

# **EU-CIS Gender Watch**

## **A Gender Analysis of the Bulgarian Developmental Aid**



**The Network of East-West Women – Poland  
Gdansk, 2008**

**by Tania Tisheva, BGRF**



## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Part 1. Basic information about development cooperation and foreign assistance</b>	<b>3</b>
History of assistance – overview. European Union and Development issues	3
Development assistance, development policy, development cooperation – laws and treaties signed by Bulgaria	4
Declared objectives of foreign assistance and development assistance	5
<b>Part 2. Gender perspective in development cooperation and foreign assistance</b>	<b>13</b>
Inclusion of gender in European laws and international agreements binding Bulgaria	13
Inclusion of gender in national governmental structure and legal framework	15
Inclusion of gender in development cooperation and foreign assistance	19
<b>Part 3. The role of the NGOs</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Part 4. Official development assistance and gender</b>	<b>23</b>
Funds allocation. Achievements of international agreements and gender	24
<b>Part 5. Recommendations for EU Commission, Parliament and EU Member States</b>	<b>27</b>
The main problems identified in Bulgaria	27
Effective ODA and achievement of the MDGs – recommendations to national officials	28
Recommendations to the European officials	28
<b>Literature</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>About the Author</b>	<b>31</b>

## **Introduction**

One year after the EU accession Bulgaria faces a twofold challenge of the EU membership: to improve the economic growth and social welfare and to contribute to the European development policy by becoming donor country to the developing world. Over the past nineteen years of painful transition to democracy and market economy Bulgaria made reforms in all public sectors. The progress achieved in political, economic and social spheres was realised thanks to the aspirations to join the European community and by meeting the defined criteria for EU membership, and last but not least thanks to the support of the international donor community.

Bulgaria has signed and ratified all major International Human Rights Instruments and together with the other developed States the country bears the moral responsibility to assist in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for the poorer countries needing support.

The proposed research provides overview of the priorities and the focus of the newly adopted Strategy and Concept for the participation of the country in the International Cooperation for Development. The goal of the study is to analyse the gender perspective in development cooperation and foreign assistance and to provide recommendations for inclusion and further strengthening of the gender perspective in the Bulgarian and European development co-operation policies.

Bulgaria as a new EU member State could build on its previous experience of cooperation with third countries and to contribute to the solving the challenges in the globalising world. The new EU-Member States are struggling to meet their commitments to achieve 0.10-0.17% ODA/GNI by 2010. Bulgaria is in the initial phase of debates on the issue. The main challenges in the forthcoming years will be the building of the administrative capacity and relevant structures for ODA policies and fulfilment of the commitments on the achievement of MDGs. Raising public awareness on the country's new donor role and involvement of civil society organizations are also of crucial importance.

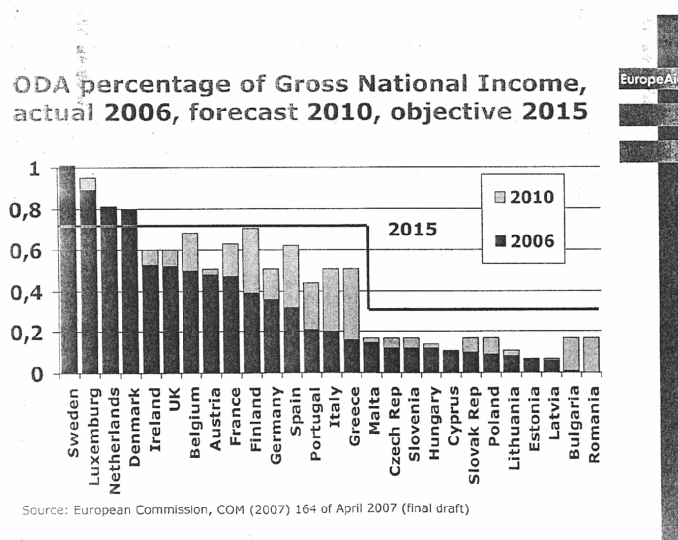
Gender equality issues are not an explicit priority of Bulgarian ODA. As member of EU Bulgaria is committed to respect the directives and the Treaties of the European Community, which implies engagement for elimination of gender inequalities and promote equal treatment of women and men in all actions undertaken. This means including the issue of gender equality also in Bulgaria's foreign and development policies.

## Part 1. Basic information about development cooperation and foreign assistance

### History of assistance – overview. European Union and Development issues

The European Union is the largest donor of ODA on global level – in 2004 the European Commission (EC) and Member States together provided 52% of the total ODA on world scale, which equals to USD 43,264 billion against USD 40,021 billion provided by all other donors. The leading role of the EU in international development cooperation has been defined as a major European priority and that is why the Union pays increasing attention to the consolidation of development issues and to building financial and institutional mechanisms for implementation of practical actions for the benefit of the developing countries both on Community level, and on national level by the individual Member States.

In the years 1960s-1980s Bulgaria participated actively in the cooperation process with developing countries. In mid-1980s it was an important donor to over 40 States in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Thus before 1989 the country has provided significant amounts of aid to third countries. Subsequently, during the transition period Bulgaria made a considerable shortage of the related financial resources. Although to a limited extent, Bulgaria has taken part in cooperation projects during the transition to market economy before its accession to the EU. According to unofficial data of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the funds extended by Bulgarian institutions, meeting the conditions of Official Development Assistance (ODA) amounted to 0.008% of the GNP for 2005.<sup>1</sup>



With the accession to the EU in 2007 Bulgaria is rejoining the international donor community, after being a recipient country for years. By signing the EU Accession Treaty a number of commitments have been undertaken, related to both harmonization of its national legislation and coordination of its foreign policy, including participation in international development cooperation. The membership in the European Union implies also responsibilities, such as participation in the common development policy.

Participation of Bulgaria in the EU development policy requires in near future the adoption and implementation of the European primary and secondary legislation in the area of development

<sup>1</sup> Data from Position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria on International Cooperation for Development

aid and humanitarian aid, as well as building up institutional capacity and adequate participation in the work of EU bodies on development issues in their various formats.

### **Development assistance, development policy, development cooperation – laws and treaties signed by Bulgaria**

Currently Bulgaria hasn't entered into any specifically targeted agreements on development co-operation, including agreements related to implementation of the New Member States' European Development Co-operation Policy.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Bulgaria became a part of the multilateral, regional and bilateral EU Development policy. The EU development policy is aligned to the Paris Declaration and has to keep in compliance with the Monterrey Consensus.

The EU Treaties establish the legal basis for co-operation with developing countries. Relations with developing countries are legally regulated in Title XX “Development Cooperation” (Articles 177–181 of the consolidated text of the Treaty establishing the European Community /EC Treaty/), Title XXI “Economic, Financial and Technical Cooperation with Third Countries” (Article 181a) and Overseas Countries and Territories” (articles 182–188, Annex II EC Treaty). The objectives of the external assistance rendered by EU to developing countries are as follows: sustainable economic and social development, integration into the world economy, poverty eradication, establishment and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights. For the achievement of those objectives there should be coherence, complementarity, and consistency of EC and Member States’ development programs as well as of their positions at international fora. Cooperation with developing countries includes both undertaking joint actions and bilateral action of the individual Member States.

The ACP- Cotonou Agreement, The Development Co-operation Instrument /DCI/, the ENPI-European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, the European Consensus on Development, Country Strategy Programmes and regional strategies and programmes, are also part of the DC Acquis in a broader sense.

In fact, significant part of the legislation on development cooperation is the so-called *Cotonou Acquis* which sets the parameters of relations between the EU and the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states (ACP countries), as well as the agreement concluded with 20 Overseas countries and territories (OCTs) having special relations with four member states which were former colonial powers. Major part of *Cotonou acquis* belongs to the Cooperation Agreement among 78 countries from ACP and the European Community signed in Cotonou (Benin) on 23 June 2000 and revised in Luxemburg on 25 June 2005. Cooperation under that agreement is based on five interdependent pillars: 1) an enhanced political dimension of EU-ACP relations; 2) increased participation of civil society and the private sector in the provision of development aid; 3) focus on poverty elimination; 4) new framework of cooperation in the area of economy and trade; and 5) rationalization of financial instruments and planning.

