

# **EU-CIS Gender Watch**

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



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## **Introduction**

The present paper aims to contribute to the assessment of Hungary's international development cooperation policy and activity from a gender perspective. Hungary re-initiated its international development and foreign assistance activity while joining the European Union, as its membership gave rise to new obligations in this field. Tied to these was the expectation to integrate the gender perspective into the area of development policy, similarly to other policy areas, in order to attain gender equality. The focus of our inquiry is to what extent Hungary's official policy and activities promote the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment in development cooperation, based on activities since 2004 and on available plans for future activities.

When aiming to implement efficient cooperation programmes in – what are classified as – developing countries, it is especially important to take the gender aspect into account. As the European Commission's Communication on the issue (European Commission, 2007, p.2) states, gender equality “is not only crucial in itself but is a fundamental human right and a question of social justice (...), [and it] is essential for growth and poverty reduction”. Gender inequalities are undoubtedly prevalent in all societies of different cultural and political backgrounds. Yet in developing countries women are generally even more likely to have less economic and political power than men, or to be exposed to gender-based violence and trafficking for sexual exploitation. In large international organisations involved in development funding, such as the EC, therefore, a twin-track approach has been determined: to strengthen gender mainstreaming, and to provide specific actions for women's empowerment in the partner (developing) countries. For donor countries like Hungary, which are obliged to carry out bilateral projects in partner countries, adopting and implementing such a complex approach would also be highly important.

The analysis will be done by exploring the country's international development policy from a gender perspective, especially in view of the expectations arising from its membership in international organisations. The obligation of furthering the issue of gender equality – both in internal and in foreign policy issues – stems from Hungary's membership in the UN as well as in the EU, enhanced by the signing of official documents, such as the CEDAW Convention, the Millennium Declaration, and the Regulations of the European Parliament and the Council, which oblige the state to take meaningful action on the issue. The areas of Hungarian policy that will be described and analysed from a gender aspect are the country's own legislative and institutional framework for implementing gender equality, the relevant international development strategies, the allocation of financial resources to specific countries and areas, and the cooperation of governmental agencies with non-governmental organisations on this issue, among others. Finally, the report will include recommendations for decision making bodies at national and international level on how to improve development cooperation with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment.

## **Part 1. Basic information about development co-operation and foreign assistance in Hungary**

### **History of assistance**

Hungary, in the process of acceding to the OECD and the European Union, committed itself to implementing international development cooperation as a re-emerging donor country. Hungary's current policy on international development cooperation (or IDC) emphatically refers to the country's recent history both of providing aid to certain developing countries and of receiving aid in the years of the country's political transition.

In an official presentation on Hungary's IDC strategy (Boros, 2005), the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed the following aspects of the country's history of foreign assistance: Hungary had a well-developed foreign aid policy before the political transition, which mainly focused on the training of professionals, providing aid credit and humanitarian aid to countries selected on a political-ideological basis. Between 1990 and 1996, when the country acceded to the OECD, foreign assistance policy was characterised by providing support to Hungarian communities living beyond the country's borders. In the period between 1996 and 2004, Hungary went through a temporary phase of both receiving and providing foreign aid, during which the country formulated its international development policy with the aim to fit European Union and other international norms. Finally, the concept of Hungary's international development cooperation policy was passed by the government in 2001, which lay the foundations for the creation of the legal framework and the governmental structure for this field of activity.

As for the main reasons for Hungary to provide foreign assistance, official statements emphasise the interplay of the expectations and standards of the international donor organisations on the one hand and Hungary's foreign policy interests and moral aims on the other. According to the official statement on Hungary's international development cooperation policy (MFA, 2003), the country was to incorporate into its legislation the part of the *acquis communautaire* that regulates IDC policies, and thereby the country committed itself to the EU's main aim of reducing poverty, with reference to the OECD DAC fundamental rules and the Millennium Development Goals.

At the same time, according to the same statement, Hungary's IDC policy is declared to be based on national interests and characteristics as well, and to mainly serve the social and economic advancement of developing countries and countries in transition. Consequently, when carrying out the IDC-related activities required by the country's membership in international organisations, Hungary aims to enter into development partnership with countries which also serve the country's foreign political and economic interests: that is, countries which are important from the aspects of regional stability, geographical proximity, traditional and active foreign and trade relations etc. Furthermore, it is also taken into account which countries are known well by members of the Hungarian social and economic life, and, finally, which countries appear open to such a partnership.

In an official presentation, the Under-Secretary of the MFA formulated the reasons for the interplay of these different motives in the following way: "The integration of international development cooperation into our international relations is in Hungary's interest as well because it increases our latitude in the field of international and security policy and in foreign economic relations, it strengthens opportunities for achieving our aims in regions outside the EU, and it increases our prestige in the world. Another important aspect is that Hungarian

society shall become open to global problems, and this outward solidarity shall have positive effects on the strengthening of the country's internal sense of solidarity" (Boros, 2005, p.23).

As a sign of the country's increasing commitment to the policy area of IDC, Hungary has been taking part, since it had an acceding member status to the EU, in summits aimed at increasing the volume of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in order to reduce poverty in developing countries more effectively. Thus at the 2002 EU summit in Barcelona, the country joined in the commitment of increasing the volume of ODA in EU member states to an average of 0.39 percent of their Gross National Income (GNI), with a minimum contribution of 0.33 percent of GNI from each member state (MFA, 2003). Furthermore, at the 2005 May 24 Conclusions of the Council, Hungary joined in setting a new collective target of 0.56% ODA per GNI by 2010. For new member states, this means a commitment of allocating 0.17% of GNI as ODA (MFA, 2006b, p.23).

However, at the same time, official documents emphasise that turning the above commitments into reality has been a great challenge for the country (MFA, 2004b, p.2; MFA, 2006a, p.1). Already the effective implementation of IDC-related activities and, especially, meeting the expectation to catch up with more generous donor countries have posed considerable difficulties. To the end of fulfilling these expectations with the country's limited resources, the chosen strategy has been to implement activities in areas where Hungary has comparative advantage. Thus for instance, as it shall be discussed later, sharing the experience of utilising aid as a recipient country in the process of democratisation has become one of the central areas of activity in the country's IDC policy.

### **Development assistance, development policy, development cooperation**

At international level, Hungary has committed itself to pursuing international development cooperation in accordance with:

- 1) The OECD DAC standards, although as a new and smaller donor the country is not a member of the DAC. However, the reporting and statistical guidelines of the OECD have been implemented in Hungary.
- 2) The Millennium Development Goals, the major document on development goals approved by the members of the United Nations.
- 3) The European Union's legal provisions on international development cooperation, provided for in Art. 177-181 of the EC Treaty, which have been given further direction to by joint statements such as "The European Consensus on Development" (2005).

