

## **Seminar on EU Accession and Peacebuilding 28-29 September 2010**

funded by the Initiative for Peacebuilding

Tuesday, 28 September

### **Background and objectives**

The EPLO seminar 'EU Accession and Peacebuilding' hosted by Fractal in Belgrade was organised to discuss civil society's expectations and concerns regarding the EU accession process' impact on peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the Western Balkans, to provide participants with an overview of the relation between conflict and the EU Accession process, to illustrate examples of advocacy on EU accession and peacebuilding and to develop suggestions on how the EU accession process could function as a catalyst for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

### **Participants**

Participation for the first day was restricted to representatives from civil society, bringing together EPLO member organisations active in the Western Balkans and their partners, as well as other interested civil society organisations. The second day of the seminar was public and included panel discussions with EU and Member States' representatives as well as officials from the Serbian government.

### **Welcome and Introduction**

Mr. Filip Pavlović (Director, NGO Fractal) and Ms Catherine Woollard (Executive Director, EPLO) welcomed participants and made some introductory remarks:

The European Union (EU) itself is an example of institutionalized conflict transformation, which is of special relevance to the Western Balkans and adds to the importance of the EU as catalyst for political developments. Some of the institutional characteristics of the EU offer solutions to the political reality of Western Balkans (e.g. depoliticised expert-level discussions or long-term perspective of EU).

Both strengths and weaknesses of the EU accession process are highly visible in the region. A striking example of a weakness is the lack of policy coherence on the part of the EU. Also, it is clear that the EU accession process will have to address the existing post-war and post-conflict challenges in the Western Balkans.

Questions that the seminar should address are:

- What is the impact of EU accession policy on conflict and peace?
- How can EU accession policy be improved?
- What can we do as civil society to improve the process?

The different kinds of policies that are considered in the seminar are all in transition at the moment due to the establishment of the EEAS.

What can civil society learn from previous accession rounds?

- Focus on implementation and not solely adoption of policies;
- Avoid broad and general recommendations;
- CSOs should analyse the processes at EU level and adapt the presentation of our work to the target audience: e.g. Commission is interested in technical work; MS are interested in political considerations with strong national interest bias;
- When advocating on EU accession, CSOs should refer to the double standards: condition for candidate countries are higher than the conditions applied in the EU;
- Separate policy and funding: EPLO is working on ensuring that there is adequate funding available for peacebuilding work within EU funding for the region.

From EPLO's side, the aim is to foster civil society cooperation across and between regions in the form of joint advocacy.

Catherine Woollard thanked EPLO member organisations who were involved in organising the seminar such as Nansen Dialogue Centres, KTK, Saferworld, Forum ZFD, PDCI and especially the Fractal team for their work and Josephine Liebl for organising the seminar.

### **Session 1: EU Accession and Conflict: problem analysis**

The objective of the first session was to provide participants with an overview of the relation between conflict and the EU accession process in order to inform the discussions held throughout the day. The session was chaired by Ms Catherine Woollard and included contributions by Ms Jelena Milić (Executive Director of the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies CEAS) and Mr. Christian Pfeifer (ForumZFD):

The speakers raised the following points (which are not necessarily the views of EPLO):

It is important that civil society in the Western Balkans remains focused on the issue of peacebuilding and EU accession, since recently a lot of attention has been directed towards 'new' topics such as economic considerations.

It is useful to compare the EU enlargement of Central Eastern European (CEE) countries and Western Balkan countries:

- CEE did not have a direct recent experience of conflict which made regional cooperation less problematic;
- CEE countries saw NATO as safeguard of their independence and statehood;
- NATO and EU worked together: NATO overseeing SSR and EU assessing progress regarding Copenhagen criteria;
- Cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) which is a requirement of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) is also different from the previous accession round. In Serbia, cooperation with the ICTY overlaps with the personnel and institutional needed changes inside the security sector.

