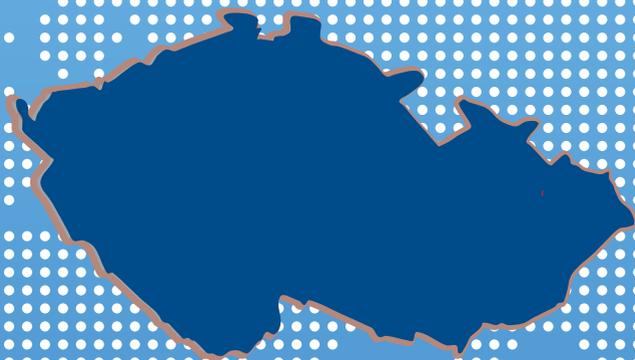


Decentralised  
Development  
Cooperation  
of Czech  
Self-Governments:

STUDY



# Decentralised Development Cooperation of Czech Self-Governments: Study

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Prague, June 2014



**CZECH REPUBLIC**  
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Svaz měst a obcí  
**SMO**  
ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY



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# 1. Introduction

*“With their decision-making powers and budgetary autonomy local governments are gradually becoming independently active also in the international environment. In the same way, European integration and the disappearance of political frontiers are opening up opportunities for inter-communal and inter-regional international cooperation, such as there has never been here before.”<sup>1</sup>*

Foreign development cooperation (FDC) of local governments<sup>2</sup>, i.e. decentralised development cooperation, is a relatively new phenomenon. In the original fifteen EU states its tradition spreads over approximately 30 years, while in the Czech Republic its existence is so far rather sporadic. The causes of this situation must be sought in the different historical development, but also in the support this form of cooperation is receiving from the centre.

It is obvious that as a result of decentralisation, which took place, or is still taking place in most EU states, we'll be encountering decentralised development cooperation ever more often. Unlike central state administration authorities local governments have an essential advantage – the immediate knowledge of the local situation, which is of key importance for a sustainable development. In other words, most challenges we are facing today (environmentally unfriendly liquidation of wastes, food safety, attainment of a sustainable development, etc.)

have a territorial dimension requiring efficient territorial self-administration. In connection with growing urbanisation these problems place a burden and at the same time responsibility primarily on the local and regional governments in developing countries, whom their counterparts in the more economically developed countries can help more easily in the framework of development cooperation.

The aim of the study is to underscore the role and the contribution of Czech municipalities in the area of foreign development cooperation. The current study is intended to make Czech towns and municipalities interested in Czech development cooperation, or contemplating their later involvement in this area, better informed. It should also provide key actors involved in Czech and European development cooperation programmes with a survey of decentralised development cooperation in the CR and its current situation. It is the first study ever to be mapping the current situation in this area, so far greatly neglected in various information materials, expert analyses and studies focusing on the area of development. On the other hand, the study is trying to suggest specific recommendations, which may lead to a more intensive involvement of Czech self-governments

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1) Address by Leena Verbeeka, 2013

2) In the study the terms "municipalities" and "local governments" are used as equivalents for "towns" and "self-governments".

in the Czech Republic's foreign development cooperation programmes.

The study, which is one of the outcomes of the "Support for the incorporation of Czech towns and municipalities in foreign development cooperation" project, is divided into five parts. The first part is devoted to decentralised development cooperation on the European scale, where this form of cooperation is a recognised addition to national development policies. This part also comprises a specific example of good practice in the Netherlands, where the application of the structural decentralised cooperation support model has proved successful. The second part presents the Czech foreign development cooperation concept, with examples of good practice in two Czech towns and one municipality. The third part brings an analysis of the results of a survey of FDC of Czech towns and

municipalities, which was one of the outcomes of the project. This part features the latest experience of Czech municipalities in this area and their potential. Possibilities of financing decentralised cooperation in the CR are listed in the fourth part. The study ends with recommendations for further action in this area. The recommendations are addressed to state institutions concerned with foreign development cooperation of the Czech Republic, the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic and local governments.

## 2. Decentralised Development Cooperation in the EU

A new phenomenon – foreign development cooperation of municipalities – has been gaining ground in Europe in the past 20 years. As mentioned in the introduction, in Europe this form of cooperation is termed decentralised development cooperation.<sup>3</sup>

Towns and municipalities are spending large sums of money on projects in developing countries and are capable of giving both expert and material assistance and support to their partners in countries on their way to development. As a result of growing urbanisation central governments cannot and will not be able to efficiently control development at the regional or local level. By their very nature, of all the public institutions local governments are the closest to citizens; they have certain obligations towards them, and consequently know their needs better than anyone else. They are the only institutional bodies ensuring continuity and having a comprehensive approach. Municipalities are the very actors capable of influencing local development in many areas, such as transport and the infrastructure, medical and social services, culture and education, the environment and waste management, water resources management, strategic planning, etc.

Decentralisation and the delegation of powers from the centre to regions are not easy things to do, and the regions

often have to face up to the government's unwillingness to give up some of their competences and provide the money needed for carrying out the work. Many self-governments in developing countries lack financial and other resources or experience to be able to do their work well and provide good services to the citizens. On the other hand many towns in the EU have great expert knowledge and potential for development cooperation. Their added value was summed up in the European Commission Communication called *Local Authorities: Actors for Development* (2008), according to which local governments:

- can be catalysts for change,
- have the potential to create long-lasting partnerships,
- respond to local needs,
- have the capacity to create multilateral partnerships,
- can pursue educational activities.<sup>4</sup>

It has to be pointed out that local governments spend considerable sums of money on development cooperation. The amounts are shown in Table 1.<sup>5</sup> Apart from this many national governments

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3) The term *Municipal International Cooperation (MIC)* is also used for "decentralized development cooperation". This term is currently used in Norway.

4) *Local authorities: actors for development*, 2008.

5) The data relate to the year 2006.

**Table 1: Sums allocated by European local governments for foreign development cooperation programmes**

Country	Total sum (EUR millions)	Percentage of official development aid (%)
Spanish local governments	443	14,8
German local governments	764	10
Belgian local governments	65	4
French local governments	150	1,5

Source: Compiled by the authors according to *Local authorities: actors for development, 2008*.

support financially the activities of their local governments in developing countries – such programmes exist, for example, in the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Spain and France.

The European Commission, aware of the growing engagement of local governments in development cooperation, has created a special grant title for local governments and has called for the opening of a structured dialogue in this area. The aim of the dialogue, which took place in 2010 and 2011, was to identify the main challenges facing civil society organisations (CSO) and local governments participating in development cooperation programmes and to find a way to make their activities more efficient.<sup>6</sup> Participating in the dialogue were the governments of EU states, European Commission representatives, representatives of the European parliament and naturally local governments and CSOs – altogether 700 participants from all over the world. The outcome of the dialogue was a final study, which comprised a number of recommendations addressed to the participating actors.<sup>7</sup>

Besides recognising, in 2008, the role played by local governments in the EU as important actors in development cooperation, since 2013 the European Commission has been paying attention, in its development policies, to the needs of the self governments in countries outside the EU, to which the aid is directed.

The following points have been taken over from the report of the European Commission called *Strengthening of local authorities in partner countries for the purpose of improving the administration of public affairs and for a more effective attainment of results in the area of development*, which commented on four needs essential for the successful development of local governments in the recipient countries.<sup>8</sup>

## 1. Decentralisation

The EU will support decentralisation in developing countries, especially in connection with the economic conditions prevailing in the particular locality. In addition, the EU will focus on the creation of a legislative and political environment essential for successful decentralisation and the development of the capacities of local governments. This is also linked with fiscal decentralisation, which is a strategic

6) *Structured dialogue. Concluding paper, 2011.*

7) For more details see *Structured Dialogue. Concluding paper, 2011.*

8) *Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes, 2013.*

area capable of contributing to the successful process of overall decentralisation.

