

Final Conference Budapest, Hungary, 17-19 May 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

The Structured Dialogue (SD) is a **worldwide initiative** discussing the involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs) and Local Authorities (LAs) in EU development cooperation. This multi-stakeholder process, launched by Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs in March 2010, concluded in Budapest during a final conference on the 17-19 of May 2011¹.

Conceived as a confidence and consensus-building mechanism, the SD aimed at increasing the effectiveness of all stakeholders involved in EU development cooperation, by building on the momentum gained by international and European debates.

Over the last 14 months, the European Commission organized numerous working groups in Brussels as well as regional seminars in Partners Countries. More than **700 CSO&LA representatives² from the EU and from over 60 Partners countries** have been gathered during the various events. The European Parliament (EP) and EU Member States (MS) were also active stakeholders of the process. Discussions focused particularly on 3 key topics: (i) the roles and added-value of CSOs and LAs in external cooperation; (ii) complementarity and coherence within the Accra Agenda for Action; and (iii) EU aid delivery mechanisms towards CSOS & LAs.

Co-organised with the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU, the **Budapest Conference** has been designed so as to collectively validate the results of the SD and to exchange on the follow-up of this very unique dialogue experience.

The event gathered **200 participants³** coming from **Partner countries** (CSOs&LAs representatives nominated in each regional seminar⁴), **European Union** (EC and EU Delegations, EU Member-states, European Parliament, other EU institutions⁵, European CSOs & LAs platforms) and **Hungary** (CSOs, Parliament, Ministries and Embassies).



¹ All documents on the final conference are posted on CISOCH. See:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Getting_ready_for_the_final_Conference_in_Budapest

² From the side of Civil Society, the SD involved a wide array of traditional and emerging actors, both from Europe and partner countries, including NGOs, trade unions, foundations, women and youth organizations, human rights organizations, cooperatives etc. Local authorities have also been represented throughout the process at different levels (municipalities, provinces and regions, and national/international associations of local authorities).

³ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/5/54/Liste_Participants_Budapest_FINAL.pdf

⁴ Four regional seminars took place during the SD: Africa, Latin America and Asia & Neighbourhood region. During each seminar, CSOs & LAs representatives have been appointed by participants to represent them in remaining events of the SD.

⁵ European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European External Action Service.

The final conference has been organized around plenary sessions, thematic workshops and one social event organized by the Hungarian Presidency. During **plenary sessions**, the **concluding paper**⁶ of the Structured Dialogue (gathering the main conclusions and recommendations of the process) has been presented to participants and stakeholders had the opportunity to share their views on the process and its follow-up. In addition, in the framework of workshop discussions, participants reflected on how to articulate SD results with other ongoing processes. Finally, the event culminated in the **endorsement of the Final Statement**⁷ of the Structured Dialogue. The complete agenda of the event is available on CISOCH⁸.

2. OPENING SESSION AND PRESENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT (17TH OF MAY)

The opening session, chaired by **Aristotelis Bouratsis**, Director at the EC, counted with speeches delivered by **representatives of the 5 main stakeholders of the SD process** (EC, EP, Member States, CSOs and LAs).



In his opening speech, Commissioner for development **Andris Piebalgs** recalled the importance of the strategic partnership between the EC and CSOs&LAs and announced a number of political commitments.

He, first at all, emphasized that there is momentum to fit SD conclusions in the EC agenda on budget support, aid effectiveness and the next generation of financial perspectives. Besides, M. Piebalgs indicated the EC willingness to

publish a **Communication on Engagement with civil society & local authorities in development cooperation** in 2012 that will build directly on the SD results. In addition, Commissioner pointed out that the EC will continue its support to and dialogue with CSOs and LAs, through **regular institutional space for permanent dialogue** taking place in Brussels and at the level of EU Delegations. In a more operational level, **internal guidelines** for implementing programmes and foster dialogue at local level will be updated, whilst taking stock of practices put forward by participants of the SD and by delegations. Finally, the EC will look into **improving its aid delivery and selection mechanisms**, using some of the ideas that emerged from the SD, in particular by simplifying procedures and make full use of the variety of support schemes available. The entire speech of Commissioner Piebalgs is available online⁹.