In the previous EU enlargement, the EU successfully made use of its soft power and was able to support a successful democratic transition. Politicians in this region mostly fail to realise the support the EU accession process can provide for democratisation.

The EU CSDP missions and EU accession process are contributing to peacebuilding and development. However, the lack of consistency in EU and MS policies is problematic and sends the wrong signals to the region.

All EU efforts to support transitional justice and the work of the ICTY have contributed greatly to awareness and provision of facts. It is therefore important to focus on transitional justice and increase the competition for democratic institutions within the region. The RECOM initiative should be supported by civil society, despite the fact that donors tend to allocate resources away from peacebuilding issues.

The European Commission does not have a mandate to look into the defense sector, which poses an obstacle especially regarding BiH and Serbia. Another problem is that the EU does not have the power to prescribe how countries should be organised internally.

The current financial climate and involvement in Afghanistan should not lower the standards for NATO and EU accession. The EU should be more consistent and clear in its support to the countries of the region in order to overcome blockages on the road to the EU. A possible next step for the EU should be to send the questionnaires to Western Balkan states to allow for an evaluation of the state of affairs.

A summary of the results of the participants' questionnaire which was sent out in advance of the seminar was presented. A lot of information and useful material has been gathered through the questionnaire, the answers have been clustered according to how many times certain issues were mentioned. Please refer to the summary of the questionnaires in the Annex and Christian Pfeifer's PowerPoint presentation.

The speakers' presentations were followed by a question and answer session. Participants raised the following points:

- EU accession policy does not cover enough of the drivers of conflict that were identified in the questionnaire;
- The role of the EU delegations is changing with the Lisbon Treaty and the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) to become more political;
- CSOs should consider how to cooperate with governments and become more proactive in approaching reformers in governmental institutions;
- Twinning process between Western Europe and CEE countries supported the societal change in CEE countries by assisting CSOs in holding their governments to account;
- Not all peacebuilding that has to be done in the Western Balkans can be accommodated within the EU accession process;
- Initiative from CSOs which signed a declaration in support of visa liberalisation for citizens from BiH and Albania sends a strong signal that civil society in the Western Balkans is dedicated to EU accession of the whole region;
- There should be more cooperation between CSOs from Western Balkans and the EU so that advocacy messages are channeled to policy makers at EU level;
- When approached, EU delegations are often interested to receive input from civil society;
- Cooperation with governmental bodies is easy on some issues such as education but can be rather difficult on others which are perceived as harder issues, such as security sector;
- The quality and level of human rights protection will decrease after EU accession. In the case of Croatia, civil society is currently considering the challenges it will face when joining the EU. In this respect, the double standards between current EU MS and candidate countries should be highlighted;
- What should the approach of civil society be to the dilemma related to the fact that decisions are political and processes are technical?
- Civil society should not solely focus on what criteria that have to be fulfilled to join the EU but should concentrate on what changes they would like to see;

- Exclusion of Kosovo from the visa liberalisation process is contributing to demoralising people in Kosovo and causing tensions. The upcoming dialogue is a promising development which could address the current obstacles to establishing 'normal' relations between Serbia and Kosovo;
- Within Serbia, a genuine decentralisation process and political participation at the local level is needed;
- While civil society is a driver of social change, its potential is limited by the unwillingness of politicians in the Western Balkans to engage with them.

## **Session 2: Developing civil society recommendations on Peacebuilding in EU Accession**

The objective of the second session was to share experiences of civil society advocacy on EU accession policy and to develop civil society recommendations on peacebuilding and the EU accession. The session was chaired by Ms Catherine Woollard and included contributions by Ms Maja Stajčić and Ms Hanna Sällström (both Kvinna till Kvinna), Mr. Filip Pavlović (Fractal), and Mr. Astrit Istrefi (Saferworld).