At national level, the legal and infrastructural framework for Hungary's international development cooperation activities was set up in a process dating back to the period before Hungary's accession to the EU. At first, the Concept Paper on IDC policy was approved by the government in 2001, which lay down the basis for the creation of the legal framework as well as the formulation of the goals and areas of IDC activities.

In order to "support the development and strengthening of sustainable (ODA) delivery capacities" (MFA, 2002b, p.3), the Official Development Assistance in Central Europe (ODACE) programme was implemented in the four Visegrad countries, among them Hungary, in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency. Set up with a maximum contribution of CDN \$15Million from CIDA, the programme had two aims: firstly, to build ODA institutions and strengthen ODA capacities and secondly, to contribute, in the form of trilateral cooperation, to the implementation of development projects in third countries. The process, similarly to programmes with other countries (e.g. Finland) and

organisations (e.g. UNDP), in which the transfer of knowledge on IDC-related issues played a central role, undoubtedly helped in the initial stages of institutional development.

The 2004 governmental report on international development cooperation (MFA, 2004a) describes that, pursuant to the Government Decree 82/2003 (07.06.), the main institution responsible for the planning and coordination of Hungary's IDC activities is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. More specifically, the International Development Cooperation Department was established as the institutional unit in charge of the above activities. The ministerial unit in charge is called Department for International Development Cooperation (DIDC). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informs national political decision-makers by reporting about IDC activities to the Foreign Affairs and Budget Committees of the Parliament. At the same time, it is a declared aim of the MFA to organise development cooperation programmes with the participation of the larger society, in order to assure accountability required by international standards. The ministry's IDC communication strategy similarly promotes social participation.

Government Decision 2121/2003 (06.06.) established the IDC Interdepartmental Committee, under the leadership of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Committee is responsible for steering the country's development policy in that it determines IDC partner countries and target areas. Regarding the coordination of the previously separate international aid activities of the ministries, the Policy states: "The development policy coordinated by MFA shall not replace the international aid-support activity and funding program so far pursued by the various line ministries and institutions. However, the MFA is now responsible to harmonise, with the active participation of the line ministries, all Hungarian development activities and to assist in the efficient use of central IDC resources" (MFA, 2003).

An Interdepartmental Expert Group, consisting of delegated representatives from ministries, was also set up in order to assist the Interdepartmental Committee. In a similar assisting role to the committee, a Civil Advisory Board was established. The board's membership consists of representatives of the MFA, political parties, trade unions, employers' organisations, academic communities, NGOs and individual experts. Its declared roles are to provide an opportunity for representatives of public life, and social and professional organisations to participate in the review of the country's IDC activities, and, furthermore, to enhance the efficiency of these activities and promote their social acceptance.

In a decision of the IDC Interdepartmental Committee in 2004, the public company HUN-IDA was appointed as the implementing agency of Hungarian IDC programmes. It coordinates the projects in partner countries carried out as part of the official IDC activities by Hungarian missions abroad, non-governmental organisations carrying out development activities (NGDOs), members of the private sector, and several public administration bodies. The institutional structure outlined above was established from the second half of 2003, which was the starting date for the planning and implementation of IDC programmes and projects.

In the pursuit to further develop the country's IDC activity, the government has been planning to create an independent act on international development cooperation (MFA, 2007a, p.20). The law that has been planned for several years is still under formulation. Prior to the approval of the act, the government intends to involve the different stakeholders in its creation. To promote partly this end at the level of civil society, at HAND – Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid a special IDC working group was set up.

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

International development cooperation policy receives a strong focus within Hungary's foreign assistance policy. It is declared to be harmonised with the foreign policy, national and moral aims laid down in the Governmental Programme.

The Concept Paper of Hungarian International Development Cooperation (MFA, 2002a) formulated the following general aims for the country's IDC activities:

- To preserve and support international peace and security, to create and sustain regional political and economic stability.
- To contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of developing countries, with special regard to LDCs (least developed countries), and with particular emphasis on reducing poverty.
- To protect human rights and equal opportunities, to strengthen democracy and civil society structures, to support local community autonomies.
- To support efforts aimed at creating economic and social development (basic necessities, healthcare provision and primary education).
- To promote good governance.
- To protect and improve environmental resources, to promote sustainable development.
- To improve the Hungarian communities' situation in the neighbouring countries (OA category).
- Active participation in the international institutional network of development cooperation.
- Membership in OECD DAC in the longer term (MFA, 2002a; MFA, 2004b, pp.5-6).

The IDC policy, as mentioned before, aims to integrate the expectations of international donor organisations with Hungary's own political interests. The priorities that emerge from these considerations are formulated in the IDC policy statement in the following way:

“In order to use our limited resources in the most efficient way, we have set clear targets and preferences when deciding on our partner countries and IDC sectors. To be able to fully utilise our comparative advantages and to ensure maximum added value to the EU common IDC, we mainly focus on Western Balkan and CIS countries and would like to share our experiences gained in the course of political and economic transition and EU accession. Hungary, as an aid recipient country up to the recent past, has also rich experiences of receiving and best utilising aid, which can be conveyed to our partner countries as well. We are confident that a well-targeted knowledge-transfer project of modest financial value can have a significant development impact.” (MFA, 2006a, p.1)

IDC activities were chosen to focus on the following sectors, in which Hungary is perceived to have relative advantages and transferable experience to developing countries:

- “the transfer of Hungarian experience related to the change of political systems (establishment and operation of democratic structures; establishment of conditions for the transition to market economy; privatisation; support to small and medium enterprises; application of the “good governance” requirements; development of migration, election and population statistic systems, etc.);
- intellectual capital, know-how based assistance (information technology and communication; community Internet access; management and planning of labour policies , etc.);

- education (university and post-graduate), training of experts and technicians, curriculum development, distance teaching arrangements;
- health, pharmaceutical production (planning, equipment and operation of hospitals and polyclinics; birth control; reduction of epidemics, etc.);
- agriculture (dissemination of the most up-to-date plant cultivating and stock-breeding methods; seed improvement; plant health and plant protection; freshwater pisciculture; afforestation programs; forestry consulting; mushroom growing; development plans for farms; biotechnology; agrometeorology; agriculture-related expert and engineer training), food industry (slaughter house design);
- water management, planning and consultancy (storage basins and barrage dams; water purification plants; dam planning; drainage; exploration and measurement of water resources, etc.);
- infrastructure planning;
- consultancy on environmental protection;
- protection of cultural heritage;
- general and transportation engineering activity; cartography” (MFA, 2003).

Beyond the concrete areas of activity, it is also a declared goal of Hungarian IDC policy to conduct more bilateral development cooperation activities and, furthermore, to increasingly untie aid.