Taking the floor just after M. Piebalgs, **Michèle Striffler**, Vice-President of the EP Development Committee, thanked the EC for the innovative initiative of the SD. She mentioned the EP's recommendation to the Council **to acknowledge the concept of the 'right to development' and the 'promotion of democracy'** as key elements for inclusive growth that would benefit partner countries' populations. The EP sees the SD Final Statement as one of the important stepping-stones for future

⁶ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/e/ea/FINAL_CONCLUDING_PAPER.pdf

⁷ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/f/fb/Joint_Final_Statement_May_2011.pdf

⁸ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/8/8e/EN_FINAL_Agenda_Budapest_Final_Conference.pdf

⁹ See European Commissioner Andris Piebalgs's speech on:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/d/d3/Speech_Commissioner_Piebalgs_-_Structured_Dialogue_17.05.2011_-_Budapest.pdf

decision-making around the next Financial Perspectives, and highly appreciates the commitment of the EC to draft a new Communication on CSOs&LAs. Lastly, Mrs Striffler (MEP) indicated that it is equally important to follow the SD outcomes at *country level*, in all phases of development programmes, from programming to monitoring and evaluation. The entire speech of Michèle Striffler is available online¹⁰.

Then, **Zsolt Németh**, Hungarian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, recalled that Hungary went through a democratization (transition) process and that development also aims at transition for people all over the world. He stated that SD conclusions and global challenges call for a **reinforced partnership with mutual obligations for developed and developing countries**. In this context, he reminded that public awareness raised by European CSOs&LAs is important, and that consultation of all partners involved is necessary within an institutionalized framework.

From the CSO side, **Justin Kilcullen**, President of CONCORD, reminded the role of CSOs throughout recent history, showing that citizens' engagement has been an important aspect in Europe's development. This rich tradition is expressed in the concluding document in which **responsibilities of all actors are spelled out to reinforce democracies** and to engage in a participatory way in development projects, through continuous dialogue, including at country level, where the greatest challenge is perhaps to enhance an enabling environment for participation.

Finally, **Frederic Vallier**, representing PLATFORMA, noted that high level participation was ensured throughout the SD process, acknowledging the importance of **LAs as development actors in their own right**. He recalled that there is **"no development without local development, and no democracy without local democracy"**, and insisted on the importance to strengthen dialogue between CSOs& LAs. Finally, he hoped that the restructuration of DGs in charge of development and cooperation will reflect the ambition of the EC to better associate LAs in the EU cooperation policy.

Following the official opening, the next two sessions in plenary **recalled the Structured Dialogue process and methodology and introduced the key messages of the concluding document**, which express the **collective consensus** reached among



participants over the past 14 months¹¹. The Concluding Paper summarizes the results of discussions that took place during the various component of the SD in Brussels, during the four Regional Seminars and in the framework of three supporting initiatives that tackled specific themes of the European Union cooperation¹². This document has been drafted on the basis of a **collective effort**, and is organized around **9 thematic chapters** that participants had the opportunity to comment. Speakers representing different stakeholders of the SD¹³ introduced the key messages from each of the 9 sections of the Concluding Paper and have been asked to briefly comment on what these messages meant in their own context. Hans Strausboll, Head of Unit at the EC, briefly presented results of the Working Group 3 on Aid

¹⁰ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/8/8a/Speech_opening_cerimony_fr.pdf

¹¹ The presentations of the process and the key messages are available on CISOCH:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Getting_ready_for_the_final_Conference_in_Budapest

¹² (i) Local Authorities in development, (ii) Development Education and Awareness Raising and (iii) Human Rights and Democratization.

¹³ I.e.: Joyce Hakmeh, Arab Center for the Development of the rule of Law and Integrity, Eugene Zapata Garesché, Ciudad de México, Mamadou Faye, Confédération nationale des travailleurs du Sénégal, Plate-forme des acteurs non étatiques pour le suivi de l'Accord de Cotonou au Sénégal, Donia Hammami, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hans Christian Stausboll, European Commission, Head of Unit DEVCO F4.

delivery mechanisms. He mentioned that the starting point of discussions was **development needs** and not only EC rules. He stressed EC willingness to simplify the call for proposals procedure and to strengthen EU Delegation's capacity in using the wide range of delivery and selection mechanisms available. One of the main results of the group on aid delivery mechanisms is the drafting of **12 Technical briefs** that will be part of the operational toolbox for EU Delegations¹⁴.

