NMS who were working on development related issues so that they could engage in policy dialogue around the EU's development policies. It was established as the NMS were just joining the EU recognising that as the EU's development policy was part of the *acquis communautaire* the governments of the NMS were required to engage and support the policy. It needed to be recognised, however, that development policy was not addressed during the accession negotiations, so the NMS were required to develop their own national development policies to support the EU's development efforts. The creation of the Presidency Fund sought to promote an active involvement of NGOs at an early stage with the purpose of helping to define such policies.

The Fund has been legally managed by Eurostep, with the support of an Advisory Board. The Advisory Board involved organisations that had an interest in strengthening NMS NGOs, including Concord and Trialog as well as parliamentary representatives.

It was implemented over the four year period of the life of the Fund on the basis of five calls for proposals.

With the finalisation of the activities of the Presidency Fund an assessment had been commissioned to look at the implementation of the Fund, and to evaluate its achievements

The assessment is in draft form and will be presented to the meeting. Participants will be asked to comment on the conclusions and recommendations so that these can be validated with the perspectives of the organisations involved in the implementation of the activities supported by the Fund. The results of the discussions will inform the finalisation of the report.

It is the intention that the report will provide information on the experiences gained from the implementation of the Fund – not just in terms of the substantive activity that the Fund supported, but also the manner in which the Fund was managed and implemented. It is also hoped that it will be a tool that contributes to the general understanding of the processes in the New member States.

## **3. Presentation of assessment report by Joyce Haarbrink:**

Joyce Haarbrink started her presentation by explaining the approach that had been taken in producing the report. This had primarily focused on what had been achieved rather than the work that had been undertaken. This had been one of the stipulations made at the establishment of the Fund by the donors.

The achievements had been assessed with reference to the stated objectives of the Fund. This had drawn substantially on the final reports presented by the organisations that implemented the activity supported by the Fund. The assessment had also looked

at how the Presidency Fund had functioned in order to support and facilitate the objectives, and the ability of the project holders to implement their actions.

Joyce explained that in presenting the draft report and its conclusions to the meeting she was looking for responses and feedback from those who had been involved.

The draft conclusions of the assessment were then presented:

#### Achievements of the Fund

- The Presidency Fund was indeed a timely initiative related to the accession of 10 New Member States in 2004 and the opportunities to promote debate in the 10 countries on development cooperation using the EU's development policy as the means to do so. The incorporation of the scope of the Fund of the 2 countries that joined the EU was important.
- The support from the Irish, Dutch and subsequently German Presidencies made the Fund possible.
- Over the lifetime of the Presidency Fund most of its objectives:
- Organizations that benefitted from the Fund did increase their capacity, knowledge and expertise with the result that many were recognised as important partners by their national Ministries for Foreign Affairs.
  - The organizations became more involved with NG(D)Os and NG(D)O platforms and networks resulting in ongoing participation in national and regional networking
  - New relationships with 'old' national NG(D)O platforms and EU NG(D)O networks were established
  - Within the organizations knowledge about EU development policy increased
  - Advocacy skills improved
- The substantial majority of initiatives supported by the Fund were successful, but there were some that did not succeed in attaining their objectives. This tended to be the result of weak management.
- The Presidency Fund did entail taking some risks. Some of the organizations supported were very small and had little experience in managing projects. However, the achievements made by many of these organizations on the basis of the support that they received demonstrated the value of the Fund.
- One of the objectives of the Fund was to promote sustainable outcomes. It can be concluded that there are levels of sustainability present in most of the recipients from the first three calls for proposal. It is still too early to reach any conclusions for those of calls 4 and 5 still as the final reports had not been available for many of these initiatives when the assessment was being made.
- Many of the proposals submitted and accepted were ambitious, and it was not surprising that some of the ambitions were not achieved. For many initiatives this also led to a delay in implementation, so that it took longer than the initial one year timeframe envisaged.
- Six of the recipients received 2<sup>nd</sup> contracts for support of their activities, and in one instance a 3<sup>rd</sup>. Some of these were completely different activities, while for others it would seem that for some of these the subsequent activities were continuations of the original initiative, albeit with some additions. This does raise issues about additionality of the actions, as well as the potential for dependency of the organizations work on support from the Presidency Fund. However it should be recognized that the projects supported were successful.

