



MINISTRY
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SlovakAid: Helping is our obligation



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PREVIOUS POSITIONS

- Slovak Embassy in Ottawa, Canada
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EDUCATION

- Slovak Technical University in Bratislava (Master in the Automatic Control Systems)
- Comenius University (Bachelor in Journalism)

Why does Slovakia give aid to foreign countries?

Development aid emerges from a complex set of motives. First of all, we stick to our commitments that result from membership in the EU or OECD. However, it is very important to mention that helping is also our moral obligation. Secondly, Slovakia has successfully gone through its transformation process also thanks to valuable help from developed countries. Therefore we should repay this “debt.” The driving force of development cooperation with Western Balkan countries or those grouped in the EU’s Eastern Partnership is their genuine interest in our successful transformation process. Moreover, we have to admit that the activities of SlovakAid are based on our

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pragmatic needs as well. In today’s globalized world, problems and risks do not stop at state borders. Climate change, terrorism, illegal migration, or illicit drugs are problems of Slovakia even if they are being solved in Afghanistan. By helping others, we are helping ourselves as well.

Can this aid be considered more as charity or philanthropy?

An intention of every donor is not only to eliminate the consequences of the problems in the developing world, but primarily to eradicate the causes. Sustainable interventions are, therefore, at the center of attention of SlovakAid and form the basis for its programs. However, the charity dimension of development assistance cannot be ignored. For instance, in the response to Typhoon Haiyan we have to start with humanitarian activities and eliminate the consequences of the catastrophe. Only subsequently we can work on post-humanitarian aid and disaster risk reduction. Financial resources of SlovakAid are used, for example, to support the work of Slovak doctors in Kenya or South Sudan. These activities are primarily aimed at saving human lives and are not sustainable without continual financial intervention. The answer to your question, therefore, is that philanthropy is the core of SlovakAid but charity is an integral part as well.

Who and how chooses the beneficiaries?

Territorial priorities of SlovakAid are defined for a period of five years. The Slovak development strategy is prepared after consultations between MFEA, line ministries, non-governmental development organizations, academics, and the private sector. Selection of partner countries is one of the most debated issues which comprises a wide range of criteria. First of all, SlovakAid is based on the needs of developing countries and the whole donor community. Secondly, Slovakia has to take into account its means, its comparative advantages and notable added value that might be brought to these developing countries. In order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of SlovakAid, the MFEA is planning to narrow the number of priority countries to ten (from the current nineteen). Thus, among the territorial priorities of SlovakAid for 2014 – 2018 there are three program countries (Afghanistan, Kenya, and Moldova), three countries from the Western Balkans region, three countries from the Eastern Partnership, and South Sudan.

How much money is given every year and how does it relate to our GDP?

The official development assistance (ODA) of the Slovak Republic in the last five years amounts to approximately 60

million euros per year, which represents the ODA share on the GNI at 0.09%. This means Slovakia lags behind fulfilling the commitment adopted by the EU to achieve an ODA/GNI share of 0.17% in 2010. Even though this commitment was not fulfilled by any other new member country except for Malta, it is not an excuse for us. A positive fact is that the amount of our assistance has tripled since 2004. With 2015 approaching, the entire donor community is facing the task of evaluating the Millennium Development Goals as well as financial commitments. Therefore, the common goal is to increase not only the amount of assistance provided but also its quality and efficiency.

What kind of Slovak Foreign Aid activities fall under the category of sharing our experience and best practices?

Transferring experience of the transformation process is one of the main pillars of SlovakAid. Projects make use of the Slovak comparative advantage, i.e., experience from institution building, democratization of society, reforms, and creating a market economy as well as integration into the EU and NATO. Cooperation is mainly in the form of technical/expert assistance called “soft projects.” To name just a few examples: the National Convention on the EU in Serbia and Ukraine, reform of public finance in Moldova and Montenegro, building civil society and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental sector in Belarus, etc. The success of these projects results from the authenticity of the Slovak experience of our transformation process, which is a strong motivation for our partners in countries of the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership.