3. SYNTHESIS OF THE WORKSHOPS OF THE 18TH OF MAY

During the second day of the final conference, **9 parallel workshops**¹⁵ have been organized to articulate the SD with on going debates on (i) aid effectiveness, (ii) managing support & financing for development, (iii) partnerships within a territory and (iv) support to democratization. The key messages of the workshops are clustered below around four topics.

3.1 AID EFFECTIVENESS DEBATE

The workshop aimed at an exchange of views on the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness¹⁶ (HLF-IV), in order to feed into the preparations of the EU Common Position for HLF-IV. It also explored how the conclusions and recommendations of the Structured Dialogue could find a place in the EU Position.

The workshop was divided into three sessions. The first one included a general presentation of the EU roadmap towards Busan. The Chair Vincent Grimaud (Head of Unit, Aid Effectiveness Unit – European Commission, DEVCO-A3) presented the milestones toward HLF-IV and indicated that an **EC Communication on HLF-IV** will be adopted in September 2011 **to facilitate the adoption of a EU Common Position for the High Level Forum**. In addition, Karin Fallman from SIDA presented the convergence between the SD conclusions and the key messages of the **TASK team on CSO development effectiveness & enabling environment**¹⁷, which reinforced the importance to mainstream the SD conclusions in the EU Common Position for the HLF-IV.

In this 1st session, discussions were organised around 4 main topics addressed in the SD agenda: (i) enabling environment for CSOs & LAs, (ii) multi-stakeholders' dialogue, (iii) CSOs & LAs' right of initiative, (iv) CSOs & LAs' accountability. In a nutshell, the participants' point of view is that Busan HLF-IV should contribute to a **new international aid architecture** based on the assessment of the results achieved since the Paris Declaration and the AAA commitments. According to the group, there is a need to **deepen current aid effectiveness commitments** and to make a real shift towards a **development effectiveness agenda**. This implies an **inclusive participatory process, a rights-based approach** and respect for **democratic ownership principles**. Discussions emphasised that the **enabling environment remains paramount** to shape the next aid architecture and participants pushed for a **strong reference** on this matter **in the forthcoming EC Communication and EU Common Position for HLF-IV**. Furthermore, CSOs & LAs called upon governments to guarantee their participation in development through **inclusive multi-stakeholder processes**, where space & support is provided to citizens so that they can give their opinion.

¹⁴ [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/SD: Session_4_\(WG3\)](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/SD: Session_4_(WG3))

¹⁵ See the description of the workshops on:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/e/ef/18_May_Description_of_workshops_FINAL.pdf

¹⁶ Busan, 29 November - 1 December 2011.

¹⁷ The Task Team has been launched in April 2009 within Cluster A (Ownership and Accountability) of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) to promote implementation of civil society-related commitments in the AAA. 5 key messages have been drafted in preparation of HLF-4: (i) reaffirm CSO as independent development actors in their own right and recognise importance of MSH dialogues; (ii) Provide, promote and monitor an enabling environment for CSOs; (iii) Implement donor support models that are conducive for CSO development effectiveness; (iv) Enhance own CSO efforts to increase their effectiveness and (v) shared responsibility on accountability, etc.

The second session discussed the **main features of the future aid effectiveness architecture including its monitoring**. Participants called on the need to establish a **multi-stakeholder monitoring system at global and country levels**, with strategies that include all stakeholders and respect international commitments (i.e. UN on Human rights or ILO on social rights). In this regard, some participants made detailed proposals such as the set up of: **participatory definitions of indicators; independent country-based monitoring systems; and a ranking index on enabling environment**.

