



Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting

Capacity building in support of security and development: Gathering civil society input

Thursday 12 March 2015

MINUTES

Introduction

A Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting took place on 12 March 2015 in Brussels, Belgium. The overall objective of the meeting, which brought together 19 representatives of European peacebuilding civil society organisations (CSOs) and officials from both the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS), was to gather analysis and recommendations from civil society on the issues and approaches involved in building the capacity of the EU's partners in support of security and development.

This report is a summary of the discussions which took place and the key recommendations made by individual participants during the meeting. As the meeting was held under the Chatham House Rule, the views expressed may not be attributed to any participating individual or institution nor do they necessarily represent the views of all of the meeting participants, the European Peacebuilding Office (EPLO) and its member organisations, or the co-organisers.

For more information about this CSDN meeting, please contact Ben Moore at EPLO (E-mail bmoore@eplo.org).

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](#).

Session 1: State of play in the area of capacity building in support of security and development.

The aim of this session was for the EC and the EEAS to give an overview of current EU engagement and policy initiatives in the area of capacity building in support of security and development, and for participants to provide their initial assessment of possible future EU action in this area.

Speakers raised the following issues:

- There is increased commitment from the EU to provide a contribution to the sustainable resolution of crises.
- EU resources are considerably more important than they were in the past and the number of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions being launched is increasing.
- Co-operation between the EC and EEAS has become more symbiotic in recent months.
- Capacity building in support of security and development in the EU's partner countries is in the European interest.
- The conceptual and philosophical debates have taken place both in Council committees and working groups, and at the ministerial level. There is currently high expectation that their outcomes will be implemented in a way which has real impact in the EU's partner countries.
- The overall goal of EU development assistance is the reduction of poverty but integral to that is a whole set of principles regarding governance and democratic values.
- In fulfilling CSDP missions, the EU is entirely dependent on the civilian and military capacities offered by Member States (MS) – as per the Lisbon Treaty, and that has a serious effect on what the CSDP can and cannot achieve.
- There is a belief among MS that the CSDP should be a short-term instrument. This is why some commentators argue that MS try to limit the duration of CSDP missions.

Other participants raised the following issues and made the following recommendations:

- What are the next steps in the process for developing the 'joint proposals for a policy approach for concrete implementation'?
- How do sensitivities surrounding security and development and CSDP missions play out in the EU's co-operation with its partner countries?
- For the EU, the nature of the security-development nexus differs depending on whether or not there is a CSDP mission in a particular country. It is important to have close liaison between the EC and the CSDP mission and later, once the mission has closed, liaison between the EC and the EU delegation (EUD), and between the EC and whatever replaces the mission.
- The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises also involves the EU reaching out to other actors.
- Security sector reform (SSR) goes beyond the military dimension. The new CSDP mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) should have a security focus rather than just a purely military focus.
- Given the legal difficulties involved in trying to equip armed forces via CSDP missions, might the European Development Fund (EDF) be a more flexible option for enabling CSDP missions to both train and equip the armed forces which receive EU training (e.g. in Mali and Somalia)?
- What has happened to the 'Train and Equip' concept which was being discussed in 2014?

- Is the current exercise related to the ongoing support for the African Standby Force (ASF) and the plans to have the regional forces in place by 2015?
- The EU's increased focus on conflict prevention is very welcome.
- To what extent are civil society actors in partner countries involved in the process for developing the new 'policy approach'?
- Have the EC and the EEAS considered launching an official consultation process in which they invite written contributions?
- There are concerns about the emphasis on institutional capacity building as the main way for the EU to support capacity building for security as working with states does not always necessarily lead to the increased legitimacy of institutions; investment in civil society's ability to interact with institutions alongside support for the institutions themselves is also essential.
- When donors consider support for SSR, they need to be acutely aware of all of the possible pitfalls.
- What does the EU like to see in terms of MS' contributions to capabilities? It seems that MS provide predominantly male personnel and this can reinforce ideas in the EU's partner countries that men should play a dominant role in security sectors.
- Capacity building has been focused on the ability of states to provide security and justice. One way of implementing the EU's Comprehensive Approach and increasing the complementarity of CSDP missions and other EU tools could be by increasing both capacities to deliver security and justice whilst also increasing the demand for more effective delivery (i.e. empowering CSOs and other 'positive forces for change in societies').