## **2. Strengthening the capacities of local governments**

The capacity of local governments is divided into three levels: personal, institutional and organisational. The first level concerns people and is influenced by the abilities, experiences and attitudes of the clerks and local government politicians. At the institutional level the capacity depends on the structure and operational processes controlling people's work. And finally at the organisational level the capacity is influenced by the political and legislative environment and the rules and practices on the basis of which the relationships between the actors develop. EU support will be targeted especially at ensuring a reliable provision of services and financial management. Special emphasis will be placed on cooperation between the self governments within the country or region and on the involvement of local government associations.

## **3. Sustainable urbanisation**

The movement of people from rural areas to towns is a phenomenon that will continue. This will particularly involve the movement of the poorer strata of the population in developing countries and the problem of finding adequate housing for them, the availability of services, safety, etc. The problems which local governments must deal with concern primarily social inclusion, territorial cohesion and the environment. The EU will especially focus on the use and evaluation of

land and the creation of cadastres and registers. Up-to-date information about the ownership of land and property will help make their use and transfer more transparent; in addition, better tax collection will raise the fiscal position of local governments.

## **4. Local government associations**

Very important is the setting up of local government associations as they can help with efforts to improve governance and development at the local level. In many developing countries the associations are weak or do not exist at all, which is a pity, as these groups are playing the key role in relation to local governments: they promote the interests of local governments at the central level, lobby for greater decentralisation, coordinate discussions and meetings of their members, are a place for sharing good practice, control the quality of services provided by local governments to citizens, etc. According to the EU, the local government associations should be more widely involved in the programming of national and local priorities, such as the implementation of programmes financed from EU funds. The EU should facilitate the creation of partnerships between associations within and without the EU.

The European Union Communication of 2013 also points out that the local authorities<sup>9</sup> of EU member states ever more

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9) The term "local authorities" covers different public administration levels, e.g. villages, communities, districts, regions, provinces, etc. In this context the term means the local level, which is in general the lowest government level in the public institutions systems and is the closest to the citizens.

often act as donors in development cooperation projects. The EU therefore proposes that the actors join together and use their expert knowledge to help systematise development cooperation at the local level in the recipient countries and make it more efficient.<sup>10</sup> It is desirable that the Committee of Regions become the umbrella body for these activities. By this communication, the EU also confirmed the irreplaceable role played by European local bodies in supporting the promotion of education and keeping the citizens informed.

Another two institutions are concerned with decentralised cooperation on the European scale – the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the Platform. CEMR currently comprises 57 local government associations<sup>11</sup> from 41 countries. Its principal aims include the possibility of influencing European legislation, supporting cooperation and exchanging experience. In this connection, CEMR is also engaged in promoting decentralised cooperation.

CEMR is one of those responsible for the founding of PLATFORMA, a consortium of actors from among European local and regional authorities concerned with development. The establishment of the platform was initiated by the European Commission in 2008. PLATFORMA is an

instrument for coordinating the policies of local and regional governments. Consequently its work is closely linked with the activities of CEMR. Its members are, for example, the cities of Paris, Nantes and Lyon, Barcelona Province, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, the German, Flemish, Italian, French, Romanian, Spanish and Dutch local government associations and CEMR itself.<sup>12</sup>

PLATFORMA coordinates the positions of its members in relation to European institutions as regards the defining and implementing European development policies, conducts a dialogue with the European Commission, supports the involvement of local governments in EU development programmes and serves as a forum for the exchange of experiences in the area of decentralised cooperation. Its members are local and regional governments, national associations, as well as international umbrella associations of local governments (such as CEMR and UCLG), which are concerned with development.

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10) *Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes*, 2013.

11) Including the Union of Towns and Municipalities in the CR.

12) For more about the Platform see the official web sites of Platforma: <http://www.platforma-dev.eu>.

## 2.1 Case Study: Netherlands

For many years, Dutch municipalities have been important actors in the area of decentralised cooperation. Their de-

centralised development cooperation has three forms. The first can be termed as an initiative from the bottom up, in

the framework of which the priorities are determined by the actors themselves – the cities and towns. A weak point of such cooperation is its small size, the impact of the assistance and difficult control of its quality. The second form is mixed and here the priorities are set by the Foreign Agency of Local Governments Association (*VNG International*) in cooperation with the towns. An advantage of this form is its greater efficiency and sustainability. The third form is consultative, where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sets out the priorities and the geographical targeting of cooperation, while the towns provide their expert knowledge. A weak point of this form is the distance of the projects from the actual actors, as the priorities are set by someone else, and it constitutes a relatively great administrative burden.

An illustrative example of the second form is the *Logo East* programme, the aim of which was to increase the capacity of local and regional governments in Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Ukraine, Serbia, Monte Negro and Russia, and prepare them for the taking over of responsibilities ensuing from decentralisation reforms in those countries. An exchange of experiences took place between the self governments in the Netherlands and the target countries on the foundations of already existing international partnerships set up according to the “*colleague-to-colleague*” principle. In several cases Czech towns became a party to trilateral cooperation projects (for example the town of Pardubice in the framework of a development project in Pernik, Bulgaria).

The programme lasted two years and was fully financed by the Netherlands Foreign Ministry. The institution in charge of its preparation and implementation was *VNG International*. Altogether 30 local government cooperation projects were supported under the programme. The 90-100% upper limit of the grant per project was EUR 70.000. The total amount of the grant for that programme was more than EUR 7 million over a period of four years. Thematically the programme focused on the good provision of services by the self governments to citizens, social matters, business, water management, informing the public, eGovernment, etc.

*Logo East* was not the only programme of this type to be administered by *VNG International*. Another programme, *Logo South* (2003–2010), was targeted at African countries, and currently *VNG International* administers a new programme the aim of which is to raise the capacity of local governments (2012–2016). Thematically the programme is focused on food safety, water management, security, reproduction, sexual education and the rights of citizens. These subjects and the priority areas of Dutch foreign development cooperation overlap. Geographically the programme is targeted at eight African countries, Nicaragua and Palestine.

### 3. Foreign Development Cooperation in the Czech Republic

Foreign development cooperation is one of the main instruments of supporting development in the poorer parts of the world. This assistance means the transfer of finance, material and expert or technical help aimed at ensuring a long-term sustainable development in the partner countries. The Czech Republic's foreign development cooperation is at the same time an integral part of the country's foreign policy, and as such it must contribute to meeting the set aims

The starting point for the formulation of Czech development cooperation is the *Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)* document, to which the Czech Republic has subscribed. The strategic aim of Czech development policy, according to the 2010–2017<sup>13</sup> FDC Concept, is the elimination of poverty, support of security and prosperity, support of democratic forms of government, observation of human rights, sustainable economic growth and incorporation of developing countries in international trade, social development and care for the environment through effective partnership that will enable poor and little developed countries to realise their development aims.<sup>14</sup>

Between 2007 and 2010, the FDC system was institutionally transformed. Its main aim was the unification of competencies and powers and the placing of the foreign development cooperation budget under the competence of the Ministry of Foreign