The speakers raised the following points (which are not necessarily the views of EPLO):

In the Western Balkans, women's organisations were the first to do cross-community peacebuilding. However, they are absent from current official political debates. Women are affected differently by threats to human security, which can be seen as the increased rate of sexual violence and human trafficking in situations of conflict. Inclusion of women in peacebuilding is crucial for sustainability, efficiency and democracy within a country, which is why their participation in peace processes should be supported. EPLO coordinated the putting together of ten civil society suggestions for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 which approximately 80 organisations have signed, which provides practical recommendations and is still open for further signatures from organisations.

The European Commission started the oral and written consultation with CSOs on the Progress Reports to better understand the gap between adoption and implementation of legislation. In both 2009 and 2010, Kvinna till Kvinna submitted written input to the Progress Report and participated in the consultation meetings in Brussels.

The objectives of this activity were to:

- (i) ensure that the gender perspective is addressed adequately in the Progress Reports and not reduced only to issues of violence against women
- (ii) influence governments in the Western Balkans via the EU
- (iii) increase the knowledge on EU accession policy of Kvinna till Kvinna and their partner organisations and
- (iv) strengthen the partnership between Kvinna till Kvinna and their partner organisations.

Civil society contribution to the Progress Reports led to a difference in the wording of the Reports, especially regarding the important difference between adoption and implementation of legislation. Lessons learned from contributing to the two consecutive rounds were:

- (i) comments should be limited to the policy area an organisation has expertise in and should be focused on the three most important issues;
- (ii) after sending in the written submission to the EU Commission in Brussels, it is important to meet with the EU officials in the regional EU delegation to ensure that they have the same information and
- (iii) information has to be presented in a way that the officials can make use of it.

During the oral consultation, it is important to be concise and focus on the three most important issues. The responsibility of presenting should also be shared between representatives of local and

international organisations. To avoid repetition and strengthen each others points, it is helpful to be aware of the other organisations present at the oral consultation. Benefits from the contribution of the Kvinna till Kvinna:

- (i) improvement of gender equality perspective in the Progress Report;
- (ii) more accurate information in the Progress Report;
- (iii) both Kvinna till Kvinna and their partner organisations build their capacity regarding relations to the EU institutions and increased their knowledge about the accession process;
- (iv) establishment of regular contact with EU officials.

The EU has considerable expertise in cross-border cooperation which can be used for the Western Balkans. One of the challenges for cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans is the lack of decentralisation. Implications of multi-level governance at EU level for advocacy:

- (i) challenge to use the peaks of political interest to promote a more long-term political strategy such as cross-border cooperation;
- (ii) issues that are not included in a specific political mechanism i.e. Progress Report has to be advocated for differently;
- (iii) important to meet and consult with different EU institutions as well as civil society and think tanks.

Fractal was involved in the Balkan Peace Park, a cross-border park that is a demilitarised zone for eco-tourism and nature conservation from the beginning (2000). It is located on the triangle between Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo where the majority of the population is Albanian. It was well received by the three national governments and is included in their policy documents as well as international conservationist organisations. The EU, however, took little interest in the project and it struggles to obtain enough funding.

Enclavia, a joint project of Fractal and IKV Pax Christi is a self-advocacy activity. The objective of this project was to increase the capacity of the Kosovo Serb community to advocate for their needs and create opportunities for them to speak to relevant stakeholders and channel their advocacy. Thereby, the project co-operated with certain EU actors to include some of the needs to the agenda of the comprehensive settlement proposal (Ahtisaari package) and the document that served as foundation of the constitution of Kosovo. Fractal was challenged within their own society for being involved in the development of the Ahtisaari package. Success was achieved regarding broadcasting in minority languages and issues related to decentralisation.

The Ibar initiative which was launched last year is aimed at creating a European micro region along the Ibar river which connects Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia. The Ibar initiative is looking into four levels of connecting municipalities, (i) local governments, (ii) local businesses, (iii) local media and (iv) people to people exchange: civil society organisations and also non-organised groups. Fractal presented the idea to different stakeholders at EU level among others Commissioner Füle who then referred to a form of Visegrád-Plus as a solution to the problem of north Kosovo and the Council of Ministers. Fractal is currently exploring the possibility of a strategic partnership with Poland for this project. The main objective is for the Ibar initiative to be established as a European micro region, which would allow the Ibar initiative to access EU funding. The Ibar initiative is an open network and interested civil society organisations are welcome to join.

