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Grupa Zagranica is a Polish platform of civil society organizations, engaged in development cooperation, democracy support, humanitarian aid and global education.

POLISH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION 2016

THE SUMMARY OF GRUPA ZAGRANICA REPORT

The report Polish Development Cooperation 2016 is another edition of Grupa Zagranica annual publication which focuses on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the actions undertaken by the Polish administration responsible for the implementation of the development cooperation policy.

This summary provides an analysis of the statistics of Polish Official Development Assistance for 2015 and the expenditure on humanitarian aid in 2016.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) refers to funds granted by governments of highly developed countries to developing countries in the form of donations and loans, with the aim to support the economic development and prosperity of the latter.

Humanitarian aid is defined as actions undertaken in order to save and protect lives of people affected by the consequences of natural or man-made disasters and to ensure their dignity is respected. These are above all short-term interventions in which the long-term goals of development co-operation are taken into account whenever possible as well as support pledged to people affected by protracted crises and measures taken in order to prevent disasters and limit the damages they cause.

THE VOLUME OF POLISH DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN 2015

Over the last five years Polish Official Development Assistance has not exceeded annually 0.1% of Gross National Income (GNI). 75-80% of this amount went to the assistance budget of the European Union and – to a smaller extent – to selected United Nations agencies and other international organisations. This is defined as multilateral assistance. The remainder, that is bilateral assistance, is delivered, inter alia, in the form of loans and debt cancellations by the Ministry of Finance and as programmes and projects implemented directly in developing countries, for which the Department of Development Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible (projects are delivered by various units of the public administration, embassies, universities and non-governmental organisations).

Multilateral assistance	Bilateral assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to the EU development assistance budget • Contribution to the European Development Fund • Contribution to selected UN agencies and other international organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferential loans for developing countries • Debt cancellations • Projects implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including embassies) • Projects delivered by other public administrative bodies • Projects delivered by external partners (including non-governmental organisations)

The overall value of the Polish Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2015 stood at PLN 1.66 billion and represented 0.1% of Poland's GNI. This means that Polish ODA increased by 10% in comparison with 2014.

Poland occupied the last position in terms of the ratio of the volume of ODA to GNI among the OECD Development Assistance Committee member states and ranked fifth from the bottom among 28 EU countries.

It should be remembered that in 2005 EU countries made a commitment to spending 0.7% of their GNI on development assistance by 2015. Poland joined the pledge although as a new EU member state it set a lower target of 0.33% of GNI. Unfortunately, for a decade it has not succeeded in getting significantly closer to meeting this target. In July 2015 the Polish government reconfirmed the position that Poland will seek to increase its ODA up to 0.33% of GNI by 2030. Drawing attention to the fact that Poland has not delivered on its declarations in the recent years, Grupa Zagranica recommends developing an internal binding roadmap which will specify how Poland can reach the level of 0.33% of GNI as soon as possible.

PRIORITY COUNTRIES AND THE ORIENTATION OF POLISH ODA

Apart from Ukraine and Belarus which have traditionally been the largest beneficiaries of Polish development assistance, in 2015 considerable funds were granted to Ethiopia and Angola in the form of preferential loans. Syria was high on the list of recipients of Polish ODA, which is understandable given the ongoing war in the country and the resulting dramatic situation of Syrians. Additionally, funds were transferred to the remaining Eastern Partnership member states, Palestinian Autonomy and Central Asia, which were at the forefront of the 2012-2015 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme, as well as to countries not specified in the priorities of Polish ODA such as Kazakhstan, Cambodia or Kosovo. Overall, 77% of Polish bilateral assistance was delivered to the priority countries, of which 48% to the Eastern Partnership member states.

Country	Gross volume of assistance (in million PLN*)
Ukraine	107.12
Ethiopia	101.31
Belarus	67.03
Angola	54.96
Syria	11.01
Moldova	9.13
Georgia	7.37
Kazakhstan	4.09
Palestinian Autonomy	3.83
Cambodia	3.68

Table. The largest recipients of Polish bilateral development assistance in 2015, with the priority countries specified.
Source: Own analysis based on Report of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the OECD DAC 2016.

PREFERENTIAL LOANS

In 2015 Ethiopia and Angola received substantial funds in the form of preferential loans. It should be noted that these were fully tied loans – they must be spent on Polish goods and services. International organisations and experts on international development believe that tying loans is disadvantageous for beneficiary countries because it makes it impossible for them to select goods and services at best prices and of best quality on the global market or to purchase goods and services on local markets so that the funds can strengthen their local economies.

Preferential loans still represent an important portion of Polish bilateral development assistance, although this trend is on the decrease (in 2015 it was 17%, in 2014 20%, in 2013 approximately 30% and in 2012 approximately 40%). The policy of the Polish Ministry of Finance in the area of development assistance is not coherent with the policy pursued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, particularly with the 2012-2015 Multiannual Development Co-operation Programme. For example, Angola is not one of the priority countries for Polish development assistance; however, in 2015 it was the fourth largest recipient of it.

HUMANITARIAN AID FOR SYRIA

Syria was one of the countries from outside the list of priority countries which received an important portion of aid. Previously Poland's involvement in the crisis in and surrounding Syria was limited to supporting its neighbours - helping refugees or local communities. However, Polish humanitarian organisations have been working also inside Syria thanks to funding obtained from other sources (for example from individual donors, international non-governmental organisations and UN agencies or the EU Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

The Polish government provides humanitarian aid in two ways: through contributions to international EU funds (multilateral aid amounted to PLN 30.5 million in 2016) and as part of bilateral aid (PLN 16.2 million in 2016), transferring funds to Polish diplomatic missions and non-governmental organisations by means of calls for projects organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Polish government delivers part of its humanitarian aid at its own initiative, part of it is a mandatory contribution to the EU funds, including the European Commission budget.

Since the armed conflict in Syria began, Polish humanitarian aid for war victims and refugees, being part of the government's internal policy, has been systematically growing. In 2012 it stood at PLN 4.3 million, in 2016 it reached already as much as PLN 46.7 million (which was approximately higher by PLN 35 million compared to 2015). In 2015 humanitarian aid provided to Syrian refugees and to Ukraine accounted for approximately 6% of Poland's bilateral assistance, in 2016 it represented 3%.

TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS FOR 2016 AND BEYOND

In 2015, the MFA concluded its work on Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2016-20 with the final text adopted by the government in October 2015. CSOs view the new strategy as better than the previous one. It is more precise and realistic in the selection of priority partners, sectors and objectives. The new strategy refers – although vaguely – to international commitments regarding SDGs, policy coherence for development and aid effectiveness.

In a July meeting of the Polish parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, Joanna Wronecka, the Minister responsible for development cooperation declared that 2016 ODA will be doubled compared to 2015 (2015: €396mil, 2016: €680mil). It would be a great progress compared to the last 10 years.

Grupa Zagranica started discussing solutions for institutional support of the non-governmental sector that could be incorporated into the Polish development aid system. The current "Principles of cooperation between MFA and social partners" does not give space for building a long-lasting and valuable partnership that would include introducing new mechanisms, such as multiannual funding and core support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Polish government should:

- Present an operational plan for increasing the level of ODA to 0.33% of GNI by 2020.
- Develop a comprehensive program of cooperation with NGOs that includes financial support programs and capacity building activities dedicated to NGOs and other social partners.
- Ensure that policy coherence for development is considered not limited to policy areas directly connected to development, but also in other areas such as finance, education and climate policy.
- Increase the role of Development Cooperation Policy Council.
- Increase national parliament engagement in monitoring development cooperation policy implementation.