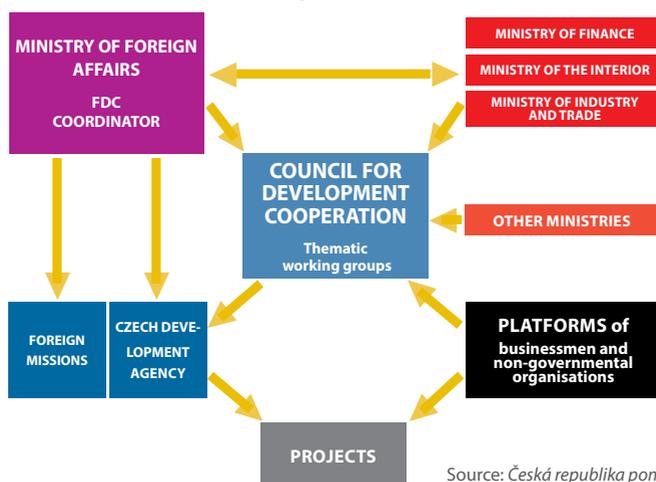
Affairs of the Czech Republic (specifically the Department for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance, and the Conceptual and Implementation Section) by establishing the Czech Development Agency (CzDA) as the implementation body of the FDC system. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the conceptual, managerial and control function, while CzDA fulfils the implementation role linked with the realisation of FDC projects coming under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to it, another body, the Council for Foreign Development Cooperation, was set up in 2008 as an inter-ministerial coordination body within the FDC system. Important FDC actors are foreign missions, non-governmental non-profit organisations (NNO), coming under the Czech Forum for Development Cooperation as their umbrella organisation, businessmen, represented by the Platform of Businessmen for Development Cooperation, and to a lesser extent also the universities.

In the framework of bilateral cooperation, Czech foreign development activities are focused on two groups of countries:

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13) The Concept of Foreign Development Cooperation of the CR is an official document setting out the FDC policy for a period of several years. Besides defining FDC policy it comprises the rules and programmes of cooperation in priority countries and sectors.

14) *Koncepce zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce na období 2010-2017 (Concept of foreign development cooperation for 2010-2017).*

**Diagram 1: Institutional backing of foreign development cooperation of the Czech Republic**

- Programme countries: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Moldova and Mongolia
- Project countries: Georgia, Cambodia, Kosovo, Palestinian autonomous areas and Serbia

The criteria for the choice of countries include the following aspects: position of the country in the context of Czech foreign policy, need of development cooperation on the part of the partner country, preparedness of the country to receive assistance and aspects of the division of labour with other donors. In the first group of countries the division into programme and project countries is based on the existence of a cooperation programme – the programme constitutes a set of activities and respects local development strategies. In the other group of countries cooperation is based on sepa-

rate projects, without the existence of a cooperation programme.

In addition to these two groups of countries, the Concept of Czech FDC for 2010–2011 also mentions *phase-out* countries, with which development activities of the Czech Republic are being gradually terminated. These countries are the former priority states, i.e. Angola, Yemen, Vietnam and Zambia.

Sector priorities of Czech FDC include: the environment, agriculture, social development (including education and social and medical services), economic development (including power) and support of democracy, human rights and social transformation. These sectoral priorities take into consideration Czech experience gained in the past and are based on the Czech Republic's comparative

**Table 2: Volume of funds expended by country (TOP 10)**

Country	Volume of funds expended (CZK '000)	Volume of funds expended (USD '000)	Share of bilateral ODA CR
Afghanistan	248 106,78	12 698,48	19,11%
Moldova	95 347,40	4088,03	7,35%
Mongolia	79 364,06	4 061,97	6,11%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	61 874,64	3 166,84	4,77%
Ethiopia	60 618,48	3 102,55	4,67%
Georgia	51 353,94	2 628,37	3,96%
Ukraine	49 627,28	2 540,00	3,82%
Serbia	46 488,13	2 379,33	3,58%
Kosovo	44 184,86	2 261,45	3,40%
Palestinian autonomous areas	32 824,91	1 680,03	2,53%

Source: Česká republika pomáhá, 2013.

advantages. One such advantage is Czech experience with the process of the country's political, economic and social transformation. Sector priorities at the same time comprise the general priorities of the international community set out by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Besides bilateral assistance the Czech Republic provides wide-ranging assistance through international organisations, such as the United Nations and its agencies and programmes, the EU, international financial institutions, etc.<sup>15</sup> Multilateral cooperation is used primarily for solving development problems, which require a coordinated global approach (e.g. environmental protection, struggle against epidemics, migration, etc.).

The total volume of financial funds which the Czech Republic expended on FDC in 2012 amounted to CZK 4.29 billion, 70% of which was allocated to multilateral

assistance and 30% to bilateral assistance. In terms of volume, multilateral assistance has been higher than bilateral assistance on a long-term basis. The traditional reason is its mandatory character (the Czech Republic has committed itself to those payments and they cannot be cancelled ad hoc) and the growing Czech contribution to the EU budget, mainly the European Development Fund (EDF), (as a result of which its part earmarked for development purposes is growing as well), which is the most important part of official Czech multilateral development assistance.

The analysis of the conceptual documents involving Czech FDC shows that the documents do not take into consideration the role or the specific position

15) For more see *Koncepce zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce na období 2010–2017 (Concept of foreign development cooperation for 2010–2017)*.

of local governments. There is no mention of them as potential FDC actors, or as partners for conceptual cooperation. The reason may be the fact that Czech self-governments are currently inadequately active in the area of development; they are not to be seen or heard of, with only a few Czech municipalities

pursuing development activities. It has to be admitted, however, that the activities of Czech municipalities have so far been dispersed, one-off acts or rather formal. In spite of this, several examples of good practice of Czech municipalities are worth mentioning.

### 3.1 Case study: Valašské Meziříčí<sup>16</sup>

Valašské Meziříčí has been cooperating with three towns in southeast Europe on a long-term basis: Budva, Monte Negro; Sevlievo, Bulgaria and Čačak, Serbia. Each year Valašské Meziříčí prepares cooperation programmes for those towns. Each programme comprises a detailed list of planned activities. For each activity there is a brief description, dates of the events, eligible expenses, mode of financing and estimated costs on the part of both Valašské Meziříčí and the recipient town.

The town is trying to prepare a wide range of activities in many areas (culture, sport, cooperation of clerks, the environment, the social sphere), and especially to keep all the partnerships alive, supported by regular visits of the leading officials of the cooperating towns. Very interesting is to see how the financing of those visits has been solved. The rule applies that transport expenses are always paid by the sending-out party, while all other costs are covered by the receiving party.

The decentralised development cooperation of the town of Valašské Meziříčí comprises the following areas:

#### **1. Social area, education, sport and culture**

Delegations of the towns and the citizens take part in various cultural events (regular and one-off), such as the Bulgarian New Year, exhibition of the glassmaking school in Sevliev, Days of Valašské Meziříčí, Days of Monte Negro Cuisine, Budva Days and Čačak Days.

At the secondary-school level reciprocal practical professional training visits of students and their teachers from Valašské Meziříčí and Budva have been taking place for several years.

#### **2. Town representatives and clerks**

Regular exchange visits are organised between the cooperating towns and Valašské Meziříčí.

Exchanges of clerks specialising in project management and grant issues take

<sup>16</sup>) Compiled according to the document *Současné trendy v partnerství měst a obcí, 2012 (Current trends in the partnerships of towns and municipalities, 2012. Case study updated according to the Presentation of the town of Valašské Meziříčí, 2014.*

place between the towns of Sevlievo, Čačak and Valašské Meziříčí. The seven-day study visits are financed by the towns from their own budgets.

Among projects being prepared worth mentioning is a *twinning* project financed by the Bulgarian Ministry for Regional Development involving clerks and aimed at good practice projects in areas interesting both parties and the project “Improving the work and services of local governments by including electronic services”, focused on the exchange of clerks concerned with strategic management from the towns of Čačak and Valašské Meziříčí.