The countries at which Hungary directs its IDC activities can be grouped into the following categories: 1) neighbouring countries, as a result of the effort “to improve the effectiveness of cooperation” and because Hungary has a “vital interest in the stability of the Central and South-East European region” (MFA, 2003); 2) least developed countries (LDCs), taking into consideration the general development aims of the European Union; 3) Far Eastern Countries, because of earlier tradition of cooperation and experience; and 4) international commitments stemming from Hungary’s membership in international organisations, e.g. the NATO.

Hungary’s IDC partner countries are reviewed by the IDC Interdepartmental Committee yearly, however, commonly only a few changes occur. In the case of the strategic partners, the elaboration of specific country strategies has begun (cf. “Hungary’s international development cooperation country strategy about Serbia”, MFA, 2007b), with the involvement of the sectors active in IDC, including NGDOs. Since 2003 the main changes in the list of partner countries have been the removal of the Palestine National Authority from among the strategic partners into the group of other partner countries, the removal of China from the country list because of the reassessment of China’s state of development, and the inclusion of Sri Lanka in the years 2005 and 2006 among partner countries because of the tsunami catastrophe that occurred there.

Current IDC partners are:

- Strategic partners:

Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vietnam

- Other partner countries:

Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Palestine Authority

- Least developed countries (LDCs):

Ethiopia, Yemen, Cambodia, Laos

- International commitments:

Afghanistan, Iraq.

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

### **Inclusion of gender in European law and international agreements**

Hungary is obliged by its membership in international organisations, most importantly in the United Nations and the European Union, to protect women's human rights and to mainstream the gender perspective into all its policies and activities, in order to realise gender equality and to empower women.

Due to its membership in the United Nations, Hungary gradually incorporated its most important conventions and policies referring to the area of gender equality into its own legislation. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), (General Assembly of the UN, 1979), is a document of outstanding importance with regard to women's rights. The Convention, which is often called "an international bill of rights for women", was ratified by the Hungarian Parliament in Statutory Law 10/1982. Its significance consists in defining the different forms of discrimination against women and in obliging states parties to carry out action at national level in order to eliminate such discrimination.

The Convention requires that its states parties take action, that is, pass legislation or introduce temporary special measures in order to realise gender equality in all areas of life, e.g. political and public life, education, health and employment. Importantly, the convention asserts women's reproductive rights. The Convention obliges its signatories to implement its provisions and to report regularly to the CEDAW Committee on the advancement of the implementation of the Convention. At the same time as Hungary's combined 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> periodic governmental report in 2002 and the 6<sup>th</sup> one in 2007 were elaborated to be presented to the Committee, Hungarian women's organisations created shadow reports that provided a more critical view of women's human rights situation in the country from the perspective of NGO experts and service providers.

Hungary has also ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol (General Assembly of the UN, 2000a) of by Law LX/2001, which enables groups or individuals from a particular state party to initiate a complaint to the Committee if the state violated or failed to secure their human rights as women and the right not to be discriminated against on the basis that they are women. In two serious cases of gender-based discrimination, Hungarian citizens have lodged such complaints against the state. The Committee found both complaints justified and obliged Hungary to proceed in order to amend the given situation and to take measures in order to avoid similar cases of discrimination against other women.

As a member state of the United Nations, Hungary also signed the Millennium Declaration (General Assembly of the UN, 2000b) in 2000, thereby committing itself to striving towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs are binding for signatory states both with regard to their national policies and their development policies abroad, and as such have special significance for IDC policy. Especially goals 2, 3 and 5 are significant from a gender perspective. In an official overview of Hungarian IDC policy (MFA, 2003) it is described that, by means of the Millennium Development Goals, the UN Member States undertook to achieve the following goals by 2015 for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women:

- Halve extreme poverty and hunger;
- Achieve universal primary education;
- Empower women and promote equality between women and men;

- Reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds;
  - Reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters;
  - Reverse the spread of disease, especially HIV/AIDS and malaria;
  - Ensure environmental sustainability;
  - Create a global partnership for development, with targets for aid, trade and debt relief.
- Hungary reported on the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals in 2004 to the UN, taking account of IDC projects that were perceived to have furthered MDGs (MFA, 2004b).

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy has been promoted both in the UN and the European Union as well. Gender mainstreaming indicates a strategy for integrating the gender perspective into policy processes in order to promote equality between women and men. It is worth pointing out that, according to a report by the Council of Europe (2004), it was in connection with the role of women in development that the concept of gender mainstreaming first came into focus at the UN Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, 1985. Later, starting with the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995, the policy of gender mainstreaming was explicitly supported. Within the EU, supported by UN commitments, the European Commission integrated the strategy of gender mainstreaming into its community action programmes on equal opportunities for women and men and into community programmes related to employment and social solidarity (e.g. PROGRESS 2007-2013). Upon acceding to the EU, Hungary, along with gender equality legislation of the *acquis communautaire*, committed itself to the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

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

EU accession, with regard to the realisation of gender equality, initiated changes in Hungarian national legislation on the one part and in the institutional structures on the other. While the legislative changes have been more comprehensive, the implementation procedures and the institutional reform have appeared to be less complete, according to a report on the gender equality aspects of EU accession process (Krizsán & Pap, 2005). The institutional mechanisms responsible for the issue of gender equality have not been constant in the last years, in the present report we will only describe the current situation.

In the governmental structure, the highest official body in charge of gender equality is the Department of Social Equality between Women and Men at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour. The department works under the leadership of the State Secretary for Equal Opportunities. The department is the only body at governmental level responsible for the issue of gender equality, however, with only a limited number of employees. It is a frequent point of criticism by non-governmental women's organisation that the issue of gender equality is not represented by a more autonomous body at a high enough level, with enough employees to manage the diverse tasks related to implementing gender equality policies.

In relation to gender mainstreaming, the Ministry aims to implement the EU's Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010) (European Commission, 2006). According to information from the Ministry's website ([www.szmm.gov.hu](http://www.szmm.gov.hu)), the implementation of the roadmap is declared to form the keystone of the department's long term working plan. There are six priority areas for EU action towards gender equality laid down in the roadmap: equal economic independence for women and men; reconciliation of private and professional life; equal representation in decision-making; eradication of all forms of gender-based violence; elimination of gender stereotypes; and promotion of gender equality in external and development policies. In these key areas, the Ministry has set up Experts' Working Groups

with the membership of NGO and independent experts. The activity of the working group on international development issues will be discussed in the next subchapter.