The third session addressed some of the issues that are relevant to the wider development agenda, such as climate change financing and fragile states. Concerning **climate change financing**, participants highlighted the risk of **over-stretching** an already comprehensive aid effectiveness agenda, which is not yet implemented. Secondly, CSOs & LAs indicated the need for specific instruments in Fragile States. The session also discussed the **role of emergent donors (BRICS) and of the private sector in the aid effectiveness agenda**. CSOs called upon the EU to build and develop constructive dialogue with other **‘emerging’ bilateral donors** (e.g. China, Brazil or India). Participants also recognized that foundations and private sector organizations could play a greater role in development through innovative approaches and public-private partnership. However, ways to align these actors to country priorities and policies need to be found, and their support should not undermine agreed development goals and human rights standards.

At the end of the session, the Chair summarized the main points of the three workshops and indicated that the EC will consider these results when drafting the Communication on Aid effectiveness.

3.2 MANAGING SUPPORT AND FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

The issue of financing for development was discussed in the framework of 3 workshops on: the Multiannual Financial Framework, the added value of engaging Non State Actors in budget support and in sector programmes and the presentation of the latest Aidwatch¹⁸ report.

The EC organized a workshop to discuss the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) starting in 2014. The current Multiannual Financial Framework expires at the end of 2013 and a Budget Review communication was adopted on October 19th 2010¹⁰. On this basis, a **first proposal from the EC** will be announced in **June 2011**, with a communication setting out broad budgetary orientations for the post-2013 period and proposals for a new MFF Regulation. This will be followed by **legislative proposals for the financial instruments for external action** to be presented by the EC during the **4th quarter of 2011**. During the debate that took place after the EC presentation, a number of participants requested an **increase of the budget allocation for CSOs & LAs (including within the thematic programme NSA&LA), including through complementarity between geographic and thematic instruments**, and possibly by earmarking funds for CSOs&LAs in these instruments. Not only it is consistent with EU development policy frameworks, but a number of recent evaluations have shown that it is also an efficient channel for development. Besides, the debate shed light on the existing dialectic between the **need to differentiate the approach and support to CSOs & LAs on the one hand, and the need to promote their complementarity and dialogue, on the other hand**. Participants called for **more flexibility within the instruments**, as a major step needed to adapt better to different actors’ needs. Finally, the issue of **policy coherence for development (PCD)** was mentioned in several occasions as a mean to move towards more effective development, and it is therefore important to see how aid financing can contribute to enhance PCD.

¹⁸ To download the report, see: <http://aidwatch.concordeurope.org>



On new aid modalities (NAM)¹⁹, the EC started by explaining why it is relevant to focus on strategic engagement with NSAs when applying modalities such as budget support, with highlights of case studies in Ecuador, Ethiopia and Ghana. The debate that followed showed that NSAs and LAs welcome the use of such modalities, **as long as it does not compromise their right of initiative and their autonomy**. Participants also insisted on the importance to **include them in the decision making process** that leads to the adoption of new aid modalities,

and to participate in the implementation and monitoring of NAM based on their added value in specific sectors. **Such participation must be organized through inclusive dialogue, supported by targeted capacity building programmes** for CSOs&LAs.

Two specific workshops were also organized regarding the **wider financing for development debate**. CONCORD organized a session entitled “*Setting new signposts for EU development aid in 2011: Will the EU take action to make aid more effective?*” in which the main **results of the Aidwatch report 2011²⁰** were presented. The discussion led to a common call to **respect the commitments taken in Monterrey**, especially because the EU lies behind at the moment, and risks to miss the target assigned for 2015. The issue of **ODA eligibility** was also discussed. There was for instance a reflection on ‘**phantom aid**’, namely funding that qualifies as ODA whereas its poverty reduction focus is unclear, and a request to carefully consider the issue of **additionality²¹**, for instance in the area of climate change.

