

Civil Society Dialogue Network Meeting Private Sector and Conflict

Monday, 29 October 2012

Scotland House, Rond-Point Schuman 6, 1040 Brussels

Concept Note

The 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 (for more information www.eplo.org). It is managed by EPLO, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office in cooperation with the EEAS and the EC.

Background and Objective

While the social, political and cultural causes of conflict have received a lot of policy attention in the international peacebuilding community, the role of business actors and the economic sector more generally have not been adequately addressed. Recent findings such as the World Bank's 2011 World Development Report highlighted the link between corruption, weak governance institutions, transnational crime, lack of employment and generating economic recovery and showed the need to integrate the private sector into peacebuilding efforts.

The CSDN meeting on Private Sector and Conflict aims to add to this discussion by increasing the understanding of the role private sector can play in peacebuilding and the impact the EU's economic policies, including investment and loans provided by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and EU trade policy can have on peace and conflict dynamics. This will be done by assessing the EU policy framework that applies to the private sector including development, investment and trade policy.

The EU is the world's biggest trading block and home to many of the largest corporations that are operating worldwide. With the Lisbon Treaty, investment policy has become an EU competence, meaning that the EU is defining the parameters that will guide investment agreements between the EU and third countries. In addition, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has become a more prominent external actor, as it is involved in the EU platform for external co-operation and development and EIB loans play a substantial role in for instance, the EU's new approach to the Southern Neighbourhood.

The meeting is organised with EPLO member organisation *swisspeace*, which has long-standing experience and expertise in the inter-linkages between private sector activities, violent conflict and peace. This meeting will build on the outcomes of the conference organised by the Human Security Division HSD of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in September 2012 entitled Economy, Human Rights and Peace.

Outputs/Outcomes:

- Background papers providing an overview of the conflict dimension of the different policy areas discussed, using case studies where possible;
- Meeting report which summarises discussion and highlights specific recommendations for EU policy makers and civil society;
- Identification of follow-up initiatives, inter alia dialogue between civil society, EU policy makers and private sector on specific policy areas.

Participants and Structure

The CSDN meeting will bring together around 50 participants, including EU policy-makers, representatives from civil society organisations and the business community. As with all CSDN meetings the focus will be on dialogue, so formal presentations will be short to allow for enough time for discussion.

Agenda

8h30	Registration of participants
9h00	Welcome and opening remarks
9h05	<p>The Ruggie framework on business and human rights – implementation in conflict-affected countries</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the Ruggie framework implemented at EU level? • What are the challenges in applying the Ruggie framework in conflict-affected countries? • How does this tie in with other initiatives aimed at supporting transparency and accountability of business, corporate social responsibility, sustainable development and good governance? <p>Chair: Andrea Iff, swisspeace</p> <p>Main aspects of the EU's approach to implementing the Ruggie framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom Dodd, DG Enterprise and Industry • Susan Bird, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion <p>Reactions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hubert de Bremond d'Ars, Total • Egbert Wesselink, IKV Pax Christi <p>Followed by an open debate</p>
10h50	Coffee Break
11h15	<p>Engaging in conflict or peace: opportunities and challenges for public investors</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the challenges and opportunities for investors in situations of conflict and how can they apply a do-no-harm approach? • What are the expectations of EU policy makers regarding the role of the EIB in post-conflict environments? • How can EIB loans contribute to achieving the EU's normative foreign policy commitments and how can the EIB operationalise the do-no harm approach? <p>Chair: Mary Martin, LSE</p> <p>Input by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleni Kyrou, EIB • Mark Segal, EEAS • Josephine Liebl, EPLO <p>Followed by an open debate</p>

13h00	Lunch
14h00	<p>Trade within an integrated EU approach</p> <p>As set out in the Lisbon Treaty, trade shall be conducted in the context of the principles and objectives of the Union's external action</p> <p>Key Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can trade contribute to sustainable economic recovery after conflict? Examples • What are the conditions for maintaining trade activities in conflict-affected countries? • How to maximize the benefits of trade in conflict and post-conflict situations? What roles for involved actors? <p>Chair: Catherine Woollard, EPLO</p> <p>Potential impact of trade on conflict dynamics: Trading across the line of conflict in Kashmir</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tahir Aziz, Conciliation Resources <p>Reactions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick Pieroni, DG Trade • Helena Halldorf Romero, European Parliament • Jean Devlin, Control Risks <p>Followed by an open debate</p>
15h45	Concluding Remarks
16h00	End of meeting