

**Subject: Invitation to the European seminar on the development effectiveness of CSOs, 10 and 11 March in Vienna**

Dear all,

Civil society organisations (CSOs) worldwide are under pressure to prove and improve their effectiveness and accountability as development actors. At the same time, the political, legal and financial environment in many countries (i.e. human rights practice, government policies, donor procedures, conditions to access funding etc.) threatens to undermine the space and ability of CSOs to act as effective engines of social change.

To promote discussion on these and other issues among European CSOs, CONCORD, the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development, has been mandated by a global CSO steering group (Global Facilitation Group) to organise a number of country and regional consultations. As part of this mandate, we would like to invite you to a

**European seminar on the development effectiveness of CSOs  
on 10 and 11 March in Vienna.**

The seminar is intended to start a broader reflection process in Europe, including consultations in several European countries. Discussions should result in principles and guidelines for CSOs to improve their development effectiveness, and recommendations on minimum standards for CSO policies and practices to governments and donors. These results will feed into a Global Assembly of CSOs, donors and governments in August 2010 in Montreal, and subsequently into the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Seoul, South Korea, in late 2011.

Through the process (which is called Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness), CSOs aim at promoting a holistic and impact-oriented approach to effectiveness that respects core CSO priorities and values, and puts human rights, gender equality, decent work and sustainable development at the centre. This must be a high priority for CSOs given the difficulties in applying current thinking on aid effectiveness to CSOs (i.e. Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness). Recognised by governments and donors as development actors in their own right in the Accra Agenda for Action, CSOs today have the opportunity, in the Open Forum, to formulate a strong response to the challenges to their effectiveness and accountability and to shape the future debate on development and aid.

**Objectives of the seminar:** The seminar is intended to raise awareness on CSO development effectiveness, to stir interest for further participation and to give room for initial reflection. Particularly, the seminar is intended to discuss opportunities for holding consultations in European countries outside the EU, co-organised by (groups of) national CSOs and financed by CONCORD, within the framework of the Open Forum.

**Target audience:** CSO representatives from European countries not member of the EU as well as representatives from European networks and platforms of CSOs outside the development sector. Other CSO representatives can participate depending on availability of space. Participants should have a strong interest and potential capacity to help organise, with the support of CONCORD, consultations on CSO development effectiveness in their countries by July 2010.

**Funding:** CONCORD can provide full funding for around 25 CSO representatives. Funding priority will be given to CSO representatives from European countries not member of the EU that have an interest and potential capacity to organise a country consultations on CSO development effectiveness by July 2010.

**How can I register?** Please complete the attached pre-registration form and send it back to Franz Josef Berger by 5 February 2010.

**What is the Open Forum?** The Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness is an international CSO driven process towards defining a global development effectiveness framework for CSOs. To this end, it will bring together CSOs and other development actors, including governments and official donors, in consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues at country, regional and international levels. A Global Facilitation Group of 25 member CSOs provides leadership to and represents the Open Forum. Please go to [www.cso-effectiveness.org](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org) for more information.

**What is CONCORD?** CONCORD is the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development. Its 24 national associations and 18 international networks represent over 1,600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European Institutions and other civil society organisations. CONCORD works with other CSO platforms and networks from around the world within the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness. Find out more about CONCORD on [www.concordeurope.org](http://www.concordeurope.org).

Best regards,

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**Further reading:**

Accra Agenda for Action and Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness:

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/58/16/41202012.pdf>

Advisory Group Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations:

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ACCRAEXT/Resources/AG-CS-SYNTHESIS-OF-FINDINGS-AND-RECOMMENDATIONS-ENGLISH.PDF>

Open Forum toolkit:

[http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/7\\_toolkit\\_version\\_post-Prague-en.pdf](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/7_toolkit_version_post-Prague-en.pdf)

If you do not want to receive further information on the seminar or other activities of the Open Forum, please send an e-mail to [cso-eff@concordeurope.org](mailto:cso-eff@concordeurope.org) and you will be removed from the distribution list. Please feel free to pass this e-mail on to other people that might be interested in the meeting.