

EPLO Funding for Peace Working Group

Contribution to the consultation on the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2011

September 2010

Background

The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) is the platform of European non-governmental organisations (NGOs), networks of NGOs and think tanks active in the field of peacebuilding, which share an interest in promoting sustainable peacebuilding policies among decision-makers in the European Union (EU).

EPLO's mission is to influence European decision-makers to take a more active and effective approach to securing peace and non-violent forms of conflict resolution in all regions of the world.

EPLO welcomes the opportunity to discuss the European Commission's (EC) proposals for the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Annual Action Programme (AAP) for 2011.

As the EC will be aware, EPLO also participated in the consultation on the revision of the EIDHR Strategy Paper (2007-2010) in 2009. We were very pleased to note that a number of the issues which we raised were taken into account in the drafting of the new EIDHR Strategy Paper (2011-2013) and we hope that they will be fully reflected in future AAPs and calls for proposals.

EPLO also participated in the regional seminar on the implementation of the EIDHR which took place in the framework of the Structured Dialogue Supporting Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights in July 2009 in Amman, Jordan. We were, however, disappointed that the final report of the seminar¹ did not include any references to peacebuilding of conflict prevention, despite the contributions which we made both in writing via the Structured Dialogue Blog² and during the three-day seminar itself.

Initial reaction to consultation points

1. Global call for proposals regrouping priority themes under Objectives 2 and 3

EPLO does not feel able to respond to the question posed by the EC on the potential benefits of this proposal without first receiving additional information (e.g. What proportion of the € 26 million indicative envelope will be allocated to supporting transnational and regional activities and how much will be allocated to supporting actions covered by the two sets of EU guidelines?)

¹ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/a/a8/Amman_seminar_report_final.pdf

² <http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/dialogue/human-rights/#comment-38>

Although we see a number of potential advantages from allocating resources in support of the same priorities for the next three years, not least in terms of predictability, we would prefer that the EC provides more details of the proposal during the consultation meeting so that we can provide a more informed opinion later on.

Regarding the priority 'Peaceful management, mediation or resolution of conflict interests or sources of deep-seated conflict or potential violent conflict' more generally, EPLO recommends the deletion of the reference to 'electoral processes' at the end of the third paragraph as it does not seem to have a clear link to either the objectives of the activities or the expected results. In addition, we would go a step further than the EC's proposal and recommend the increased inclusion of civil society (rather than just 'civil society priorities'), including women's groups, in peace negotiations.

2. Permanently open call for proposals for actions targeting human rights and fundamental freedoms in countries where they are most at risk and human rights defenders

EPLO does not feel able to respond to the question posed by the EC on the potential benefits of this proposal without first receiving additional information (e.g. What impact (if any) would the proposal have on the amount of funding which is available for human rights defenders?)

At first glance, the possibility for projects which target emergency human rights situations to be fast-tracked seems to be a welcome development. In its contributions to previous consultations on the EIDHR,³ EPLO has consistently advocated for the EC to consider support for human rights defenders in conflict-affected countries as a specific priority. We also advocate for the inclusion of an explicit reference in the EIDHR AAP 2011 to women human rights defenders since they are especially at risk in a number of countries.

3. EC – CSO partnerships

EPLO recommends that the EC makes (increased) use of the following tools in order to better target local civil society organisations (CSOs) in third countries:

- **“Integrated” co-operation meetings:** Rather than organising instrument-specific consultation meetings, EC delegations should draw on best practices of organising broader civil society consultations on overall co-operation between the EC and third countries.
- **Joint organisation:** EC delegations should co-operate with one or more local CSOs in order to decide jointly on topics to be discussed, CSOs to be invited etc.
- **Timely provision of information:** The EC (delegations and headquarters) should ensure that calls for proposals are issued with the longest possible deadlines and that that information relevant to consultations is circulated well in advance of planned meetings.
- **Re-granting and working with informal partners:** By increasing opportunities for re-granting and working with informal partners, the EC could help to broaden the scope of CSOs with whom it can co-operate.

³ Available at: <http://www.eplo.org/index.php?id=238>