Saferworld has worked on the EU's CSDP mission in Kosovo since 2007. A participatory conflict analysis conducted by Saferworld and their partner organisations in Kosovo in 2007 showed that the main drivers of conflict are the confusion between powers held by EULEX and the Kosovo government and a lack of transparency and accountability. Advocacy was undertaken in Kosovo and Brussels and Saferworld was involved in developing a training package for EULEX staff which was focused on possibilities for cooperation between EULEX and civil society.

It is important that outreach for CSDP missions is not limited to media communication, but based on consultation with civil society and local constituencies on a broader level. Saferworld joined the work of the Human Rights Review Panel and organised public debates in various municipalities. In April 2010, Saferworld and EPLO organised a civil society seminar on EULEX and civil society participation in Pristina. Evaluation of engagement with EULEX: (i) some progress has been made in consulting with civil society organisations, unfortunately not much in regard to local communities (ii) transparency and accountability still needs to be increased to avoid confusion about the actual mandate and role of EULEX.

EPLO is currently considering the development of a scheme of alternative reports for CSDP mission which would bring in civil society analysis of the countries in which the CSDP mission is deployed and would monitor the impact and effectiveness of CSDP missions.

The speakers' presentations were followed by a question and answer session. Participants raised the following points:

- It is important that projects are informed by the realities of the people living in the respective communities and communicate back to them at the same time;
- What are other policy processes and advocacy targets CSOs are involved in?
- The need for civil society organisations to be proactive and provide EU Delegations with concrete recommendations as well as the importance of personal relationships with EU officials was stressed;
- The RECOM initiative is a good example of a regional civil society initiative that succeeded in attaining financial (though no political) support<sup>1</sup> from EU institutions;
- CSOs should not only focus on how they can benefit from or use the EU accession process but think about how the EU can benefit from their experience and knowledge in conflict-affected countries;
- Civil society should be wary of being instrumentalised by EU and other institutions to achieve their mandate and should for instance question the current push for political support for RECOM which comes too soon;
- Cross-border advocacy is not only an activity but a process itself, building long-term relations with sharing of risks and benefits;
- Civil society monitoring of the CSDP missions is vital and much needed;
- Civil society should constantly bear in mind the impact of their work and be conflict sensitive themselves; the challenge is to bring the ideas, needs and empirical evidence from the community level to policy makers;
- The idea of Visegrád-Plus is politically a very sensitive topic in Kosovo.
- It was mentioned that the idea behind it is to answer certain political challenges through development measures.

### **Working Group Session and reporting back to the plenary**

The participants divided into three working groups on the following topics:

- Transitional Justice, reconciliation and RECOM
- Crossborder peacebuilding and regional cooperation

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that Pierre Mirel, Director of Relations with Western Balkans at DG Enlargement in the European Commission expressed the European Commission's political support for RECOM in his speech at the 5<sup>th</sup> regional forum on transitional justice in Budva in May 2009. Similarly, the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament hosted an exchange of views with representatives of the RECOM initiative in September 2010.

- Civil society input into the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue

The working groups considered the following questions:

- What are the mechanisms and entry points for advocacy on peacebuilding at national and EU level?
- What are the advocacy objectives and messages?
- What are the resources available and needed and what activities can be carried out?

After the discussion, the working groups reported back to the plenary:

### **Transitional Justice, reconciliation and RECOM**

Advocacy objectives:

- Transitional justice itself as a long-term objective: healing and establishment of justice and truth;
- Increase the EU's conflict sensitivity and consideration for issues related to transitional justice in for instance programming;
- Develop a holistic understanding of transitional justice, e.g. the debate should not be limited to ICTY;
- Ensure that the gender dimension receives adequate attention in transitional justice processes.

