

Civil Society Dialogue Network Member State Meeting Spain

Key recommendations from the Meeting

Tuesday, 13 March 2012

EU Common Foreign and Security Policy as a Peacebuilding Tool

This document presents the key recommendations made by participants at the CSDN meeting. These recommendations do not necessarily represent the views of the organisers, nor can they be attributed to any individual participants or participating institutions.

On CFSP and the role of the EU in the world

Points made by the participants include:

- According to some participants, the change from a unipolar world to a multipolar one should motivate the EU to question what role it wants to have in the world, in order to define what objective(s) should drive its external action.
- Some consider that the EU is currently moving away from its role as a normative power on the international scene. They regret it and suggest the EU should rather retain its specificity and promote the idea of effective multilateralism, understood as a tool to create a more just/fair world. Moreover, because of its history as a peace project, the EU in general and the EEAS in particular should focus on promoting sustainable peace.
- For some, the EU should not try to differentiate itself too much from the member states, as they are the ones eventually defining its external action. Even if it may not be optimal, some view the EU's primary comparative advantage as a coordinator and shaper of common foreign and security policy at the behest of some individual member states. Others considered that an alternative to this situation would be to further strengthen the European institutions.

On the EU and peacebuilding after Lisbon

Points made by the participants include:

- The creation of the EEAS has introduced many opportunities to strengthen the effectiveness and coherence of EU external action and the Service has achieved some success during its first year of existence (e.g. Serbia/Kosovo agreement in EU-facilitated dialogue, coordination EEAS/Commission on the response to the Arab Spring). However, the Service has been overall acting in response to events rather than acting proactively on the international scene.
- With particular regard to conflict prevention and crisis management, there has been an overemphasis on crisis response, at the expense of more long-term objectives of the EEAS. Yet, according to an external evaluation of the European Commission's support to conflict prevention and peacebuilding¹, the EU can be more effective when it takes a long-term approach and uses all the tools at its disposal. It is therefore crucial to avoid any institutionalisation of this overemphasis on crisis response.
- Instead, the EEAS should generate more strategies with clear objectives that would enable better coordination and synergy between the different EU institutions as well as with member states. The Sahel Security and Development strategy² and the Comprehensive Approach to Sudan and South Sudan³ are welcomed developments; the EEAS could develop strategies and policies for other regions and for thematic issues.

¹ [Thematic Evaluation of European Commission Support to Conflict Prevention and Peace Building](#).

² EEAS (2011): [Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel](#).

³ The Comprehensive Approach itself is not a public document. For the main elements of the approach, please consult the [Council Conclusions on Sudan and South Sudan from June 2011](#).

- Provided that clear strategies define the purpose of EU external action, the comprehensive approach to crisis can be a very useful tool to ensure a more consistent and effective action of the EU and its member states. Such a comprehensive approach should be extended beyond civil-military coordination, to include areas that are not part of the EEAS's direct mandate, such as development assistance or trade. This would improve the consistency and effectiveness of EU external action.
- In order to define solid strategies and policies and to implement them successfully, the Service should also be provided with appropriate means, budget and staff, despite the financial constraints faced by the EU at the moment. In terms of staff, a participant also suggested the creation of a training academy. The issue of ensuring gender-balance when appointing high-level EEAS staff was also raised.
- More attention should be paid to EU delegations. There is a long way to go in bringing them to their full potential. Different reporting lines between European Commission staff and EEAS staff complicate their work, while they are expected to take on a leading role in ensuring cooperation with member states embassies. A participant also suggested they could act as overarching coordinators for CSDP missions where relevant.
- Finally, participants commented on the lack of Spanish nationals at high level positions within the EEAS.

On lessons learned from CSDP missions

Points made by the participants include:

- The EU has been focusing too much on outputs rather than longer-term outcomes to define these missions as successful or not. Although clear short-term objectives are essential to ensure smooth implementation of CSDP missions, they should fit into a longer-term strategy. It is therefore essential to consult with local CSOs during planning and conduct to better anticipate and monitor the overall impact of the missions.
- Before supporting the creation of a CSDP mission, member states should make sure they can provide the necessary means to implement it successfully.
- Regarding the staffing, as most of the missions are civilian ones and require a specific approach, an adequate balance between personnel with civilian and military background should be ensured. In addition, member states should make sure that deployed staff is properly trained on CSDP procedures and the overall EU intervention and political objectives towards the host country.
- The EU should invest more in evaluations of CSDP missions and be more transparent about it, even for military missions. The EU should consider following the example of NATO and UN, and engage with external evaluators. Evaluations should also include a section about the mission impact on conflict dynamics. Finally, the EU should engage with civil society representatives for the evaluation of CSDP missions.
- Several participants recommended the creation of an EU permanent civil-military planning and conduct capability, to be able to deploy its biggest missions rapidly without relying on NATO.
- They also called for the continuation of the pooling and sharing initiative under the coordination of the European Defence Agency.

Civil Society Dialogue Network

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project funded by the European Commission aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and EU policymakers. The CSDN contributes to strengthening international and regional capacity for conflict prevention and post-conflict co-operation. The CSDN is managed by EPLO, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, in cooperation with the EEAS and the EC.

For more information about the Civil Society Dialogue Network, please visit the [EPLO website](#).