In response the speakers said:

- CSDP missions are not launched unilaterally; they need the agreement of and a political framework established by all 28 MS.
- CSDP missions are reviewed operationally every six months and once a year by the Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD). MS retain close control of missions and their areas of concern are raised during these review processes.
- There are now methodologies for conflict analysis which can incorporate local knowledge. However, it should be recognised that these can vary according to the circumstances in the particular partner country.
- There is a real effort to achieve an appropriate gender balance in recruitment for CSDP missions in order to both meet their specific needs and to project the right image. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/Vice-President of the EC (HR/VP) is mindful of this and has recognised that there are too few female CSDP heads of mission.
- The Comprehensive Approach also involves MS and the issue of burden-sharing – by whatever mechanism appropriate, including through bilateral support from MS to partner countries – must be approached as strategically as possible.

Session 2: Focusing on key policy issues

The aim of this session was to focus on specific policy issues and options, and for participants to provide analysis of and recommendations on them.

Speakers raised the following issues:

- The philosophical debate about capacity building in support of security and development has been going on for several years and the current expectation, especially from MS, is that the time is ripe for implementation. However, the more engagement takes place with a broader range of actors, the more there is a tendency to return to philosophical debates.

- A number of trade-offs, particularly relating to the achievement of long- versus short-term goals, are inherent to the programming of different instruments. The issue of capacity substitution versus capacity enhancement is a trade-off between trying to fill a gap quickly and trying to implement longer-term responses.

Other participants raised the following issues and made the following recommendations:

- Regarding the possible use of development funding to finance peace and security activities, funds which have been allocated as part of the 0.7% official development assistance (ODA) target should not be used to pay for military activities.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) criteria on ODA should not be expanded as they already allow for many so-called 'soft' peace and security activities.
- The debate on widening the OECD-DAC criteria is not just a philosophical one; there are real concerns that the suggested changes are actually a means of reallocating or even double counting development funding without improving its effectiveness.
- Regarding conditionality, if the broad goals of institutional capacity building are effectiveness, legitimacy and resilience, what conditions are attached to assistance in order to safeguard against corruption or human rights abuses? How are conditions monitored and evaluated, and what are the potential repercussions if they are not met?
- Monitoring is one of the many roles played by civil society actors: it is a role they are expected to play and one which they actively seek. A lack of engagement with civil society can pose problems if it increases opposition to CSDP missions and consequently limits their effectiveness.
- The absence of linkages between the reviews of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the European Security Strategy (ESS) and the CSDP poses major risks. The European Neighbourhood has become increasingly securitised: the good work which has been undertaken on the Comprehensive Approach could be undone if MS push for policies which are overly focused on crisis management and containment.
- It is important to acknowledge that fragility assessments do not take place in politically neutral spaces or vacuums, and the EU and other donors need to acknowledge the awkward positions in which they may find themselves when they seek to implement development assistance and oversight whilst simultaneously maintaining formal diplomatic relations.
- Recent evaluations of SSR programmes have shown that there is insufficient political dialogue between donors and partners for sensitive issues to be addressed.
- Capacity building is also about building relations between different actors and, therefore, it requires trust building, which cannot happen overnight. Designing support for capacity building must take this into account and allow for long-term, flexible approaches.

In response the speakers said:

- The EEAS was in its infancy when the Arab Spring began and the institution was unable to handle the demands of the situation. There has been significant progress in the past five years but there is still much work to be done.
- Capacity building in support of security and development (previously 'train and equip') has brought different institutions together more than ever before in terms of longer-term policy planning. However, donors still have a tendency to be reactive in policy approaches, notably to the Middle East.