### **3. Businessmen and economy**

Here, businessmen from Valašské Meziříčí participated in the fair of small and medium-sized firms in Serbia and several groups of businessmen from Valašské Meziříčí and its environment paid private working visits to Čačak.

Contacts are being promoted with the firm CINI Čačak (heating systems) and new contacts are being established in the area of medical communication equipment – the firm Datacom Valašské Meziříčí. The Valašské Meziříčí dairy has established contacts with a firm in Čačak, the most important fruit producer in the region, which could supply the dairy with fruit syrups for its yoghurts.

### **4. Agriculture and the environment**

Worth mentioning is the project “Development of integrated protection of agri-

culture from pests, diseases and natural disasters” taking place in cooperation with Čačak. The project was supported by the EU under the *Exchange 3* programme.

An important event was the International Environmental Conference in Valašské Meziříčí (2009), in which the representatives of all the cooperating towns participated. Besides an expert conference, a rich accompanying programme was prepared for foreign delegations: workshops on waste management and renewable energy sources, excursions to the firms Schott Solar and Ponast in Valašské Meziříčí, visit to the swimming pool combined with the presentation of a successful project co-financed from EU funds, “Green Light for the Beskyds – Use of Solar Collectors”.

A benefit for Valašské Meziříčí is the experience, which the Serbian partners gained in the realisation of European projects and which they shared with their Czech partners. Over the past two years, the town of Čačak obtained approximately EUR 20 million from EU funds, thanks to the realisation team, which has great experience in realising such projects.

### **5. Clubs**

Cooperation with Sevliev and Čačak has become so popular that two clubs have been set up in Valašské Meziříčí to support and promote it: Club of Friends of Sevliev and Bulgaria and Club of Friends of Čačak and Serbia. Their activities involve mainly the cultural sphere.

### 3.2 Case study: Čermná nad Orlicí<sup>17</sup>

The idea for long-term development cooperation took shape during the signing of the cooperation agreement between the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia and the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic in 2002. In the same year, contacts were established between the communities of Čermná nad Orlicí, Kruščica and Češko Selo, which were confirmed in 2004 by the signing of the Declaration of Mutual Cooperation at the embassy in Belgrade. One of the reasons for starting cooperation with those communities was strong Czech minorities living there.

Cooperation covers several areas: education, sport, public administration, health-care, humanitarian assistance, economy and culture. Participating in the projects are the community Čermná nad Orlicí and the Hradec Králové Region, which has contributed to the cost of repairing the school building in Krušič and the purchase of machinery for the cultivation of green spaces in that community.

The community Čermná nad Orlicí supported financially the reconstruction of the town hall building in Češko Selo, the reconstruction of the former school into a museum and a hostel. Another joint project was the reconstruction of a football pitch, where new floodlights were installed and a part of the grounds was turned into a children's playground. The Čermná nad Orlicí community also helped with the construction of the telecommunications infrastructure (Internet,

telephone) at Češko Selo and together with the Czech embassy in Serbia supported the construction of the public water supply system there.

The communities organise regular meetings at which people exchange experiences they have in the administration and functioning of the communities and plan further common projects. Cooperation is also developing in the cultural area, specifically during mutual visits, at concerts and performances of folklore ensembles. Each year children from both Serbian communities spend their holidays in a summer camp, organised at Čermná nad Orlicí by the Brontosaurus movement.

The activities pursued in the framework of cooperation are supervised by the mayors of Čermná nad Orlicí, Kruščica and Češko Selo.

The main asset of cooperation is the assistance Čermná nad Orlicí is giving to its Serbian partners during transformation and the progress of democratic reforms. This concerns especially assistance in the sense of sharing good and bad experiences gained on the Czech side, as well as in the area of small investment assistance. The exchange of experiences takes place on a voluntary basis and its great value rests in giving and receiving inspiration.

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17) Taken from *Současné trendy v partnerství měst a obcí*, 2012.

Greatly beneficial is the perception of the cooperation by the citizens of all the participating communities, between which warm relations prevail. The people of Čermná nad Orlicí consider the

assistance being given by their community to the partners in Serbia useful and much needed, and that is why they support the development activities of their community.

### 3.3 Case study: Litoměřice<sup>18</sup>

Unlike the previous two examples, the example of the development activities of the town of Litoměřice comes under development education. The town of Litoměřice has decided to become one of the Czech Republic's Fairtrade towns.<sup>19</sup> Efforts to gain this status was supported by the town council, which in 2011 set up a Fairtrade working group, in the same year realised the *Aware & Fair* project, and in September 2011 became a Fairtrade town.

Under its development education programme, the town realised a number of activities:

- 30 Fairtrade product tasting events during various undertakings /public forum, Kapradí (Fern), Advent fairs, campaigns.../,
- 120 seminars and get-togethers on *Fairtrade* and development education (more than 3 400 participants),
- two presentations on Litoměřice as a Fairtrade town at conferences in the Czech Republic and three abroad (Berlin, Poznan, Hannover),
- five big events for the public (two fair breakfast events, fair coffee at five, fair town in motion, Fairtrade fashion parade + preview in the library),

- 1<sup>st</sup> national Fairtrade conference in the CR,
- theatre workshop,
- handbook for teachers (list of activities for teaching global responsibility through play),
- TV spots, living map, Fairtrade guide.

The town has also made a survey among the citizens to find out how many people support the development activities of their town. The survey has revealed that 69% of citizens (78% of women and 59% of men) support the *Fairtrade* idea and that 65% of the citizens support the certification of the town.

According to the town representatives, such activities need the support of the town council, the Healthy Town concept and cooperation with the projects and strategies department. Cooperation with non-profit organisations and foreign partners is also welcome. An important role in promoting the *Fairtrade* idea was played by local schools and libraries.

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18) The case study is based on the *Presentation of the Town of Litoměřice*, 2014.

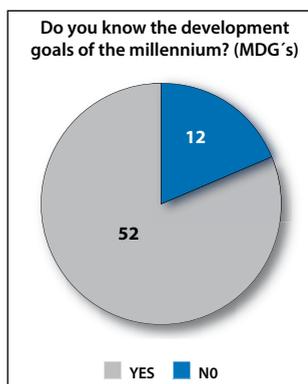
19) More about Fairtrade towns can be found at: <http://www.fairtradovamesta.cz>.

## 4. Survey of foreign development cooperation of towns and municipalities in the Czech Republic

Decentralised cooperation of Czech municipalities is an unexplored area – no research or survey examining this phenomenon has been made so far. Although it is true that in 2011 the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic carried out a survey of international cooperation among towns, but that survey covered all foreign countries and was not focused specifically on foreign development cooperation. A long-term aim of the Union is to support FDC of Czech towns and municipalities, but without knowing their needs and motivation it is not possible to target the Union's support correctly. These are the reasons, why in March and April 2014 the Union carried out a questionnaire survey, in which it addressed 300 municipalities,

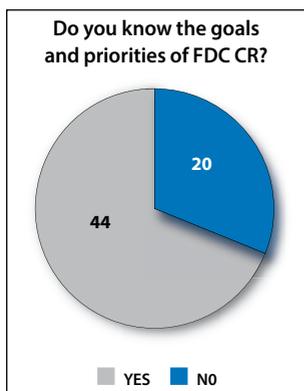
mainly 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-type communities<sup>20</sup>, 64 of which returned the questionnaires completed. The survey had three parts:

**Chart 2: Knowledge of MDG's**



Source: Questionnaire survey.

