

## **Towards A Peacebuilding Strategy for the European External Action Service**

The establishment of a European External Action Service (EEAS) provides the EU with a unique opportunity to implement its commitments on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In establishing the EEAS, the EU could develop a new kind of normative foreign policy and overcome some of the shortcomings of traditional diplomatic services. The EEAS could work constructively with non-state actors and transcend a narrow approach of security.

EPLO's vision is of an EEAS which uses its considerable leverage to promote sustainable peace. A growing body of evidence shows that peacebuilding is the most effective way to prevent, end and manage violent conflict and that civilians and civil society play an essential role in peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding encompasses a broad range of approaches to conflict, including prevention of violent conflict, tackling of the root causes of conflict and emphasising human security (i.e. the consequences of conflict for the security of local civilians rather than states). Most definitions of peacebuilding are based on the concept of conflict transformation which sees conflict as an inevitable and even healthy societal process if effective mechanisms are in place to manage it, resolve differences and prevent violence.

This paper contains ten suggestions for action which could serve to inform the structure and functioning of the EEAS:

### **(1) Bring conflict prevention back into the picture**

In 2001, the EU adopted the Gothenburg Programme<sup>1</sup> for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts. The Programme sets out concrete commitments covering four areas: political priorities for preventive actions; early warning, action and policy coherence; EU instruments for long- and short-term prevention; and co-operation and partnerships.

EPLO's review of the Gothenburg Programme<sup>2</sup> showed that many of the commitments have not been met. While parts of the Programme remain relevant, other sections could be updated so that it can serve as a reference point for the EEAS. In the meantime, developments in the evaluation of conflict prevention mean that it is now easier to demonstrate its effectiveness, thus removing a political obstacle to taking a preventive rather than responsive approach. It is therefore important to:

- Update and implement the Gothenburg programme commitments in the four areas it covers. In doing so, political priority should be given to conflict prevention over short-term crisis response, EU programmes and policies should be subject to a comprehensive conflict analysis and in-house expertise on conflict prevention should be increased.
- Ensure that the findings of the forthcoming review of the Gothenburg Programme are integrated in the EEAS' work.
- Co-operate with both international and local civil society organisations (CSOs) working in conflict-affected countries to make use of civil society capacities in preventing violent conflicts and their re-emergence and to ensure long-term solutions and impact.

### **(2) Bring peacebuilding expertise into the EEAS**

The EEAS will recruit staff from the European Commission, the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU and from EU Member States. In order to promote peace, it needs staff members who have expertise in peacebuilding and conflict analysis. Ways the EEAS can accomplish this include:

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<sup>1</sup> The Programme was developed during the Swedish EU Presidency and promoted by Anna Lindh who believed that the EU had an obligation to prevent conflict.

<sup>2</sup> EPLO (2006) Five years after Göteborg: the EU and its conflict prevention potential.

Accessible at: <http://www.eplo.org/documents/eplo5yearafterweb.pdf>

- Make peacebuilding expertise a clear job requirement for positions dealing with or in conflict-affected countries; using a merit-based and gender-balanced approach, recruit people with relevant expertise in Brussels and in EU Delegations.
- Offer in-service training and professional development on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
- Ensure that training and recruitment mechanisms are open and accessible not only to civil servants but also to candidates from the private sector and civil society.
- Introduce a quality assurance unit for peacebuilding (or focus this function in the Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding), which will include a mediation support cell to support senior-level officials working on peace processes as well as staff dedicated to knowledge sharing with experts on peacebuilding within and outside the EEAS, including on transitional justice, gender, SSR, DDR, protection of civilians and other relevant peacebuilding policy areas.
- Ensure that staff members involved in the planning and implementation of the Instrument for Stability (IfS) have the necessary thematic experience to interact with peacebuilding actors, including specialised CSOs.

### **(3) Appoint senior-level officials with responsibility for conflict prevention and peacebuilding**

The EU's institutions are hierarchical, like many EU Member States' civil services. With little decision-making power held by lower level officials, it is important that those in senior positions have named responsibilities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It is therefore important that the EEAS:

- Appoints senior level officials with responsibility for peacebuilding explicitly mentioned in their job descriptions to be in charge of ensuring that the EU meets its commitments to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
- Brings all structures responsible for response to conflict (CMPD, SitCen, CPCC, EUMS, parts of DG RELEX, including units A2 and A3, etc) into one Directorate General, which should then include a Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Directorate.
- Uses the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Directorate as the motor for supporting and promoting conflict prevention and peacebuilding across the Service's work, including support to the geographical departments.
- Resists attempts to absorb peacebuilding capacity – resources, personnel, policy development – into crisis management. The EU's response to conflict should go far beyond costly and less effective crisis management, focusing instead on conflict prevention and building lasting peace.
- Ensures that the current and envisaged structures have substantial civilian expertise in their leadership.

