



EPLO Conflict Prevention Newsletter

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Berlin Declaration on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Treaties of Rome

On 25 March 1957, six European countries, already linked by the European Coal and Steel Community, signed the Treaties of Rome, founding the European Economic Community and EURATOM. Fifty years later, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands have been joined by 21 other European countries in the now called European Union.

EU Member States and institutions celebrated this anniversary and decided to adopt a declaration re-asserting shared values and outlining ambitions for the future.

The [Declaration](#) starts with the main achievements of the European Union: bringing peace, prosperity and understanding in Europe, considering that EU Member States "have learnt the painful lessons of a history marked by bloody conflict.

Among the shared values, the declaration mentions that "We are striving for peace and freedom, for democracy and the rule of law, for mutual respect and shared responsibility, for prosperity and security, for tolerance and participation, for justice and solidarity". But those achievements are not taken for granted, and the EU will have to face major challenges, inside and outside its borders, mainly linked to the globalisation of the world. In order to respond to this, the declaration says that the EU is "committed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the world and to ensuring that people do not become victims of war, terrorism and violence", continuing by assuring that the EU "wants to promote freedom and development in the world (...), to drive back poverty, hunger and

disease [and] to continue to take a leading role in that fight". In the same vein, the third part of the declaration states that the EU will "continue to promote democracy, stability and prosperity beyond its borders".

The European Parliament as a whole warmly welcomed and endorsed the content of the Declaration as a statement of the basic principles of the Union even though some MEPs criticised the process by which the Declaration has been written.



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The declaration addresses some of the EPLO points published before the adoption of the Berlin Declaration which asked for the recognition of the realities of a world in which there is conflict, poverty, insecurity and inequality in many countries and regions as well as the need for conflict sensitive approaches in its external policies. The EPLO comments are available [here](#).

The Civil Society Contact Group also presented a statement entitled "Give us a reason to celebrate before 2057," asking European leaders to close the gap between intention and action and enable the EU to deliver on its promises. The statement is available [here](#).

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RoCS Seminars: "Learning from the Field"

On 28 and 29 March, two seminars on "Learning from the field" were held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Brussels within the Role of Civil Society in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management (RoCS) project. The events were organised jointly by EPLO and the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), in cooperation with the German Presidency and the Bertelsmann Stiftung.

On 28 March, around 35 NGO experts from Brussels and various conflict zones, such as Nepal, Sri Lanka, Somalia, DR Congo, and Kosovo, gathered to discuss the cooperation of the European Union with civil society actors in the field. During the morning session, two case studies on Somalia and DRC, prepared by Brigitte Fahrenhorst and Peter Sampson, were presented. The aim of the afternoon session was to identify commonalities with regard to EU-NGO cooperation between the Somalia and DRC contexts and other cases of state fragility by drawing on the experience of the many field experts present. The following was concluded: 1) one must distinguish between NGOs as a) privileged dialogue partners, b) service deliverers and c) as an independent policy; 2) international NGOs can play a valuable role in identifying local interlocutors, but they need to pay attention to exclusive or privileged relationships; 3) funding mechanisms need to be flexible, rapid, long term, and leave space for local solutions to local problems; 4) the EU's openness to civil society is very dependent on individual champions within the system. Finally, generic recommendations for improved EU-NGO cooperation in the field were developed to be presented to EU policy makers the next day.

On the second day of the event, around 25 institution representatives including Commission and Council Secretariat officials and Member State representatives joined the NGO experts. Following introductory comments by Nicolas Beger (EPLO) and Andreas Künne of the German Presidency, the Slovenian CivCom Representative, Peter Grk, moderated the first session. After the Somalia and DRC presentations, Antje Herrberg and Guy Banim of the CMI presented the comparative experiences and the general lessons learned developed the previous day.

The comments with regard to ESDP were: 1) NGOs can help increase transparency and accountability of ESDP missions and thereby help them achieve their objectives; 2) the value of cooperation with civil society at EU and at the field level is still not universally recognised and there is a need for a comprehensive approach of close interaction between ESDP missions and

civil society actors from the planning phase all the way through to evaluation; 3) NGOs who have been demanding partnership recognise that they now must live up to the claim that there is value added; 4) there is no need for new strategies or documents, but there is a need for culture shift and consistent outreach.

The advice to the PSC was, among other, that 1) fact finding and preplanning is to take into account NGO experience to ensure sustainability of the peace effort, 2) modalities for routine information exchange between relevant agencies and civil society in the field are to be developed; 3) there should be exchange of views and feedback in view of ESDP missions. The first examples on the Brussels level (NGO presentations to CivCom in planning/review phase) are very promising. The importance of corrective and flanking actions was also stressed.

