

European Foundation Centre (EFC)
Grantmakers East Group (GEG) Ninth Annual Meeting
21-22 October 2004, Sofia, Bulgaria

**PRELIMINARY REPORT:
THE REGION OF CEE AND NIS BURSTING WITH CONFIDENCE**

Funders who gathered in Sofia, Bulgaria for the Ninth Annual Meeting of the EFC Grantmakers East Group (GEG) devoted attention to the question: Can Grantmaking be Sustainable in the Region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the New Independent States (NIS)?

The participants concluded that CEE and NIS are bursting with confidence. This is partly due to the success of the 2004 European Union (EU) enlargement and the momentum it has created. On 6 October 2004 the European Commission announced that Bulgaria and Romania are on the road to EU membership starting from 1 January 2007. The confidence also manifests itself among independent donors who advocate that foundations need to support the policy-making process to add value to grantmaking and make it sustainable. They need to further build expertise and harness human capital to make an even greater contribution to the process of building peace, stability, and prosperity in the Region. The Good Neighbours Programme developed by members of the EFC is an important step in that direction. The programme will complement the work of the GEG by growing ethical, effective, accountable, and transparent giving in the Region.

The issues discussed during the Ninth Annual Meeting were grouped into three principal areas: Public Participation, Grantmaking Practice, and Sustainable Funding. The participants placed stress on two matters. These were indigenisation of grantmaking in the region and the strengthening of citizens' engagement in democracy building. The main trends of the indigenisation process include increased corporate giving and establishment of re-granting foundations. Financial and capacity-building assistance is still needed to make progress towards Sustainable Grantmaking. The strengthening of citizens' engagement creates a challenge for civil society. Foundations, their partners, and their grantee networks need to continue to support the democratisation process and convince people to organise around causes even more effectively.

The Ninth Annual Meeting was held on 21-22 October 2004 in Sofia, Bulgaria. 160 representatives of private and public grantmakers from more than 30 countries took part in the event. The Meeting was organised by the EFC and the GEG Steering Committee and was hosted by the Bulgarian Donors' Forum.

The Tenth Annual Meeting of the GEG will be held in Kyiv, Ukraine on 20-21 October 2005. Discussions will focus on how to: assist in capacity-building, mobilise local resources, and increase public engagement in democracy building.