3.3 PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN A TERRITORY

A panel discussion was organized by PLATFORMA²² in order to build on chapter 3 of the Concluding Paper, entitled “Territorial approaches to development and LAs and CSOs articulation at local level”. Practical cases from Burkina Faso and India served as concrete examples whereby **deliberate pooling of efforts by various actors** and a strong **willingness to collaborate** occurred by the members of the coordination committee. It was acknowledged that LAs can achieve **smart partnerships** with civil society and make efficient use of all resources in the territory by including NGOs, universities, economic actors, donors, etc. in their actions. Generally speaking, **public private partnerships also** seem to be a **tool to get to more efficiency**. Hereby, both sides of the partnership need to be interpreted in a broad sense. Indeed, uniting forces between **the public side** (through involvement of LA, independently from partner governments for example), on the one hand, **and the private side** (all types of CSOs: both profit and non-profit), on the other hand, should be more often considered in international cooperation activities. Also in line with the SD outcomes, it was estimated fundamental to **avoid duplication**. From a territorial perspective, local authorities have a role to play in this coordination, which comes along with their political mandate.

¹⁹ Workshop organized by the EC. The EC will publish the report on NSAs in NAM soon. For the time being, the leaflet on *Engaging non State Actors in New Aid Modalities*, can be downloaded from <http://www.capacity4dev.eu/public-governance-civilsociety/document/leaflet-engaging-non-state-actors-new-aid-modalities>

²⁰ To download the report, go to: <http://aidwatch.concordeurope.org/>

²¹ Whereby ODA should not be used: on the contrary, additional funding should be budgeted to cover issues such as climate change.

²² “What is a partnership approach based on the local/regional level? Experiences of cooperation between LRA and NGO”. For more info see: <http://www.platforma-dev.eu/en/quadrilogue-en.htm>

3.4 SUPPORT TO DEMOCRATIZATION

Two workshops covered themes related to support to democratization. First of all, *“From developmental to political: the paradigm shift in EU democracy promotion”*, organized by ENOP²³, which was focusing on **democracy support**. Secondly, *“The added value of the New Member States (NMS) in development cooperation and in implementing the outcomes of the SD”*, organized by the Czech and Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ECNL²⁴, which gave prominence to **transition experiences**. It was noted that European actors can start from historical experiences which took place in their own continent²⁵ in external EU development actions around democratization. Both panel discussions were also linked to the outcomes of the Amman regional seminar, which was held in the framework of the SD supporting initiative on Human Rights and Democracy between 29th of June and 1st of July 2010²⁶.

Democracy support

This topic relates to the **enabling environment** for CSOs and LAs, as well as to the **human rights based approach**. For issues of democratization, it seems fundamental to make a paradigm **shift from developmental to political** by **applying coherence** on democracy support **within EU policies**. As funding in this field is only marginally appearing in current EU foreign instruments through EIDHR²⁷, it could be useful to rethink the place democracy support takes in the European development policies in future. This would correspond to the pleas of the Structured Dialogue to bring the notion of democratic local ownership centrally into current debates. Mr Gahler (MEP) mentioned that the European Parliament is currently working on a report on EU tools in favour of democratization. According to participants in the workshops, the priority resides in a fundamental debate on the **concept & scope** (a ‘definition’) of democracy support, or even democracy promotion, and the **practical implications of this notion, which go beyond politics**. Each context is unique and requires a specific, tailored approach. It was considered better **not to treat democracy support as a cross cutting issue** as it then risks to be “forgotten” as a main axis in development. Finally, it was noted that **dissemination of information** is crucial in democratization processes. **Making change visible and lasting** takes a lot of time and effort, not just funding.

Transition experience

Even if a **“direct transfer” of transition experiences is impossible** from one country to another, the panel²⁸ gave some practical tips to gradually get to **domestic anchoring**, such as making use of a phased approach (before, during & after change of regime). Secondly, it was stressed that it is **better not to rush from one “popular region” to another right after a Revolution but instead stick to planned strategies of democracy support in the longer term**. Practice has shown that the arrival of **too much funds too soon risks killing civil society** due to an increased risk of funds going to the wrong stakeholders. It is equally dangerous for local authorities that should monitor and challenge the new regime. Thirdly, by means of an example (the European Transition Compendium²⁹), it was demonstrated how useful **capitalization of experiences** can be, more precisely of those of the EU12 (NMS). Last but not least, **the conceptualization of transition experiences** and their limitations seems **necessary**: E.g. *How far does the EU transition experiences stretch? What about the influence of prospective EU accession on transition processes?*

23 <http://www.european-network-of-political-foundations.eu/cms/index.php/News/ENoP-at-the-Final-Conference-of-the-Structured-Dialogue-Budapest-HU-16-19-May-2011>

24 The European Center for Not-for-profit Law ECNL with the support of the Hungarian CSO platform HAND (<http://www.hand.org.hu/english.shtml>).

