

EPLO Funding for Peace Working Group

Contribution to the consultation on the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2010

September 2009

Paragraph 21 of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Strategy Paper (2007-2010) provides that:

“The response strategy aims to be “conflict sensitive” (...), helping to tackle root causes, such as measures to combat discrimination, or building consensus in society to pursue reconciliation processes in post-conflict situations. Where necessary, the response strategy is interfaced with crisis response interventions envisaged under the new Instrument for Stability (...).

We strongly support the European Commission’s (EC) stated commitment to conflict sensitivity and we urge it to implement this commitment by facilitating its delegations to undertake detailed conflict analysis the results of which should be linked to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects financed from the EIDHR.

In response to the consultation document which was circulated to civil society organisations (CSOs) on 18 September, EPLO would like to make the following specific comments:

- **Action Fiche 1: Enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in countries where they are most at risk**

In accordance with the EIDHR Strategy Paper, the focus of this action is “situations characterised by a serious lack of fundamental freedoms, high risk for human security, high pressure on human rights defenders, difficulty for civil society to operate and little or no room for political pluralism.” However, the reference to “human security” is not included in the overall objective of the action nor is it translated into specific activities to be supported. We, therefore, recommend the following amendment to the second paragraph of section 2.1 of the consultation document:

The overall objective of this action is to support local stakeholders and civil society organisations in their work aimed at promoting positive changes in countries and regions where human rights, fundamental freedoms **and human security** are most at risk.

In this context, we also recommend the following amendment to the specific objectives of the programme which as set out in the sixth paragraph:

The activities under this action should promote a holistic approach to human rights and should in these difficult situations specifically seek to improve the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the right to freedom of opinion and expression, access to information and the right to communicate, including freedom of the media, fight against censorship, and access to the internet; the right to peaceful assembly and association, including the right to form and join a trade union; freedom of movement within the borders of a state, and the right to leave any country, including one's own, and to return to one's country **and to promote human security by contributing to the prevention of violent conflict.**

Similarly, we recommend the following amendment to the ninth paragraph:

Priority will be given to activities addressing in-country situations where fundamental freedoms as identified above are the least secure, **where there is the least human security** and where disrespect for human rights is particularly pronounced.

In addition, the list of indicators which can be used to characterise situations in which human rights, fundamental freedoms and human security are most at risk should be extended to include the following indicator:

- Risk of violent conflict

- **Action Fiche 3: Country-Based Support Schemes – Strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in supporting the peaceful conciliation of group interests and in consolidating political participation and representation**

We recommend the following amendments to the list of specific outcomes of the action:

ii) regular reporting from local civil society organisations in view of the country's international commitments on human rights, including, for instance regular reports by a consortia of civil society bodies on the Universal Periodical Review of countries at UN level, on the implementation of European Neighbourhood Policy action plans and so on; an independent detailed diagnosis of challenges to human rights, democracy **and peace**, endorsed by leading civil society stakeholders [e.g. produced in advance of an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) mission]; **an independent CSO analysis of the causes, profiles, actors and dynamics of ongoing or latent conflicts**

iii) broad consensus between groups with opposing interests on directions for legislation on land reform and compensation, on the terms of reference and resources for a truth and reconciliation commission; regular dialogues established between CSOs divided on religious or ethnic grounds and some common activities launched; **regular dialogues established between CSOs, the general public, government agencies, armed groups and other parties to conflicts and some common activities launched.**

- **Action Fiche 6: Support to Human Rights Defenders**

We recommend the following amendment to the section 3.2 of the consultation document:

Specific assistance will be provided to human rights defenders in countries in which there is latent or ongoing conflict and in post-conflict countries.

- **Further consultation points: Choice between launching a new call for proposals under Objective 2 with a limited number of priority areas (violence against women and girls, rights of indigenous peoples and LGBT rights) and reinforcing other objectives/ calls and financing some projects in the reserve lists.**

According to paragraph 36 of the EIDHR Strategy Paper (2007-2010):

There are two potential areas of transnational and regional activity:

i) dialogue and practical cooperation activities aimed at assisting the peaceful management, mediation or resolution of conflicting interests or sources of deep-seated conflict or potential violent conflict. (...) Activities may seek to strengthen transnational networks for child protection, promote solutions on divisive matters (e.g. of citizenship, migration, refugees and asylum), support reconciliation among leading stakeholders and civil society organisations from neighbouring countries, and to develop civil society based early warning systems;

ii) capacity-building and practical cooperation through transnational civil society organisation networks in third countries. Specific themes can be wide-ranging and may include for example women in politics, domestic violence, female genital mutilation and all forms of cultural and traditional coercions, trafficking in human beings and all forms of modern slavery, rights of indigenous peoples and persons belonging to minorities, and abolition of the death penalty, democratisation of political parties and local civil society organisations.

We strongly believe that the EC should maintain a clear link between peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict and the promotion of human rights and democracy. We, therefore, recommend that the EC supports dialogue and practical co-operation activities as set out above.