The European Commission (EC) should ensure appropriate selection and training of its staff and develop innovative approaches to working in areas with no state authority. The EC could play an overall coordination role. Where ESDP instruments are also deployed, it is crucial to recognise that conflict prevention and crisis management is not the sole competence of one or the other EU pillar.

During the second session, chaired by Martina Weitsch (Quaker Council for European Affairs/EPLO), the European institutions had the opportunity to present their positions and views on EU-NGO cooperation in the field and on the EU level and to react to the recommendations expressed by NGOs. The Council General Secretariat's presentation took the recommendations developed under the RoCS I project as a basis and pointed out that a lot of work had been done to cooperate with civil society in Brussels as well as at the field level, but that some improvement was needed. The lessons from civil society cooperation in Kosovo were presented by a former UNMIK official. More involvement of local civil society in policymaking and, at the same time, better mapping and quality control of NGOs were some of the conclusions he drew. Finally, the European Commission's representative described the many functions for which the Commission works with NGOs, e.g. policy input, operational capacity, legitimacy reasons. He described DG Relex's engagement through the Stability Instrument, the Conflict Prevention Network, and a series of mediation workshops. He promised that the EC would do its "homework" assigned by NGO representatives at this event and look at how to channel more funding to *local* civil society.

EU-Africa Strategy Underway

Preparations are well underway for the drafting of the EU-Africa Joint Strategy, scheduled to be adopted at the EU-Africa Summit to be held in Lisbon at the end of 2007. This initiative is part of the ongoing EU-Africa dialogue (also known as the Cairo process) which was launched with the EU-Africa summit in Cairo in 2000. Typically, this dialogue process includes semi-annual meetings of ministers, annual meetings of the Commission and AU Commission, and regular dialogue with delegations and AU officials in Addis Ababa.

In an effort to ensure that the debate is not restricted to officials and policymakers alone, the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) launched a multi-faceted consultation. Funded by the African and European Commissions and supported by the Finnish, German and Portuguese EU Presidencies of 2006 and 2007, the consultation centres on an internet forum (<http://europafrica.org/>), which enables individuals, organisations, and platforms to submit both comments and relevant research

documents. The website is supplemented by various meetings, including a conference for non-state actors to be held in late April. The results of the April meeting and the comments from the internet consultation will be compiled for the 14 May EU-Africa Ministerial Troika meeting.

The process of consultation with civil society has been sharply criticized for being flawed both in method and timeframe. CONCORD, the confederation of European NGOs for relief and development, submitted comments calling for more open engagement with African civil society and institutions and proposed a longer period for consultation with the Lisbon Summit as a milestone rather than an endpoint. According to ECDPM, the Africa Union has received assistance in conducting a civil society consultation process, and there is a civil society forum scheduled to take place in June in advance of the July AU Summit in Accra.

This EU-Africa Civil Society Consultation is focused on four main themes:

Peace and security, linked to the development of a continental peace and security architecture;

Governance, including human rights and democracy, and the African Peer Review Mechanism

Regional integration and trade, touching, amongst other, the role of the AU in the Economic Partnership Agreements and in the framework of the WTO

Key development issues, including items such as debt, environment, food security, but also the return of stolen cultural goods.

Democratic Republic of Congo

At least 100 people were killed in four days of violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo at the end of March. Fighting broke out between supporters of President Joseph Kabila and supporters of Jean Pierre Bemba after Mr. Bemba's supporters rejected a government plan that called for them to disarm. An uneasy calm returned to Kinshasa by 26 March, but there is fear that the fledgling government may not survive another outbreak of violence.

Somalia

Fighting broke out in Mogadishu on Thursday, 29 March, between Ethiopian troops and Somali insurgents in what some call the worst violence in 15 years. Nearly 50,000 residents have fled the capital in the previous two weeks. Food supplies are dangerously low, and poor security has impeded humanitarian access to the displaced. Ugandan AU troops have been unable to stop the fighting, despite their mandate to replace the Ethiopian troops who have been in place since the end of 2006. Hundreds of additional Ethiopian troops arrived in Mogadishu on 31 March. Somalia's interim government still plans to go ahead with a reconciliation meeting of elders, politicians, and former warlords in two weeks.

Building a Future on Peace and Justice

The Governments of Finland, Germany and Jordan, together with the International Center for Transitional Justice and the Crisis Management Initiative are organising a **high level conference in Nuremberg on 25-27 June 2007**.

The primary goal of the Conference is to promote better understanding and better management of tensions that may arise between the goals of "peace" and "justice" in the course of peace-brokering or in post-conflict peace-building. To achieve this, the Conference will build on practical experiences from political practitioners and civil society as well as on academic input.

The Conference will seek to mandate the drafting of political recommendations (Nuremberg Manifesto) that will address the question of how peace processes can best deliver both sustainable peace and justice for victims of past crimes. Political recommendations from the Conference will be directed to decision-makers within Governments and international organisations, in particular the United Nations and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

For further information, please see the official [website](#).