An important component of the external relations’ legislative basis are the so called “regional regulations” which are part of the secondary law and set the parameters of EU relations with states from certain regions (Commonwealth of Independent States and Mongolia, the Western Balkans, Asia and Latin America, Mediterranean and North African countries). In addition to the development policies’ legislative basis are the trade agreements concluded by EC as well as

---

<sup>2</sup> The Challenge of the EU Development Co-operation Policy for New Member States, A Report by PASOS (Policy Association for an Open Society) for European Parliament Committee on Development, 4 October 2007, available at: [www.pasos.org](http://www.pasos.org), 18.02.2008

a number of agreements concluded within the UN framework (for example conventions in the area of environmental protection). The regional regulations with countries from CIS and the Western Balkans are of specific importance for Bulgaria.

Along with the legal instruments, the EU development policy is regulated by the acts of the so-called “*soft law*”, which are not of legislative nature. These include various political documents such as declarations in respect of individual regions, sectors, issues, etc., joint decisions on the EU contributions in various international donor programs (for example the Global Environment Facility, the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, etc.), and EC Communications. A most significant achievement is the *European Consensus on Development* adopted in December 2005 by the three Presidents of the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the European Commission. The document contains a joint position on the Millennium Development Goals and a common understanding of the values, objectives, principles and means of rendering assistance to developing countries. It provides the EC and the Member States with a general framework of pursuing an effective and consistent policy. *Poverty eradication* is the main objective of cooperation and development policy has been identified as a key element of the EU foreign policy in the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Security and Defence Policy. The link between development policy and other policies of the Union as the ones on trade, migration, environmental protection and employment is made relevant.

With Bulgaria’s accession to the EU the acts of the European development policy, including so-called “*soft law*”, become politically binding also for our country.

### **Declared objectives of foreign assistance and development assistance**

As a member of the EU, Bulgaria undertook the commitment to achieve the Monterrey goals and the amount of ODA allocated by them to reach 0,17 % of GNI in 2010 and 0,33 % of GNI in 2015. (Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions, 10255/05, Brussels, 18 June 2005, p. 8-27). Another declared commitment is the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in poorer countries by supporting them in the solution of their most serious problems.

### **Stage of Implementation of Bulgarian Development Co-operation Policy**

The launch of Bulgarian Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) report was in 2003, followed by the adoption of Bulgarian Youth Millennium Goals Report (2005)<sup>3</sup>. Initial efforts for establishment of Bulgarian NGOs Platform for international development co-operation started in 2006. The Platform is a coalition of NGOs not officially established by the moment. In the middle of 2008 is expected the publication of second Bulgarian Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) report.

In January 2007 the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs elaborated a “Position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria on International Cooperation for Development”, which was published on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2007<sup>4</sup>. On 19 July 2007 the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria adopted a Decision 504 by virtue of which a *Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation international development co-operation* was ratified.

---

<sup>3</sup> In 2004 and 2005 all agencies from the UN family in Bulgaria in partnership with non governmental youth organizations and clubs organized a national information campaign on the Millennium Development Goals. Some 2,000 children and young people shared their views regarding the MDGs and their Bulgarian dimension.

<sup>4</sup> at the web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: [www.mfa.bg](http://www.mfa.bg)

Drafted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the document was a result from the consultations between the representatives of the interested State agencies and non-governmental organisations. With the adoption of the Concept Bulgaria, like all other EU members will take part in the European Fund for Development with its own contribution.

A Council for International Development Cooperation, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, was created by the Council of Ministers' Decree on 23 July 2007. IDCC is based on the existing inter-agency Council for participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the international development cooperation established by a Council of Ministers Decision of 9 February 2006.

Bulgaria will start to allocate funds for development aid, which should be granted along with a separate line of the national budget. This is not a fact yet for the budget year 2008.

### Declared objectives and field of assistance of Bulgarian ODA

The newly adopted Concept paper contains the main elements of the Bulgarian development policy – goals, tasks and formulates principles, geographic and sectoral priorities, financing, administrative and organizational aspects. The document should serve as basis for the elaboration of short-term and medium-term strategies and annual action plans as well as for future legislation regulating the formulation and implementation of the Bulgarian development policy as an instrument of the foreign policy.

The philosophy of Bulgarian ODA will be in the framework of the political commitments that the country has already taken as an UN and EU-member.<sup>5</sup> Bulgarian participation in international development co-operation “*is an integral part of the overall content and goals of the Bulgarian foreign policy as stated in the Programme of the Bulgarian Government, August 2005, namely: promotion of Bulgaria as a consistent, reliable and predictable partner in international relations and protection of its interests; strengthening of economic and cultural cooperation in South-Eastern Europe and assistance to neighbouring countries and countries in the region in their full integration in Euro-Atlantic structures; providing support to Bulgarian nationals living abroad and strengthening of the relations with Bulgaria’s traditional partners from the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America*“.<sup>6</sup> All Bulgarian governments after 1989 have strongly accentuated on Bulgaria’s ambition to play a role of reliable partner in international relations and especially on its stabilization role at the Balkan and Black sea region. Thus participation in development assistance for Bulgaria means investing in stability and just relations with third countries. ODA is declared as an instrument of the Bulgarian foreign policy and should successfully complement it.<sup>7</sup> This approach resulted in the determination of the priority countries for ODA on the basis of the Bulgarian geopolitical interests.

---

<sup>5</sup> Bulgaria supported the decisions made at the UN conferences on international development issues, including the decision of the European Council of June 2005 adopting the new quantitative ODA targets within EU.

<sup>6</sup> *Bulgaria and International Development Cooperation* – a foreword by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, booklet published at the web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs containing the *Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation international co-operation development*, <http://www.mfa.bg/en/files/pdf/Bulgarian%20Development%20Co-operation%20Policy%20Paper%20EN.pdf>, 21.03.2008

<sup>7</sup> Presentation of the conceptual framework of the Bulgarian development cooperation policy, by Mr. Lubomir Kjachukov, deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bulgarian Debate on Millennium Development goals, Sofia 16 October 2007

## Objectives, principles and priorities of the Bulgarian development policy

The main objective of Republic of Bulgaria's development policy is defined in eradication of poverty and the dealing with issues related to poverty, which hinder the improvement of the quality of life in developing countries. In the "Position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria on International Cooperation for Development" it is acknowledged that overcoming poverty requires a balanced approach in a number of different but interrelated spheres, including good governance, conflict prevention and protection of human rights (including the rights of the child and gender equality). These principles are a key for achieving gender equality and fulfillment of women's rights. The analysis of all related documents adopted in the field of development cooperation shows that gender equality has been quoted two times, and in relation to poverty eradication and is not a declared priority of Bulgarian ODA. Furthermore, undertaking concrete development assistance initiatives according to the declared objectives will depend on the available resources and potential of Bulgaria (as stated in the Concept).

### Principles

The Bulgarian policy of cooperation with developing countries is contingent on the general principles laid down in the UN Millennium Declaration and the European Consensus on Development adopted in November 2005 as well as the OECD/DAC requirements with regard to the ODA quality and quantity parameters.

Bulgaria's participation in the international development cooperation is also guided by the following specific principles, adopted with the Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation international development co-operation;

- *Partnership* - stable and long-term partnership with the aid recipients and the members of the international donor community based on mutual confidence and respect for the partner's sovereignty, traditions and culture. The governments of partner countries bear the main responsibility for the development of their countries; however, their efforts in that direction are to be supported by the developed countries;

- *Ownership* - the assistance is determined by the needs of the recipient and not by those of the donor; leading are the needs of the recipient countries, their own development strategies defining the national priorities and means of attaining them, based on the principles of good governance, democratic standards, rule of law and human rights protection; It is stated that Bulgaria will avoid any politically determined allocation of its aid and will tailor its development cooperation programmes to those national strategies and the resulting actions as well as to the processes and deadlines of the partners as far as that is possible;

- *Coherence*, complementarity and coordination – coherence of Bulgarian development policy and the other national policies that affect developing countries; complementarity and coordination of the actions under the development policy and the actions of the other donors; predictability and stability of aid flows to partner countries;

- *Effectiveness* - improving the quality of aid provided by Bulgaria and other donors as well its more effective use by the recipients;

- *Concentration* - concentration of the efforts on a limited number of beneficiaries and action areas. The main part of the bilateral assistance is to be directed towards the priority states and sectors;

- *Conditionality* - assistance is to be granted on the basis of the results produced by the partner countries and their compliance with the principles of good governance;

-*Transparency* – the allocation of funds and the assessment of their use will be subject to objective and transparent criteria based on the principles of good governance; the policy will be implemented on the basis of cooperation with representatives of the Bulgarian state administration, non-governmental organizations, private business, academic circles and other interested groups of the public as well as with the partner countries;

-*Non-discrimination* - equal treatment and equal possibilities regardless of sex, race, religious affiliation, age, disabilities, sexual orientation etc.

