



## **Civil Society Dialogue Network Geographic Meeting**

# **Civil society perspectives on lessons learned from conflict prevention and peacebuilding approaches to addressing the root causes of (i) forced migration and (ii) violent extremism in the Horn of Africa**

Thursday 9 June 2016, Brussels

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

This document is a compilation of the key recommendations made by participants in the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) Geographic Meeting entitled 'Civil society perspectives on lessons learned from conflict prevention and peacebuilding approaches to addressing the root causes of (i) forced migration and (ii) violent extremism in the Horn of Africa' which took place on Thursday 9 June 2016 in Brussels. (NB/ The following recommendations do not necessarily represent the views of the organisers, nor can they be attributed to any individual participant or participating institution.) A full report of the meeting will be available soon.

### **Conflict-sensitive approaches to preventing violent extremism / countering radicalisation in the Horn of Africa**

- Many EU projects are unnecessarily labelled as countering/preventing violent extremism (CVE/ PVE). This terminology is often counterproductive and should be carefully considered.
- All actions aimed at PVE / countering radicalisation in the Horn of Africa should be underpinned by an overarching strategy, rather than government-led, security-driven counterterrorism (CT) measures, and should seek to involve the moderate Muslim community.
- The EU should avoid explicitly directing funding at CVE activities. Instead, it should support a broader range of actors which are working to build community cohesion, facilitate religious dialogue, etc.
- A lot of EU funding goes into what is often locally perceived as negative counter-messaging. The EU should instead focus on positive messaging, in order to give young people a sense of belonging.
- Many EU-funded CVE initiatives tend to focus on certain countries (e.g. Kenya, Somalia) at the expense of others. Given that VE has a transnational dimension, the EU should also fund projects in Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti where CVE is not sufficiently addressed.
- Before further developing additional CVE/PVE initiatives and programmes, the EU needs to carefully assess and map out what has worked, what has not, and capitalise on lessons learned.
- Local context analysis is decisive in understanding local risk factors and the interplay between the key drivers of radicalisation. Responses to VE therefore need to be highly contextualised, innovative and proactive.
- There is a need to take a holistic approach to CVE/PVE, and to amplify existing communal capacities, including through harnessing traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution at the community level.
- PVE interventions should seek to address less tangible issues such as identity and belonging, and the historical grievances underlying them.
- The relationship between VE and other forms of violence needs to be explored more deeply, giving due consideration to the specificity of each context.
- Better rehabilitation and reintegration processes are required for former Al Shabaab fighters in order to ensure that they do not become radicalised and/or recruited by extremist groups.
- Addressing economic factors alone is insufficient to tackle the issue of home-grown terrorism.
- The EU has established a number of partnerships with oppressive regimes as part of its CVE efforts. It should place greater emphasis on holding its partner governments accountable for human rights violations.

- Most EU actions in the Horn of Africa ignore the potential of women to act as powerful agents of change in their communities, including by detecting early signs of radicalisation and challenging extremist narratives at home through education. The EU should aim to amplify women's resilience and capitalise on their key role in preventing radicalisation.
- With the lines between statebuilding and humanitarian actions becoming increasingly blurred, the EU needs to create spaces for principled action so that those NGOs which do not want to be implicated in devising political solutions are able to decide for themselves which elements of CVE they wish to address.
- The international community, including the EU, should study options for engaging in constructive dialogue with both individual violent extremists and the groups to which they belong.

### **Conflict-sensitive approaches to tackling the root causes of forced migration in the Horn of Africa**

- There is a need for deeper analysis in order to further understand the push and pull factors in forced migration in the Horn of Africa.
- The EU should place more emphasis on analysing the conflict sensitivity of the policies and partnership agreements on which its relationships with the countries in the Horn of Africa are based. In this context, it should focus on its partner governments' handling of the migration-development nexus in order to identify and minimise the unintended negative impacts of their policies.
- When dealing with its partner governments in the Horn of Africa, the EU should ensure that good governance is at the top of the agenda. Otherwise, all subsequent actions will only address the symptoms rather than root causes of migration.
- The EU should continue to support system-wide, multi-stakeholder conflict analysis, especially in countries such as Somalia and South Sudan in order both to inform policy and to foster timely joint actions.
- Border conflicts require participatory conflict analyses which involve local people, through intra- and inter-community dialogue and trust-building.
- The EU should ensure that the long-term development aid perspective for the Horn of Africa is not overshadowed by the current pressure to manage the migration crisis in Europe or by short-term interventions such as those related to the Khartoum Process.
- The EU should enforce conflict-sensitive funding standards in all sectors. It should require funding applicants to conduct conflict analysis as an integral part of their proposed interventions and to reflect conflict-sensitive practices in their monitoring and evaluation.
- EU development assistance aimed at addressing the root causes of forced migration should be conditioned by specific benchmarks and criteria for measuring progress towards implementation.
- Decision-making around the EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa, should be more transparent.
- The EU should support capacity building for actors, including civil society organisations (CSOs) in its partner countries, on integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into all of their activities.
- The EU should focus on reducing the barriers to mobility at the intra-regional level in the Horn of Africa. This could, in turn, contribute to reducing migration flows to the EU.
- The EU should be more vocal in expressing concern and criticism regarding human rights violations committed by governments in the Horn of Africa.
- The closure of the Dadaab refugee camp in the north of Kenya could exacerbate forced migration. The EU should ensure that the process of repatriation is conflict-sensitive, giving particular attention to vulnerable groups, including women and children.
- The EU should devise actions aimed at empowering young people and at increasing their economic and social self-reliance. This could help to prevent migration and to increase resilience against recruitment by extremist groups.
- The EU should try to address the linkages between forced migration and VE as part of its comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises.

#### **Civil Society Dialogue Network**

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a mechanism for dialogue between civil society and EU policy-makers on issues related to peace and conflict. It is co-financed by the European Union (Instrument for Stability). It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), a civil society network, in co-operation with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The second phase of the CSDN will last from 2014 to 2016. For more information, please visit the [EPLO website](#).