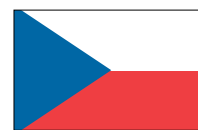


"The Financial crisis, which has brought down living standards in developed countries, has a subsequent effect on developing countries' growing rate of poverty. This threatens the Millennium Development Goals. I would like to assure you that in this precarious time the EU is determined to comply with its commitments in increasing the development aid and fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals."

Mirek Topolánek, Prime Minister, Opening speech at the Joint Parliamentary Assembly EU-ACP, Prague, 6 April 2009



Czech Republic

Has the Czech Republic established a timetable to reach the target of 0.17% by 2010? NO YET
Will the Czech Republic meet the 0.17% target without inflating its aid? NGO prediction: UNLIKELY

The Czech Republic has shown positive progress in transforming and consolidating the development cooperation system and its centralisation during 2008. The government established the Czech Development Agency and inter-ministerial Czech Council on development cooperation. The ODA budget will gradually become centralised under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the bilateral ODA will be administrated by the Czech Development Agency. This is an important step forward in how seriously the government is taking the issue of development.

The Czech Republic has stated that it will strive to achieve the 2010 and 2015 commitments of 0.17 and 0.33% GNI targets. In 2008, the Government provided €146m in ODA, amounting to 0.11% of GNI. The levels of ODA in 2009 will be influenced by the impact of the economic crisis. The government has already announced a 5% budget cut across all ministries. In spite of this they have estimated that ODA as a percentage of GNI could increase to 0.13%. However, this will only happen as a result of the impact of the financial crisis on GNI.

It is estimated that around 14% of the total aid provided in 2008 by the Czech Republic can be counted as inflated aid.

• Aid quality

As part of the major structural changes, the Government has begun preparations on a development cooperation act, to be presented in the Czech Parliament during the course of summer 2009. The preparation of the new midterm ODA strategy for 2011-2015 with a revision of priority countries is planned for 2009

The transparency of the Czech ODA system suffers from a lack of independent and sound evaluations carried out regularly and systematically. The evaluation reports are scarcely accessible to the public, making scrutinising implementation of recommendations barely possible.

Predictability of aid flows still needs to be improved. Firstly, there are no binding timeframes and budget lines for priority countries, or sectoral priorities. Secondly, the Czech ODA system works on the basis of one year funding plans and indicative funding for a maximum of three years. In practice, multi-year projects, receive funding on an annual basis.

The Czech Republic does not have a gender strategy in place as gender equality and women's empowerment are mainstreamed into Czech development cooperation. Nevertheless, gender and other mainstreamed issues such as climate change, are not being

sufficiently addressed. This is largely due to a low understanding of mainstreaming, and a general lack of expertise among the institutional actors.

Czech ODA also mirrors the government's political interests, security and migration concerns. Top recipient countries, such as Serbia, have close political and historical ties with the Czech Republic. In four out of the eight priority countries which receive Czech ODA, migration and security related development projects are being implemented. The Ministry of Interior follows the OECD/DAC reporting guidelines and therefore includes costs for immigrant reception centres, police and security related missions in ODA statistics.

Czech NGOs call on their government to:

- Ensure steady increases in absolute ODA numbers, and binding schedules for achieving the ODA targets.
- Increase the funding for Least Developed Countries and Low Income Countries.
- Set clear and transparent criteria for the selection of priority countries for new Czech government ODA plans for 2011-2015.
- Establish a multiannual system of ODA financing and improve predictability of aid flows.
- Conduct regular external evaluations and ensure publication of the reports and implementation of the recommendations.
- Increase cooperation with other donors and reduce transaction costs and the administrative burden for recipient countries.
- Formulate a distinct Gender Strategy in close cooperation with the civil society.

Czech Republic's genuine and inflated aid