OECD recommendations on untying aid in that vein will be taken into account in the formation of the Bulgarian development policy.

The principles of the Paris Declaration are part of the BG Development Policy through the EU membership, although Bulgaria is not yet an OECD country.

The following *criteria for selection of priority cooperation partners* have been approved with the adoption of the Concept Paper:

The countries with which Bulgaria will build up development partnerships should meet the following criteria:

- existence of a certain level of political, diplomatic, commercial and economic and cultural contacts between Bulgaria and the respective partner country;
- a comparative advantage of Bulgaria in providing assistance to a certain country: greater experience in certain areas in comparison with other donors and/or better awareness of the local needs and characteristics, which will be conducive to making the assistance more effective;
- fulfilment of the general conditions for cooperation with the donor community: the recipient country is to take real steps addressing the problems of its own development; presence of the relevant infrastructure needed for the cooperation implementation, etc.

#### Geographical priorities of Bulgarian ODA

On the basis of the adopted criteria for selection and in line with the principle of concentration, the *Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation international development co-operation* defines two groups of countries for development cooperation:

1) Priority countries are those that will attract the main resources within the framework of the development cooperation. The group will include countries from South East Europe-Western Balkans and the Black Sea region. These two regions were determined as the priority regions for Bulgaria. In January 2008<sup>8</sup>, five concrete countries were already announced: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Macedonia and Serbia.

Cooperation with Southeast Europe and in the Black Sea region has always been an explicit priority goal of Bulgarian foreign policy. As a Member State of the European Union and NATO, Bulgaria's is seeking to follow a balanced policy with its immediate neighbors. The

---

<sup>8</sup> Lubomir Kjachukov: Bulgaria starts to provide assistance according to its commitments as EU member State, interview for the TV emission "Realno", BTV, 8 January 2008, available also at the web site of the MFA: [http://www.mfa.bg/bg/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=16915&Itemid=253](http://www.mfa.bg/bg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16915&Itemid=253), 9.01.2008

participation in several regional initiatives aim at contributing both to intensifying relations between the different countries, and to enhancing interregional cooperation along the Danube River, with Central Asia and the Middle East in the transport and energy sectors, in environmental protection, etc.<sup>9</sup>

“In the future, on the basis of the experience gained and the existing financial possibilities, the circle of the priority partners may be extended to include countries of the least developed group, particularly in Africa, in view of the EU commitment to orientate 50% of the increased development aid to that continent.”<sup>10</sup> Although by the adoption of the Concept paper no African country has been approved for Bulgarian ODA, few months later a consensus that Angola will be a priority country has been reached. This decision is motivated by the traditional relations between the two countries and by the established Bulgarian diplomatic mission in Luanda.

2) The second group of countries, recipients of ODA will be those States, to which Bulgaria has undertaken international commitments within the framework of international organizations or coalitions (such as Iraq and Afghanistan).

*At this initial stage for provision of ODA it is unlikely for other priority countries to be included soon.* The approach to target 5- 6 priority countries is based on the experience of the ten New EU member States that joined the Union in 2004 in terms of prioritization of the ODA recipients. At the drafting phase of the Bulgarian Concept for development cooperation the officials have discussed a list of fifty countries but soon was drawn the conclusion that it wouldn't be possible and realistic to disperse Bulgarian assistance in so numerous directions.

According to the provisions of the Concept paper the list of priority countries will be regularly revised. There is a declared commitment that Bulgaria will make all possible efforts to support African initiatives in the field of development cooperation, i.a. in the context of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs paper “Concept and specific measures for reinforcing the relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Sub-Saharan African states”.

The geographical priorities of Bulgaria's development aid do not limit the provision of humanitarian aid or any urgent ad hoc actions aimed at preventing or mitigating the aftermaths of crises, armed conflicts or acts to combat international terrorism.

### Sectoral priorities of Bulgarian development cooperation

Sectoral priorities for development cooperation are defined both by the Position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria on International Cooperation for Development”, and by the Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation international development co-operation. The focus will be on sectors where the country has a comparative advantage in granting assistance, expertise and capacity<sup>11</sup> for activities in the following sectors:

- education and training of specialists (in the higher education sphere, in particular);
- infrastructure construction and maintenance (energy and water supply networks, construction);
- carrying out reforms in the economic, financial, administrative, social and healthcare spheres;

---

<sup>9</sup>Quotation about the aims of the Bulgarian regional policy

[http://www.mfa.bg/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=5097&Itemid=304](http://www.mfa.bg/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5097&Itemid=304), 19.02.2008

<sup>10</sup> Quotation from the Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation international development co-operation

<sup>11</sup> The needs of the partner countries will be taken in consideration

- cultural diversity and tolerance;
- environmental protection and sustainable development promotion;
- security and post-conflict reconstruction.

In line with the concentration principle, Bulgaria will commit itself in no more than two sectors per partner country.

#### Mechanisms for provision of Bulgarian development assistance

- Multilateral mechanisms of the Bulgarian development policy based on a membership/donation principle: such as participation in international organizations directly or indirectly involved in development issues, global funds and international initiatives for implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The Concept Paper on Bulgaria's Policy on participation international development co-operation acknowledges that the selection of specific instruments for provision of official development assistance will depend both on the needs of the recipient country and the possibilities of the donor country.

“Bulgaria will avail itself of the possibilities for cooperation with IMF and WB in a donor role already. Within the framework of the World Trade Organization Bulgaria accords a special attention to the matters of importance to the developing countries by supporting initiatives for liberalization of trade and investment activities.”<sup>12</sup>

- The participation of Bulgaria in the provision of Aid for Trade should be increased, as declared in the Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation international development co-operation.
- Participation of Bulgaria in the EU development policy.

Another text of the Bulgarian Concept paper would reveal in most clear way the declared ambitions for contribution to the EU development policy: *“Bulgaria’s EU membership involves participation in the EU general development policy. The country will take part in shaping the common policy in this area and representatives of the Bulgarian business and non-governmental organizations will have the possibility, together with those of the other EU Member States, to participate in its realization through the implementation of EU-financed projects and other activities. The European Development Fund (EDF) is the main European instrument through which Bulgaria will provide development aid. It will be through EDF that Bulgaria will be able to foster its cooperation with the ACP countries. Bulgaria will participate in EDF through regular payments to the EDF budget (the amount of the payments for the period 2008-2013 has already been determined) as well as – through its participation in the EDF Committee, in the allocation of resources under Fund’s projects and the exerting of control over their effective and transparent spending.”*

Through EDF Bulgaria will be able to foster co-operation with ACP countries. The amount of payments to the EDF for the period 2008-2013 has been set at BGN 33.4m (€ 17,1 million)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Quotation from The Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation international development co-operation

<sup>13</sup> The Challenge of the EU Development Co-operation Policy for New Member States, A Report by PASOS (Policy Association for an Open Society) for European Parliament Committee on Development, 4 October 2007, available at: [www.pasos.org](http://www.pasos.org), 18.02.2008

“Participation in the financing of multilateral EU development policy instruments is one of the most important commitments Bulgaria made upon its accession to the Union. Since it obtained the status of „acceding country,“ Bulgaria has been involved in all forums addressing mobilization and spending of funds for development.”<sup>14</sup>

- Bulgaria’s bilateral mechanisms of development aid

According to the adopted Concept paper, at this initial stage Bulgarian efforts will be focused on more traditional bilateral cooperation instruments such as:

- implementing small, clearly defined and streamlined projects the implementation of which does not require any big resources;
- participating in joint development projects of established donors in the selected priority countries on the basis of trilateral cooperation. Such participation would be greatly suitable for Bulgaria as it would enable the country to gain experience and presence in states and activities which would otherwise be inaccessible in view of the limited possibilities and resources;
- providing technical assistance to strengthen the local capacity through provision of know-how in the form of experts, consulting services, supplying materials and equipment, training local experts etc.