**Chart 1: Knowledge of the goals and priorities of FDC CR**



Source: Questionnaire survey.

the introductory part, in which the communities were asked whether and how they were informed about development cooperation in general, the second part addressing experienced participants in development cooperation, and the third part, which looked into the future, i.e. at whether the communities were considering joining the project, and their expectations and obstacles affecting their decisions to participate in development cooperation.

20) The law distinguishes between municipal authorities with extended powers, i.e. 3<sup>rd</sup>-type municipalities, and empowered municipal authorities, i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup>-type municipalities. Each type is entitled to perform certain powers defined by law.

In the introductory part about one-third of the municipalities said they were acquainted with the aims and priorities of FDC. However, the fact that only 64 municipalities of the total number of those addressed returned the questionnaires could mean that the knowledge about decentralised cooperation and FDC in general was inadequate in the Czech Republic, and consequently the

involvement of the towns and municipalities was negligible. In fact, only 23% of them know about the MDGs, which the concepts of Czech FDC are taking into account in the form of struggle against poverty. On the other hand a very positive result is that more than 60% of the towns and municipalities addressed consider foreign development cooperation useful, or rather useful.

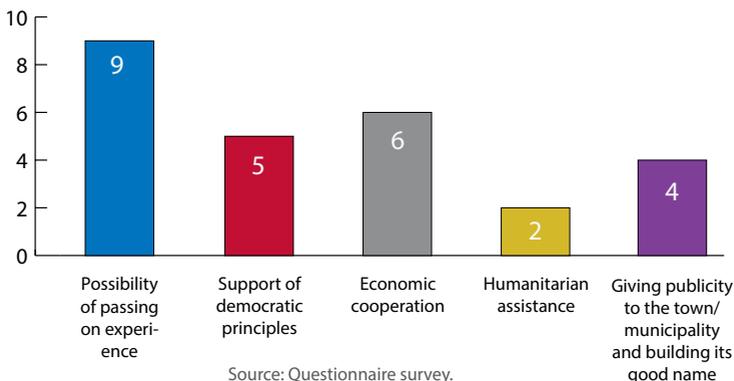
## 4.1 Experiences of Czech towns and municipalities

In the 64 returned questionnaires 10 municipalities – Prachatice, Letohrad, Litoměřice, Brno, Černá nad Orlicí, Uničov, Krnov, Valašské Meziříčí, Chrudim and Vrchlabí – said they already had experience with FDC. The following results therefore concern exclusively this group. Interesting were the replies concerning

motivation, because the survey revealed that the main stimulus for setting up development partnerships was the possibility of passing on experience. This reply was given by 9 out of every 10 self governments. The following part concerns economic cooperation and the support of democratic principles.

**Chart 3: Motivation of Czech towns and municipalities**

What has been/is the greatest motivation for your town/municipality to participate in FDC?



Czech self governments have the greatest experience in long-term cooperation (8 in 10) and humanitarian assistance (4 in 10). Nevertheless, some of those 10 municipalities also participated in some one-off development project (4 in 10).

Table 3 features a list of realized projects. It can be seen that in most cases the de-

tion events several times a year and the remaining three once in one to two years.

Equally important is the retrospective evaluation of the benefits ensuing from the activities of self governments in the framework of development cooperation. By far the greatest benefit for Czech municipalities is striking up contacts,

**Table 3: Types of realized projects**

Type of activity	Country	Town/municipality
Exchange of physicians	Belarus	Prachatice
Toy donation	Georgia	Prachatice
Support of <i>Fairtrade</i>	Malawi	Litoměřice
"How the old regime ended and the new one started" project	Ukraine	Brno
Building telecommunications and water supply systems, repair of public buildings	Serbia	Černá nad Orlicí
Cultural and leisure-time activities	Ukraine	Uničov
Pre-school education, cooperation between secondary schools, local development	Ukraine	Krnov
Exchange of project managers of local authorities	Serbia	Valašské Meziříčí
Humanitarian assistance	Afghanistan, Kosovo, Philippines	Litoměřice, Chrudim
Exchange of experts	Georgia	Prachatice, Vrchlabí

Source: Questionnaire survey.

velopment activities of Czech towns and municipalities involve education, culture and small infrastructure projects, especially in countries participating in the Eastern Partnership programme and in the Balkans, which are the closest to Czech self governments due to mutual historic ties and shared transformation experiences. It also ensues from the questionnaire survey that the frequency of mutual cooperation is intensive, as seven municipalities participated in coopera-

strengthening cultural ties and mutual exchange of experiences.

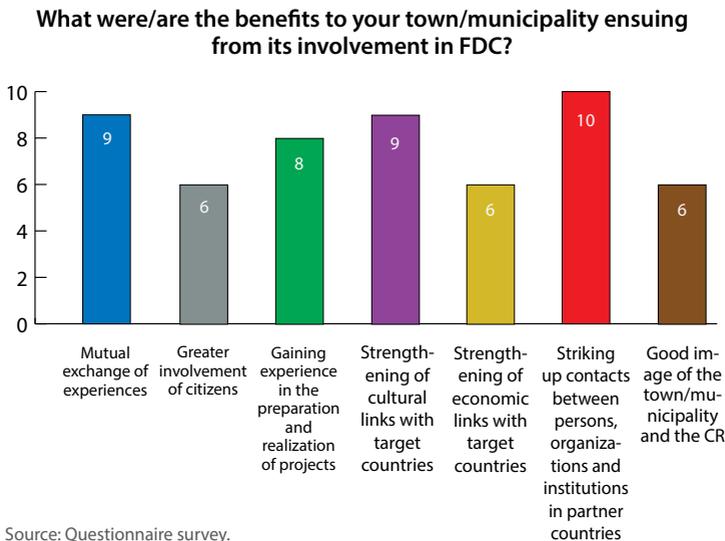
A positive feature is the fact that thanks to the realization of their development plans Czech municipalities have gained new experience in preparing and realizing projects in general. Another benefit is that as a result of the municipalities' involvement in development cooperation the citizens became more engaged in the administration of public affairs. Also

interesting is the fact that, in addition, in the case of 6 in every 10 self governments their economic links were strengthened and their good name was promoted.

An important point in the survey was financing. The survey revealed that all the municipalities (10 in 10) finance their

development activities primarily from their own budgets. Some of them also use EU grants (3 in 10) and others took advantage of Czech grant opportunities (2 in 10). The sums which the municipalities expend on development activities range between CZK 10 000 and 800 000 a year.

**Chart 4: Benefits from decentralized development cooperation for municipalities**



## 4.2 Future of Czech decentralized cooperation

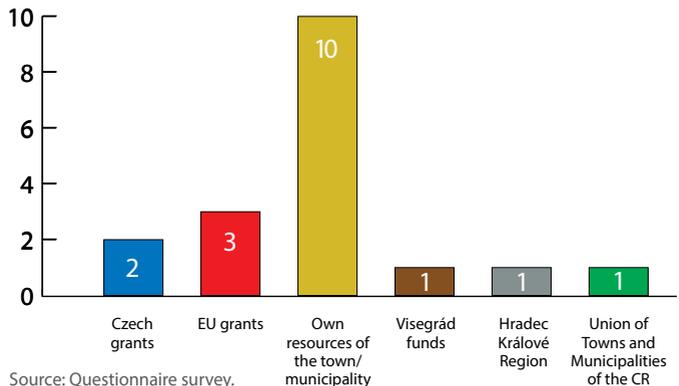
The third part of the survey focused on local governments, which were interested in joining FDC in future or planned to expand their existing activities. There were 32 of them – exactly one-half of the 64 respondents. The aim was to find out where the potential support to Czech municipalities from the Union of towns and Municipalities of the CR and state

institutions shaping and financing Czech development cooperation should be targeted to.

