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FoRS – Czech Forum for Development Co-operation

Czech Republic Becomes a Member of Elite Donor's Club

Prague, May 14, 2013 – Today, the Czech Republic has become a full member of OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and thus joined 25 most developed donors which together provide as much as 95 % of total development aid. After 18 years of membership in OECD, the Czech Republic has completed its transformation from being a recipient to becoming a donor of development aid. Just in 1995, the Czech Republic joined OECD and renewed its national program of development assistance. Currently the Czech Republic provides 0,12 % of its GNP to aid.

The Czech Republic is the first country among the new EU member states which becomes a part of this prestigious club. *“The decision of DAC to offer the Czech Republic full membership is wonderful news, a positive assessment of the transformation which the Czech development cooperation has gone through. Czech development cooperation is to a great extent professional. There is still a long way to go, but we are approaching the experienced donor countries”*, says Šimon Pánek, the director of Czech NGO People in Need.

At the same time, becoming a full member of DAC represents further requirements for the Czech Republic on the effectiveness of its national development assistance program. *“I hope that our membership in DAC will contribute to a higher quality of the provided aid, of its system and the way it is distributed, in the accordance with the basic principles of development cooperation”*, adds Šimon Pánek.

The recommendation of OECD in this sense focuses mainly on the issue of so called “tied aid”, meaning aid where the donors condition the realization of the development project by purchasing only goods and services from its own country. *“The purpose of the Czech development assistance shouldn't be a support of the Czech goods or services”*, explains Jana Miléřová, the director of FoRS - the Czech Forum for Development Cooperation. Šimon Pánek appreciates that: *“the Czech programs and projects are mostly designed in order to really help and not to primarily support the interests of donor or implementing entities.”* The first step for the Czech Republic is to establish a monitoring of the tied aid, which will permit its reduction.

By entering DAC, the main international forum for development assistance, the Czech Republic, so far an observer, can better profit from the shared international experience. The possibility to vote on the Committee decisions and become actively involved in the debate on the future of development assistance is another important gain.

Among other countries that initiated the preparation process of entering DAC or at least expressed an interest to do so, belong Slovenia, Slovakia and Poland. The last member which entered DAC was Island this March.

Olivier Consolo, Director of CONCORD, the European Development NGO confederation says that *“For EU Development Cooperation this is good news because the Czech Republic is setting an example for other EU12 countries to follow by becoming the first to be part of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. Czech Development Cooperation has gone through significant changes in the past 5 years, becoming the most transparent donor among the EU12 countries as shown in CONCORD's Special AidWatch Report. By becoming a DAC member, the Czech Republic has the opportunity to not only to strive to*

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achieve the 0.33 target by 2015 but to recommit to 0.7% of ODA/GNI by 2015 and to take greater responsibility in times of economic crisis when aid is needed more than ever.”

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Notes to the editors:

- FoRS – Czech Forum for Development Cooperation - is a platform of Czech non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other non-profit entities that are involved in development cooperation, development education and humanitarian assistance. Currently it represents more than 50 entities - among them are non-profit organizations, foundations, international organizations, academic institutions and others. The president of the Board of the Directors is Oldřich Pospíšil from Caritas Czech Republic; vice presidents are Jan Bárta from ADRA and Ondřej Kopečný from Glopolis. Šimon Pánek is member of the Board.
- This April OECD has published preliminary data on OECD members' development assistance in year 2012. According to this data, Czech Republic provides to development assistance 219.33 USD millions. Statistical data for all OECD countries are available at <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=TABLE1>. Final data will be available in July 2013.
- The readiness of the Czech Republic's international development system to enter DAC was reviewed by OECD DAC mission held this March in Prague. Criteria for entering were the following: long-term and stable volume of provided aid, an existence of appropriate strategy, politics and institutional framework, established system of performance monitoring and evaluation, and the capacity to engage in core DAC work. The special review clearly recommended the Czech Republic for entering DAC.