#### Current state of priorities’ setting for bilateral assistance with the defined ODA recipient countries (Western Balkans and Black sea region)

One year after the EU accession Bulgaria is at stage of discussions with each of the five priority countries about potential thematic areas for assistance.<sup>15</sup> This is the reason for which for the needs of the current research paper it wouldn’t be possible to analyze these priorities. Furthermore, no information was provided about the timeframe for their complete definition (no information on when this will be completed).

These spheres will be defined in line with the specific needs of each country. The priorities for bilateral projects will be elaborated in consensus between Bulgaria and the beneficiary country. It is very important that the relevant proposals for project will come from the priority States for ODA themselves.<sup>16</sup>

According to the adopted mechanisms for provision of bilateral aid respective governments of the beneficiary country will apply for projects before Republic of Bulgaria. Thus the non-governmental organizations from priority countries will receive development assistance funding for projects through their own governments. Bulgarian partners are also supposed to take a very active participation in this process of assistance.<sup>17</sup> The funding will be approved by a specialized unit at the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

---

<sup>14</sup> Bulgaria and International Development Cooperation –a booklet published at the web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs containing the Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation international co-operation development, <http://www.mfa.bg/en/files/pdf/Bulgarian%20Development%20Co-operation%20Policy%20Paper%20EN.pdf>, 21.03.2008

<sup>15</sup> meeting with officials from the MFA, Direction “UN and global issues”, Department “Development policy, economic and administrative issues”, as a result of requested information on ODA by the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, 18 March 2008

<sup>16</sup> Lubomir Kjachukov: Bulgaria starts to provide assistance according to its commitments as EU member State, interview for the TV emission “Realno”, BTV, 8 January 2008, available also at the web site of the MFA:

[http://www.mfa.bg/bg/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=16915&Itemid=253](http://www.mfa.bg/bg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16915&Itemid=253), 9.01.2008

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Information about the proposed priorities for bilateral cooperation with Armenia was published in the media after the official visit of the Bulgarian Prime minister in Yerevan<sup>18</sup> at the end of 2007. The commitment for granting of development aid for Armenia has been reconfirmed, with accent on support for reforms and modernization assistance programmes. Armenia has proposed for financing projects in the field of education and qualification of personnel.

---

<sup>18</sup> [www.novinite.com](http://www.novinite.com), 14.11.2007

## **Part 2. Gender perspective in development cooperation and foreign assistance**

### **Inclusion of gender in European laws and international agreements binding Bulgaria**

Bulgaria has signed and ratified all major International Human Rights Instruments.

The basic principles of equality between women and men are proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. *Article 7* states that “*All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.*” Based on this fundamental provision the United Nations, the International Labor Organization and the Council of Europe adopted a number of international documents for elimination of discrimination, all ratified by the Republic of Bulgaria. Bulgaria is firmly committed to the principles and goals of the final documents, adopted at the UN World Conferences on Women in: Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), Beijing (1995).

According to its commitments to the fundamental international documents, the country is obliged to report periodically to the specialized UN bodies.

Namely, the main instruments which are part of the domestic legislation of the country, according to the Constitution of Bulgaria /Art. 5 - 4/ and related to the protection of women's rights are as follows:

#### Universal documents:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, ratified 1970
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1960, ratified 1970
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, ratified 1991
- The UN Convention against Torture, 1984, ratified 1987
- Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960, ratified 1962
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979, ratified 1981
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1999
- Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1952, ratified by Bulgaria in 1955
- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1949
- Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1962, ratified 1956
- Relevant Conventions of the International Labour Organization - on Equal pay/ C100/ on the Elimination of Discrimination at work/ C111/, and others making part of the core labour standards and the standards for Decent work

Relevant UN *soft law* documents signed by Bulgaria are:

- Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1967
- Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993
- Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, 1974
- Very important political commitments are contained in the signed by Bulgaria Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action- Beijing, 2005

The BPFA is essential for the relation of each of its areas of concern and of action with the gender developments goals. The other important element and tool given by the BPFA is the principle and approach of gender mainstreaming.

The Beijing Platform for Action endorsed gender mainstreaming as an effective strategy to promote gender equality and stated that governments and other players "should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, so that before decisions are taken an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively". Mainstreaming the gender perspective means promoting the perspective of women and men and also the perspective of specific women' s rights in all governmental decisions, as well as the continuous assessment of the impact of such decisions and policies on women and men.

Bulgaria adhered also to the MDGs and the respective commitments related to gender equality and empowerment of women.

Regional documents:

European Social Charter (revised), ratified 2000

European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, ratified in 1992

The commitments in the frame of the EU:

Gender equality is one of the key principles of the European Union. Article 3 (2) of the Treaty establishing the EC (10) explicitly commits it to the promotion of gender equality in all its actions.

Furthermore, the EU has strongly committed itself to the promotion of gender equality and poverty eradication. Notably, it is a signatory to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), and the Millennium Declaration. All of its Member States have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Numerous internal EU documents contain similar commitments.

The EU Roadmap on Gender Equality between women and men (2006- 2010): a special priority area in the Roadmap is the promotion of gender equality in external and development policies. It is necessary to differentiate between acceding, candidate and potential candidate countries, and other countries which may take part in the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The former must enforce the Community *acquis*, whereas in the case of the latter, the EU seeks to promote internationally recognised principles such as the Millennium Development

Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). It has also reaffirmed, in the "European Consensus on Development", that gender equality is one of the five key principles of development policy. The new EU Strategy for Africa also includes this aspect.

One of the key actions in this respect recommended by the Roadmap is that at international level, and according to the BPfA, which is backed by the Commission, the EU makes provision for better data collection capacity on gender mainstreaming in developing countries. Furthermore, the Commission will take gender mainstreaming into account in a number of future communications, such as those on demography, the establishment of a system for comparable statistics on crime, victims and criminal justice, and "A European Vision on Gender Equality in Development Cooperation"<sup>19</sup>.

### **Inclusion of gender in national governmental structure and legal framework**

After the EU accession gender equality is considered as achieved in Bulgaria. There is still no legislation on equal opportunities between women and men. Eight years after signing UN Millennium Declaration (September 2000) the Bulgarian targets of the third Millennium Development Goal (Promotion of Gender Equality and empowering of women) are still relevant for the country. Millennium Development Goal No 3 aims at elimination of gender inequality and the adaptation of this goal for Bulgaria is focused on the achievement of two key targets:

- Political equality of women, which requires increased participation of women in governance and decision-making
- Economic equality of women, which requires measures for elimination of income differences between women and men.

According to data of the Global Gender Gap report 2007 Bulgaria is ranked at 25<sup>th</sup> place (the Report covers a total of 128 countries, representing over 90% of the world's population). The report accounts progress in economic participation and opportunities for women in Bulgaria: women's labour force participation rose from 41% last year to 52% in the latest available data, the percentage of women legislators, senior officials and managers increased from 30% to 33%.<sup>20</sup>

During the period before 1989 everything in the field of gender equality was perceived as achieved and even surpassed. In the years 1962 – 1990 there was a trend for an increasing women's representation in the Parliament (with a relatively stable share of women in Parliament of 19%, due to a party quota system) but immediately after the democratic changes, after 1989 there was an abrupt of the number of women in Parliament. The gender equality issues have been brought on the political agenda ten years after the changes by the European Union, the UN and women's NGOs.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2007.pdf>, 28.01.2008

<sup>21</sup> Equal rights and equal opportunities for women's participation in political life in Bulgaria, BGRF, Sofia, October 2000

### Women's parliamentary representation in CEE countries, data for Bulgaria

	1980	1990	Change (1980-90)	Most recent election (date)	Change (1990-now)
Bulgaria	21,7 (1981)	8,5	13,2	26,7 (06/2001)	+18,2

Source: Women's parliamentary representation in CEE countries (%)<sup>22</sup>

### Women in Government, 1980-2002 (percentage of total)<sup>23</sup>, data for Bulgaria

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2002
Bulgaria	2,4 (1981)	3,7 (1986)	8/10/5*	5,0	22,7 (2003)

Source: EGG Work Package 2 reports \* There were multiple governments during these years.