25 This does not only cover the recent most recent enlargements when 12 new countries entered the EU, but one can also build on experiences related to the accession of older members states like Spain and Portugal in the seventies.

26 https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/HDR:Seminar_1

27 The EIDHR instrument represents roughly 1.3% of the entire EC ODA.

28 From the side of civil society, the panel was composed of Mr Balazs Sator (President of HAND, the Hungarian NGO platform), Mrs Nilda Bullain (Director of ECNPL, Hungary) and Mr Marek Svoboda (People in Need, Czech Republic).

29 http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/eu-12-member-states/index_en.htm

4. RECOMMENDATIONS & REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS THROUGH FEEDBACK FROM PANELS (19TH OF MAY)

The recommendations to the different groups of stakeholders (partner countries' governments, CSOs, LAs, and the EU) that emerged from the process were introduced in the morning of the 19th of May by four participants³⁰. They constitute Part II (page 19-23) of the Concluding Paper of the SD³¹ and form the **basis for further commitments in enhancing partnership** between the EC, its partner countries and CSOs&LAs. Recommendations address the various topics tackled during the Structured Dialogue ranging from CSO enabling environment (primarily responsibility of Partner States), CSO&LA own accountability, call for multi-stakeholders dialogue at country level, increased interactions between CSO&LA at the local level, enhanced EU coordination in CSO&LA support, etc.

Then, **two interactive panel discussions** were organized to reflect about the SD process and to strategize on possible directions for the future. The panels were moderated by the technical assistance in a journalistic style and panelists included representatives from the CSOs & LAs stakeholders as well as MS. Throughout the discussions, feedbacks received from participants on the SD process and its future were projected on screen, and panelists were asked to comment on them.



The first panel³² was a lively debate focusing on both the content and the process of the SD. Panelists welcomed the SD initiative and expressed that it has been a good demonstration of **multi-stakeholder (MSH) dialogue and a progressive trust-building process**. In their opinion, it was the first time that such initiative has brought together the EC (i.e. different services at headquarter level and EUD representatives), the European Parliament, Member States, and CSOs & LAs from European and partner countries in order to openly discuss key issues and

responsibilities in development cooperation. The panel appreciated the **worldwide coverage of the process**, as well as its various dimensions through the actors represented and the topics addressed. The following points were identified as **particularly relevant for a successful process**: a targeted agenda with different methodologies; meetings prepared well in advance; quick feedbacks and a transparent process with the possibility to provide comments at each stage.

However, the role and content of CISOCH as a communication tool should be questioned. Participants mentioned that CISOCH is not sufficiently user-friendly yet, that Internet access remains an issue in many partner countries and above all, and that the blog linked to CISOCH to participate online to the SD has not been used by participants. In addition, **a better articulation** between the SD dynamic and other **ongoing dialogue processes would have been expected**. Finally, panelists manifested that the **SD should not remain a one shot-experience** that ends in Budapest. They called on the **EC to ensure its follow-up and to support CSOs & LAs to act as multipliers of the SD outcomes in their countries and regions**. One pilot follow up action was mentioned: the workshop

³⁰ Recommendations to Partner Governments were introduced by Anas El Hasnaoui, Espace Associatif; Recommendations to CSOs by Natalia Zabrodotskaya, EU Delegation to Russia; Recommendations to LAs by Régis Koetschet, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Recommendations to EU by Birgit Daiber, ENOP.

³¹ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/e/ea/FINAL_CONCLUDING_PAPER.pdf

³² Sam Biesemans, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development; Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, CGLU Afrique; Aroma Dutta, Private Rural Initiatives Programme (PRIP) TRUST; Sally Nicholson, Green 10 and Assel Tastanova; Red Cross Kazakhstan.

that took place in Bamako in April 2011, at the initiative of the African CSO representatives and supported by the EUD in Cameroon, in order to give feedback on the SD outcomes to African CSOs. Another initiative is foreseen in San Salvador to inform Latin-American LAs associations.

