

BROAD VARIETY OF SUPPORTED NGO PROJECTS

Enhancing rights of victims of domestic violence in the Czech Republic

In the Znojmo region of the Czech Republic, victims of domestic violence and their families will receive support and assistance. Besides improving services for victims and their families, the project also aims to raise awareness about domestic violence through lectures and publicity material.

Czech multicultural education centre

A centre for multicultural education will be established in the city of Jihlava. The centre aims to provide improved services and education to minority groups, in order to encourage better integration of the Roma population and other minorities in Jihlava. The centre will offer Czech and English language classes, a children's centre and multicultural events for the public.

Estonian youth café

Young volunteers aged 16-25 will serve as counsellors for teenagers in order to help them make informed decisions about unprotected sex, alcohol, smoking, drugs and abortion. 15 schools will participate in the project, and information materials for students and teachers will be distributed to the schools. The volunteers will also receive training in advance of the counselling sessions.

Promoting ecological awareness in Poland

High school students in the Podlaskie Voivodship in Poland will be invited to develop mock business plans in order to learn about environmentally friendly approaches to business. Eco-Clubs of Entrepreneurship will be established in ten schools, where students will learn about business planning, ecology and renewable energy sources.

Environmental education in Slovakia

The Centre of Environmental and Ethical Education Z.I.V.I.C.A is developing a practical model for environmental education, based on spiritual development, social justice, sustainable economy and environmental responsibility. The first part of the project also involves reconstruction of the environmental educational centre facilities.

Network of Estonian NGOs

By sharing experiences and creating strong partnerships between NGOs, enterprises and universities, the project "Efficient NGOs, viable society", aims to strengthen Estonian NGOs' capacity. Through impact and capacity assessment, stimulating legitimate partnerships and offering continuous support to the partners, some 20 organisations are set to benefit from the support.



Civil society across Europe is taking part in the NGO funds established under the EEA and Norway Grants.

In May 2004, the European Economic Area (EEA) was expanded to include the ten new Member States of the EU, with a further enlargement to include Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. At the same time the three non-EU members of the EEA - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway - established the EEA and Norway Grants to support social and economic cohesion within the enlarged EEA.

The 30 members of the EEA share access to the Internal Market, characterised by the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons.

Over the five-year period 2004-2009, the EEA and Norway Grants will make available €1.3 billion to 15 beneficiary states in the EU. Norway provides 97% of this funding. Projects are supported in a wide range of priority sectors such as protection of the environment, conservation of the European cultural heritage, health and childcare, and development of human resources.

EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

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NGO FACT SHEET DECEMBER 2008

Supporting NGOs in the enlarged EEA



Young volunteers participating in the reconstruction of an environmental educational centre in Slovakia.

Strengthening European civil society

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are widely recognised as an important part of the framework supporting democracy and a just society. Whether as a watchdog or as a vehicle for advocacy and policy implementation, NGOs and other civil society organisations today play an essential role in ensuring the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of public policies.

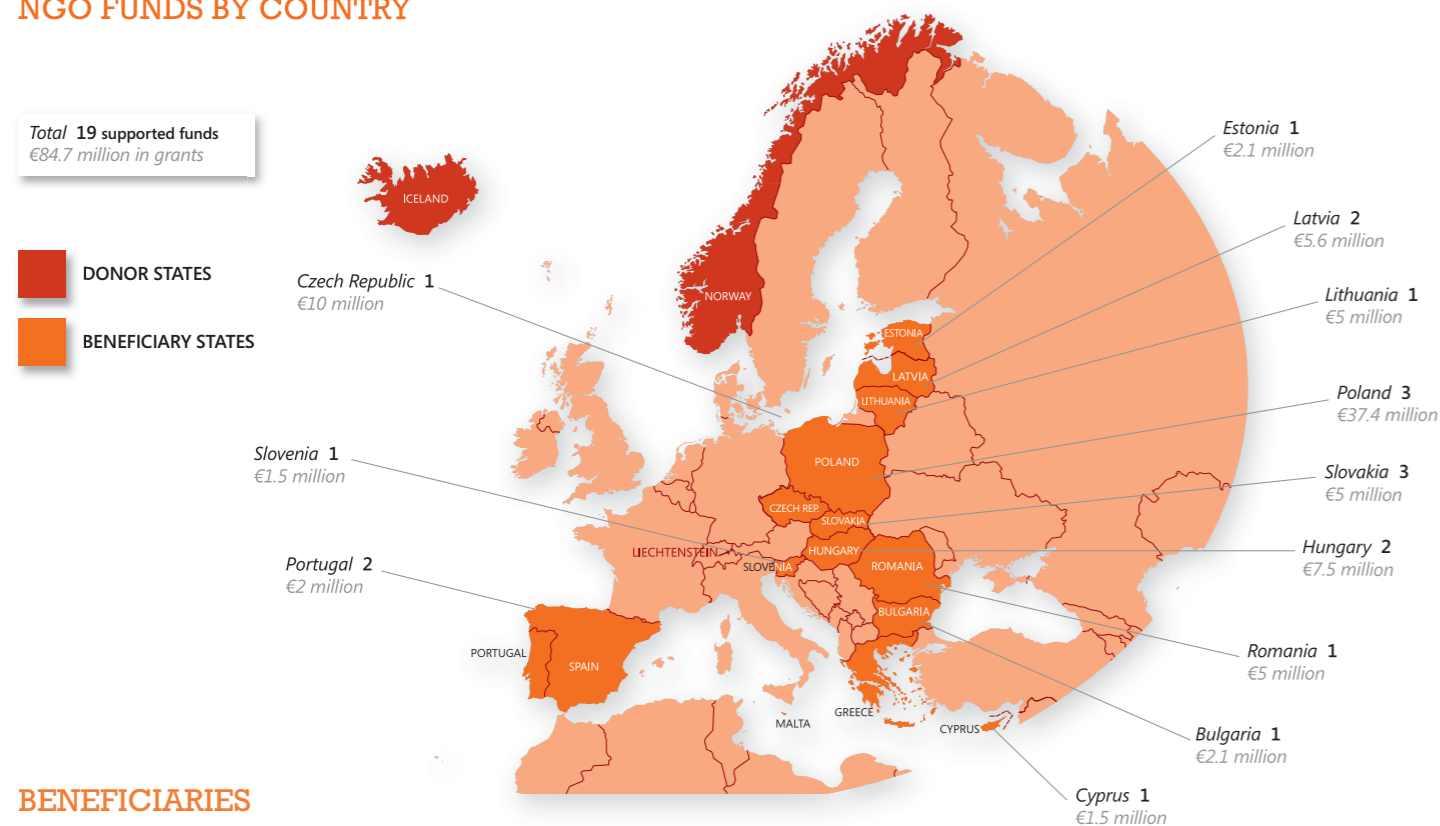
The EEA and Norway Grants offer extensive support to NGOs, as an integrated part of their overall efforts to reduce economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA). Through the NGO funds established in beneficiary states, the donor states Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have made available some €85 million to civil society in Central and Southern Europe. In addition, support to NGOs is provided through individual projects approved directly by the donor states.