From the geographical point of view the prevailing direction of future cooperation is Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Those countries are the closest to Czech towns and communities from the historical,

**Chart 5: Financing development activities by municipalities**

Which sources does your town/municipality use to finance development activities?

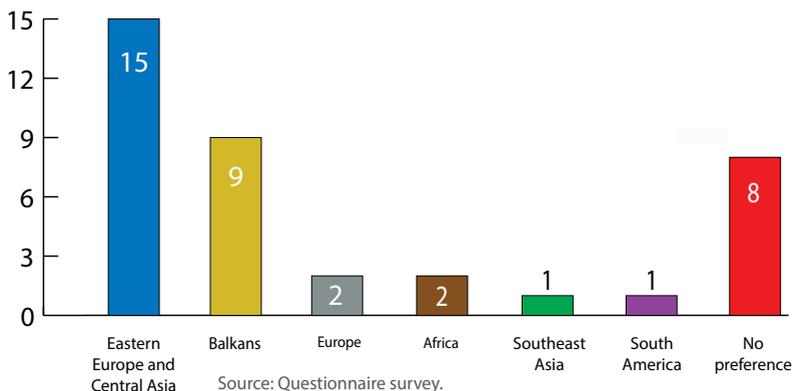


cultural, as well as economical points of view. Starting development cooperation with partners in those countries is easier for the towns and communities, as a number of them can continue and inten-

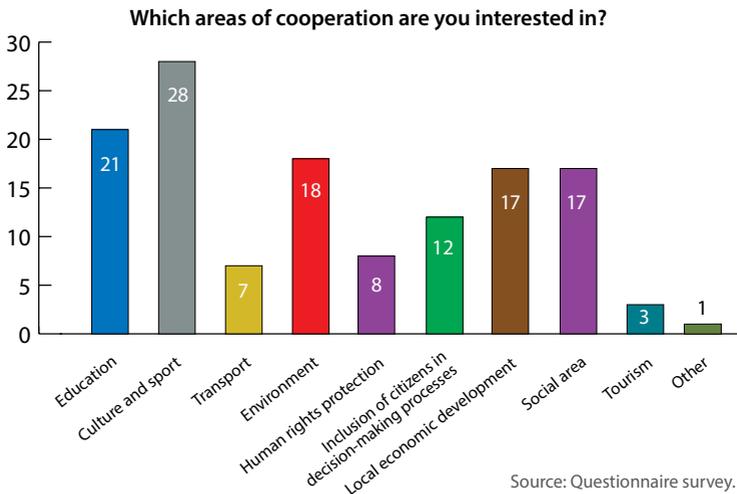
sify their partner cooperation with the local governments in those countries and take advantage of contacts Czech towns and municipalities have built under *twinning* programmes.

**Chart 6: Preferred countries for starting development cooperation from the municipalities' point of view.**

Which countries or regions would your town/municipality like to cooperate with under the FDC programme?



**Chart 7: Sectoral targeting of cooperation**

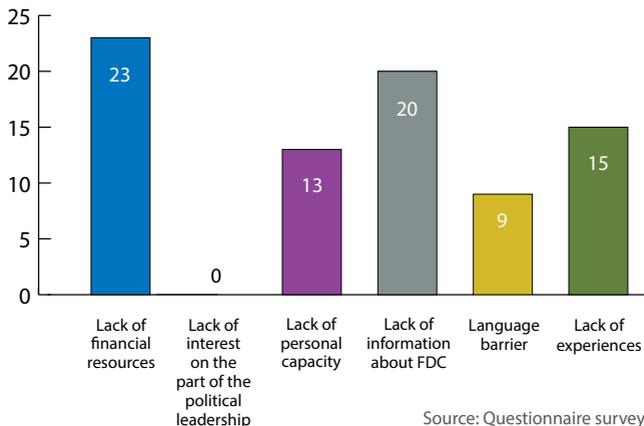


Which countries or regions would your town/municipality like to cooperate with under the FDC programme?

In their future development activities the towns and municipalities would like to cooperate especially in culture and

**Chart 8: Limits to the involvement of municipalities in development activities**

**What prevents your town/municipality from becoming more widely involved in FDC?**



sport, education, the environment, local economic development and the social area. As regards ideal forms of cooperation, the priorities are study trips, study visits and exchange sojourns. The municipalities are all giving preference to both long-term and one-off projects.

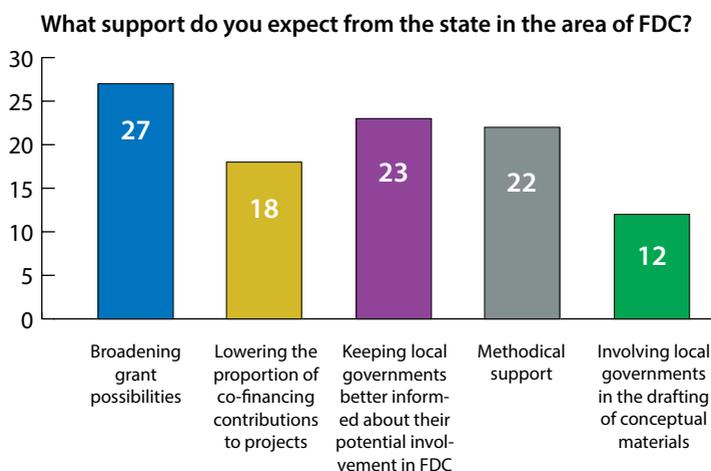
There are several obstacles preventing towns and municipalities from broader participation in FDC, according to the survey. The greatest limit to the involvement of Czech municipalities in development cooperation is lack of financial resources in the municipalities' budgets. Another obstacle of comparable importance according to Czech self governments is lack of information about FDC itself, surprisingly not a lack of interest on the part of the political leadership. Lesser obstacles according to the towns and

municipalities are the language barrier, personal capacity and lack of experience as regards the realisation of development cooperation projects.

The questionnaire survey also revealed that Czech municipalities were prepared to get more actors involved in their development activities. Besides the citizens (27 in 32) Czech towns and municipalities are showing interest in establishing cooperation with non-governmental non-profit organizations (24 in 32), as well as with the business sphere (21 in 32).

Answers concerning state support in the area of development cooperation, which Czech towns and municipalities expect to obtain from the state, can be taken as a certain hint to the state to give greater support to the involvement of Czech self

**Chart 9: Support expected to be given by the State to decentralized development cooperation projects**



Source: Questionnaire survey.

governments in the framework of decentralized cooperation. The largest number of municipalities mentioned the need for broadening grant possibilities and making people better informed about the potential involvement of local governments in development cooperation projects. Czech municipalities would also welcome greater methodical support and lesser proportion of co-financing development projects in the framework of state grant programs. Not lastly, Czech towns and municipalities consider it important that

the role of local governments be taken into account in drafting conceptual materials concerning Czech FDC.

## 5. Financing decentralized development cooperation of Czech municipalities

One of the key issues linked with the realization of decentralized development cooperation is its financing. As mentioned in Chapter 4, all towns and municipalities with experience in FDC finance their activities in the first place with their own resources (10 in every 10 towns and municipalities). At the same time they point out that the greatest obstacle to the development of their activities in this area is lack of finance in their budgets. On the other hand, a group of 32 local governments wishing to develop or enlarge their development activities in future expect the state to broaden grant possibilities and reduce the percentage of co-financing.