A second animated Q&A panel discussion³³ covered the challenges of the follow-up of this SD pilot initiative and its outcomes. Panelists indicated that it is now crucial that the SD conclusions are taken into **consideration at policy and political level**. Despite its initially proclaimed non-binding status, the SD outcomes somehow commit the EC to ensure the mainstreaming of its conclusions. More particularly, the SD recommendations should be **translated into operational contributions for the HLF-4 in Busan, and for the ongoing negotiations on the financial perspectives and the new EC Communication on the involvement of CSOs & LAs in EC development cooperation**.

Based on this 14-month experience, panelists proposed to put in place **regular and inclusive multi-stakeholders dialogue mechanisms** with discussions **at different levels (national, regional and global)**. If possible, **such dynamics should start at country level**, with a strong involvement of EUD. Partner countries' governments and the private sector should also be involved in these dialogue processes. Lastly, it was pointed out that **EUD could play a very useful facilitator role** in promoting coherence between EU MS for in-country dialogue initiatives.

5. CLOSING SESSION (19TH OF MAY)

The closing session was the occasion to hear EU institutions' statements on the follow-up of the SD process. **Charles Goerens**, from the Development Committee of the EP, acknowledged the importance of the SD, as a pioneer initiative that illustrated the **need for a dialogue that does not imply a consensus on every point, but aims at a common approach to development, shared by all stakeholders**. He mentioned that the issues of ownership, right of initiative and simplification of procedures should be further addressed by the EC and that the forthcoming communication on CSOs&LAs was welcome. Lastly, he wished that representatives of partner countries' governments would be associated in the follow up of the SD.

Ádám Kirchknopf, Deputy Head of Department for International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, congratulated the EC for the initiative and participants for their active involvement throughout the process. He recalled that only little can be achieved in development cooperation without an inclusive approach, and that it is necessary to broaden and deepen the commitments between the EU and CSOs&LAs. He added that the **SD results should be part of the change agenda** to enhance cooperation policy in a rapidly changing world.

Aristotelis Bouratsis, Director of DG DEVCO (Directorate D) in the European Commission, acknowledged the importance of participatory approaches in development, and indicated that the results of the SD would contribute to the EC reflection on improving its development cooperation policy and instruments. He summarized the main EC commitments for the follow up of the Structured Dialogue:

- **A new EC Communication on CSOs&LAs (2012)** that will ensure a **political debate and follow up at the highest institutional and political level**;
- The **institutionalization of the debate** between the EC and CSOs&LAs;
- The **reshaping of the NSA&LA thematic programme** so as to increase the support to CSOs&LAs platforms located at various level (as of the next call proposal in July 2011);
- **Update of methodological tools** for EU Delegations, including on aid delivery and selection mechanisms
- Integration of Structured Dialogue conclusions in **EU position on Aid Effectiveness**

³³ Christine Andela, COSADER and National Alliance against Hunger; Izabella Toth, CONCORD; Paola Simonetti, ITUC; Carles Llorens i vila, PLATFORMA and José Piñeiro Pena, CUDECOOP.

Finally, Mr. Bouratsis reminded the audience that the new DG DEVCO will offer a **rationalized organization of all matters concerning CSOs&LAs within the D2 unit**, headed by Angelo Baglio as of June 1, 2011, and that there will already be a **follow up conference of the Structured Dialogue** in Brussels before the end of the year.

The Budapest Final Conference ended with the reading of **the Final Statement³⁴ of the Structured Dialogue** to the audience by Mr. Hamisi Mboga, from the Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya, and Mr. Dirk Vantyghem from Eurochambres. Participants have congratulated the EC for the SD initiative, which will become an important milestone in the EC strategic partnership with CSOs & LAs. All stakeholders are now expecting concrete follow-up actions on the commitments taken in Budapest and reflected in the Concluding Paper of the Structured Dialogue. Along the line of a quote used in Budapest:



**“Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end.
But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning”.**

Winston Churchill



³⁴ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/f/fb/Joint_Final_Statement_May_2011.pdf