

EPLO Funding for Peace Working Group

Contribution to the consultation on the mid-term review of the thematic programme 'Non-state Actors and Local Authorities in Development'

March 2010

The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) firmly believes that, in order to meet its policy objectives in the field of development co-operation, the European Union (EU) needs to promote and implement measures which lead to sustainable peace between and within states, and which transform and resolve conflicts non-violently. This belief is mirrored in the EU's numerous policy commitments linking peacebuilding and development.¹

EPLO also believes that non-state actors (NSAs) have a crucial role to play in promoting sustainable development through peacebuilding. In this context, EPLO welcomes the fact that the current strategy paper (2007-2010) for the thematic programme 'Non-state Actors and Local Authorities in Development' (NSA-LA) prioritises those countries where situations are not conducive to ensuring NSA involvement in the development process, including conflict-affected countries, and hopes that this will be maintained in the new strategy paper (2011-2013).

In response to the questions which were raised in the Issues Paper, EPLO would like to make the following comments:

- **Targeting small and vulnerable NSAs (Question 2):** EPLO believes that the EU delegations could significantly increase NSAs' access to the resources available under the NSA-LA Thematic Programme by actively trying to engage with organisations which are based outside the capital cities of the EU's partner countries.
- **Number of eligible countries (Question 3):** EPLO is concerned about the suggestion that the number of countries which are available for funding under the NSA-LA Thematic Programme could be reduced. However, if budgetary constraints mean that this is necessary in the next programming period, EPLO would recommend that rather than prioritising LDCs, resources should be focused on countries where situations are not conducive to ensuring NSA involvement in the development process, particularly conflict-affected countries.
- **Improving capacity-building measures (Question 7):** EPLO believes that capacity building measures for beneficiaries could be improved by ensuring that EU delegations in those countries which are eligible for funding under the NSA-LA Thematic Programme, including conflict-affected countries, try to actively engage in genuine dialogue with NSAs. This dialogue could take the form of biannual or quarterly meetings with local civil society organisations representing all sectors and from both the capital city and the provinces.

¹ These include Article 11 of the ACP-EU (Cotonou) Partnership Agreement (2000), Commission communication on conflict prevention (2001), EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflict (2001), Commission communication on policy coherence for development (2005), Council conclusions on security and development (2007),.

In addition to responding to the questions set out in the Issues Paper, EPLO would also like to raise the following issues:

- **Consultation:** EPLO is the only EU-level platform for peacebuilding and conflict prevention organisations. Our members are some of the largest peacebuilding and conflict prevention NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks active both within the EU and in all major conflict zones throughout the world. However, despite several requests, the European Commission (EC) has so far failed to recognise EPLO as a relevant stakeholder in its own right in discussions about the NSA-LA Thematic Programme. This is particularly strange given that EPLO is regularly invited to participate in consultations organised on other external financing instruments, including the Instrument for Stability and the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. **EPLO therefore requests that it is notified of and invited to participate in this and future consultation processes on the NSA-LA Thematic Programme as a recognised stakeholder in its own right.**
- **Calls for proposals:** In the Issues Paper, the EC states that according to an external evaluation of the NSA-LA Thematic Programme, 'The Calls for Proposals mechanism is an effective mechanism for allocating in a transparent and fair manner the available budget to beneficiaries to implement projects that will assist in achieving the overall and specific objectives of the programme.' EPLO believes that in order to achieve Objective 1, **EU delegations in conflict-affected countries should include references to activities in support of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the guidelines for calls for proposals.** In cases where EU delegations in conflict-affected countries decide not to include peacebuilding or conflict prevention in the guidelines, they should provide clear justification for that decision. Furthermore, all **calls for proposals should include conflict sensitivity in the cross-cutting issues** to be taken into account, including, if procedure allows, in the evaluation grid for evaluating proposals.
- **Development education and awareness raising:** According to the current strategy paper for the NSA-LA Thematic Programme, '(...) development education activities shall be strategic and identify clear thematic priorities within the policy framework of the European Consensus and the MDG agenda.' In EPLO's experience, the links between peace and security and poverty eradication and development,² which are set out in the European Consensus on Development, are largely overlooked in communication to EU citizens on EU development policy. In this context, EPLO believes that **peacebuilding and conflict prevention should be included in the list of themes to be prioritised under Objective 2** in the new strategy paper. In addition, EPLO believes that activities which involve EU-based diaspora communities from conflict-affected countries should also be considered in development education and awareness raising activities.
- **Coordination and communication of NSA networks:** In order to meet its policy objectives in the field of development co-operation, the EU needs to promote and implement measures which lead to sustainable peace between and within states, and which transform and resolve conflicts non-violently. In this context, EPLO believes that all NSA networks whose work contributes to the achievement of the EU's development policy objectives should be eligible for support under Objective 3 of the NSA-LA Thematic Programme.

² Paragraph 40: '(...) Without peace and security development and poverty eradication are not possible, and without development and poverty eradication no sustainable peace will occur (...).'