

Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting at Expert Level

Monday 9 July 2012, Brussels

Introduction to the Early Warning Risk Matrix

The Early Warning (EW) Risk Matrix represents **one of many tools** that will contribute to an updated EU External Action Service (EEAS) early warning system. The broader objective of the EW system is to **anticipate conflict risks** in order to enable EU actors to **prioritise and deploy resources** in a way that mitigates those risks and prevents conflicts. The Matrix component of the system represents an **initial, light touch assessment of long and medium-term risks**. It aims to assist EW decision-makers by identifying as early as possible a short-list of **countries that are deemed to be at risk of conflict**, and by presenting an overview of the nature of that risk.

Design specifications for EW Risk Matrix

- Monitor developments and trends in core conflict risk areas
 - Identify risk areas with worsening trends
 - Present easily comprehensible and comparable country data
 - Generate automated and succinct reports on a country's conflict risk profile
 - Be regularly updated with minimal human resources
 - Incorporate existing EU assessment tools relevant for conflict risks
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What the tool is *not* doing

- Predicting imminent outbreaks of violent conflict
 - Replacing more comprehensive conflict analysis
 - Serving as a stand-alone early warning system
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Accompanying Notes for the Matrix

Core risk areas linked to conflict

The Matrix is intended to align with other internal conflict prevention tools, such as the Country Conflict Assessment (CCA), which itself builds on an existing EU resource for conflict assessment: the **European Commission's Root Causes of Conflict Check-List (1999)**.¹ For more information, please consult the updated *CCA questionnaire*, which will also be discussed during this meeting.

Focus on developments and trends

The Matrix aims to bring together data on **developments (and trends) that have occurred over various time intervals** (i.e. annual, bi-annually and quarterly) for the individual risk areas. It is not intended to duplicate the work of the CCA in describing the underlying structural factors, though it

¹ The original eight root causes are: (1) Legitimacy of the State, (2) Rule of Law, (3) Respect for Fundamental Human Rights, (4) Civil Society and Media, (5) Relations between Communities, (6) Sound Economic Performance, Social and Regional Inequalities, and (8) Geopolitical Situation.

does extract some structural data. The matrix country reports refer both to developments *and* underlying structural factors to encourage deliberation over how recent developments interact individually and cumulatively with these factors to indicate a risk of conflict.

Internal and external data sources

As far as possible, external data has been incorporated to triangulate data from EU sources, i.e. the CCA, the SIAC Global Threat Review etc. Internal data is essential for **ensuring that the assessment is linked to internal policy processes and the capacity to act**. Internal data has also been used to encourage the exploration of avenues for preventive action within the initial risk assessment phase. External data strengthen the assessment by **verifying, challenging, or at a minimum encouraging reflection on, internal analysis**.

Quantitative and qualitative data

The Matrix includes both quantitative and qualitative data for indicators of the core conflict risk areas. In order to **meet the requirement of brevity**, the external data sources are largely quantitative indices or statistics, whilst the qualitative data has primarily been drawn from internal sources. Given the **proliferation of risk management tools and conflict analysis**, the use of internal data as a qualitative source allows for consistency as EU institutional analysis or reporting is more likely to adhere to a consistent structure.

Choice of data sources

An attempt has been made to match the external indices and statistics to indicators noted within the root causes framework in order to facilitate triangulation with the CCA, and for consistency amongst the EW tools. In the end, **three key criteria have influenced the selection of data: (a) the ability to identify indicators that are most valid for assessing risk, and (b) the ability to source regularly updated, reliable quantitative data to monitor the selected indicators, and (c) the ability to source data with the requisite global coverage**. Therefore, in some cases, proxy indicators or alternate approaches have been adopted. For example, please see the *External data (Annual)* section in the matrix country report for the 'Civil Society and Media' risk area (Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders).

The selection brings together **diverse data providers**, including non-governmental, inter-governmental, and academic to try to mitigate the risks from using one approach and one (type of) provider.

Final points

The **objective of the EEAS Early Warning Risk Matrix** is paramount:

“to assist EW decision-makers by identifying as early as possible a short-list of countries that are deemed to be at risk of conflict, and by presenting an overview of the nature of that risk.”

The Matrix is not the final analysis of early warning but rather a valuable **first step to assess the conflict risk and support the prioritisation process** for EU early warning and action.

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