

EPLO Funding for Peace Working Group

Contribution to the regional seminar on the implementation of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

June 2010

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 is a member of the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) and we support the recommendations set out in their position paper on the Structured Dialogue process.

According to its legal basis, the overall objective of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is to contribute to the 'development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law and of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.'¹ EPLO believes that violent conflict represents one of the greatest obstacles to the achievement of this objective and that activities aimed at supporting the prevention of violent conflicts and the promotion of peace are central to creating the enabling environment for the promotion of democracy and human rights. In this context, we have consistently advocated for the inclusion of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the list of activities to be supported by the EIDHR.²

In addition, EPLO has consistently supported the inclusion in the EIDHR Regulation of a clear reference to measures 'to facilitate the peaceful conciliation of group interests, including support for confidence-building measures relating to human rights and democratisation'³ and references in the two EIDHR strategy papers to 'building consensus in society to pursue reconciliation processes in post-conflict and fragile situations.'⁴ In this context, we shall continue to advocate for the European Commission (EC) to facilitate the EU Delegations in conflict, post-conflict and fragile situations to undertake detailed conflict analysis, the results of which should inform the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects financed from the EIDHR.

The purpose of this paper is to set out some of EPLO's perspectives on the various issues relating to the implementation of the EIDHR which will be discussed during the upcoming regional seminar in Amman, Jordan.

¹ Article 1(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1889/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide

² See *inter alia*

EPLO Funding for Peace Working Group, (2005), Response to the EC consultation paper on thematic programming of "EIDHR II"

EPLO Funding for Peace Working Group, (2007), Response to the EIDHR Strategy Paper 2007 – 2010,

EPLO Funding for Peace Working Group, (2009), Response to the presentation by the European Commission of its priorities for the revision of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Strategy Paper (2007-2010)

Available at <http://www.eplo.org>

³ Article 2(1)(a)(vii) of Regulation (EC) No 1889/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide

⁴ Paragraph 21 of the European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy Strategy Paper 2007-2010 and Paragraph 32 of European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy Strategy Paper 2011-2013

Working Group 1: Support to democratic structures

(Issues to be discussed: Democracy support, visits of Members of the European Parliament to EU Delegations (TBC))

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) should meet civil society organisations (CSOs) during their visits to third countries. For example, MEPs could be encouraged to meet EIDHR beneficiaries (current and former) as well as other relevant CSOs. EIDHR beneficiaries should be seen as a source of country expertise.

Election observation missions: EPLO has repeatedly stated its view that election observation missions (EOMs) should be financed through the geographical instruments. Although we maintain this view, we are nonetheless still open to possible co-operation with the EC in developing appropriate concepts and approaches to EOMs in conflict, post-conflict and fragile situations. In addition, given that electoral processes encompass both longer term pre-and post-electoral phases, we encourage a broadening of activities to enable EOMs to contribute to a more comprehensive approach to democracy support. To this end, we shall continue to advocate for the EC to support the implementation of so-called “complementary actions” contained in Action Sheet 15 of the 2010 EIDHR Annual Action Programme⁵ which include exploratory and post-election monitoring activities complementary to EOMs.

Elections are only a small part of the process of establishing functioning democracies. If they are not supported by complementary measures there is a risk that elections can provoke violent conflict, as was the case recently in Kenya.

Given the limited amount of funding which is available for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide, we strongly believe that it is essential that funding is available to ensure that the commitment included in both EIDHR strategy papers that ‘the response strategy will be implemented primarily by civil society organisations.’⁶ In this regard, we shall continue to monitor the commitment made by the EC during the meeting with CSOs in July 2009 that ‘the ceiling of 25% of the total EIDHR budget for EOM expenditure will be respected.’⁷ Furthermore, we shall continue to recommend that the Commission considers the possibility of using some of the funding which it currently allocates to EOMs to support the implementation of complementary measures by CSO actors. In this context, it is our belief that NGO-led violence prevention and early warning activities can play a crucial role in contributing to electoral processes in conflict-prone areas and countries, as seen recently in Ghana.

Working Group 3: Human rights defenders – situations, threats, responses

(Issues to be discussed: Human rights defenders)

Human rights defenders: EPLO has repeatedly welcomed the flexibility of small grants for human rights defenders (HRDs) whilst at the same time recommending that longer-term grants for accompaniment activities should also be eligible for support under Objective 3 (Supporting actions on human rights and democracy issues in areas covered by EU Guidelines). We shall continue to advocate for the EC to broaden the scope of activities that are eligible under this priority. In addition, given the scale of the threat posed to HRDs in conflict and post-conflict countries from both armed groups and security forces, we shall continue to advocate for the EC to consider support for this particular group as a specific priority.