### Management of the Fund

- The Presidency Fund was managed with flexibility, and in a style that was cooperative and supportive of the organizations involved.
- There was a regular revision of its own procedures based on experiences gained from the successful calls for proposal.
- The approach to the Presidency Fund itself was ambitious with the original concept being to publish and implement 6 calls for proposal over the planned 3 year life of the Fund. Ultimately there were 5 calls published instead of 6, and the implementation period was extended to cover 4½ years.
- The pressure on the administration of the Fund was also compounded by the absence of the Administrator for maternity leave and due to sick leave. Since the administration of the Fund was based on the administrator as the only employee of the Fund this disrupted the effectiveness of the Fund secretariat.

### Website

- The website had significant potential, but did not maximize these. In particular:
  - It could have been used to promote the organizations being supported through having links to their websites
  - Information on the activities of the recipients could have been posted to the site, such as the national reports
  - Similarly events being organized by the recipients could have been posted to the site.
  - The website could have been used as a tool for exchanges of experiences between recipients with the establishment of a password protected intranet.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations were included in the draft report:

- There is clearly a perceived need for some form of follow up to the Presidency Fund. What this might be needs further discussion. If funding for any follow up initiative is to be sought on the same basis as for the Presidency Fund then there should be a timely start to identify potential Presidency donors (Belgium (July-December 2010), Hungary (January – June 2011), Poland (July – December 2011) and Denmark (January – June 2012))
- For any future funding mechanisms there should be longer time schedule for the Fund as a whole, with the calls for proposals being published less frequently
- The time period for implementation of actions should be increased from the 1 year established in the Presidency Fund.
- There needs to be sufficient funding ensured in any budget for the secretariat
- A future Board should have a decision making capacity right from the start, but should also ensure the maintenance of a political vision/strategy (advisory role)
- The PF website should be a comprehensive communication tool, not only increasing the visibility of the PF, but also of all the recipients and their activities
- The PF could include annual meetings between the recipients of each call to promote cooperation and synergies between the recipients
- Donors should meet regularly (once a year) to monitor the PF and ensure a continued joint approach towards promoting a full involvement of the NMSs in development cooperation

#### **4. Presentation of Innovative Activities**

Three presentations were then made that focused on some of the actions that were supported by the Presidency Fund.

##### **4.1 Postcard campaign - Polish Humanitarian Organisation**

Paulina Kaczmarek administered the programme of PHO. They received support from the Fund under the first Call for Proposals. The postcard campaign was the second initiative pursued as part of the project.

Postcards were produced at the time of national parliamentary elections in Poland (17 October). The campaign sought to activate people to sign a petition to politicians on development policy and on the budget for development. (is now actually changing)

The campaign also included a short movie that was posted on YouTube to support the use of the postcard petitioning. This was important as there was some reluctance by people to be identified through sending postcards. The YouTube video was visited by large numbers of people and gave increased credibility and acceptability to the postcards.

The result was that the petition was signed by a lot of people and put the issue clearly on the table. Its impact is still visible and was instrumental in generating political support for a law on development.

##### **4.2 Twinning - EMLA**

Kordian Kochanowicz presented the initiative. It was supported under Call xx. The aim of the action was to strengthen collaboration between EMLA and the organisations with which it works in the EU with partners in developing countries. Given the relatively low level of knowledge and understanding in Poland about Africa it was considered necessary to establish clearly identified links with partner organisations for the legitimacy of EMLA's work, and hence its advocacy.

The actions sought to promote Tanzania and the situation of Tanzania, and to establish a clearly defined partnership with Tanzanian civil society. The outcome was that there were new contacts established, and information and materials for use in advocacy. The partnership has yet to identify specific content.

##### **4.3 Fair trade awareness – Integra**

Allan Bussard presented the initiative that Integra undertook on fair trade. Integra received support under Call ...

The aim was to raise public awareness in Slovakia about fair trade. It was easy to measure because it began from a position of almost no awareness in Slovakia for the concept of fair trade. By the end of the campaign 50% of the people surveyed declared themselves aware to fair trade

The campaign focused on an advertising campaign under the title "I don't like the taste". It comprised advertisements with photos of celebrities with a grimace on their face. It made a big impact because people recognised the personalities but were not used to seeing them with no makeup and a disgusted look.

While the campaign was successful in promoting awareness it was not possible to provide links in the advertisements for people to buy fair trade products, because of the nature of the agreement on the content of the advertisements.