The trends for representation of women in Parliament for the period 2000 – 2007 are not successively positive. After the 2001 elections the share of women parliamentarians rose from 10% to 26% (in the 38th National Assembly). Nevertheless, this did not lead to increased political will for legislative changes and during the same parliamentary mandate the Draft law for equal opportunities between women and men has been rejected. In 2005 the share of women in Parliament declined again (22% of women in the 40<sup>th</sup> National Assembly).

By the end of 2007, one year after the EU accession, a limited progress could be reported in relation to the achievement of Third Millennium Development goal. Women's participation at the labour market for 2007 is 47,5% (43,9% for the year 2002), and the Lisbon strategy goal is to reach 60% for 2010.

Data about women's representation in decision-making structures after the elections in 2005 does not reveal very positive trends:

- 21% of women in Parliament (50 women of total 240 MPs)
- 3 of 5 Chairpersons of Bulgarian parliament are women
- 44% of the elected European parliamentarians are women
- 24 % of the members of the Council of Ministers are women (4 of total 17)
- 31% are women at deputy-ministerial positions
- 6% of the Bulgarian ambassadors are women
- 44% of the Chairs of the State agencies are women (4 of 9)
- 55% of the Chairs of the Bulgarian National Audit office are women
- 44% of the members of the Commission for protection against discrimination are women
- 25 % of the regional governors are women (7 of 28)
- 9,5% of the Mayors are women (25 of 264).<sup>24</sup>

The next Millennium Development Goals report for Bulgaria, which will be published in 2008 will analyze the achievements. The 2003 report defined the following policies and measures, which should be initiated for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of Bulgarian women: "The development of policies and mechanisms for equal opportunities is an EU accession requirement for Bulgaria. Such policies may be based on:

<sup>22</sup> Fixing An Old Divide: The Political Participation of Women in an Enlarged Europe, author Amanda Sloat, paper available at: [unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN018544.pdf](http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN018544.pdf), 15.03.2008

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Press release of the Ministry of Labour and Social policy with heading "Minister Maslarova announced the Bulgarian position on gender issues at a Forum in Slovenia", 31.01.2008, available at the web site of the MLSP

- Promoting political sensitization to gender equality;
- Creating national machinery on gender equality;
- Monitoring gender equality indicators;
- Reporting on achievements in gender equality in Bulgaria”<sup>25</sup>

### National regulations concerning gender equality

The basic standards on gender equality and non-discrimination based on gender are set forth in the Constitution of Bulgaria, in the Law on Protection from Discrimination and in the Labour Code. It is interesting to mention that since 2000 there have been attempts at different times to introduce a special law on Equal opportunities between Women and Men. Without success so far.

As harmonisation with EU standards is considered to be almost completed, there have been no substantial changes in the legislation concerning gender equality in the last two years. The next round of changes should follow in connection with the harmonisation with the *acquis* in the field of equal treatment in social security matters.

One important development in the last years, however, is the reviving of the idea to enact a separate law on equal opportunities for women and men in Bulgaria. The initiative for drafting such a law was taken in 2006 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The main challenge is the lack of political will and the debates about the “positioning” of the new law within the framework of existing legislation, especially the Law on Protection from Discrimination and the Labour Code. A main focus of discussion surrounding the new law is the nature of the new institution on gender equality and its position, competences, budget and staffing.

In the beginning of 2008 the debates are still there, there are different versions of drafts of laws on gender equality pending in the Commissions on Human Rights of the National Assembly and the political will and outcome from this process are unclear.

As a beginning of institutional mechanism, in 2006 a new Equal Opportunities Department has been established at the Directorate for Demographic Policy, Social Investment and Equal Opportunities in the Ministry of labour and Social Policy. Hopefully, if a law on gender equality will be adopted, it will provide for a real gender equality mechanism.

As part, or better “fragment” of the gender equality mechanism in Bulgaria, a national Advisory Council on Gender Equality was established at the end of 2004 at the Council of Ministers. The Ministry of labour and Social Policy is the Chair of the National Council. The Council meets twice a year but due to the lack of a real mechanism, the work of this advisory body is not effective enough.

Two national Action Plans on gender equality have been adopted but not implemented so far for 2005 and 2006. The aim of these plans is that all state institutions will combine forces to carry out the policy for equal opportunities for women and men in all areas of economic, political and social life. This included ensuring equal access to health services, education, decision-making, equal access to resources in society, overcoming gender stereotypes, and working with the media. The plans were not financially sustainable – it was provided that they would be funded from the budgets of the different ministries. This in fact meant no funding and sustainability and plans were not implemented. Their adoption and review of implementation were one of the main competences of the mentioned national council.

In a nutshell, we can say that we can hardly speak of established gender equality machinery in Bulgaria with clearly defined functions and interrelation among the separate structures yet.

---

<sup>25</sup> Bulgaria: Millennium Development Goals report 2003, UNDP, Sofia, 2003, p.24

There is no gender equality body, coordinating the activities of the different institutions, to be responsible for the development of the state policy in gender equality and monitor its implementation. Currently, there is more or less just a set of structures, created under different laws and not in one framework. One of the reasons for that is the lack of National Gender Equality Strategy.

By the year 2006 in Bulgaria have been established the following institutions, addressing gender equality issues:

#### Institutional Mechanisms to the Legislative

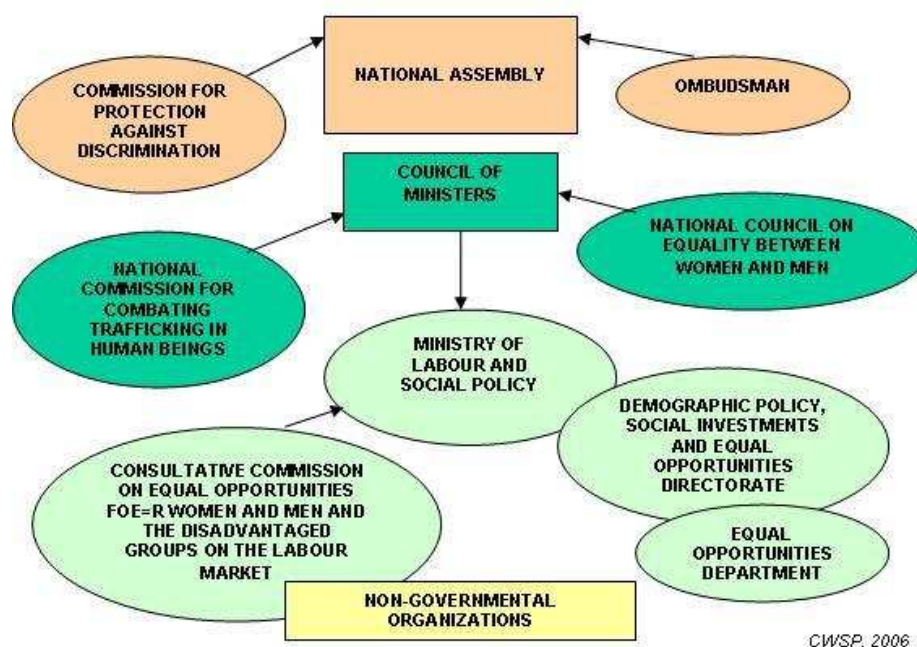
- Human Rights and Religious Affairs Committee at the National Assembly – Sub-committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality
- Commission for Protection against Discrimination, reporting to the National Assembly
- Parliamentary Ombudsman, reporting to the National Assembly

#### Institutional Mechanisms to the Executive

- National Council on Equality between Women and Men to the Council of Ministers
- National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
- Equal Opportunities Department at the Demographic Policy, Social Investments and
- Equal Opportunities Directorate at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- Consultative Commission on Equal Opportunities to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy

Institutional Mechanisms at the Local Level practically do not exist in Bulgaria.

The following Institutional Mechanisms Chart<sup>26</sup> could illustrate the existing gender equality machinery at national level:



CWSP, 2006

<sup>26</sup> Source: Available at the web site of the Center for Women’s studies and Policies, [www.cwsp.bg](http://www.cwsp.bg), 20.03.2008

### **Inclusion of gender in development cooperation and foreign assistance**

As member of EU Bulgaria is committed to respect the directives and the Treaties of the European Community, which implies that our country is obliged to eliminate gender inequalities and promote equal treatment of women and men in all actions undertaken (Art. 2 and 3 of the Treaty establishing the European Community). This means including the issue of gender equality also in Bulgaria's foreign and development policies.

