

## **Social dialogue in Central and Eastern European Countries for the further integration of the European dimension**

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- *Information initiative on the application procedures included in the pre-accession strategy*
- During 2002 and 2003, CEETTAR responded to requests from new organisations in various Central European countries that they should be better informed concerning the enlargement process.
- In this context, we were able, with operational funding from the Commission, to convince our partners in the new Member States that they will have to be keen to develop sectorial social dialogue in their countries.
- It was in this context that two seminars (27 September 2002 and 26 February 2004) were held in Tallinn (Estonia) and Brussels in order to prepare the organisations in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary for accession to the EU.

### “Social dialogue in Central and Eastern European Countries for the further integration of the European dimension”

This was the starting point of the author of the project, which aimed to demonstrate that, by training the human resources of the ARC organisations in Central European countries, it would be possible to improve their preparation and qualification for accession to the European Union.

#### ***The project objectives covered several categories:***

- General training in the methods of social dialogue.
- To demonstrate (persuade) to socio-economic organisations that, based on sectorial social dialogue, progressive changes are unavoidable if they are to access Community acquis and that preparations and consultation must take place prior to such changes.
- To implement a pilot project, which will be transferable to other candidate countries.

The training of officials from different organisations has focused on:

- **The enlargement process,**
- **The situation of agriculture:** Outline of the situation facing agriculture in 15 Member States

- **The situation in Central and Eastern European Countries**
- **Negotiations on the agricultural chapter**
- **Pre-accession aid instruments: PHARE SAPARD ISPA**

## **CONCLUSION**

- The project provides an “added value” in more general terms, by helping to bring the EU closer to its future citizens and particularly the agricultural sector in the relevant countries.
- Sectorial social dialogue is a channel for the consultation and involvement of civil society.
- The information and training provided have proved themselves to be a tool and basis for social dialogue and not the preserve of the administrations.
- CEETTAR is convinced that only a three-fold approach – **listening, information, dialogue** – will enable the agricultural and rural sectors of the new Member states to understand, under the best possible conditions and as rapidly as possible, the challenges and methods of the European system and feel part of this “challenge” in order to tackle the associated short-term risks and prepare for its long-term benefits.