### **(4) Ensure the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and other related commitments on gender, peace and security**

The EU has made progress on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 with the development of the Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security (adopted in December 2008), which is complemented by a document entitled Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as reinforced by UNSCR 1820 in the context of ESDP (also adopted in late 2008). In addition, in May 2009, the European Parliament passed a resolution on gender mainstreaming in EU external relations, including in peacebuilding and nation-building.

That said, there is still a gap between policy and practice. To move from commitments to true implementation requires concrete, responsive, time-bound projects and programmes, capacity, resources and monitoring. The lack of women in senior positions is particular evident in EU external affairs. We strongly recommend that the EEAS:

- Ensures that relevant staff, including managers, are trained on the operational implications of policy commitments to gender, peace and security.

- Makes gender analysis routinely part of EU policy-making and practice.
- Appoints equal numbers of men and women in the EEAS, particularly at senior level.
- Creates enabling conditions and insists on women's participation in the peace processes to which the EU provides political and financial support, involving both women peace activists and women negotiators and mediators.
- Gives adequate status and support to the EU Taskforce on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).
- Makes adequate funding available for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related WPS commitments, as well as core funding for women's organisations in conflict-affected countries.
- Ensures political leadership and demonstrates the prominence given to gender, which could be done for example by creating a special unit on gender and by appointing a high-level representative on gender, peace and security.

## **(5) Ensure that the EEAS' work is itself conflict-sensitive**

Analysis carried out by EPLO and its member organisations, as well as by the EU institutions themselves, indicates that the EU sometimes acts in a way which may exacerbate conflict and prevents it from using its full leverage to promote peace. This means it is important to:

- Use conflict analysis to consider the impact of all EU policies and programmes on actual and potential conflicts.
- Develop planning tools to be used for conflict prevention as well as crisis management.
- Review the mandates of EU Special Representatives before they are extended at the end of the year according to their added value in contributing to peacebuilding and conflict prevention, revise them to include conflict sensitivity and ensure that EU Special Representatives have relevant conflict prevention and peacebuilding expertise available to them.

## **(6) Fully implement the EU's existing commitments to peacebuilding**

Since 2001, the EU has adopted a set of policy commitments on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the Lisbon Treaty states that the EU's aims are to 'promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples' (Art. 3.1) and to 'preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security' (Art. 21.2(c)).

The EU has a record of adopting normative commitments but not putting them into practice. This stems in part from the complexity of the EU's structure, including the division of external affairs among European Commission and Council of the EU, and in part from the tendency of EU Member States to make commitments without subsequently providing the resources or secondary decisions needed to implement the commitments. The EU does not need new norms, policies or grand strategies; it needs to be guided by existing commitments and to put them into practice, including by:

- Making the prevention of conflict and building sustainable peace explicit objectives of the work of geographical and thematic departments.
- Including the promotion of peace as an unambiguous goal in country strategy papers together with corresponding activities and budget provisions in the related national indicative programmes.

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<sup>3</sup> See Article 11 of the Cotonou Agreement (2000), the Commission Communication on Conflict Prevention (2001), the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts adopted at the European Council in Göteborg (June 2001), the Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development strategic framework (2001), the Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2007), the Communication Towards an EU response to Fragility (2007), the 2003 European Security Strategy (and in particular the 2008 review of its implementation), the Commission Communication on Policy Coherence for Development (2005), the Council Conclusions on Security and Development (November 2007), and the European Consensus on Development (2005). The importance of building peace is further acknowledged in the European Neighbourhood Policy (2007) and the Joint Africa-EU Partnership (2007). These documents and others also recognise the crucial role that NGOs play in EU peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and crisis management and acknowledge that there cannot be sustainable development without peace and security.

- Building conflict prevention and peacebuilding into monitoring and evaluation systems so that the EEAS is assessed *inter alia* on its contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the reviews which will take place in 2011 and 2013.

## **(7) Ensure that the EEAS develops an effective partnership with civil society in Brussels and in country and that it is a model for accountability**

The EU has a strong record of working with civil society and also of supporting the development of civil society both inside and outside Europe. We would like to see the EEAS continue this tradition by working closely with civil society using formal and informal mechanisms. Close co-operation with civil society will improve the effectiveness and accountability of the EEAS. Following the One World Trust framework for the accountability of international organisations<sup>4</sup>, the accountability of the EEAS should cover the following four dimensions: participation, evaluation, public complaints mechanisms and transparency.