There is only one subsidy title in the CR, administered by the Czech Development Agency, for the exclusive financing of decentralized cooperation. Besides this title, the only other project suitable for financing the local governments' development activities is the transformation programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Apart from those programmes, however, Czech towns and municipalities can also use the Europe for Citizens programme, The Visegrád Fund and the Danube and *EuropeAid* Transnational Cooperation Programmes. More detailed information about those titles and programmes can be found later in this chapter.

### **Czech Development Agency<sup>21</sup>**

The Czech Development Agency (CzDA) administers the grant title Support of the development activities of regions and municipalities in priority countries.<sup>22</sup> The annual allocation for this project is CZK 1 million, while the maximum amount of support is CZK 0.5 million per project. The proportion of co-financing in this case is 40%. The aim of the projects is to support the partner institutions of local governments in the target countries and to support civil society institutions and institutions of a cultural, social, health-care, scientific and research character. The activities and aims of the projects must be targeted at the transfer of know-how, the sharing of experiences in economic and social transformation and the strengthening of capacity for good quality administration of public affairs. The projects must be in agreement with the MDGs.

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21) More about CzDA at <http://www.czda.cz>.

22) For more about the grant title see <http://www.czda.cz/cra/projekty/podpora-rozvojovych-aktivit-kraju-a-obci-v-pprioritnich-zemich-zrs-cr.htm>.

## **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic<sup>23</sup>**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) administers the Transformation Cooperation Programme (TRANS), aimed at the transfer of good practice from the CR in the areas of civil society development, cooperation with local administration authorities, the media, youth and education, and human rights fighters. In this case the target countries are Myanmar/Burma, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iraq, Kosovo, Cuba, Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine.

For the first time, towns and municipalities were not included among grant recipients in competitive tendering for 2014, although self governments have gained tremendous experiences in the transformation process in a number of areas at the local level over the past 25 years. As mentioned in Chapter 2, a number of West European countries realize this role being played by self governments and support it.

## **Europe for Citizens<sup>24</sup>**

Besides other priorities, the Europe for Citizens programme focuses on the creation of partnerships between towns and the creation of town networks. In addition to towns in the EU, this programme is open to towns in Albania, Macedonia and Serbia. The general goal of the programme is to help promote the idea of European citizenship and improve conditions for civic and democratic participation in the EU. The programme is intended to raise the awareness of the citizens of EU countries of their common history, memory

and values of the EU and to support the democratic engagement of citizens in the process of formulating EU policies, intercultural dialogue and voluntariness.

## **The Visegrád Fund<sup>25</sup>**

The Fund supports the cooperation of towns within the Visegrád Group and towns within the Eastern Partnership Group. In its framework, support can be provided to areas such as culture, science and education, youth exchange, promotion of tourism, etc. The budget of the project usually ranges between EUR 6000 and 15 000.

A condition of participation in the programme is the partnership of actors from at least three of Visegrád's four member countries and one East Partnership country. Non-profit organizations, schools and universities and other educational or research institutions may participate besides local governments.

## **Danube Transnational Cooperation Programme<sup>26</sup>**

In the 2014–2020 programming period the Czech Republic will participate in

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23) For more about the programme see: [http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni\\_vztahy/lid-ska\\_prava/transformacni\\_spoluprace\\_1/obecne\\_TRANS/koncepcie\\_transformacni\\_spoluprace.htm](http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni_vztahy/lid-ska_prava/transformacni_spoluprace_1/obecne_TRANS/koncepcie_transformacni_spoluprace.htm)  
24) More about the programme at [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/Europe-for-citizens\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/Europe-for-citizens_en).

25) More about the fund at <http://visegradfund.org/v4eap/>.

26) Information about operational programmes can be found at: <http://www.strukturalni-fondy.cz/cz/cs/Fondy-EU/2014-2020/Operacni-programy/OP-nadnarodni-spoluprace-Danube>.

a new programme, the Danube Transnational Programme, which brings together Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Monte Negro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. The issues to be tackled by the programme comprise most of the traditional issues involving transnational cooperation, such as innovation, transport, the environment and institutional cooperation.

### **EuropeAid<sup>27</sup>**

*EuropeAid* is an office for the promotion of cooperation set up by the European Commission. It has the use of a number of financial instruments through which it can support development cooperation and specifically the development cooperation of local governments. Financial assistance is allocated through open tendering in which applicants from geographic areas defined in advance may

participate. There is a great competition in the tendering procedures from the more experienced actors in Western EU countries. Administration and language requirements, combined with pressure for the involvement of more partners in the framework of cooperation projects are the main reasons why Czech municipalities have not so far responded to *EuropeAid calls*.

Each call specifies the subject of the competition, which changes according to the needs of the target countries. Practically all developing countries are among the target countries both in Europe (except the EU), Africa and Asia, and South and Central America. As a rule, co-financing is 15% for EU countries<sup>28</sup>.

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27) More about *EuropeAid* at [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index\\_cs.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_cs.htm).

28) The calls are published at a special address: <http://ec.europa.eu/europa.eu/europeaid/work/funding>.

## 6. Conclusion

It is obvious that decentralized development cooperation is of key importance for the struggle against poverty and other aspects preventing development. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this form of cooperation is common in West European countries. The EU, too, strongly supports this form of cooperation, as it is aware of the fact that a number of problems must be solved at the local level in the framework of development programmes with the help of local and regional governments. Environmental protection, sanitary and human safety, food and water supply, basic public assets, a well-functioning infrastructure, public safety and sustainable development can only be achieved if local or regional governments, which can learn from their experienced partners in industrially developed countries, also participate.

It ensues from the study being presented that in comparison with Western EU countries decentralized development cooperation in the Czech Republic is only at the beginning, but according to the survey of foreign development cooperation of Czech local governments its progress can be expected, judging by the fact that there are dozens of municipalities contemplating to join in or broaden their development activities. At the same time it can be said that unlike West European countries and the EU itself, in the Czech Republic this form of international cooperation is not being adequately promoted by state institutions concerned with

FDC. In spite of this, there are several Czech towns and municipalities which successfully realise this form of international cooperation already now (see Chapter 4).

Czech towns and municipalities are important actors in the field of international relations, especially as regards the partnership of towns, where Czech municipalities have struck up hundreds of partnerships all over the world. Municipalities should also play this role in the area of development cooperation, although this need not be apparent at first sight. Thanks to their historic experiences Czech municipalities are favourite partners to development projects, especially in the Eastern Partnership countries and in other priority countries of Czech FDC.

The survey results summed up in Chapter 4 show that Czech municipalities contribute to the renewal of relationships which faded out with the disintegration of the Eastern Block, they organise cultural and sporting exchanges, transfer positive experiences which they gained during the transformation process, while also pointing out its negative aspects, share experiences in the area of good governance, prepare conditions for potential economic cooperation of businessmen in partner towns, municipalities and regions and contribute towards spreading information about development in the Czech Republic. Thanks to these efforts, Czech towns and

municipalities participating in development cooperation projects contribute not only to the development of their partners abroad, but also to keeping civil society in the Czech Republic informed about development programmes and promoting the good name of Czech FDC at home and abroad.

In conclusion, the study mentions several recommendations which may help towards a greater development of FDC in Czech towns and municipalities. The recommendations are divided into three areas according to their targets, i.e. recommendations to state institutions concerned with FDC, recommendations to the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the CR and recommendations to Czech municipalities.