Therefore work still needs to be done to promote the purchase of fair trade products.

## **5. Discussion - Contributions and comments on the Report**

The participants responded to the presentation of the draft report with comments and reactions. In general the representatives from the organisations involved in the implementation of the Fund felt that the assessment often failed to recognise the level of achievements made with the support of the Fund. For many organisations this support has been crucially important in enabling them to reach their current levels of capacity and expertise. Concerns were expressed about the need for some form of follow up as the options for the future are limited for most of the organisations.

Specific comments and suggestions to the report:

### **5.1 Provision of financial data**

It was pointed out that the report as it stands does not adequately provide information about the origins and nature of the Presidency Fund and its scope. It was suggested that information on these issues would be important to enable readers who do not have any knowledge of the Fund to understand the context in which the assessments are being made. This could be included in an annex.

### **5.2 Assessing impact**

It was also suggested that the assessment would be more valuable if there some data was included to indicate what level of change in basic indicators on support for development cooperation in the New member States over the time that the Fund was operational.

It was agreed that this would indeed be interesting, but there was recognition that identifying accurate statistical data for relevant indicators would be difficult. Quantative data that does exist would be more indicative. This could include:

- Evolution of national NGO platforms within the NMS over the period of the Fund
- Evolution of contacts with Ministries for Foreign Affairs
- Evolution of involvement of organizations supported by the Fund in EU NGO networks

### **5.3 Strengthening of national platforms**

A number of the participants stressed that without the Presidency Fund it would not have been possible for the national platforms to be established and/or strengthened. The fact that some of the actions planned were not undertaken should not necessarily be seen as a failure of the initiatives per se. In many instances the platforms are very active with growing membership, and have been able to develop strong working cooperation with officials in the Ministries.

### **5.4 Ambitious expectations**

It was widely recognised that many of the initiatives did have high expectations, and sought to undertake more activities than was ultimately possible. It was also recognised that the 1 year timeframe was too short for many of the initiatives being undertaken, which was one reason why extensions for the implementation period were requested. However there were other reasons why this was necessary related to delays in the official processes that the

activities were trying to influence. The acceptance by the Presidency Fund for these delays on the grounds that it was better to maximise the opportunities rather than just stick to the original timetable was seen as a positive response from the Fund.

#### **5.5 Sustainability**

Ensuring sustainability after the initiatives had been completed was one of the criteria for support provided by the Presidency Fund. It was clear that there were different measures for assessing sustainability, of which one was continued financing. Others include increased levels of expertise and understanding, as well as the relationships that were built with officials, with European networks, and with civil society organisations in developing countries.

It was suggested that there should be an assessment of the nature of the sustainability of the activities supported once they were completed. This would be very useful in identifying future approaches.

### **6. Brief presentation of individual organisational responses**

The participants made brief comments on the issues raised in the report as they related to their own organisation:

#### **6.1 Sloga**

Marjan Huc indicated that for Sloga, the national NGO platform for Slovenia, the Presidency Fund was important in enabling the following:

- Sloga now has very strong relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries and NGOs are more involved in the implementation of development policies.
- Recognition that the international context is important for dialogue and Sloga is now participating in working groups of Concord and other networks
- The Presidency Fund helped Sloga to work with the media; Eurobarometer showed that there is public support for development. International cooperation is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> place as a priority. It was hard with the media at the beginning as the issues were seen as being too exotic. This is changing and Sloga prepares a monthly briefing for journalists. Some 10% of them regularly take these briefings into consideration.
- Despite the crisis, international cooperation remains a priority to the government

#### **6.2 PHO**

The Presidency Fund's support for activities that would not have been possible otherwise helped to increase PHO's visibility and recognition, including amongst other NGOs. On the basis of this WHO is now working with NGOs from other parts of Europe.

#### **6.3 Lithuanian Consumers Institute:**

Zita Ceponyte indicated that on the basis of the activities undertaken with the support of the Fund:

- LCI has developed good relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has regular meetings with representatives of the Ministry
- It has developed good relations with the media, and has become more visible within Lithuania
- LCI has started new initiatives, such as information to schools on development cooperation with 65,000 leaflets going to schools.