Entry points:

- End of ICTY mandate: how can knowledge be transferred?
- Establishment of the EEAS: new Heads of Delegation
- Progress Reports (written input and oral consultation)
- Approach Member States that are interested in issues of transitional justice

Advocacy messages:

- Need to monitor the performance of national courts in relation to war crimes.
- Present civil society suggestions on how to implement transitional justice e.g. active prosecution of perpetrators of rape, promote work with war veterans support further fact finding.
- Present facts that show that the accession of Western Balkan countries is different from CEE enlargement (e.g. Croatia will join the EU with around 90.000 landmines).

Participants raised the following issues in response to the working group's presentation:

- Local, national and regional RECOM consultations discusses many of the issues raised and some of them are already addressed (e.g. ICTY exit strategy).
- Should CSOs advocate against steps towards EU accession if they see criteria for transitional justice threatened?

### **Cross-border activities and regional coordination**

Entry points:

- Important to start on the local level and seek tangible effects of cooperation.
- Key actors: NGO sector, local governments and institutions, respective ministries, EU MS Embassies and donors (especially those who have a regional strategy).

Mechanisms:

- Develop joint strategies and programmes with different organisations that have offices over the region or with partner organisations;
- In joint strategies, gender should be a cross-cutting issue and the role of women in peace processes should be taken into account.

#### Advocacy objectives and messages

- Both objectives and messages should be informed by experience and analysis from the community level, especially regarding border populations;
- Working on a regional level can help to differentiate between national trends and structural causes.

#### Activities and resources:

- Financial resources are lacking;
- Expertise and experience is available and should be coordinated.

#### Activities:

- Bringing together CSOs from the region in meetings similar to this seminar;
- Meetings with EU officials could be conducted jointly to highlight regional aspect;
- Use the opportunity of Progress Reports to influence decision makers in Brussels.

#### Participants raised the following issues in response to the working group's presentation:

- The EU welcomes concrete suggestions for regional cooperation;
- In the long-term, regional cooperation should have concrete results and should not be an end in itself;
- Economic cooperation is an important part of regional cooperation, which is often forgotten by peacebuilders;
- Some EU supported mechanisms Crossborder Institution Building (CBIB) is an EU Commission funded project based in Belgrade provides capacity building for local authorities, institutions, NGOs, etc;
- It is not necessary to establish new structures for cooperation but to engage in each other's work and to be informed about regional initiatives;
- November: Launch of a call for proposals for regional cross-cultural activities, which will provide the opportunity to put together a regional project;
- Regional Development Agencies in the Western Balkans are responsible to establish official regional cooperation between themselves;
- The last two IPA call for proposals (one on interethnic dialogue and one on intercultural dialogue) had a regional dimensions;
- There are many thematic networks in the region that connect stakeholders, e.g. cities, that could serve as a good source of knowledge and experience;
- From EPLO's side, cross-border cooperation would mean bringing civil society analysis to policy makers at EU level, using the Civil Society Dialogue Network that EPLO manages.

#### **Civil society input into the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue**

##### Formulation of eight basic principles that should be taken into account:

- Remove obstacles for citizens that would like to cooperate and meet each other;
- The purpose of the dialogue should not be EU accession but a belief that dialogue itself is necessary;
- Negotiations should include opportunities to consult the public;
- A consultative process should involve people affected by the issues that are discussed;
- Topics of negotiations should focus on the improvements of citizens' lives;
- Both the negotiation process and the outcome should contribute to peacebuilding;
- Existing dialogue processes between Kosovo and Serbia citizens should not be harmed by the official dialogue;
- Negotiators should take ownership and responsibility for the (intermediary) outcomes of the dialogue process.



Next steps:

Basic principles should be discussed with a larger group of civil society and hopefully endorsed by more CSOs. They could then be submitted to the official dialogue as input.