The open calls have so far been met with great interest from NGOs. In the immediate aftermath of the cold war, Central and Eastern European countries saw a surge in the support from foreign donors. However, after becoming members of the EU, many of the donors have pulled out to pursue projects further to the east and south. The support from the EEA and Norway Grants has therefore become even more important in order to prevent a young and fledgling civil society from being crippled by a lack of funds, and contribute to its continuous development.



The €10 million Czech fund was the first NGO fund to be launched under the EEA and Norway Grants.

NGO FUNDS BY COUNTRY



BENEFICIARIES

Strengthening civil society and improving the capacity of non-governmental organisations are key initiatives under the EEA and Norway Grants. In total, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have made available more than €115 million to civil society in Central and Southern Europe.

NGO Funds

NGO funds have been established in Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Grants ranging from a few thousand euro to €250,000 are available within areas such as the promotion of free media and free speech, equal opportunities and human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development, and social inclusion.

Estonian NGO fund

Intermediaries: *Open Estonia Foundation*
Grant: €2.1 million

The Estonian NGO fund supports projects within the focus areas democracy and civil society, environment and sustainable development, and social integration and local development. The fund also targets capacity building, supporting the development of emerging NGOs. The two calls held to date generated more than 260 applications, of which 58 were awarded grants.

Projects implemented by NGOs

Civil society organisations were also eligible applicants under the calls for individual projects that have now been concluded in the beneficiary states. To enable NGOs to implement such projects over €250,000, the co-financing requirement was set at 10 percent. A total 50 individual NGO projects amounting to more than €30 million in grants are being implemented.

Dialogue and reconciliation

Project promoter: *Cypriot Association for Historic Dialogue and Research (ADHR)*
Grant: €750,000

In the UN-controlled buffer zone in Nicosia, a new educational centre is being established to foster closer ties between civil society organisations from both Cypriot communities. The centre will encourage use of the buffer zone by the Cypriot population, and the project holds strong local backing both in the Greek Cypriot south and the Turkish Cypriot north.



FUND FOCUS

A BOOST FOR POLISH CIVIL SOCIETY

The €41.5 million Polish NGO fund is the biggest of its kind in Poland, supported with a €37.4 million grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. This is the largest single grant to be awarded under the EEA and Norway Grants. Since the fund was launched in April 2007, around 3800 applications have been submitted and an estimated 1000 grants will be awarded to NGO projects.

The three fund components are managed by two organisations with ties to civil society and experience in the areas of intervention: The Co-operation Fund Foundation is responsible for the focus area of democracy and civil society, while environmental protection and sustainable development as well as equal opportunities and social integration are managed by Ecorys. The Polish NGO fund recently released a short film to showcase progress made in promoting democracy and civil society in Poland. The short film 'Bus to Democracy' is available on the NGO fund's web page www.funduszngo.pl



Polish media watchdog

Through systematic monitoring of the Polish media, with a special focus on the local level, one of the projects supported by the Polish NGO fund aims to serve as a media watchdog. The project will also promote changes to current legislation in order to secure a sound legal basis for free media, as well as encourage and stimulate high-level and public debates on the various aspects of media freedom.

The Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Poland promotes the project, which is carried out in collaboration with the Norwegian Human Rights House Foundation.

PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

The three donor states have a rich tradition of civil society participation, and bilateral partnerships between NGOs in the beneficiary states and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have been established in projects under the various NGO funds.

Civil society in Polish schools

Through raising awareness about civil society in lower- and upper secondary schools, this project aims to create a vibrant basis for civil society participation in Poland. 300 student unions and tutors will be trained in raising social awareness and shaping civil attitudes. The project will be implemented in close collaboration with the Norwegian National Union of Students.

Supporting local initiatives in Slovenia

Working closely with the community-based Natural Resource Management Network in Norway, this project aims to promote democratically formed local initiatives in Slovenia. Through raising awareness about local participation possibilities, the project aims to increase participation in local policy-making and encourage locally oriented projects.

Promoting human rights in Poland

By raising awareness about human rights, this project aims to enhance respect for the principles of democracy in Poland. Implemented in collaboration with the Centre for Development and Environment at the University of Oslo, the project will carry out training sessions, workshops and debates, as well as conducting a summer school on human rights for Polish children.



With 19 NGO funds established in 12 beneficiary states, the EEA and Norway Grants are primary supporters of civil society in Central Europe.