Bulgarian ODA commitment, as outlined in the adopted Concept by the Council of Ministers, refers to Millennium Development Goals and more specifically to eradication of poverty. The country's official bilateral assistance is expected to contribute to the improvement of the quality of education, gender equality, reducing child mortality, prevention of HIV and tuberculosis. Due to the fact that the country is in initial stage of provision of ODA, there are no annual reports of the implementation of the bilateral assistance. The official reference documents on ODA, which are very few at the moment, do not contain clear commitments to gender equality principles.

The gender approach in Bulgarian Development Cooperation policy is still missing because the very process has not begun yet. Despite that, we think that it is important for women's NGOs to monitor the process from the beginning and to try from this year 2008, to explain the need for a gender approach and to exert pressure to include it in all policy documents, future frameworks and concepts and in the work of all existing and future mechanisms for gender equality in Bulgaria.

### **Part 3. The Role of the NGOs**

There is little knowledge in Bulgaria country about the Development policy of the EU and about the International Development Agenda. Even less information is available about the so important gender aspects and perspective of the agenda and the processes.

Two sociological surveys that have been carried out at the end of 2006 and in the beginning of 2007 reveal that Bulgarians are not familiar with development co-operation policy. Slightly more than 50% of citizens consider developing countries as undoubtedly deserving of help, but 45% either disregard aid-to-development as an insubstantial matter, or have deeply ingrained doubts about it. In the Eurobarometer survey about Europeans' motivation to support the development aid, conducted in February-March 2007, Bulgarians cited as the second main reason for aiding poor countries the following: “to prevent citizens of these countries emigrating to rich countries”. Over two-thirds (70%) subscribe to the opinion that the EU and USA must maintain policies in support of the poor and undeveloped countries, mainly in Asia and Africa. However, this share dips to 47% when Bulgaria is placed in the picture as a donor - based on the view that Bulgaria is among the countries in need of such aid and support.

Development education is not an implemented practice in Bulgaria. After the EU accession several events dedicated to development issues and to MDGs have been organized and covered by the media (such as “European Development Days”, the Parliamentary debate on the MDGs, visit in Sofia of Stefano Manservizi, Managing Director of General Department of Development at the European Commission in April 2007 etc). These events gave opportunity for the announcement of data for Bulgarian ODA commitments and official figures of the implemented assistance so far.

In the last three years an informal coalition of NGOs are forming the Bulgarian NG(D)O Platform, a non-legally established structure aiming at creating partnerships both on NGO level and with government bodies for ensuring effective participation of NG(D)Os in the ODA policy development. The platform has had regular meetings and leads discussions for legal establishment. Participating NGO have declared their willingness to be civil society partners in the framework of the Bulgarian ODA policy two years before the EU accession and they have been in contacts with the platforms from the new EU members States. This is a positive development. Furthermore the platform members have already had trainings, organized by TRIALOG and of the Polish NGDO platform in the last two years.

The Bulgarian platform has currently an informal structure and two national coordinators. Thematic working groups have been established and their representatives participated in EU – organized events (as conferences and workshops organized by CONCORD in 2006/7).

The platform is united around the vision that there is a need for adoption of coherent and effective National ODA Policy that:

- is based on the Millennium Development Goals and in compliance with EU Development policy
- corresponds to the spirit of Bulgarian cultural, historical and democratic traditions
- is an integral part of Bulgarian foreign policy
- incorporates the National Program of Assistance to Developing Countries
- involves NG(D)Os and other actors such as private business, educational and academic institutions and religious organizations in setting up national sectoral and geographical priorities
- builds up on existing models and experiences
- takes into account national issues related to international development such as poverty reduction.

The next steps planned by the members of platform are:

Activities at the national level:

- Formal establishment of the Platform of NG(D)Os
- Parallel cross-sector research report and/or collection of materials
- Organizational development and capacity building of NG(D)Os
- Set up of a Forum for information exchange, discussions and member capacity building
- Awareness raising initiatives.

Activities at the European level:

- Participation in the lobbying activities of TRIALOG and CONCORD
- Participation and building of regional NGDOs partnerships and networks in South Eastern Europe
- Exchange of experience with EU member States and the new member States.

The informal NGDO platform is still quite a loose formation of organisations and the realisation of the attempts for its legal establishment will be a real challenge. The above-mentioned objectives have been agreed between the NGOs participating in the platform and have been also published at the common web site. The platform should gain more visibility and expertise on development cooperation issues. The contact with Bulgarian officials is sporadic and until the moment civil society organisations were not able to exert influence in the process of setting the priorities of the ODA policy. At this initial stage when Bulgaria starts to provide official bilateral assistance to third countries, it is crucial to initiate research and data collection, and the civil society organizations to fulfill their “watchdog” functions. This is necessary for monitoring the ODA policy and the fulfillment of the obligations of the State. It could be done by the Bulgarian platform or a group of core NGOs and does not require necessarily a legally formalized structure of the platform.

No research has been initiated so far on the spendings for development assistance. There is no information about the nature of the projects implemented in third countries. The problem with this kind of information is also relevant for the officials from the Bulgarian Ministry of foreign affairs. They are making efforts to gather such data, but the mechanism for reporting on the projects, qualified as ODA, is not functioning (many Ministries does not provide this information to the MFA).

The links between the different DC instruments an documents and of the DC instruments with the MDGs and the international and regional standards and documents for gender equality and women’ s rights are not known in Bulgaria. Therefore the civil society and mainly women’ s NGOs in Bulgaria, are concerned about the lack of information, awareness and cooperation around these so important on-going processes. There is a need for more information and awareness, for translation and for making the documents accessible, for establishing partnerships with other NGOs and actors around the gender aspects of the EU and International Development Agenda. It is important also to show that the civil sector is active and informed in order to be perceived as a credible interlocutor for the government and the EU.

The role of Bulgarian NGOs and the private sector is acknowledged as very important by the Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation in international co-operation. The Ministry of Foreign affairs has declared that the civil society organisations would be valuable partners in the efforts for:

- generating ideas and recommendations for policy formulation within the framework of the International Development Cooperation Council (IDMC),
- elaboration and presentation of specific projects and making the public awareness raising on the international development problems and the Bulgarian contribution to their solution.

“Within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, the cooperation between the public sector and the private sector is encouraged in the form of the so-called public-private partnerships. In this context Bulgaria’s development policy is open for participation to the private business as an engine of economic development, employment and welfare in developing countries by way of activities such as building up human capital, transfer of know-how, technologies and good practices; building up physical and social infrastructure, developing skills for participation in the social dialogue, providing technical assistance for establishment of regional integration structures etc.”<sup>27</sup>

Another aim of this cooperation is broad access to information about the cooperation with developing countries. As stated above, the challenge for the civil society sector is to build a strong platform for cooperation and for monitoring of the official development assistance. As the ODA budget and mechanisms will be developed almost “by zero”, the moment is very appropriate for advocacy and monitoring initiatives.

---

<sup>27</sup>Quotation from Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation in international co-operation

#### **Part 4. Official Development Assistance and Gender**

Gender equality and equal opportunities between women and men are not a declared priority field for Bulgarian ODA. The understanding of the MFA<sup>28</sup> is that gender equality could not be a vertical priority, but it is a cross-cutting, horizontal issue that could be included in ODA in the framework of some of the declared sectoral priorities (f. ex. education or reform in the social sphere) upon request of an ODA recipient country in the future under the mechanism for bilateral assistance. At the moment, without any budget allocations for the year 2008, without an approved mechanism for implementation of the bilateral assistance, the perspective for realization of concrete projects in the priority countries for ODA seems still quite far.

The institutions which will be responsible for ODA planning and implementation face the challenge to build the administrative, technical, planning and operational capacity in very near future for the provision of quality assistance to third countries.

#### **Planning, management and reporting of development assistance activities<sup>29</sup>**

“The planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the projects referring to the policy on Republic of Bulgaria’s participation in international development cooperation will be based on clear and transparent procedures consistent with EU and OECD/DAC practices. Planning will be carried out through annual action plans of specific activities and medium-term three-year programs. All interested institutions within the public administration are to submit to the Minister of Foreign Affairs projects and proposals in the relevant area, to be included in the medium-term program and the annual action plans as per the geographical and sectoral priorities approved in this Concept. Based on them as well as on the proposals of the non-governmental sector that meet the respective criteria MFA elaborates and submits to International Development Cooperation Council annual action plans. MFA is to develop clear rules and criteria for evaluation of the projects, which will be part of the legislative basis of the development policy.”