On the basis of government decree 1089/2006 (IX.25.), the Council for Women's and Men's Social Equality was established. It was supposed to continue the work of the former Women's Representation Council, which, however, was practically never functional. According to the government decree, the new council was created as a consultative, advisory body preparing, monitoring and initiating governmental decisions in the area of gender equality. The council consists of representatives of women's organisations of a national scope, independent gender experts and representatives of the different ministries, and is chaired by the State Secretary for Equal Opportunities. It has a yearly work plan, for 2008, for instance, there are four meetings planned, and at one of them the aforementioned Experts' Working Groups will describe their activities and exchange experience with the members of the Council.

In the Hungarian Parliament, the proportion of women Members of Parliament has been steadily low, around 10% since the political transition. Within the parliament the issue of gender equality is represented at subcommittee level. Under the Committee on Human Rights, Minorities and Religion, the Subcommittee of Social Equality between Women and Men was established in 2007. It has 6 MP members, 3 women and 3 men, who proportionately represent the different parties present in the parliament. The subcommittee works together with other governmental bodies in charge of equal opportunity issues, especially with the Ministry's relevant department. Importantly, last year, the parliament debated a bill of the smaller governing Liberal party that aimed at introducing a compulsory 50-50% gender quota on party candidates' lists in the country's mixed election system of individual candidates and party candidates' lists. The bill was supported by, among others, the chairwoman of the Subcommittee of Social Equality between Women and Men. However, the bill, which would have required a two-thirds majority vote, was rejected.

At legislative level, the harmonisation of national legislation with European directives concerning gender equality took place in quite an extensive form. The main legislative step in this direction was the creation of a comprehensive antidiscrimination law, Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities. It is worth mentioning that this approach was favoured over a separate act concerning gender equality, when a related bill was refused by the parliament. The Equal Treatment Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, family status, pregnancy, motherhood or fatherhood and sexual orientation, among other grounds. It defines and bans direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment, unlawful segregation and retribution. Organisations carrying out public tasks are obliged to fulfil the requirement of equal treatment in all their relationships and proceedings. The principle of equal treatment has to be observed in most forms of employment affairs (at companies of state or private ownership equally), the health service and education etc. However, the scope of the act does not extend to family law relationships and relationships between relatives, which is a point contested by the Hungarian Women's Lobby, the umbrella organisation of women's NGOs.

The Equal Treatment Act initiated the National Equal Opportunity Plan that was to include all measures by the government to promote the equal opportunities of social classes facing discrimination. The act also specifies that state-owned companies with 50 or more employees have to pass an equal opportunity plan. Last but not least, the act established the Equal Treatment Authority, an independent body functioning since February 1, 2005 (see [www.egyenlobanasmod.hu](http://www.egyenlobanasmod.hu)). Its most important function is the reviewing of individual and public complaints that arise from the presumed violation of the principle of equal treatment. According to the shifting of the burden of proof, it is not the injured party but the respondent that has to prove that the principle of equal treatment has been observed by them. If the

principle is found to have been violated, the authority may order that the situation shall be changed and impose a fine of up to 23000 Euros. However, although the Equal Treatment Authority reviews a large number of complaints from the members of different social classes yearly, the majority of the cases of discrimination likely still go underreported and are unknown. As women's NGOs perceive that discrimination against women in the areas regulated by the act is still prevalent, more efficient legislative and institutional measures are continuously called for in order to realise gender equality.

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

According to the information provided by the MFA's Department for International Development Cooperation, the promotion of gender equality does not appear explicitly in Hungary's IDC policy and activities, either as a topical or as a cross-cutting issue. This is largely attributed to the fact that Hungary's development strategy is generally not complex and finely segmented enough yet and, moreover, other horizontal issues are not integral to it either. However, both of these are important aims that the governmental actors involved in IDC intend to pursue. As a result, at this stage no strategic document exists that especially stresses the importance of the promotion of gender equality and of women's empowerment in the country's IDC activities.

At the same time, in the international development cooperation policy there is sporadic reference to goals related to gender equality. In the Concept Paper on IDC, as mentioned earlier, the protection of human rights and equal opportunities appears as a goal, implying the equal opportunities of women and men as well. However, only in relation to the Millennium Development Goals is there actual reference to certain gender aspects by way of mentioning the following MDGs:

“2. Achieve universal primary education. Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

3. Promote gender equality and empower women. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

(...)

5. Improve maternal health. Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality rate” (MFA, 2004b, p.1).

As far as international expectations of mainstreaming the gender perspective into the country's IDC policy is concerned, there is very limited formal reference to this in related official documents. There is an indication in the official Hungarian “Report on IDC activities in 2006 and planned tasks for 2007” (MFA, 2007a) of Hungary's signing of the European Consensus on Development of 2005. This EU-level official statement describes the main IDC policy aims at both community and member state level. Gender equality issues are placed at the core of development issues and gender mainstreaming is formulated as a requirement:

“Equality between men and women and the active involvement of both genders in all aspects of social progress are key prerequisites for poverty reduction. The gender aspect must be addressed in close conjunction with poverty reduction, social and political development and economic growth, and mainstreamed in all aspects of development cooperation. Gender equality will be promoted through support to equal rights, access and control over resources and political and economic voice” (The European Consensus on Development, 2005, p.16).

Nevertheless, the above mentioned Hungarian report does not explicitly refer to the requirement of mainstreaming the gender aspect into IDC policy.

It is observable that the issue of gender equality, mostly due to the cooperation with other EU governments, has recently received more attention within development policy. An event that marked this trend was the “Seminar on EU Development Policy and Reproductive Health” that took place in December 2007 with the participation of Visegrad 4 countries, in the joint organization of the Dutch and the Hungarian Government. As the invitation letter stated, the aim of the seminar was twofold: to initiate dialogue among new EU member states and the Netherlands on the issues of international development and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and to build the capacity of policy makers, researchers and NGOs in the area of IDC and reproductive health. The seminar aimed to focus on EU policy, the specific roles of Member States, and potential further collaboration in connection with the issue. Such events with the combined aims of capacity building and the initiation of further cooperation seem very useful in connection with gender-related issues, as they can contribute to a more efficient integration of the gender perspective into development policy according to international standards.

As mentioned earlier, the EU Roadmap for equality between women and men is a significant policy document that affirms the importance of mainstreaming the gender aspect into the EU’s six policy areas including development policy (European Commission, 2006). Among the expert working groups set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, one called “Working Group for the Promotion of Gender Equality Outside the EU” is concerned with the promotion of this aim. According to the information on the group’s website ([www.gendereuropankivul.hu](http://www.gendereuropankivul.hu)) and the group’s coordinator, this working group fosters the mainstreaming of gender equality issues into Hungary’s neighbourhood policy, foreign and IDC policies. In support of this aim, the website, for instance, contains informative summaries on the UN’s and the EU’s instruments, such as strategies and policies on the realisation of gender equality in international development cooperation. As a result of their activity, the mainstreaming of the gender perspective into Hungary’s IDC policy is planned through close cooperation with the Visegrad 4 countries and the most recently acceded EU members Bulgaria and Romania, to which end a conference has been organised for April 2008.

