

“Bulgaria’s participation in the EU development policy is a challenge which sets a number of requirements to the country, such as adoption and implementation of EU primary and secondary legislation in the area of development aid and humanitarian aid, building up institutional capacity and adequate participation in the work of EU bodies on development issues in their various formats.”

Bulgaria’s Policy on Participation in International Development Cooperation, Concept Paper, 2007



Bulgaria

Will Bulgaria achieve the 2010 target according to the budgeted aid levels? No

Will Bulgaria achieve the 2010 target without inflating its aid? No

Official figures show that Bulgaria is the worst performer among European Member States in terms of aid levels. In 2009, ODA levels remained at 0.04% of GNI, signalling no change compared to 2008. However, this was only possible as a consequence of the crisis, and in constant terms ODA dropped by 13%. Bulgaria has consistently underperformed in comparison with all other European countries and it is clear that the 2010 target will not be met.

• Aid quality

The draft version of the programme for Bulgarian participation in international development recognises the importance of several subjects in the frame of development policy. The programme integrates cross-cutting issues such as gender, democratisation, and social inclusion of vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, the programme and regulations related to ODA spending still needs to be discussed and adopted by the Council of Ministers. This will be the moment when CSOs will be able to make recommendations for improvement.

The government does not count climate finance as ODA despite the fact that in 2009 Bulgaria pledged a symbolic amount of €20 000 during the Copenhagen summit. Until 2009, climate related spending was not reported separately – but will be after 2011. The government does not intend to increase the amount of ODA reportable under the OECD “Rio Marker” on climate change.

In general, the government does not consult CSOs on development issues on a regular basis. One of the reasons is limited capacity within the government ranks, but more relevant is the fact that national NGOs are usually perceived as implementing development actors. This is something clearly reflected in the existing drafts of ODA regulations. Nevertheless, CSOs were invited to participate in the drafts mentioned before and made contributions to the process. The parliament, which should play an important role in development issues, is not very active in this field due to lack of awareness and clear idea of the purpose of development assistance. In addition, Bulgarian ODA is provided on an ad-hoc basis and not supported by a clear strategy. As a consequence, there is no interaction with Southern CSOs and ODA flows are unpredictable.

Bulgarian NGOs call on their government to:

- Elaborate and adopt legal framework for ODA spending. The draft proposal outlining the main framework and procedures in regard to ODA spending has already been elaborated by the MFA in collaboration with other agencies and NGOs.
- Adopt a Mid-term Programme for Bulgarian participation in international cooperation on development. Currently there is a draft version of such a programme elaborated by the MFA. The programme describes the general framework and main directions for work in the targeted countries. The adoption of such a programme should lead to more precise planning of resources for its implementation.
- Regulate the participation of NGOs in the Council on international development in order to achieve greater transparency and legitimacy of the actions undertaken.

Bulgaria's genuine and inflated aid

