

23 April 2015

Dear Mr Fernando Frutuoso de Melo,

We write to you in support of the CONCORD and TRIALOG position concerning the rules and guidelines applied to Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) call for proposals sent to you on 13 February 2015. Particularly, we share the concerns of smaller non – governmental organizations which are affected by the changes introduced to DEAR in 2013. Similar concerns were expressed in a joint letter of 14 June 2013 to Mr. Fokion Fotiadis, EuropeAid’s Director General, when changes in DEAR call for proposals policy were discussed. We appreciate the Commission’s openness to look for a solution demonstrated back then. However, the experience of the past two years has shown that the compromise reached in 2013 still makes it very difficult if not impossible for smaller CSOs all across Europe, and notably from EU13 Member States, to apply for DEAR grants.

As demonstrated by a recent study conducted by TRIALOG, the inability to access EU funding in the area of development cooperation has become a problem for many civil society organizations. Two elements of the DEAR rules still raise our concern. First, even the 1 million EUR threshold of a DEAR project makes it impossible for smaller organizations to secure 5% of co-financing. Secondly, the required number of countries in which the project must be implemented is discriminatory to smaller CSOs with fewer regional offices across the EU or lesser capabilities to create consortia. Moreover, the necessity to carry out actions in minimum 6 countries preclude planned activities from replying to national specificities so important when explaining global challenges to our societies. In some cases projects implemented by smaller CSOs addressing the needs of relatively smaller countries or regions within a country would be even more relevant and beneficial.

A sustainable solution is needed for the above mentioned problems which will be satisfactory for both – small and large organizations within all EU countries. Therefore, we call for changes in the rules and guidelines which will enable smaller organizations to apply for accordingly smaller grants. This approach will allow local CSOs to be engaged in the field of development education while keeping large scale projects raising cross-cutting or regional themes and aiming larger audiences. We believe it is mutually beneficial, both for the EU and the CSOs to have a vibrant and diverse CSO community engaged in development cooperation and in global education.

As we already embarked towards establishing a universal post-2015 agenda, we would also like to highlight the important role of all EU CSOs in the implementation process of the new agenda and in achieving sustainable development goals. In addition, the work of CSOs is crucial for building support for development cooperation, without which the collective EU commitment of achieving 0.7% GNI for ODA would be very difficult to obtain.

Furthermore, we also support the CONCORD/TRIALOG appeal to the Commission to reconsider the decision not to launch a DEAR call in 2015 which might create a significant funding gap for development CSOs.

We remain at your disposal to exchange views on the issues raised in our letter at the margins of the meeting of EU Development Directors General at the beginning of May.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rayko Raytchev', written in a cursive style.

Rayko Raytchev
Director-General for Global Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Filippos Kritiotis', written in a cursive style.

Filippos Kritiotis
Director General for Development
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vesna Batistić-Kos', written in a cursive style.

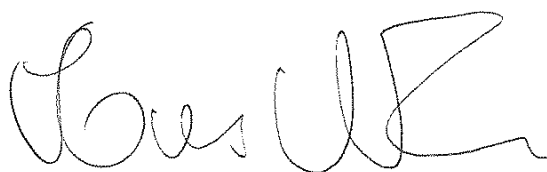
Vesna Batistić-Kos
Director General for Multilateral Affairs and Global Issues
Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hana Ševčíková', written in a cursive style.

Hana Ševčíková,
Director of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic



Andre Pung
Director General
External Economic and Development Cooperation Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia



Ádám Zoltán Kovács,
Deputy State Secretary for International Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary



Laima Jurevičienė
Director
Development Cooperation Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania



Jonathan Galea
Director General
European and Economic Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta



Zuzanna Kierzkowska
Director
Development Cooperation Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland



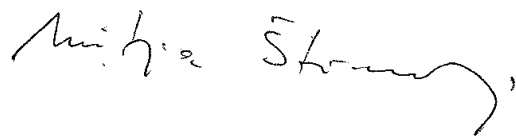
Prof. Doutora Ana Paula Martins Laborinho
President of Camões - Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua
Portugal



Gheorghe Magheru
Political Director
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania



Roman Bužek,
Director General
Directorate General for International Organisations, Development Assistance
and Humanitarian Aid
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mitja Štrukelj". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Mitja Štrukelj
Director General for International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia