

Commissioner José Manuel Barroso
European Commission
200, Rue de la Loi
B-1049 Brussels

Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner
European Commission
200, Rue de la Loi
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 22 May 2008

Dear President Barroso and Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner,

We would like to thank you for your reply of 8 November 2007 to the NGO letter on the ENP conference. We are pleased to find clear references to the importance of involving civil society in all aspects of the ENP. We find it important to emphasise the role of civil society actors as strategic partners in the political, social, and economic dialogue as well as key aid delivery actors.

We have been cooperating since 2007 as an informal network composed of Brussels based NGOs following different aspects of the ENP/ENPI with NGO partners in neighbouring countries. This informal network proves to be both effective and flexible, and allows for exchange and cooperation on concrete projects, such as the “KIC ENPI: “Towards a People’s Partnership” project (led by Eurostep and Aprodev) or the “Handbook to assess implementation of the ENP Action Plans in the field of the Environment ” (led by WWF and Heinrich Böll Foundation). Both projects aim to enhance the capacity of the local NGOs to participate in the development and monitoring of the ENP/ENPI implementation. A short summary of both projects is included in attachment.

In your letter you welcomed our suggestions on the role of civil society in the ENP process and on potential mechanisms to improve consultation with civil society. Together we have identified several key issues outlined below that we would be pleased to discuss with you at your best convenience.

NGO Platform on the ENP

We have discussed within our constituencies the possibility of developing a civil society platform on the ENP but we do not have the mandate at this stage to form such a platform nor do we have the possibility to consult the ENP civil society community at large. If there would be initiatives to set up such a platform in the future, the opportunities, challenges and conditions for its establishment should be discussed with a broad representation of civil society from neighbouring countries and the EU.

Institutionalised dialogue with civil society

A key element within civil society is the need for clear mechanisms for consultation. This is required both at the national level in the neighbouring countries and in Brussels in relation to e.g. the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the ENPI Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and the yearly assessment of the ENP Action Plan implementation. In line with a coherent development policy we expect consultation

processes to be similar to the ones on other development regions e.g. non-state actors consultation in the elaboration of CSPs in ACP countries. We want to ensure a real opportunity for civil society and the European Parliament to feed efficiently into the process of review, so that the priority areas are being reassessed. Thus, the Commission, EC delegations and partner governments should establish and present a roadmap outlining the process, the mechanisms, guidelines and also a detailed calendar, well in advance, to ensure a broad and timely consultation of stakeholders. A “roadmap model” in line with this is attached.¹

Communication and transparency

An essential component of open communication and effective consultation is transparency. Concerns have been expressed regarding different levels of access to information in ENP countries as well as in Brussels. We are jointly managing a website (www.enpi-programming.eu) that aims at providing NGOs with basic knowledge on the status of the ENP/ENPI and giving access to relevant documentation. All relevant documentation relating to general and programme specific planning (programming guidelines, joint annual reviews, evaluations, reports on consultations, etc.) should be published on each EC delegation website in local languages. The “roadmap” setting out the timetable and rules of engagement for consultations mentioned above should be published and updated regularly.

We look forward to discussing a more in depth participation of civil society actors in the coming ENP conference and the progress reports on the ENP, at your best convenience.

Yours sincerely,

¹ The roadmap has been drawn on the basis of the EC draft: “Non-State Actors (NSA) and Local Authorities (LA) Consultation in the Elaboration of 10th EDF Country Strategy Papers in ACP Countries” from 25 October, 2007.

Signatories:

José Moisés Martín, Director, ACSUR Las Segovias, Spain

Aurelia Bondari, AGROinform, Moldova

Rob van Drimmelen, General Secretary, Aprovev, Belgium

Genoveva Tisheva, Director, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Bulgaria

Charalambos Vrasidas, Executive Director, CARDET, Cyprus

Ionut Sibian, Executive Director, Civil Society Development Foundation, Romania

Ilya Trombitsky, Eco-TIRAS, Moldova

Simon Stocker, Director, Eurostep, Belgium

Nino Gujaraidze, Executive Director, Green Alternative, Georgia

Malgorzata Tarasiewicz, Director, Network of East-West Women, Poland

Hala Shokrallah, Director, Development Support Centre for Consultancy and Training, Egypt

Roland Kovats, Director, Freedom House Europe, Hungary

Caroline Wildemann, Hivos, the Netherlands

Michael Gatt, Chair Person, Kopin, Malta

Allam Jarrar, the Palestinian NGO Network, Palestine

Miklos Marschall, Regional Director of Europe and Central Asia, Transparency International

Iryna Trokhym, West Ukrainian Centre "Women's Perspectives", Ukraine

Anthony Long, Director, WWF European Policy Office, Belgium

Georgi Sanadiradze, Director, WWF Caucasus Programme Office, Georgia

Michael Baltzer, Director, WWF Danube Carpathian Programme, Austria

Paolo Lombardi, Director, WWF Mediterranean Programme Office, Italy

Appendix 1

KIC ENPI Project: Towards a People's Partnership

Project led by Eurostep in cooperation with Aprodev, Oxfam Novib, Acsur & Womnet

With an overall objective of ensuring that EU policies towards the neighbouring countries are reflective of people's aspiration in the region, Eurostep is implementing a project focussing on capacity building of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Morocco, Egypt, Palestine, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The aim is to enhance the capacity of CSOs to become more involved in monitoring EC assistance in their country and lobbying their government, EU Delegations and the EU institutions to ensure sustainable development policies are coherent with people's needs.

The specific objectives are:

- To increase general knowledge on ENP/ENPI issues within local CSOs (30 in each country).
- To develop the skills of a number of CSO staff in neighbouring countries, with a view to involve them in a monitoring exercise of EC spending under the ENPI.
- To bring expertise of CSOs from Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus and Southern Mediterranean within the discussions on ENP and ENPI directly, through Eurostep and other EU based civil society actors.
- To collect reactions & recommendations from local CSOs on EC policies, to be published in a report on each project in each country and to be used as concrete input to the Mid Term Review of the ENP CSPs.

A significant result or output of the project is these country reports, consisting of civil society's analysis of the CSP and its concrete recommendations on how to improve CSP priorities to be coherent with the needs of the people.

Assessing the implementation of the environmental commitments in the ENP Action Plans (AP)

Project led by WWF and the Heinrich Böll Foundation (Hbf)

With an overall objective of improving the ENP Action Plan implementation in the field of environment and sustainable development, WWF and HBF are implementing a project promoting an independent monitoring of AP implementation by civil society organisations in ENP countries.

The specific objectives are:

- To improve the system of ENP monitoring and reporting by developing guidelines for future assessments of the ENP Action Plans implementation¹.
- To enhance the capacity of NGOs in ENP countries to participate in the monitoring of ENP implementation and to lobby for sustainable public policies when dealing with national authorities and EU Delegations.

A major output of the project is “A Handbook to Assess Implementation of the Action Plans in the Field of Environment” that will be tested in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in the coming months. Opportunities for using the Handbook in Morocco are also being explored. The resulting independent and systematic monitoring of the ENP APs will be shared with the Commission in time for the next progress reports. The Handbook is made available to individual NGOs, NGO Networks and other interested stakeholders with the aim of applying it in other countries and possibly adapting the methodology to other areas of concern, e.g. human rights, social development or gender issues.

¹ The guidelines have already been shared with the Commission services (DG RELEX, DG ENV and EuropeAid)

Appendix 2

Proposed roadmap for consultations

- *Why*; the objective of the consultation process, the role and expectation of each actor.
- *When*; scheduled dates and time for the consultation period e.g. 2008-2010 - The date and time of the consultation should be communicated publicly and to civil society actors 6-8 weeks in advance.
- *Where*; extension of consultation beyond the capital in order to include rural, out of reach areas (decentralisation).
- *What*; form of consultation: general meetings, sectoral/thematic meetings, regional events, media (press, web) and/or other mechanisms to be specified.
- *How*; the working methods; basic standards for interaction:
 - a) EC and partner government to disseminate relevant documentation at least 6-8 weeks in advance.
 - b) Stakeholders to provide written contributions 2 weeks in advance.
 - c) Further exchanges at consultation sessions (general meeting, sector-specific or thematic meetings, panels, web based consultation).
 - d) EC, Delegations and partner governments to provide the report and feedback on consultations within 4 weeks.