

Civil Society Dialogue Network - Member State Meeting Austria

The EU, conflict prevention and peacebuilding: State of play and the role of civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

Thursday, 16 October 2014 (13h30 – 17h30)

Summary Report

A half-day CSDN Member State meeting took place on 16 October 2014 in Vienna. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the EU's role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding with Austrian civil society organisations and policy-makers, increase understanding of EU peacebuilding and Austria's role within it as well as identifying opportunities for Austria to support EU peacebuilding.

The first session focused on the state of play regarding EU, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It provided an assessment of the effectiveness of the EU at preventing conflict and building peace and identified obstacles to the EU increasing its role as conflict prevention actor. Participants discussed how these obstacles can be overcome and whether there is a specific role for Austria in this regard. The role of civil society and ways to engage with civil society in conflict-affected countries was brought up several times as was the change in the nature of conflicts.

The second session focused on the role of civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in conflict prevention. It analysed the priorities for increasing the effectiveness of civilian CSDP and also considered how the European Council Summit in June 2015 could be used to that effect. Among the issues that were discussed were the place of CSDP within the EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises, the specific role that CSDP missions play in conflict-affected countries and the reform priorities related to civilian capabilities, recruitment and training. Different opportunities for CSDP to contribute to conflict prevention were debated and again the role of Austria in supporting the development of civilian CSDP was highlighted.

The meeting brought together 25 participants, including policy makers from the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Austrian Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, the Federal Chancellery, the Austrian Parliament, the National Defence Academy and civil society representatives from Austria and beyond.

The Civil Society Dialogue Network:

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a mechanism for dialogue between civil society and EU policy-makers on issues related to peace and conflict. It is co-financed by the European Union (Instrument for Stability). It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), a civil society network, in co-operation with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The second phase of the CSDN will last from 2014 to 2016. For more information, please visit the [EPLO website](#).