⁵ Available at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/human-rights/documents/annual_action_programme_2010_en.pdf, pp. 101-105

⁶ European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy Strategy Paper 2007-2010, p.2 and European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy Strategy Paper 2011-2013, p. 4

⁷ See [http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/cooperation_with_ngo/docs/minutes_ngos_meeting_\(2\).pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/cooperation_with_ngo/docs/minutes_ngos_meeting_(2).pdf), p. 2

Working Group 4: The EIDHR in its broader co-operation context

(Issues to be discussed: Complementarity and mainstreaming; coordinating regional projects (possibly), coordination between the EU and EU Member States (possibly))

Mainstreaming human rights and democracy concerns in all EC external co-operation programmes: EPLO strongly believes that activities in support of peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict are inherently linked to the promotion of human rights and democracy. In this context, we also advocate for the EC to ensure that all of its development assistance is conflict-sensitive and for it to consider the inclusion of specific support for these activities in all of its external co-operation programmes.

Complementarity of the EIDHR with other EC external financing instruments: In addition to our work on the EIDHR, we have also undertaken considerable work on the Instrument for Stability (IfS). One of our findings has been that the 18-month time limit for activities under the crisis response component of the IfS prevents it from supporting the type of long-term activities which are necessary in the context of supporting human rights defenders (peacebuilders). We believe that the EC could help to overcoming this shortcoming in terms of complementarity between the these two external financing instruments by allowing short-term IfS crisis response activities to be followed up by longer term support from the EIDHR.

EPLO believes that the EIDHR should complement or reinforce other EU action in conflict-affected countries, including CSDP Missions and direct support to governments through budget support. This could include:

- Consultation of EIDHR beneficiaries in programming development funding and in planning CSDP Missions
- Provision of analysis from EIDHR-funded projects to officials in the European External Action Service (EEAS) with responsibility for country and regional planning
- Support to civil society participation in accountability of budget support recipients (e.g. through participatory budgeting, budget transparency, expenditure tracking and civil society oversight bodies)
- In-country consultation bringing together EIDHR recipients and CSDP mission staff.

Working Group 5: The EIDHR in its environment – working in difficult environments

(Issues to be discussed: Operating in difficult environments, channeling funds in difficult environments, projects with informal partners, the security of project beneficiaries, dealing with “GONGOs”)

EPLO strongly commends the EC’s commitment to support to civil society through the EIDHR without requiring the agreement of the government. In relation to this, there is also a great need to support civil society in unrecognised territories and in autonomous, breakaway, distant and disputed regions. Given the paucity of donors able or willing to provide support in these difficult cases, the EC should consider prioritising them through the EIDHR.

Working Group 6: Mapping the added value of the actors and opening up human rights and democracy activities

(Issues to be discussed: Economic, social and cultural rights, the involvement of other actors, mapping CSOs and problems with PADOR)

Involvement of other actors: As stated above, EPLO strongly believes that activities in support of peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict are inherently linked to the promotion of

human rights and democracy. In this context, we advocate for the EC to take a broad view of activities which can be supported under the EIDHR in order not to exclude the possible participation of peacebuilding organisations.

Working Group 7: The implementation of the EIDHR

(Issues to be discussed: Transparency/information sharing, the use of the 3% available for support measures, pooling of funds (possibly))

Definition of priorities, selection criteria and procedures for local calls: See above.

In addition, EPLO advocates for the EC to ensure that EU delegations include activities in support of peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict in guidelines for calls for proposals in conflict, post-conflict or fragile situations.

Working Group 9: How to cover democracy and human rights issues in the media? How can democracy and human rights projects link in with journalists and the media?

(Issues to be discussed: Making support visible (possibly))

The media's role as a pillar of democracy is well recognised and the EIDHR should continue to support media development. EPLO would like to draw the EC's attention to the role which the media frequently plays in generating conflict through biased, sensationalist and irresponsible reporting. In particular, the media tends to focus on the promoters of violence rather than on the promoters of peace.

EPLO encourages the EC to use the EIDHR in order to support balanced journalism, peace journalism, the innovative use of the media as a conflict prevention tool (e.g. in reaching out to armed groups or in publicising peace agreements and peacemakers), and, above all, the work of investigative journalists.