#### **6.4 FoRs,**

Zuzana Sladkova presented the case of the Czech national NGO platform for which:

- The Presidency Fund helped in establishing the policy of the forum
- Its support enabled FoRs to make an action “Appeal to the candidates” for the EU elections, which has led to close cooperation with 2 MEPs
- On the Czech level there is now excellent cooperation with Ministry of Foreign Affairs. FoRs is an official observer and part of the working group for the drafting of the Mid-term Strategy.
- FoRs has started cooperation with national politicians (meetings, parliamentarians debate) but awareness on development is still very low
- Development cooperation is being increased priority, and it is included in the political parties’ programmes for the next national elections

#### **6.5 Network of East West Women,**

Malgorzta Tarasiewicz stated that:

- NEWW has joined the platform of NGOs in Poland and participates in a project to that seeks to promote gender in development issues
- As a result of the project NEWW was asked to present her the project and its results as a meeting of the UN in Geneva
- It has also resulted in training for women in NGOs on monitoring development aid with a specific focus on gender questions.

#### **6.6 EMLA**

Kordian Kochanowicz suggested that:

- There should be more cooperation and networking between the recipients of the Presidency Fund
- In Poland there is space for more exchange and coherence between NGOs. Learning by doing is needed in that context because the political scene is changing and that has an impact at the EU level

#### **6.7 IGPN**

Marija Savovska presented perspectives of the work undertaken by IGPN. This was derived from the basis that gender equality is essential for development. This needs to be central to work at all levels, so as to ensure that governments, EU and NGOs do include it on the agenda. For this to be successful it is necessary to work together to be sure that everyone has the same angle of approach on these issues

#### **6.8 Kopin and SKOP**

Dominik Kalweit stated that he was in fact representing both Kopin and Skop at the meeting. Skop is the national NGO platform for Malta. Kopin is an individual organisation that was instrumental in establishing Skop. His observations were that for the work of Kopin and Skop the report was quite correct.:

- Kopin managed to achieve the overall objectives in its project
- Kopin gained some expertise on Africa which it can now share with other Maltese organisations
- The Presidency Fund enabled Kopin to establish a professional secretariat, although most of its work continues to be done by volunteers. This does raise issues about how to sustain its paid staff. However, on the basis of its

credibility it is involved in partnerships with others on projects funded by the EC

- The Presidency Fund was also a great opportunity for the national platform because it increased the capacity of the platform and its members, gained strength in bringing in the development perspective. The Calls 4 and 5 helped promoting sustainable development
- While the Presidency Fund may not be the cause of cooperation between Cardet and Kopin it was a catalyser that helped to improve collaboration.

#### **6.9 ECIP**

Valery Pandzharov said that ECIP is the Bulgarian national NGO platform that was established following Bulgaria's accession to the EU in 2007. For ECIP the Presidency Fund had been instrumental in enabling the platform to be established. In relation to the actions supported:

- Some of the objectives were very ambitious and could not be implemented in the original year timetable. However, the level of ambition was a great stimulus to dynamic of the platform.
- The project has been successful as it did enable the establishment of the Bulgarian Platform. It is now necessary for the platform to become part of the EU wide network.
- Contacts have been established with Ministries of the Bulgarian government but cooperation still needs to be improved with some structures
- There is also a need to prove sustainability with partnerships

#### **6.10 FOND**

Adela Rusu indicated that this was the first project of the organisation, which is the national NGO platform for Romania. It has:

- Built the foundations for policy work. It was ambitious
- Enabled the organising of a development camp next year. FOND will be able to influence the agenda and introduce the ACP dimension
- Provided the basis for further activities as the results of the project go beyond the project itself

#### **6.11 Cardet**

Demetris Hadjiisofocli indicated that:

- The Presidency Fund support enabled the establishment of the Cypriot NGO platform. This has been important in capacity building and in discussions with other NGOs
- The presidency Fund support led to establishment of policy capacity
- For the future and partly as a result of the crisis, funds for small countries are difficult to find. There is a need to find alternatives. If we work together, we can have a bigger voice for promoting development cooperation and getting this reflected in budgets.

In responding for the Advisory Board Olive Towey suggested that there was nothing wrong about ambition. The descriptions and great stories put forward in the meeting were fantastic to hear. These need to be clearly captured and expressed in the report and in other follow up work of the Presidency Fund. They also need to be communicated to the donors and the potential donors because the content is very rich.

