

EPLO activities in EU Member States aimed at strengthening EU peacebuilding policy

Recommendations from Member State meeting

This document summarises the recommendations to the Dutch government, EU policy-makers and civil society from The Netherlands which came out of the meeting entitled **Round-table on the EU and Peacebuilding: What role for The Netherlands?** which took place in The Hague on Thursday, 14 February 2013. For more information, please visit [EPLO's website](#).

The following EU policy areas were discussed during the meeting: the role of the EEAS in making the EU more effective in peacebuilding and the EU's policy towards the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This document captures the recommendations regarding these two issues.

The role of the EEAS in making the EU more effective in peacebuilding

Recommendations to:

1) EU officials:

- Develop capacity to respond to root-causes of conflict, as opposed to consequences of conflict;
- Make use of the EU's non-financial i.e. political support in combination with financial support;
- Address the key challenge of connecting short-term response to crisis to longer-term assistance;
- Reduce competition of different EU actors present in conflict-affected countries (e.g. Head of CSDP mission, Head of Delegation, EUSR etc);
- Ensure existing early warning information from conflict-affected countries is taken up and acted upon inside the EU institutions;
- Assess where the strengths of the EU lie in external action, such as conflict prevention, and invest resources accordingly;
- Reach out to and inform the public in EU Member States better about what it is the EU is doing in foreign policy.

2) Dutch government officials:

- Support the development of joint EU positions by the EEAS;
- Further contribute to making crisis management procedures more effective;
- Use the mid-term review of the EEAS to bring up issues related to the longer-term development and functioning of the EEAS which go beyond the current mandate of the HR/VP such as: clarification of job profiles in the management board including the position of HR/VP;
- Develop recommendations that go beyond the EEAS and address other actors/institutions that have a role to play in contributing to the success of the EEAS such as the Member States themselves, the European Commission (especially DG DEVCO and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments - FPI);
- Support to making the EU external action funding instruments more flexible to enable the EU to respond to crisis in a timely manner, but also to allow for co-operation of different EU actors at the country level;
- Promote the EU using a broad definition of the Comprehensive Approach to EU external action which integrates CSDP as one tool among others that the EU has at its disposal;
- Clarify what role The Netherlands sees for Member States in the Comprehensive Approach to EU external action;
- Contribute to the revival of civilian CSDP by supporting a revision of the concepts that

underlie civilian crisis management (possibly as part of or follow-up to the de Kermabon process);

- Resist the attempt to reduce the money available for the Instrument for Stability (IfS) in the discussions about the distribution of money between the different external action funding instruments.

3) Civil Society organisations

- Provide input to the Dutch government's position on the EEAS mid-term review.

EU's policy towards the Middle East and North Africa (MENA): supporting inclusive institutional reform

Recommendations to:

1) EU officials:

- Re-introduce peace and human security to be central elements of the EU's policy towards the MENA region;
- Recognise the important contribution of Islamic culture to Europe;
- Clarify the scope of the 'more for more' approach: does it in practice mean that accepted principles (such as observance of human rights standards) are taken seriously?
- Consider the regional dimension of conflicts when designing policies towards particular countries in the MENA region;
- Define what the comparative advantage of the EU is compared to other international actors active in the region (e.g. China, Gulf Cooperation Council);
- Bring the EU's experience of dialogue with civil society into its relation with the League of Arab States and its Member States;
- Stress the importance of transparency and institutional reform in its engagement with the League of Arab States and its Member States;
- Reach out to the public in the MENA region and in EU Member States;
- Engage with countries of the MENA region in equal partnerships, where both parties can learn from each other;
- Address root causes of the 'Arab spring' such as economic inequality and missing rule of law;
- Facilitate consultation of civil society in the MENA region;
- Keep supporting agents of positive political and social change.

2) Dutch government officials

- Capitalise on The Netherlands' comparative advantage in not having a colonial history in the MENA region and its ability to build consensus among the EU Member States;
- Recognise the important contribution of Islamic culture to Europe;
- Address root causes of the 'Arab spring' such as economic inequality and missing rule of law;
- Facilitate consultation of civil society in the MENA region;
- Keep supporting agents of positive political and social change.

3) Civil society organisations:

- Work with the League of Arab States to support albeit slow process of opening up for dialogue with outside actors;
- Provide positive examples of successful reform and transition to counter other, more pessimistic, accounts of the current situation in the MENA region;
- Interact with EU and EU Member States on the approach taken vis-a-vis some Member

- States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, for instance Qatar;
- Recognise the important contribution of Islamic culture to Europe.

EPLO's suggestions for follow-up and possible next steps:

EPLO will be taking forward the recommendations related to the EEAS' role in making the EU more effective in peacebuilding in its work on the mid-term review of the EEAS throughout 2013. For more information, please contact Josephine Liebl (jl Liebl@eplo.org).

EPLO will be providing input into the discussions on CSDP in the run-up to the European Council meeting in December 2013 which will discuss, among other things, the effectiveness, visibility and impact of the CSDP. For more information, please contact Josephine Liebl (jl Liebl@eplo.org).

In June 2013, EPLO will organise a CSDN meeting on the cooperation between the EU and the League of Arab States on issues related to peace and security to collect civil society's views. For more information on this meeting, please contact Anna Penfrat (apenfrat@eplo.org).



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