Furthermore, with the support of the Ministry, the Council of Geopolitics Public Interest Foundation announced in March 2008 a competition for researchers to write an essay related to the issue of “Gender equality outside the Eastern borders of the European Union”. The call especially encourages women researchers to apply, and the result will be published as part of the organisation’s “Workshop papers” series. Hopefully, the above recent activities funded by the Ministry signals the start of a longer-term commitment to integrating the issue of gender equality into IDC policy and activities.

The current lack of gender mainstreaming in IDC policy certainly has effects at the level of IDC implementation and monitoring, which is likely to change in the future. According to information from the IDC implementing agency HUN-IDA based on telephone conversation, currently the aspect of gender equality does not appear consistently as a requirement in calls for applications related to project grants, or in the contracts signed with the executive organisations. As a result, currently projects are not monitored or registered according to the criterion of the promotion of gender equality. However, some more recent calls for tender, e.g. the call for projects in Afghanistan to develop health services, have required taking into account gender aspects in order to guarantee that the developed services would be accessible for both women and men, and that the project may contribute to the elimination of gender inequalities.

Furthermore, according to information from the above source, in the frame of a so-called Twinning Light project with the Finnish Government, the institutions in charge of IDC received training and assistance with IT infrastructure in connection with the OECD DAC statistical standards, which include statistical data registry according to horizontal aims such as gender equality. The technological and knowledge base for registering ODA statistics is currently under development and testing, and is due to be launched in the coming years. As a result, the new system is said to be suitable for registering and analysing gender-disaggregated statistical data and for assigning costs and proportions of funding to sectoral and horizontal aims.

### **Part 3. The role of non-governmental organizations**

#### **NGOs seen as a partner**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and non-governmental organisations have mutually declared their interest in cooperation for the goal of consulting on international development cooperation policy aims and directions. Hungarian IDC policy papers detail the concept of cooperation with NGDOs from the MFA's perspective: as consultative partners, partly due to their membership in the Civil Advisory Board, and as potential executive organisations that carry out IDC projects. In connection with the implementing role of NGDOs, it has been emphasised that "[A]ny not-for profit organization selected to the post of Implementing Agency should reasonably be experienced in development issues, should not be inordinately structured and should be supported with a flexible decision-making mechanism." (MFA, 2003). The requirement for them to have wide-ranging qualifications has also been formulated.

The MFA compiles annual reports for the IDC Interdepartmental Committee on activities of the previous year and planned tasks for the next one, in which a separate subchapter is assigned to the description of the relationship and cooperation with NGDOs. According to the annual reports, the relationship with members of the civil society has been constantly improving. They give account of the following types of activities:

- Consultation on the possible forms of cooperation;
- Consultation on humanitarian aid coordination;
- Informational events on IDC programmes and calls for application;
- Involvement of NGDOs in capacity-building projects.

Consecutive reports contain an increasing number of positive and acknowledging remarks on the activities of NGDOs, especially with regard to their substantial assistance in humanitarian aid activities and to their role in popularizing the issue of international development cooperation within the wider society through conferences. The 2006 report points out that Hungarian diplomats also lobbied at the European Commission for NGDOs to be able to apply for IDC grants at EU level (MFA, 2006b, p.24). The 2007 report stresses that NGDOs, by virtue of their network of connections in recipient countries and their membership in international umbrella organizations, have implemented remarkable IDC projects, therefore it is in the interest of the official IDC policy to utilise these comparative advantages and NGDOs' capacities for the validation of national interests (MFA, 2007a, p.19).

From the point of view of NGDOs, the cooperation with the MFA in IDC activities may also be characterised as more effective than at the beginning. Mentioned by the MFA's yearly report of 2004, the NGDO platform HAND Association critiqued the MFA's calls for applications for not reflecting the specific operational mechanisms of NGOs, thanks to which more widespread consultation with NGOs was promised (MFA, 2004a, p.9). According to information from HAND Association, the cooperation with the MFA still has not reached a satisfactory level, which is marked by the fact that in 2007, instead of the planned monthly meetings, only two consultations took place in the whole year. It is the intention of the Association to realise bimonthly meetings in the future.

In the area of consultation on IDC directions regarding certain countries, according to information from HAND Association based on personal communication, although the MFA intended to involve NGDOs in their design from 2007, there were cases when these had to

react in a very limited amount of time to specific strategy proposals related to partner countries, such as Serbia. HAND Association, the platform of NGOs, reacted to this trend in 2007 by emphasising to the MFA that as an umbrella organisation they would require to consult members on such important issues and would therefore need 3 weeks' time to be able to comment on drafts efficiently. Subsequently, this request was taken into account by the MFA when preparing the next country strategy paper in 2008.

It is worth pointing out that many of the NGOs and humanitarian aid organisations that carry out projects with funding from large international donor organisations have extensive available experience with integrating the gender aspect into their projects. According to information received through telephone and email communication from the Hungarian Interchurch Aid, the inclusion of the gender equality aspect in their work has been the result of a twofold process: on the one hand, it has been a requirement of the donor organisations in the implementation and the monitoring process of humanitarian and development projects, on the other hand, it has arisen from the actual needs of the population in the recipient countries, in which poverty and gender inequality are fundamentally connected. The international development activities of HIA contain the aspect of gender equality and the empowerment of women for the whole period of each project (from planning and assessment through implementation to follow-up), according to its own and international standards. Moreover, they have carried out specific projects for the promotion of gender equality, e.g. a complex social services project in Uzbekistan in cooperation with a local association for disabled women; also, their development strategy for Afghanistan and their implemented Afghan projects take into consideration and promote the situation of women, especially widows; and keeping gender-disaggregated data on projects is integral to their development-related work. In our opinion, this and other Hungarian NGOs and aid organisations have valuable professional and field experience in the promotion of gender equality, and they would be able to deliver significant input for Hungary's official IDC policy and activity from a gender aspect.

### **NGOs – a mandate to monitor**

Hungarian IDC policy documents acknowledge that development cooperation activities funded from the state budget “are required by international standards to be organised with wide social participation, the involvement of the public and the assurance of accountability” (MFA, 2003). NGOs, who as civil society members build a bridge to society, are highly eligible for enforcing these requirements of transparency and accountability. In Hungary, the Aid Watch Working Group of HAND Association carries out the monitoring of Hungarian official IDC policy and activities, while consulting with its own members and independent researchers as well. The association provides research data for and takes part in EU-level monitoring work as well by virtue of its membership in CONCORD European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development. Some of the association's members, like BOCS Foundation and the women's issue organisation Nőtárs (“Sisterhood”) Foundation also take part in consultations within CONCORD on gender-related issues. The Hungarian aid watch working group places great importance on the involvement of official actors in their activities, in order to lead meaningful and constructive dialogue with them on IDC-related issues. As part of their monitoring work, the HAND Aid Watch Working Group has organised a professional seminar and workshop with the participation of international and Hungarian officials and experts on the provision of IDC statistical data in March 2008.

As a recent result of their activity, the association published a report entitled “Hungarian international development policy in the light of numbers” in 2007. The aims of the research

report were to describe and critically assess Hungarian IDC policy according to international aid watch standards, to elaborate recommendations for improving IDC, and to raise public awareness about the necessity of providing genuine aid. As the report testifies, its writers received much of the required information from the MFA and the line ministries involved in IDC, however, not all the data that they asked for and not always in an exact and consistent form. The report quotes that the deficiencies in data provision have been acknowledged by the MFA itself as follows: “In the interest of exact cost calculation and statistical data delivery, steps need to be taken in 2007 in order to update the project registry system, to develop a uniform system for managing statistical data, to gather information more thoroughly, ... and to increase the effectiveness of programme efficiency measurement” (Kiss, 2007, p. 5). With the given limitations, the report gathered and analysed all available statistics on IDC to the depth that the availability of data made possible. As a first-time NGO account of Hungary’s IDC activities according to international aid watch requirements, this report is very important.

As a result of the problems with receiving IDC-related data from the ministries for the above report, especially because of the sporadic and fragmented nature of the data, according to information on the association’s website ([www.hand.org.hu](http://www.hand.org.hu)), they turned to the Parliamentary Commissioner (or Ombudsman) for Data Protection and Freedom of Information with a petition in 2007. It sought answers to the queries whether Hungarian ODA-related data are public and whether the ministries proceeded in a lawful way when they rejected to release certain data. As the ombudsman found the association’s objections valid, a statement was issued in favour of general access to data on IDC activities, as these undoubtedly constitute public information; it stated furthermore that the ministries responsible for supplying data should assist in a cooperative manner, especially towards public service organisations.

## Part 4. Official Development Assistance and Gender

### Funds allocation

As described earlier, there are several deficiencies in Hungarian IDC in connection with the issue of gender equality. Firstly, at this stage there is no strategic document available on the promotion of gender equality in international development cooperation policy. Furthermore, in the area of IDC, gender mainstreaming has not taken place yet. In general, policy documents do not mention gender equality as a cross-sectoral issue or as an aim to be promoted through specific projects. Apart from the above factors, the current lack of a registration system containing gender-disaggregated data on the country's spending as ODA also makes it difficult to research how much of the aid spent has contributed to the promotion of gender equality.

In order to place the issue into context, below follows an overview of Hungary's spending on bilateral and on multilateral aid, as their proportion has significance for the country's ability to focus aid spending on certain sectors. As the aid watch report of the national NGDO platform points out (Kiss, 2007, p.7-10), the available data testify that Hungary's multilateral aid spending is generally more than the aid spent on bilateral projects, a trend that diverges from the desired ratio of 60:40 between bilateral and multilateral aid. This partly stems from that fact that as Hungary is an EU member, 4.68% of its contribution to the EU budget may be counted as ODA. Furthermore, with the start of the country's compulsory contribution to the EU's EDF (European Development Fund) in 2008, this part of the ODA is certain to increase the proportion of multilateral aid costs. The aid watch report warns that the greater proportion a donor country spends on multilateral aid, the less opportunity it has to make decisions about partners, aid activities and preferred sectors to be supported.

**Table 1: The distribution of Hungarian ODA between 2003 and 2006 (in million HUF) (Kiss, 2007, p. 8)**

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Bilateral aid	1472,33	6743,91	13 290,47	13 321,91
Multilateral aid	5508,77	13 734,67	8583,13	15 681,81
Total amount	6981,10	20 478,58	21 873,59	29 003,70
Percentage of bilateral aid within total	78,90	67,10	39,20	54,10

There is no data available on funds previously allocated specifically to the promotion of gender equality. Also, in general it is only in retrospect that the sectoral distribution of IDC activities is reported. Among the sectors that were supported in bilateral aid projects, some, we assume, may have contributed partly to the promotion of equality between women and men, e.g. projects in education or in the health sector rather than others. Beyond these assumptions, there are, however, no actual data available on past or future funds allocation to the end of promoting gender equality.

### Expenditures on particular countries

Although there is no specific IDC-related strategy on gender equality, there have been a small number of projects that, either partially or entirely, aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The findings below were based on the information received through telephone and email communication from the MFA's Department for International

Development Cooperation, the annual reports of the MFA on IDC activities, and on the Hungarian report for the UN about the promotion of the Millennium Development Goals (MFA, 2004b).

In 2006 in the Vojvodina region of Serbia, which is a region bordering with Hungary and has a large Hungarian national minority population, a programme was implemented in partnership with the UNDP for the contribution to the economic empowerment of women, specifically the members of the Women's Textiles Workshop Network (WTWN). The project entitled "The expansion of women's entrepreneurs' opportunities for entering the market" had a budget of HUF 4 million (approx. EUR 15700). According to the MDG-related report, the programme aimed to improve the participating women's positioning in the market, and through interregional cooperation develop their potential to export their products. The project was also planned to start communication at policy level – with government officials, institutions and other stakeholders – in order to draw their attention to the needs of small producers, which they should take into account when developing economic policies. The project aimed to facilitate the networking of approximately 250 women entrepreneurs.

In 2006 in Kyrgyzstan the Hungarian embassy coordinated projects that partly aimed at strengthening a women's organisation and at reducing poverty in the community. Five such projects (containing elements such as providing school uniforms, reconstructing kindergartens or providing food aid) were implemented by the Erayim Women's Civil Association with a budget of USD 10000.

From October 2006, Hungary took on the management of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Baghlan province. Since May 2007, Hungarian organisations have been carrying out related developmental projects in the region as well. According to the annual MFA report on IDC of 2006/2007, the mission in Afghanistan intends to provide developmental and aid elements whose effect cannot only be felt immediately, but which also promote sustainable development, and the strengthening of local capabilities and professional skills (MFA, 2007a, p.14). In the frame of this programme, a training project for midwives took place, which had a double goal: the improvement of obstetric services and the professional training of women.

With relation to future plans, a planned project coordinated by the ministerial "Working Group for the Promotion of Gender Equality Outside the EU" may be mentioned. For April 11-12, 2008 a conference is planned to take place in Kanjiza, Serbia for women social workers and experts on the issue of the reclamation of young girls and boys who have been in state care. The event, planned to host 80 experts, aims to share Hungarian social workers' professional experience on the issue with Serbian experts. It is planned that the different practices in Serbia and Hungary may be compared, the EU-conforming good practices shared, and the problems related to women's equal opportunities in the CEE region identified and handled.

However, in relation to future plans on the promotion of gender equality, it is problematic that no further specific information is available. Apart from the lack of a general strategy regarding gender equality within IDC policy, the gender aspect is apparently missing from the only available country strategy concerning Serbia, Hungary's most significant IDC partner country, as well (MFA, 2007b). In the strategic document, beyond quantitative aims, qualitative aspects are also mentioned, which are based on Serbia's own Poverty Reduction Strategy and the EU's strategic plans for Serbia's stability. Among the issues, the aim to reduce the poverty of vulnerable social groups, such as the Roma, refugees, children and the elderly, is mentioned. Gender equality, however, as a cross-cutting issue or an issue to receive specific funding, is missing, whereas it would be important to take it into account in this and other country strategies, too.

## **Achievement of international agreements and gender**

Only in relation to the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals is information available, based on the report “Taking Stock” (MFA, 2004b). The report draws attention to the fact that as a small donor, Hungary has had limited resources and opportunity to contribute on a large scale to poverty reduction programmes. However, in connection with the goals that are related to the promotion of gender equality, there are a few programmes mentioned. Under goal 2, the achievement of universal primary education, the elementary school project of the Hungarian Interchurch Aid is mentioned, where equal access to education has been promoted.

Under goal 3, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, the aforementioned programme in Serbia for women’s entrepreneurs is described (MFA, 2004b, p. 14). Related to goal 5, the improvement of maternal health, it is mentioned that Hungary aims to carry out preventive programmes in order to contribute to a decrease in the number of abortions. According to the report, for Hungary it seems especially important to concentrate on young people and emphasise men’s role and engagement in his female partner’s reproductive health and their child’s development. The specific project mentioned here is a training programme for 20 social workers in Ukraine, organised by the Hungarian Interchurch Aid (MFA, 2004b, p.15).

In connection with the Millennium Development Goals, it is worth keeping in mind that their main aim is poverty reduction and the development assistance of the poorest countries. In Hungary, in contrast, the focus of bilateral IDC activities with a gender element has been mostly on neighbouring or middle income countries. In general, as the aid watch report of HAND Association points out, the country assigns less aid to LDCs and African countries that would be preferred on the basis of MDG declarations and international expectations (Kiss, 2007, p.13).

The European Commission’s “Communication on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Developing Countries” from 2007, according to the CONCORD Gender Working Group’s analysis, is a valuable official document that assesses EU achievements in the field so far and provides directions for the further promotion of gender equality in IDC. Importantly, the document emphasises the need for a twin-track approach: to increasingly implement gender mainstreaming, and to realise specific actions for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment, these in five areas: governance, employment and economic activities, education, health, and gender-based violence. The complex approach set out in this legally non-binding, official document, which includes budget support and a list of gender sensitive indicators, should be taken into account at Member State level, as well, as such an approach seems to be required to integrate the gender perspective into development cooperation.

## **Efficiency, quality and transparency of ODA from gender perspective**

As the experience of other non-governmental organisations, such as HAND Association, Nótárs Foundation, and our own observations testify, it is currently difficult to assess the real extent of commitment to gender equality in Hungary’s international development cooperation, and its efficiency and quality. Up to now, there has been no specific research directed at the issue, however, according to information from HAND Association, following CONCORD’s initiative and requirements, the aid watch activities of the national NGDO platform will increasingly take into account the gender aspect in IDC as well.

Nótárs Foundation has implemented a project in 2007 and 2008 with the support of the Presidency Fund in order to create a gender-based network of NGOs in Hungary. Based on information from through personal communication, the efforts of the foundation to involve national politicians in dialogue has been only partly successful, as only a few women politicians open to gender issues have been responsive to such efforts. Unfortunately, they have not succeeded in reaching the Hungarian woman Member of the European Parliament who takes part in the work of the EP Development Committee in order to consult with her on the issue of gender equality in development.

The first aid watch report on Hungary's IDC activity (Kiss, 2007) does not discuss these particular aspects but describes trends that can certainly affect the implementation of gender equality. These trends include, as partly mentioned before, the predominance of multilateral aid over bilateral aid, the lack of attention to low income and least developed countries, the lack of preference for implementing MDGs and Basic Social Services, the inflation of aid at the expense of genuine aid, and the problematic status of statistical data gathering and registration, which makes the monitoring of aid spending and project implementation difficult.

Gathering the data for the present research has been quite difficult, as official sources of information themselves referred to the low number of available data. Thus, although officials of the MFA and the related institutions have seemed quite cooperative regarding the issue, they were only able to provide some information on implemented projects, without any reference to previous or future commitment to gender-related activities, and, importantly, without information on how successful the projects have been. At the moment, there is no complex registration system in place, and there are no gender disaggregated data available either. Although the national aid watch activities of HAND Association have opened up a lot of questions about the issue of ODA efficiency and transparency, the platform's cooperation with policy makers is still in the process of becoming more regular and mutual. This will hopefully facilitate an increased openness on the side of the government to respond to NGO observations on the desired aspects of increased transparency with regard to the issue of gender equality as well.

### **Other observations**

The first aid watch report on Hungary (Kiss, 2007) yielded the general result that the country's international development cooperation policy needs to be improved in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Consequently, the aid watch working group has created a set of guidelines on the necessary changes that would improve development policy from the point of view of all the participants, which will be outlined below.

Recommendations:

1. free access to public IDC data, statistics, reports and project evaluations;
2. complete transparency of the data that do not constitute trade secret, the creation of an IDC database and documentation centre;
3. the creation of the legislative framework for IDC with the involvement of all stakeholders;
4. better calculability of Hungarian IDC funding, schedule for achieving the 0.17% and 0.33% ODA/GNI proportion; a certain percentage of ODA should be assigned to national education on IDC;

5. accountability on the implementation of Hungarian IDC and on ODA spending; yearly reporting in a systematic and comparable way;
6. increasing of the proportion of bilateral ODA;
7. the preference of African and Least Developed Countries and the poor as recipients;
8. the preference of supporting sectors (e.g. agriculture, health services, education) that best serve the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and of supporting Basic Social Services;
9. the registration/accounting of aid inflating items (e.g. debt relief, costs for refugees) as non-aid items;
10. the calculable increase and the improvement of quality of genuine aid;
11. measurement and increasing of aid effectiveness;
12. project monitoring, ex ante and ex post assessment, impact analysis with special regard to environmental impact, and feedback (Kiss, 2007, p.27).