She observed that while there were clearly many achievements made by the different organisations with the support of the Presidency Fund, and a basis had been built on

which the organisations would be able to build further for the future, there were obvious concerns about the funding opportunities for sustaining the aspirations and expectations for engaging in development issues within the New Member States. The question of whether there was a need for some follow-up initiative was therefore important. .hope the PF's initiatives and coming outs would be sustainable.

In this context she therefore posed three questions:

- What is the appropriate model of funding for the organizations that have benefitted from support of the Fund, and of course potentially others from the New Member States?
- What are the opportunities that are now open with the experiences gained?
- How do we use it to move beyond?

## **7. Potential for the future**

Simon Stocker introduced the last substantive item of the meeting that focused on the future. The departure point for the discussion was that the Presidency Fund was established as an instrument with a limited lifespan. While the three years originally envisaged had been extended eventually to 4½ years, the aim of the fund was to use the “window of opportunity” following enlargement to promote civil society engagement in the early development policy making process of the 10 + 2 New Member States. It was clear that from the assessments being made the Fund had indeed succeeded.

It was also clear that there is a need to ensure that the capacity built within NGOs within the New member States is sustained and built upon so that it can continue to be an engaged partner with government and other actors in the ongoing evolution of national and EU development policy. Without doubt much of the capacity and expertise that has been put in place over the past 4½ years will not disappear without the ongoing support of the Presidency Fund. However, there are clear indications that there is a need for financial resources to be secured to enable much of the ongoing work to be continued.

In looking at the potential for any follow-up initiative should address three issues:

### **7.1 Policy objectives**

The Presidency Fund's focus was on promoting an engagement by civil society organisations in the New member States to engage in policy dialogue. To this end it sought to increase capacity and expertise of New member State NGOs to engage in policy questions and in advocacy. This has been credibly established in most, if not all of the 12 states. So what now needs to be done to continue strengthening this and building on what has already been achieved?

### **7.2 Financial needs**

It is clear that there is an ongoing need to obtain the financial means necessary to continue. Not just for engaging in policy dialogue and advocacy, but in ensuring the organisational structures on which this is based. In terms of official sources of funding that may be available for this kind of work in New member State NGOs the main obvious sources are the European Commission and the national government. These are already important funders for many of the organisations, and will continue to be so. Apart from the issues relating to the need to ensure the generation of the co-financing necessary and the management capacities associated with such projects, there is a question about the sensitivity of both the Commission and national governments supporting policy advocacy that is seeking to change their respective positions. Are there other sources of finance that can be identified that can be drawn upon?

### **7.3 Continued enlargement of the EU**

The third issue is the expectation for further enlargement of the EU in the coming years and the needs associated with a similar kind of process that the Presidency Fund has played for the EU-12. Do we need to consider preparations for these potential needs?

In the ensuing discussion there was general agreement that there was an ongoing need to support the continuing policy advocacy dimensions of NGOs from the New Member States. What has been achieved remains relatively fragile, and this needs to be re-enforced. This does not just relate to the need for financial resources, although that is important, but also inputs on experience and policy analysis necessary for sustaining the ongoing dialogue. For a number of organisations Eurostep has been one of the networks that which has provided this kind of support, and it is hoped that Eurostep will continue this role.

On finance there was recognition that financial sustainability was essential for ensuring that the ongoing works is effective and successful. A dependency on finances from the Commission and the nation Ministry for Foreign Affairs does raise questions about the ability to be independent. Therefore there is a need to identify additional alternative sources of funding. Is there potential for generating resources from citizens and other private sources? If so, could this be done to support policy work rather than merely on the basis of charity to support people in need?

It was also suggested that as part of the future framework for ongoing policy work the potential of using the period of a country's EU Presidency should be recognised. Inevitably this was a moment in which there was more focus nationally on the EU. For the New Member States that have already taken on this role (Czech Republic, Slovenia) the opportunities were self evident and the NGOs used the opportunity to advantage.

## **8. Conclusions**

In the concluding part of the meeting Joyce Haarbrink thanked the participants for the responses to the draft report. She indicated that the substance of the meeting had been important for the finalisation of the report and she would seek to draw on these inputs in modifying the current draft, as well as in finalising the final details. Since the report will include very brief descriptions on each of the initiatives that were undertaken the organisations undertaking the initiatives could expect to receive the proposed text for these initiatives for comment.

She invited participants to make any further comments that they might feel were relevant so that the final version of the report would be fully informed on the different initiatives undertaken.

The aim was for the report to be finalised during January 2010.

January 2010