Participants raised the following issues in response to the working group's presentation:

- It would be good to have civil society from all over the Western Balkans and the EU on board;
- One could be even more ambitious and involve civil society more formally in the negotiations, making the link between track 1, 2 and 3 negotiations;
- It is important for civil society not to be consumed by the official dialogue but to take the ongoing crossborder co-operation they are involved in as a point of departure to feed into the process;
- Within the dialogue, women's participation in the peace process should be explicitly spelled out. EPLO is hosting a meeting on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and in particular women's participation in peace processes in the framework of the Civil Society Dialogue Network on 23 November in Brussels.
- To what extent is civil society engagement in the dialogue possible? Civil society should not become politicised in the process. There are risks attached to the involvement in the process and often the pressure comes from within the own society and CSOs should evaluate and mitigate those risks.
- If CSOs agree on guiding principles that would lead the dialogue, a considerable amount of risks are mitigated.

### **Preparation of the next day's discussions**

Participants collected issues to be raised at the panel discussions with representatives from the EU, Member States and the Serbian governments the next day:

- Applying lessons learned from conflict transformation in the region;
- Limits of EU accession to address all peacebuilding issues;
- Point out the risks of conflicts that were identified in the questionnaire and that are not currently tackled in the EU accession policy framework;
- EU accession can itself fuel conflict;
- Where does the EU accession process start according to EU officials?
- How can EU accession be accommodated in the bigger picture of building peace and preventing conflict?
- Concrete outcomes of the seminar's discussion, such as the CSO guiding principles for the Serbia Kosovo dialogue should be presented in the second panel discussion.

### **Section on follow up/ joint advocacy work**

The discussions held at the seminar could be the starting point for the development of joint advocacy recommendations on EU accession policy. A possibility for taking this forward would be regular meetings of EPLO members and their partners in the region. EPLO would be willing to facilitate an Ad-Hoc Working Group as a vehicle that can be used to react to channel advocacy work into EU policy if it would be useful to do so.

Ms Catherine Woollard thanked Mr. Filip Pavlović, Ms Ana Ranković and Ms Josephine Liebl for organising the seminar as well as the participants for their interesting contributions throughout the day.

Wednesday, 29 September

### **First Panel: EU Accession and conflict in the Western Balkans**

The session was chaired by Ms Tanja Popović (Nansen Dialogue Centre Belgrade) and included contributions by Mr. Filip Pavlović (Fractal), Ms Catherine Woollard (EPLO), Mr. Thomas Gnocchi (EU Delegation Serbia) and Mr. Srdjan Gligorijević (British Embassy).

Ms Tanja Popović introduced the group of CSOs present and summarised the previous day's discussions.

The speakers raised the following issues (which are not necessarily EPLO's views):

- Civil society can support and add to the EU accession process;
- The EU, a peace project itself, should better adjust to the post-conflict situation in the Western Balkans and increase its efforts to export its model of conflict prevention;
- Civil society should also be involved in what are perceived as 'harder' issues, such as institution building, SSR or anti-corruption;
- EU accession might exacerbate conflict if, for instance (i) issues of SSR are not addressed adequately, (ii) territorial disputes remain unresolved, or (iii) economic inequality increases through privatization and other reforms;
- CSDP missions have to reinforce EU accession policies instead of undermining them;
- The EU has a variety of tools to address conflict prevention in the EU accession process, such as the Stabilisation and Association Process and the Progress Reports;
- Serbia has made considerable progress since the SAA was signed in 2007 which has been rewarded by the visa liberalisation in 2010;
- The UN Resolution brought a new dynamic to the situation, the EU itself will hold to the ICTY conditionality;
- EU accession policy itself is a peacebuilding tool and informed by the EU's identity as a security community;
- The acceptance of EU norms will be more transformative than EU accession;
- Although the Western Balkans have reached a negative peace, a positive peace still has to be reached.

