

## Comments on the MAAP

Working document on the Multiannual Action Programme for 2015, 2016 and 2017 on the Thematic Programme ‘Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities’

Contributions from the cooperative participants of the Policy Forum

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## General comments

We welcome the inclusive and transparent approach of the consultations which have been organised around the “Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities” Thematic Programme. A support program for economic and social development actors has always been considered an important step in the right direction.

As such, we support using multi-annual action programmes instead of annual ones for this thematic programme, which should facilitate predictability, planning and implementation. At the same time, some flexibility of yearly planning will get lost; sound initial programming can though compensate this.

## Specific comments

As we generally appreciate the possibility of a multi-year approach to programming, we would like to highlight the following aspects from previous discussions, political documents and commitments, which seem crucial to us for a successful approach and implementation of the MAAP, namely:

1. Strengthen the different families of actors must remain a priority, as stated in the SD Budapest recommendations
2. Previous political commitments, such as EU communications and resolutions, should be followed in the MAAP guidelines

### *1. The ‘Final Statement of the Structured Dialogue’*

The process initiated by the Structured Dialogue, which is recognized today as one of the most inclusive consultation processes under the Policy Forum, produced a set of recommendations in May 2011.

This ‘Final Statement of the Structured Dialogue’, recognizes the diversity of actors, and the respective roles and mandates of each one. This knowledge, acquired via the Multistakeholder dialogue, is underlined and confirmed in the EU communication ‘Europe’s engagement with civil society’ from September 2012.

The multi-annual action program should therefore be clear from the beginning about the differentiation of actors, so that the different families of actors as defined in the Policy Forum and the EU Communication are represented.

## *2. Previous political commitments*

As indicated in the working document on the MAAP, the Thematic Programme on CSOs and LAs benefits from a strong political commitment at the EU level and is in fact guided by a number of EU communications, resolutions and working documents.

This is actually visible in the Multiannual Indicative Programme 'Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities' for the period 2014-2020. The document reflects very well the outcomes of the Policy Forum and the linked inclusive consultation processes. We would therefore suggest that the MIP, being composed of several AAPs, should also remain the reference document for any future potential Multiannual Action Programs.

More specifically, the following two points of the MIP can be highlighted, which remain crucial at an initial planning stage in any longer-term process:

- The MIP gives an interesting overview on 'lessons learnt' from previous support schemes and the Policy Forum. It suggests going beyond the traditional model of CSOs as pure service deliverers and acknowledges CSOs work to empower populations, promote inclusion and enhance governance and accountability. This has to be well reflected in the structuring of the upcoming support schemes.
- The MIP states under priority 2 that 'The EU aims at strengthening representative, membership-based and actor-based regional and global Civil Society networks (...), in order to maximise the effectiveness of their work as development actors and partners in policy-making, on development related topics at global and regional levels.' This should be well reflected in the MAAP, as partnering with existing dynamics and representative structures will have a snowball effect on the implementation activities of the different actors.

## **Final remarks**

The cooperative movement welcomes the initiative of the MAAP, enabling longer-term planning, programming and predictability and at the same time reducing administrative procedures at EU level.

We believe that the previous political documents, as well as the inclusive consultations and the Policy Forum give sufficient substance to allow for a sound planning of the Multiannual Action Programmes. As outlined above, we call therefore for a strong application of the outcomes of these processes, especially concerning the differentiation of CSO actors and the strengthening of representative networks.

We are looking forward to an enhanced collaboration with EU Institutions and believe that in terms of dialogue, citizen reach, and as an economic and social model of entrepreneurship, the cooperative model represents a real added value.