Transitional Justice: Not Just Courtrooms and Truth Commissions

It is hard to believe, but it was only six years ago that the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) opened its doors in New York. Today, with seven offices on four continents and projects in more than 30 countries, the ICTJ has become a renowned actor and advocate for addressing past human rights abuse in order to prevent future violations.

While human rights organizations have traditionally focused on documenting violations and lobbying against abuse, the Center was founded on a new direction in human rights advocacy: helping societies heal by addressing and accounting for past crimes after a period of repressive rule or armed conflict.

The ICTJ assists societies grappling with legacies of human rights abuse by providing them with comparative information, policy analysis, and legal and technical assistance. In addition to specific country programmes, the Center seeks to develop understanding of the field through its research work as well as to strengthen local organizations and activists involved in transitional justice by building global information-sharing networks. The ICTJ also engages and informs senior policymakers in intergovernmental institutions and national governments on a wide range of transitional justice issues.

The Center deploys a holistic approach to justice in its work to combat impunity. Transitional justice approaches encompass various dimensions and can be both judicial and nonjudicial. "In an increasing number of countries, local actors have begun to emphasize nonjudicial measures," says Mark Freeman, Director of the ICTJ Brussels Office. "These have often taken the form of truth commissions. The Center has considerable, well-established expertise in this area, and has provided assistance to several past and currently operating truth commissions." Other nonjudicial approaches include comprehensive state-sponsored victim reparation programmes, justice and security sector reform measures such as census, identification and vetting policies, and the building of monuments and memorials.

Nevertheless, Mr. Freeman points out that "Prosecutorial efforts are also critical, and should generally be pursued as part of an integrated approach to dealing with a legacy of mass abuse." To this end, the ICTJ firmly advocates the application of international human rights and humanitarian law. At the same time, the Center seeks to reconcile its fundamental belief in universal standards with a deep and nuanced appreciation of the various unique cultural and historical contexts that it encounters in its work around the world. The ICTJ strongly believes that all stakeholders in a transition process must be consulted and participate in the design and implementation of transitional justice policies in their respective countries. Ultimately, the Center sees transitional justice approaches as helping to significantly increase civic trust and reduce the likelihood of future conflict or violence.

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Publications

ICTJ Launches First Report on ICC Outreach

Report Stresses Importance of Victim Outreach and Greater Visibility in the DRC

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) launched ***Sensibilisation à la CPI en RDC : Sortir du « Profil Bas »***, an in-depth in-country assessment of the outreach efforts of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Launched from the Center's offices in Brussels, Kinshasa, and New York, the report analyzes the Court's outreach, profile, and reputation in the DRC. Congolese Thomas Lubanga is the first person the Court is prosecuting for war crimes.

"Not only is this a critical time in the Congo's transition to peace, the DRC is also a major test for the ICC," said Alpha Fall, Senior Associate at the ICTJ's Kinshasa office. "If the Court hopes to promote a culture of justice and respect for human rights during the course of this trial, it must reach out to victims and educate the general public about its activities in the DRC."

The report takes a critical look at the ICC's outreach strategy in the DRC, suggesting that it has so far fallen short of reaching out effectively to the many victims of the Congo's brutal conflicts.

More than an analysis, the report also aims to provide a roadmap for the immediate future, giving the ICC recommendations on how to improve its outreach efforts, for instance, by encouraging it to develop a closer relationship with the Congolese civil society, which can ensure better information of the victims most concerned by the trial.

To access the full report, see [Sensibilisation à la CPI en RDC : Sortir du "Profil Bas"](#) (in French). The report will be made available in English in the near future at www.ictj.org.

Aid for Peace—A Guide to planning and Evaluation in Conflict Zones

This new book by Thania Paffenholz and Luc Reychler is providing processes, methods, tools and many examples and experiences from and for working with peacebuilding, development and humanitarian policies, programmes and projects for and in conflict zones. The details of this book are available [here](#).



The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office — EPLO

EPLO is the platform of European NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks active in the field of peacebuilding, who share an interest in promoting sustainable peacebuilding policies among decision-makers in the European Union.

EPLO aims to influence the EU so it promotes and implements measures that lead to sustainable peace between states and within states and peoples, and that transform and resolve conflicts non-violently. EPLO wants the EU to recognise the crucial connection between peacebuilding, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development world wide and the crucial role NGOs have to play in sustainable EU efforts for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and crisis management.

EPLO advances the interests of its members through common policy positions and consequently advocating for those common positions. EPLO disseminates information and promotes understanding of EU policies of concern to its Members. The Office builds also solidarity and cooperation amongst its members and with other relevant NGO networks. Finally, EPLO raises awareness about the contribution the EU should make to peacebuilding and the need to hold the EU accountable to its own political commitments of helping secure peace within and outside its borders.

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