Participants raised the following issues in response to the panel's presentations:

- The EU accession process should not be limited to technical issues;
- Particularly smaller CSOs have difficulties in attaining funding from EU Delegations;
- Guidelines for human rights defenders should be adapted to the local context;
- Is institutional change a prerequisite or a result of adoption of certain norms?
- Talking about adoption of EU norms can be problematic due to the feeling of cultural superiority within the EU and the current rise of xenophobia and racism inside the EU, including racism towards people in the Western Balkans.

### **Second Panel: Civil Society Engagement in the EU Accession Process**

The second panel was chaired by Ms Catherine Woollard (EPLO) and included presentations by Mr. Srdjan Majstorović (Serbian Office for European Integration), Mr. Astrit Istrefi (Saferworld) and Ms Hanna Sällström (Kvinna till Kvinna).

The speakers raised the following points (which are not necessarily the views of EPLO):

- CSOs have an important role to play in the EU accession process as agents for change;
- The Serbian Office for European Integration has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with 90 CSOs;
- Regional cooperation and SAP is in itself a peacebuilding exercise;
- Future of cooperation between the Serbian Office for European Integration and CSOs will focus on the monitoring and advisory role of CSOs and regional advocacy on Western Balkan accession;
- CSOs have an important role to play in monitoring EU CSDP missions such as EULEX, advising on transparency and accountability and raising public awareness;
- Positive peace is still a long way from being achieved;
- The gap between theory and practice, especially regarding the adoption of legislation and its implementation, is apparent;
- Ownership should not only apply to the governments of the Western Balkans but should include CSOs.

Participants raised the following issues in response to the panel's presentations:

- While the EU is generally positive towards CSO involvement, it is met with scepticism by some governments in the region.

## ANNEX:

### Questionnaire summary

#### I. Local conflict dynamics and EU accession process

Q 1: What would you describe as the (maximum three) most important **current drivers of conflict** in your area/country? (include regional factors if these are significant). Who are the (maximum three) **main negative actors** (individuals/institutions) and what is their negative influence?

- Ethnocentric Government's politics (lacking political will for transforming conflicts) (III)
- Lack of progress in the EU and NATO accession process
- Lack of the official dealing with the past processes/unresolved issues from the past (examples: insufficient war crime trials, no healing processes for victims, unfair privatisation which has economic consequences for the citizens...) (III)
- Insufficient implementation of new legislations (too quickly introduced)
- Corruption
- Poor and unequal economic development/ social instability (low level of security in general) (III)
- *Minority rights* – e.g. Formation of Bosniak National Council in Sandzak, Serbia;
- *Disagreements over structure of states and unresolved territorial issues* – cf. constitutional reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina (**Kosovo** and BiH status issue) (IIII)
- Leadership culture that enables leaders (political, religious, ethnic) to easily manipulate individuals and groups
- Gender inequality
- Serbia/Kosovo conflict (III) (general but also country specific)
- Conflict in BiH (general but also country specific) (II)

- Country specific

*Macedonia*: Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement/Country's census scheduled for April 2011

*BiH*:

- Forthcoming elections (beginning of October)
- (un)resolved issue of Kosovo/a
- Negative influence by Media

*Serbia*:

- Tensions in the Sandzak region (divisions within Islamic community) (II)
- South Serbia is still potentially unstable part of the region

- Actors:

(Nationalistic) Political actors (often involved in violent conflicts before) (VIII)

Governing structures at all levels (local to national, e.g. not finding Mladic) (II)

Media (Driven by specific interest groups) (IIII)

(Politicized) Religious leaders and institutions (VI)

EU/international community (too passive in tackling critical issues; failing to strengthen domestic reform capacities) (II)

Criminal Groups

Q 2: What would you describe as the (maximum three) main **mitigating factors currently contributing to preventing violent conflict**? Who are the (maximum three) **main mitigating actors** (can be the same as above) and what is their positive influence?