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

### **Recommendations for the National Government of Hungary**

According to our assessment, Hungary's current and planned international development cooperation lacks adequate commitment to gender equality. This is evident from the fact that in the country's international development cooperation policy, there is only sporadic reference to gender equality, mainly in connection with the Millennium Development Goals. There is no explicit commitment to the promotion of gender equality as a cross-cutting goal or as a specific theme to be promoted through projects. Similarly to other policy areas, gender mainstreaming has not been implemented in development policy at institutional or programmatic level.

So far, the ministerial unit responsible for gender equality has planned to address the issue of gender equality in IDC in the framework of consultation with other Central and Eastern European new EU member states. Although an expert working group has been set up to address the issue of gender equality in development, there has been no forum established to consult a wider range of organizations that have experience in implementing projects in beneficiary countries to promote gender equality or women's empowerment.

Since 2004, the beginning of the country's IDC activities, there have been a few projects carried out in the framework of ODA that either fully or in part aimed to further gender equality. However, the success rate of these projects is not known. Gender equality as a horizontal aim in projects is not always required, it is not properly monitored or followed up. The transparency of data on the planned budget allocation to gender-related projects or on such projects after their implementation is not satisfactory.

What is clearly needed is a stronger commitment at national level to the promotion of gender equality and the better fulfilment of specific activities towards this goal. The mainstreaming of the gender perspective into development policy would be indispensable for the fulfilment of related obligations through the country's EU and UN membership. For the efficient inclusion of the gender perspective in country strategies as well as in programme planning, the government should consult non-governmental organisations – from beneficiary countries and from Hungary – which are active in the promotion of gender equality in the partner countries. Only in this way can it be warranted that proper gender assessment is carried out and that programmes reach those individual women whose situation needs to be improved in this way, as well as local women's NGOs that can effectively contribute to the better fulfilment of gender equality in the partner country.

We strongly advise the national government:

- to create a strategy for the promotion of gender equality following the twin-track approach recommended by the EU and by involving NGDOs with relevant experience and knowledge about gender issues;
- to mainstream the gender perspective into IDC policy, the operational mechanisms and the programme activities, particularly:
- to include in the future act on IDC the promotion of gender equality both as a cross-cutting issue and as a goal to be pursued by particular projects;
- to include the gender equality aspect in IDC-related country strategies;

- to provide specific training on the mainstreaming of gender equality issues to governmental officers and to the experts of executive organizations;
- to provide guidelines for gender impact assessment;
- to implement gender budgeting;
- to include the gender perspective throughout the whole cycle of the programmes;
- to assign to the MFA a stronger supervising and monitoring role with regard to gender equality;
- to collect and publish quantitative, gender-disaggregated data regarding funds allocation and project implementation;
- to gather and publish qualitative data on the success of implemented projects, including the assessment by beneficiary groups.

### **Recommendations for EU Institutions**

For the European Commission and the European Parliament, which have recently confirmed their commitment to pursue the fulfilment of gender equality in international development, a stronger supervising role is highly necessary. In accordance with the CONCORD Gender Working Group's recommendations, confirmed by country-level observations, we urge the EU's relevant decision making bodies:

- to require gender analysis within Country Strategy Papers;
- to monitor whether gender analysis has been applied in CSPs;
- to press for EU Member States' IDC policy to include the gender equality perspective in coherence with EU-level policy and commitments;
- to draw upon the assessment reports of CONCORD with regard to the advancement of gender equality issues in EU Member States's IDC policy and activities;
- to provide information to new EU members on older EU donor states' experience and good practice in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in development.

To sum up, in Hungary's international development cooperation policy and activities a clear commitment to the promotion of gender equality is currently missing. Therefore it would be indispensable to state in the planned IDC Act and other IDC policy documents that the country aims to further gender equality and to implement gender mainstreaming at operational and programmatic level. Especially in view of the recent problems with the availability of data on planned and implemented projects, the data collection and registering should be brought up to date with OECD standards and should be made completely accessible to the public. From the point of view of the potential beneficiaries, it would be indispensable to include gender assessment in the planning of programmes and projects in partner countries by involving local women's NGOs in the process.

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## **Interviews**

Gábor Bálint, Officer of the EU Policy and Fundraising Unit, Hungarian Interchurch Aid

Ibolya Bárány, Executive Director of HUN-IDA Hungarian International Development Aid Public Company

Györgyi Blahó, Program Coordinator of HAND Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid

Ida Csapó, Executive Director of Nőtárs ('Sisterhood') Foundation

Ákos Madari, Coordinator of the "Working Group for the Promotion of Gender Equality Outside the EU", Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

Lilla Makkay, Coordinator of the Department for International Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Gyula Simonyi, Executive Director of BOCS (Bokor Öko Csoport) Foundation

## About the Author

**Réka Sáfrány** has worked as the Program Assistant of the non-governmental organization MONA Foundation for the Women of Hungary since 2004. She holds an MA degree in Gender Studies from Central European University, Budapest. She has experience in conducting research on policy issues from a gender aspect, especially on gender equality and the EU accession, gender and decision-making, social exclusion, women in prisons, and violence against women. At MONA Foundation she is responsible for preparing and assisting research and advocacy projects, editing research reports and organizing conferences and workshops. She is the representative of MONA in two working groups at the Ministry of Social and Employment Affairs aiming to implement the goals of the EU's Gender Equality Roadmap (2006-2010). She took part in writing the Shadow Report accompanying Hungary's Sixth Periodic Report submitted to the CEDAW Committee in 2007.

**MONA Foundation for the Women of Hungary** was established in 1992 as a non-profit, non-partisan foundation dedicated to the betterment of the lives of all women in Hungary. In order to achieve that, MONA's activities fuse the theoretical and the practical. The foundation educates women on empowerment strategies for participation in a democratic society by improving their political activity at all levels of government, their economic strength through job-seeking strategies and training, and their preparation for the job market of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The foundation also organizes national media campaigns to improve women's knowledge about human rights.

MONA supports research on women's issues on a national and international level by conducting research on the opportunities for and problems of women's participation in politics, and by initiating and organizing research on women's employment, women's participation in public life and violence against women, with particular focus on mobbing at the workplace, prostitution and trafficking and intimate partner violence. The foundation organizes conferences, workshops and other professional meetings on issues related to gender equality, and acts as a publishing and distribution clearing-house on gender-related publications of interest to professionals and experts. Moreover, MONA encourages networking between institutions by organizing and participating in international joint projects with NGOs and other organizations, and by disseminating best practices of research institutions in terms of gender-oriented policy research.

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