

EUROPEAN FOUNDATION CENTRE (EFC)  
GRANTMAKERS EAST GROUP (GEG)  
SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING

17 AND 18 OCTOBER 2002  
MOSCOW, RUSSIA

**PRELIMINARY REPORT**

The Seventh Annual Meeting of the Grantmakers East Group (GEG) held on 17-18 October 2002, in Moscow, Russia gathered over 150 representatives of government, corporate, and private grantmakers. The participants representing 25 countries comprised both directors and programme officers. The Annual Meeting was organised by the European Foundation Centre (EFC) and the GEG Steering Committee, and was hosted by the Donors' Forum in Russia. It was supported by thirteen grantmaking institutions active in Russia and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Newly Independent States (NIS).

One of the aims of the GEG Annual Meeting was to enable participants to become better acquainted with the state of Russian civil society and Russian indigenous grantmaking. Olga Alekseeva, Director, Charities Aid Foundation–Russia, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Chairman, YUKOS Oil Company and the Open Russia Foundation, and Georgy Satarov, President, INDEM Foundation, among others, shared their experience in the field with the GEG participants. The Annual Meeting's plenaries and workshops were enriched by the feedback from the EFC Governing Council Delegation that met with Russian foundations, Deputy Prime-Minister and other senior public officials on 14-16 October 2002. The aim of the mission was to learn about the environment for philanthropy in Russia and to share and explore mutually supportive ways of boosting private giving in order to find the best approach to common cultural and social challenges.

The GEG Annual Meeting provided a forum for exchange of practical experience and in-depth discussion on issues important to funders of civil society from the CEE and NIS. Plenaries and workshops focused on grantmaking strategies in the region. They addressed key challenges facing donors and fostered discussion on opportunities for cooperation among funders in four principal areas: Poverty and Social Exclusion, Civil Society Development, Democracy and Good Governance, and Capacity Building.

The highlights included:

- Implementation of successful migration projects
- Collaboration with religious and faith-based organisations
- Development of partnerships between foundations and public donors to develop viable lobbying strategies for EU Enlargement

The session on migration in former Soviet Union and Accession Countries in the perspective of the European Union (EU) Enlargement outlined major challenges for both

their citizens and governments. They include: improving border services and structures, developing strategies addressing labour migration, fostering research on migration and developing comprehensive data collection on migration issues in the region. It was suggested that grantmakers should focus on border-monitoring projects, think-tank activities related to migration and the inclusion of CEE in existing European networks of research on migration issues.

The participants of the session exploring the role and impact of faith-based philanthropy noted that although there are many faith-based organisations that have a good record in humanitarian relief and charitable activities, the secular-oriented international donors are sometimes faced with tough decisions about funding activities of religious organisations. There was a consensus that the grantmakers should look into potential cooperation with faith-based charities on specific issues e.g. in the framework of broader network or support groups dealing with these issues.

The session exploring prospects for lobbying European Union (EU) Institutions by social economy organisations from the Accession Countries explored strategies for influencing the decision-making process of the EU administration. There was a consensus that, instead of requesting funding, associations and foundations should approach Brussels' institutions to shape the political agenda of the Union so that it takes their interests into account, e.g. lobbying the adoption of the European statute on foundations and associations. It was further observed that whenever possible Brussels should be reached via combined national level efforts. The participants noted successful initiatives maximising impact of social economy organisations in the Accession countries. One example discussed was the EFC EU Enlargement Task Force that nourishes partnerships among independent donors, their grantees and European public authorities at national level.

The next GEG Annual Meeting will be held on 23-24 October 2003, in Bratislava, Slovakia.