- EU accession prospect (IIII)

- NATO accession prospect
- Strong presence and influence of the international community namely: US, EU and OSCE in the country
- Dealing with the Past initiatives (II) (e.g. RECOM (Regional commission for Establishing the Facts about War Crimes and Other Serious Human Rights Violations Committed in the former Yugoslavia) (II)/Various reconciliation initiatives
- Experience of the previous war, where people many people are hesitant to repeat it (BiH)
- Social networks
- Civil society networks promoting principles of democratic
- **Democratic pro-EU political forces** – cf. Serbia and Croatia, guaranteeing stability in the Balkans;
- **Strengthened regional co-operation** - particularly with respect to co-operation between Interior Ministries.

- Country specific

*Macedonia*: Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement

*Serbia*: Smaller opposition parties

- Actors:

Civil Society Actors (VI)

International Community: EU (III), USA

Relationship Josipovic/Tadic (II)

Most Politicians (interested in keeping a minimum of stability, responsibility to protect the citizens)

(II)/ /pro-EU political parties

Educational institutions

Local Media

Q 3: Are there examples where you think the **EU Accession process had a positive impact** on /has been successful in addressing conflict risks and promoting peace? Please give examples.

- Physical presence of EU actors: EU military missions (Macedonia: Concordia and EUPOL Proxima missions)/EU Special representative (Macedonia: positive signal that EU wants to see progress in relations with MZ)
- Accepting EU membership bids (Macedonia 2005, connecting ethnic groups with a common goal)
- Financial investments in democratisation process (empowering civil society organisation, forcing regional governments to accept legislation which can in long term contribute to the prevention of the conflict (Anti-discrimination Act, acts related to the status of national minorities etc., establishment of minority national councils). (III)
- Investments in development projects.
- Fostering cross-border/regional cooperation
- **EU's role in promoting dialogue over Kosovo** – despite divisions within the EU concerning the issue of Kosovo's status, the EU seems set to act as a key mediator in the process;
- General function of the accession process as a powerful carrot (III)
- EU membership perspective helped reach results also with important agreements such as Erdut (Eastern Croatia) and Ohrid (Macedonia).

Q 4: Are there examples where you think the **EU Accession process has exacerbated tensions** and/or increased the risk of violent conflict? Please give examples

- Lack of political will within EU to be more determined concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina (constitution process), the situation of Kosovo;

- Forcing states to collaborate with ICTY;
- Linking of EU accession with NATO (military alliance);
- **Inconsistent reform criteria/standards** – creates an impressions that certain parties are favoured for pragmatic, as opposed to principled reasons – cf. visa liberalization debate in BiH and questions about Serbia's compliance with ICTY;
- Contact with EU staff legitimises politicians who usually act as spoilers, blocking progress and reform;
- EU does not approach real drivers of peace: Civil society actors instead are only official partners

- Country specific:

*Macedonia:* Holding back Macedonia's EU integrations because of the name dispute Greece has with Macedonia.

*BiH:*

- **Insistence on centralization in BiH** – the claim that EU accession demands the centralization of functions has contributed to exacerbating tensions, particularly among Bosnian Serbs.

- **Police reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina** – despite a plethora of different policing models throughout the EU, the conditionality attached to police reform has negatively impacted reform dynamics in BiH.

*Serbia:* Promises to Serbia to become an EU member if it recognizes Kosovo

## **EPLO MEMBERS**

Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management  
Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network—KATU  
Conciliation Resources  
Crisis Management Initiative—CMI  
European Network for Civil Peace Services—EN.CPS  
European Centre for Conflict Prevention—ECCP  
ESSEC Iréné  
Fractal  
Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior—FRIDE  
German Platform for Peaceful Conflict Management  
Glencree Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation  
International Alert  
International Center for Transitional Justice—ICTJ  
International Crisis Group  
Interpeace  
Kvinna till Kvinna  
Life and Peace Institute  
Nansen Dialogue Network  
NGO Support Centre  
Nonviolent Peaceforce  
Partners for Democratic Change International—PDCI  
Pax Christi International  
Quaker Council for European Affairs—QCEA  
Saferworld  
Search for Common Ground  
Swisspeace  
Toledo International Centre for Peace—CITpax  
World Vision

## **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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