One year after the elaboration of the Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation in international co-operation, there are no additional regulations adopted in the field. The MFA plans the creation of a mid-term strategy for three years. As this is not a fact for 2008, it is more likely this strategy to be adopted for the period 2009-2011. The document is expected to contain for the first time a budget for official development assistance.

The funds will be provided in the central republican budget of the Republic of Bulgaria. Despite the proposal of the Ministry of Foreign affairs for budget allocations of 15 million BGN in the central budget for ODA from 2008, the National assembly hasn’t voted this a budget.<sup>30</sup>

The Council of Ministers, on proposal of the Chairman of IDCC, is to approve the allocation of funds for the financing of development projects, which shall be provided for in the budgets of MFA and the other institutions which are primary receivers of budget appropriations.

---

<sup>28</sup> Meeting with officials from the MFA, Direction “UN and global issues”, Department “Development policy, economic and administrative issues” as a result of requested information on ODA by the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, 18.03.2008

<sup>29</sup> As defined in the Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation in international co-operation, quotation from the document.

<sup>30</sup> *State Budget of Republic of Bulgaria 2008*, State gazette No 113/ 28.12.2007

## **Funds allocation. Achievements of international agreements and gender**

Bulgaria will strive to reach the levels set for newly acceded member states regarding the provision of official development assistance, i.e. assistance to the amount of 0.17% of GNI in 2010 and 0.33% of GNI in 2015, depending on its economic status and possibilities (and also according to the expected growth of the GDP). According to these commitments in order to reach the level of 0,17% of the GNI, by 2010 the amount of 85 million BGN should be allocated.<sup>31</sup> While aspiring to meet the targets, Bulgaria is starting from a very low base (of 0.008% of GNI could be counted as development cooperation in 2005, with a leap to 0.06% in 2006)<sup>32</sup>.

### Official Bulgarian ODA figures

Bulgaria's official ODA as a share of Gross National Income (GNI) in 2005 amounted to 0.008% of GNI, or (3, 317 889 BGN). In 2006, the figures increased to 0.06% of GNI, or BGN 28.6m (€14.6m), of which BGN 1.05m (€ 0.54m) was committed to multilateral development co-operation and BGN 27.5m (€ 14.1m) to bilateral co-operation. As by 2007 Bulgaria sets aside ODA just 0.08 per cent of its GDP.<sup>33</sup> This data comprises as well Bulgaria's contribution to multilateral institutions (which equals to 0,04 %of GNI)<sup>34</sup>

### Official numbers

<b>Bilateral Official Development</b>	-1,33 of which:
Project and programme aid	- 1,20
Emergency and distress relief	- 0,13
<b>Multilateral Official Development Assistance</b>	- 0,67 of which:
Grants and capital subscriptions, total	0,67
UN agencies	0,64
Regional development banks	0,01
Montreal Protocol	0,02

Source: ODA BULGARIA and civil society involvement, presentation available at:

Documentation of the TRIALOG Central Training online <http://www.trialog.or.at/images/doku/bulgaria-ct2008.pdf>

---

<sup>31</sup> Lubomir Kjachukov: Bulgaria starts to provide assistance according to its commitments as EU member State, interview for the TV emission "Realno", BTV, 8 January 2008, available also at the web site of the MFA: [http://www.mfa.bg/bg/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=16915&Itemid=253](http://www.mfa.bg/bg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16915&Itemid=253), 9.01.2008

<sup>32</sup> The Challenge of the EU Development Co-operation Policy for New Member States, a study, requested by European Parliament's Committee on Development, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/expert/eStudies.do?languageEN>, 2. 03. 2008

<sup>33</sup> The figure was presented during the Bulgarian Parliamentary MDG debate, Sofia, 16 October, by Atanas Paparizov

<sup>34</sup> Report on the Challenge of EU Development Cooperation Policy for the New Member States (2007/2140(INI), Committee on Development, 12.02.2008

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2008-0097&language=BG&ring=A6-2008-0036>, 22.03.2008

### Forecasted ODA million BGN

(The exchange rate is base on fixed BGN/€ exchange rate: € 1/BGN 1.95583)

	2007	2008	2009
Payments to international organizations	1, 079	1, 133	1, 190
Payments to EU budget	620,00	695,00	731,00
Payments to EDF		2,5	4,5
Bilateral aid	0	28	44
Multilateral aid	100	72	56

Source: *ODA BULGARIA and civil society involvement, presentation available at:* Documentation of the TRIALOG Central Training online, <http://www.trialog.or.at/images/doku/bulgaria-ct2008.pdf>

In the official statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is promoted the perspective for small budget allocations in the coming years. The Bulgarian debate on MDGs provided space for discussions on the role that the country can perform at the initial stage as a donor. Representatives of Bulgarian public institutions stressed that significant financial assistance for the recipient countries at this initial stage of ODA provision shouldn't be expected. Although it was stated that Bulgaria should compensate by providing expert assistance and human resources to the beneficiary countries.

The *thematic areas of the sectoral priorities for bilateral cooperation* are very broadly defined in the Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation international cooperation development. On one hand this gives the opportunity for proposal and approval of various projects but on the other hand the *gender perspective is not present explicitly as a priority for bilateral assistance*.

With the mid-term strategy for development assistance, which should be adopted, probably next year, there will be already concrete thematic areas for bilateral assistance with the priority countries for Bulgaria.

There is no data on expenditures of ODA by categories, provided from Bulgarian Ministries to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There is no information on completed projects in beneficiary countries, related to gender equality.

The following years will be very important for implementing and developing the commitments made in the Concept Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation in international co-operation and making it a reality. For the moment even an ODA of 0,17% of the GDP by 2010 seems difficult to achieve.

Nevertheless, Bulgaria, as the other EU countries, is a part of the multilateral, regional and bilateral EU Development policy. As such, the country has to face the double challenge of the relatively recent EU membership and inadequate economic standards, and the need to comply with EU Development policy. The latter is aligned to the Paris Declaration and has to keep in compliance with the Monterrey Consensus. The forthcoming review processes of both international documents in 2008 in Accra (the Paris Declaration) and in Doha (the Monterrey Consensus) is an additional challenge for Bulgaria.

Commitments related to the implementation of a transparent and accountable ODA policy have been declared with the approval of the Concept paper. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will

publish an annual report and annual statistical information about provided Official Development Assistance (on its the website).

The EU is committed to promote gender equality and eradication of poverty at the international level. Bulgaria by the force of the EU membership is also committed to the achievement of these goals. *Bulgarian ODA should therefore be in compliance with these principles.* The fact that there is no central budget and mid-term strategy for bilateral ODA makes impossible the launch of calls for proposals for projects for the moment (and for the whole 2008 year). This makes difficult for the civil society to monitor the achievements and the compliance between commitments and implemented policies.

Bulgarian institutions must be held accountable for the implementation of an ODA policy related to the eradication of poverty and achievement of the MDGs. The effective ODA will depend on a political will for adequate budget spending and for fulfillment of international agreements and national commitments in the field of poverty alleviation and promotion of gender equality. The role of the NGOs as advocates for transparent development assistance is also crucial. This should be a two-way cooperation process, which is expected to result in quality assistance to the beneficiary countries, with the broad participation of civil society actors.

## **Part 5. Recommendations for EU Commission, Parliament and EU Member States**

This report has attempted to analyze to what extent the Bulgaria recognizes and fulfils its responsibilities for delivering ODA and to what extent gender equality commitments are present at the development assistance policies.

Bulgaria entered the EU in 2007 and the government adopted the Concept on Development Co-operation policy in the middle of 2007. Although the concept is an ambitious document based on the EU Development policy, the country is far behind the economic standards of the rest of the EU Member States, besides Romania (having already national budget spending for ODA for 2008). The following years will be very important for implementing and developing the commitments made in the concept and making it reality.

The country has to face the double challenge of the relatively recent EU membership and inadequate economic standards, and the need to comply with EU Development policy.