### **Recommendations to Czech state institutions concerned with FDC**

As mentioned several times before, Czech towns and municipalities play a unique role in the framework of FDC. It is desirable for Czech state institutions to use their potential to the maximum degree, which could raise the long-term effect of development assistance in the priority countries of Czech FDC. It is essential to realise that local governments, by the very nature of their existence, have other priorities (e.g. provision of services to citizens, development of their territories, etc.) than development cooperation. Thereby they differ basically from non-profit organisations, for which development cooperation is often the core of their activities. However, it is important to point out that in spite of these

limits Czech municipalities can contribute significantly to easing poverty and other negative aspects linked with poverty, since unlike other actors they can include into development cooperation the local-government dimension essential for ensuring efficient development cooperation. At the same time, in addition to other development actors, they can offer the knowledge of a host of experts from among the ranks of elected representatives and clerks, who have practical knowledge in areas covering all kinds of public services.

Czech municipalities are broadening the perception of development cooperation as they can strike up cooperation between both political representations and citizens, non-profit organisations and local firms, etc. In other words, they create a desirable umbrella for additional cooperation projects. In this way, local governments co-formulate a foreign development policy in the form of diplomacy at the local level. Unlike other actors, their approach to development cooperation is more comprehensive. In addition, it is obvious that the towns and municipalities will tend to cooperating with only one or a smaller number of partners. No big multilateral projects comprising a larger number of partners or more activities are to be expected. Nevertheless, such cooperation may achieve long-term continuity and sustainability, which is one of the essential conditions of promoting Czech development cooperation.

The interest of Czech municipalities in decentralised development cooperation is growing. Our survey has revealed that

there are up to twenty self governments among Czech municipalities, which are considering joining FDC CR, and methodical support from state institutions appears to be of key importance for the realisation of their development projects. In view of the specific character of the municipalities and towns it would be suitable to reduce for them the administrative burden linked with those projects as Czech municipalities do not have sufficient personnel like other actors, and this administrative burden complicates their development efforts.

As the survey shows, a great limit to the broader involvement of Czech municipalities in FDC is the lack of financial resources for their development activities. Considering the advantages of decentralised development cooperation and its benefits for Czech FDC greater support from the state for the activities of Czech municipalities by raising its financial support would be desirable. There are several possibilities of doing it. The first is to reduce the mandatory co-financing share in the framework of the grant title applying exclusively to local and regional governments. Another form of state support could be broadening the sphere of grant titles/programmes, which the towns and municipalities can join, especially by including local governments in the recipient group under the TRANS programme. It is also worth considering the opening of the well tried and tested programmes for supporting decentralised development cooperation, commonly used by experienced European donors, such as the Netherlands (see sub-chapter 2.1).

A great contribution to the support of decentralised development cooperation in the CR would be closer cooperation of key state institutions with the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the CR, which defends the interests of local governments and which represents them in the framework of the Council for foreign development cooperation. The participation of the Union in conceptual preparations of FDC within the different working groups would help bring the opinions of the actors involved in Czech FDC closer together and allow for broader discussion of issues concerning decentralised development cooperation of Czech self governments.

### **Recommendations to the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the CR**

The recommendations addressed to the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the CR can be divided into two spheres: the Union's activities in relation to its membership base and its activities directed towards state and EU institutions.

As regards the first sphere, the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the CR, in connection with the growing interest of Czech municipalities in development cooperation, should carry on its campaign to promote the idea of decentralised development cooperation through its communication channels, because as the survey on FDC revealed, municipalities are inadequately informed about this form of international cooperation. Besides, the Union should try to intensify its consulting activities in the area of development cooperation so as to become

a natural contact and information centre on Czech decentralised development cooperation.

In connection with the growing interest of the Union's membership base in development cooperation the Union of Towns and Municipalities should consider establishing a platform of towns and municipalities for decentralised development cooperation in the framework of the Union's working structure, which will concern itself with key development documents at the Czech national and the European level, including the formulation of the positions of Czech municipalities on those documents and on development cooperation in general. To support more active participation of the members of local governments in the area of development cooperation it would be suitable to set up and run a database of experts from among the ranks of elected representatives and clerks whose knowledge and experience could be used for the development projects of the Union and other actors, such as MFA CR, CzDA, NNO, etc.

In relation to state institutions the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the CR should maintain its contacts and carry on expert discussions with the department of MFA CR concerned and with CzDA. As regards the strengthening of the role of Czech municipalities in the framework of conceptual and programme materials it would be desirable that the Union participate in the negotiations of relevant working groups concerned with foreign development cooperation. Following the example of the support being given to

decentralised cooperation in western EU countries the Union as the umbrella organisation for Czech towns and municipalities should campaign for a structured support of Czech self governments (grant programme) in support of their involvement in development cooperation, as this kind of state support has proved its worth in other countries and has made it possible local municipalities to materialise development projects.

In addition, the Union should intensify its cooperation with other parties involved in Czech FDC, find common points of interest, and possibly participate in the development activities of the other actors which would be desirable for supporting decentralised development cooperation in the CR.

At the European level the Union of Towns and Municipalities should continue its cooperation with CEMR and the Platform in the area of development cooperation. The Union should strive for the broadest possible involvement in the framework of CEMR working groups and the Platform focused on development issues so as to be able to influence, through these organisations, not only European development policies, but also share the experiences and the know-how of European local governments and their associations in the area of development, transfer them to the national level and participate in the formulation of the decentralised development cooperation concept. At the same time it would be desirable that the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the CR promote cooperation with the national self government associations

in the Czech FDC target countries so as to create suitable conditions for the establishment of potential development cooperation between Czech towns and municipalities and their counterparts in those countries.

### **Recommendations to Towns and Municipalities**

As mentioned in the recommendations addressed to the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the CR, the towns and municipalities active in the area of development should join the platform of towns for decentralised development cooperation in the framework of the working structure of the Union of Towns and Municipalities CR, where they could discuss their views, formulate their positions concerning development cooperation in general and participate in the creation of an action plan for the support of decentralised cooperation in the CR.

In the framework of their competence Czech municipalities should seek greater involvement of the citizens, non-profit organizations and local businessmen in their development activities. It is equally important that (especially the inexperienced) Czech municipalities should

take advantage of individual consulting services provided by CzDA and MFA CR before submitting their cooperation projects. In addition to individual development projects Czech towns and municipalities have an opportunity to join development cooperation projects by sending out their experts. Czech municipalities have a host of experts among their elected representatives and local clerks, who could share their expert knowledge with FDC actors in the framework of development projects.

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- FairTrade campaign: <http://www.fairtradovamesta.cz>
- MFA CR: <http://www.mzv.cz/>
- Platforma: <http://www.platforma-dev.eu>
- Structural funds: <http://www.strukturalni-fondy.cz>
- Visegrád - Eastern Partnership Programme: <http://visegradfund.org/v4eap/>

## 8. List of abbreviations and acronyms

CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CR	Czech Republic
CzDA	Czech Development Agency
EU	European Union
FDC	Foreign development cooperation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEPCO	International Advisory Centre of Municipalities ( <i>Mezinárodní poradenské centrum obcí</i> )
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NNO	Non governmental non profit organisation
OP	Operational programme
UN	United Nations
SMO CR	Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic ( <i>Svaz měst a obcí ČR</i> )
SATC	Secondary Apprentice Training Centre
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments

Published by  
the Union of Towns and Municipalities  
of the Czech Republic  
Press run: 100 copies  
First edition, Prague 2014

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*This publication was prepared in the framework of the Support  
for the Incorporation of the Towns and Municipalities  
of the Czech Republic in the Foreign Development Cooperation Project supported  
under the Foreign Development Cooperation Programme of the Czech Republic.*



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