### **The main problems have been identified as follows:**

- Bulgaria makes small commitments until now and big portion of the development cooperation money goes as contributions to multilateral agencies or to the budget of the EU.
- Small allocations to bilateral aid and lack of information about implemented project so far. Moreover, no projects, related to gender equality have been implemented. The future perspectives for project in this field remains unclear (at least until 2009, when if there will be a budget for bilateral assistance, such projects could be initiated. Another detail is that the thematic areas for cooperation with each priority country are not defined yet).
- No reports on ODA have been published yet, which makes the process less transparent and difficult for monitoring.
- There are no debates in Bulgaria about the quality of aid, fulfilment of MDGs and gender equality in development cooperation. The transition from a recipient country to donor country is difficult. There is a need for strong public support for Bulgaria's new role and active civil society organisations in awareness raising and advocacy.
- The challenge for public institutions and NGOs is to build this capacity in the next years.

In the next months there will be a process of mutual identification and recognition between the institutions, responsible for ODA and Bulgarian NGOs, and this is the chance for the NGOs to get involved from the beginning stage of provision of ODA, to prove themselves as reliable partner with expertise, to monitor how engagements are fulfilled, to advocate for relevant budget spending. Another goal is to work on the conceptualisation and defending Bulgarian position on the gender components of development cooperation policy. The Bulgarian NGDO platform should strengthen its capacities and gain expertise on EU development policies and their gender aspects.

## **Effective ODA and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals – recommendations to national officials**

The successful policy actions aimed to reach the MDGs can be seen in the following:

- Establishment of indicators for the achievement of MDGs and specific goals for the realization of Bulgarian ODA strategy, related to the eradication of poverty and gender equality concretely for the bilateral assistance policies.
- When thematic areas for bilateral cooperation with Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Macedonia Serbia, and Angola will be adopted, the Ministry of Foreign affairs would have to publish the information. Establishment of rules for transparent procedure for project approval and monitoring. Spreading of accessible information among the civil society about the future calls for proposals.
- Improved data collection and publishing of related information. Building of administrative mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of progress in reaching these results. Publishing of annual reports by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Allocation adequate funds from the national budget for ODA. Increase of the budget spending for ODA. Institutions should make efforts to work on the fulfillment of the commitments to achieve 0.10-0.17% ODA/GNI by 2010.
- Planning and implementation of information and awareness raising activities, aiming at increasing public support for the Bulgarian ODA policies. More information about EU development issues.
- Structured cooperation with the civil society organizations. Maintenance of a web site with relevant data and information about ODA policy, as proclaimed in the Paper on Bulgaria's policy on participation in international cooperation.
- Strengthening of the Bulgarian gender equality machinery and adoption of new legislation in the field. The inclusion of gender priorities in the ODA will depend on the evolution of national developments concerning gender. Gender-disaggregated statistics, gender budgeting (both missing in Bulgaria), new laws and regulations and new gender equality bodies will help, but common efforts from many actors are required for any real improvements to emerge.
- Elaboration of National Strategy on Development education.<sup>35</sup>

### **Recommendations to the European officials:**

- “There is a pressing need to coordinate old and new donor activities, while the potential advantages of the new Member States should be assessed and used in particular sectors/countries. The media and development NGOs should be encouraged to raise awareness among the population at large because only with wider support will it be possible to allocate financial and human resources to European development cooperation.”<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> none of the ten New member States of the EU has such. Draft Report on the Challenge of EU Development Cooperation Policy for the New Member States (2007/2140(INI)), Committee on Development of the EP. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-396.721+02+DOC+WORD+V0//EN&language=EN>, 26.03.2008

<sup>36</sup> quotation from the Report on EU Development Cooperation policy: the challenges for the New Member States 12.2.2008 PE 396.721v03-00 A6-0036/2008 (2077/2140(INI)) Committee on development of the EP. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0097+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>, 26.03.2008

- The initiation of specialised campaign on awareness raising on the EU development issues and the commitments for realisation of the MDGs and gender equality in developing world.
- Support of the EU to the new Member States for strengthening their role as new donors.
- Realisation of projects on "twinning" to train the personnel of new Member States through quality technical assistance, as recommended by the "Report on EU Development Cooperation policy: the challenges for the New Member States".
- Mainstreaming gender equality in all policies, strategies and actions and financing of measures which directly support women's empowerment in third countries.
- Strengthening the gender equality within the Union through legislation, gender mainstreaming, specific measures for the advancement of women, action programmes, social dialogue and dialogue with civil society. Strengthening the existing policies and legal framework for promotion of gender equality in Development cooperation.
- Cooperation with women's networks for the promotion of the principle of aid effectiveness and for enhancing gender equality and women's rights in the EU development policy. Raising awareness that there is no aid effectiveness without development effectiveness and that gender equality, environment and human rights must be recognized as crucial to development effectiveness.

## Literature:

*Bulgaria and International Development Cooperation*, a booklet published at the web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

*Bulgaria: Millennium development Goals report 2003*, UNDP, Sofia, 2003. (ISBN 954-9724-57-3)

Bulgarian Youth Millennium Goals Report “*Eight Goals: eight Insights. Young people’s stories on the Millennium Development Goals*”, UNDP/UNFPA (Sofia, 2005) ISBN 954-335-006-x

*Concept on the Policy of Bulgaria for participation in the international development cooperation* - a booklet published at the web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Gender equality and women empowerment in development cooperation

Draft report on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Cooperation, Committee of development of the EP, 26.11.2007, accessible at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu>

*Equal rights and equal opportunities for women’s participation in political life in Bulgaria*, BGRF, Sofia, October 2000

Eurobarometer survey “Citizens of the new EU Member States and Development Aid” published in September 2007 at [http://ec.europa.eu/development/AboutGen\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/development/AboutGen_en.cfm)

*Fixing An Old Divide: The Political Participation of Women in an Enlarged Europe*, by Amanda Sloat, paper available at:

[unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN018544.pdf](http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN018544.pdf)

Gender equality legislation and policies on the agenda of Bulgarian parliament, BGRF, Sofia 2002. (ISBN 954-8667-26-6)

Global Gender Gap report, available at <http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2007.pdf>

*ODA BULGARIA and civil society involvement, presentation available at: Documentation of the TRIALOG Central Training online* <http://www.trialog.or.at/images/doku/bulgaria-ct2008.pdf>

Position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria on International Cooperation for Development

Roadmap for gender equality between women and men, 2006-2010, European Commission, Issued in Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2006. (ISBN 92-79-00707-6)

The Challenge of the EU Development Co-operation Policy for New Member States, A Report by PASOS for the European Parliament Committee on Development, 4 October 2007

[www.pasos.org](http://www.pasos.org)

*To the Farthest Frontiers: Women’s Empowerment in an Expanding Europe*, Eurostep/Social Watch, 2005.

[www.cwsp.bg](http://www.cwsp.bg) - Center for Women’s studies and Policies

[www.mfa.government.bg](http://www.mfa.government.bg) – web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[www.mlsp.government.bg](http://www.mlsp.government.bg) – web site of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

[www.novinite.com](http://www.novinite.com)

[www.parliament.bg](http://www.parliament.bg) – web site of the National Assembly

[www.trialog.org](http://www.trialog.org) – TRIALOG web site

[www.undp.bg](http://www.undp.bg) – UNDP Bulgaria

## **About the Author**

**Tisheva Tania** – has a Bachelor degree in political science, option comparative political science and foreign policy (2002) and Master degree in "National policies and European policies of the EU member states" (University of Paris III, Sorbonne nouvelle 2003 - 2004). She works in the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation since 2001 as a researcher and project coordinator. Responsible for research activities and coordination of projects in the field of gender and youth issues, related information campaigns and activities, publishing activities. Experience in the Bulgarian civil society sector and worked for the Institute for Regional and International Studies (Sofia), a leading Bulgarian think-tank. In the period 2004-2006 participated in advocacy projects, development of advocacy methodology for trainings of civil society organizations. Advocacy trainer at seminars for NGOs and civil society activists in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

\*The gathering of data on Bulgaria's ODA policy and the direction for future assistance was possible thanks to the researcher's participation to related events (in the period 2007-2008), to the participation at the meetings of the Bulgarian NGDO platform, to the following of the information, published by the Bulgarian media and to the official request for information, sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed by a meeting with officials from Ministry of foreign affairs, Direction "UN and global issues", Department "Development policy, economic and administrative issues".