- **Participation:** Introduce mechanisms for consultation of CSOs and the provision of their analysis; collaborate with and engage civil society to implement policy where appropriate; support local CSOs, raise awareness of the benefits and practical implication of civil society participation and invest in long-term co-operation.
- **Evaluation:** Involve civil society in evaluating the performance of the EEAS and in the consultation on the EEAS later this year; document and develop, in consultation with civil society, best practice principles for all parties engaged in EU crisis management and conflict prevention.
- **Transparency:** Set up a rigorous access to information regime and an active disclosure policy; enable the European Parliament to fulfil its monitoring role by submitting periodical reports on decisions taken by the High Representative and making them public and requiring EU Special Representatives to report transparently to the European Parliament on their activities and budgets.
- **Public complaints mechanisms:** Ensure that the EEAS has adequate public complaints mechanisms and means of redress, using existing instruments such as the European Ombudsman and OLAF.

## **(8) Review the EU's statebuilding efforts and the role of the EEAS in supporting the EU's commitments on statebuilding and fragile situations**

Statebuilding carried out by the EU – and by many other international donors – has yet to create any viable states. Many EU agencies are engaged in statebuilding (although it is often not described as such). This includes governance work supported by DG Development, and in particular the technical assistance provided to partner countries – which is currently under review following a critical assessment by the European Court of Auditors – as well as many of the activities which are included under the civilian crisis management component of CSDP (rule of law, police training, SSR, public administration) and finally some of the work supported by DG RELEX. To improve statebuilding, we recommend that the EEAS:

- Implements a new strategy on budget support which builds accountability to civil society into the whole of the budget support process (using participatory budgeting, budget monitoring, expenditure tracking, civil society oversight bodies, etc).
- Commits to the draft implementation plan developed by the European Commission on situations of fragility.
- Makes the promotion and protection of independent civil society a priority throughout the different phases of statebuilding to avoid the isolation of politically independent voices and the marginalisation of less dominant groups within society.
- Ensures that statebuilding policies are conflict-sensitive and contribute to peacebuilding.
- Uses the opportunity represented by post-conflict statebuilding to promote the participation of marginalised groups in political processes and thus establish inclusive and equitable institutions which are capable of addressing conflict.

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<sup>4</sup> See [www.oneworld.net](http://www.oneworld.net).

## **(9) Strengthen the civilian elements of the CSDP**

The EU's CSDP consists of military and civilian crisis management. In practice, 28 CSDP Missions have been deployed to conflict-affected areas since 2003. The Missions vary hugely in terms of size and tasks, ranging from the small-scale Missions, such as EUPOL in the DRC, to EULEX Kosovo, which has taken over from UNMIK and is contributing to the development of a state in the newly-independent Kosovo.

EPLO believes that after ten years of CSDP a comprehensive assessment is now due. In addition, a plan for the integration of civilian and military crisis management has now been put in place in the form of the Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD), which will be integrated into the EEAS. EPLO argues that the CMPD should be integrated into a wider structure for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, a Directorate General within the EEAS, because crisis management is but one tool at the EU's disposal. If the CMPD and CSDP as a whole continue to operate independently of the EU's geographical departments, it will defeat the objective of the EEAS. In addition, the imbalance in the CMPD implies a reduction in the importance of civilian crisis management – at a time when it needs to be strengthened. There is also a risk that conflict prevention and peacebuilding resources – both financial and human – are subsumed into and diverted to crisis management. We therefore recommend that the EEAS:

- Increases the number of civilian experts in the CMPD at staff and management level.
- Puts in place effective systems for identifying, recruiting, training and deploying civilian experts to CSDP Missions from the EU's Member States.
- Builds a Rapid Reaction Civilian Capacity with sufficient planning, procurement, staffing and monitoring capacity to be able to mobilise civilian resources needed in conflict situation quickly via recruitment systems based on the concept of the Rapid Reaction Teams.
- Carries out a review of CSDP, assessing how each individual Mission has contributed to long term peacebuilding in the country in which it has operated.
- Increases co-operation with civil society in Brussels and improves capacities for co-operation in country, especially with respect to informing, implementing and evaluating CSDP Missions and holding them to account.
- Ensures that IfS funding linked to current and future CSDP civilian Missions is not used to top up Missions' budgets but is used to support civil society efforts which contribute to the Missions meeting their objectives.
- Explores the idea of conflict prevention rather than crisis management CSDP Missions, including the use of planning as tool for prevention of conflicts rather than crisis management.
- Uses a decision-making process which brings together the CMPD, the director of the geographical team in Brussels, the High Representative's staff and the head of delegation to make decisions on deployment of new Missions.

## **(10) Ensure that the EEAS champions peacebuilding in its relations with other EU institutions and that it promotes a common EU approach to conflict-affected countries**

The EU has frequently suffered from a lack of policy 'coherence' or consistency (where one policy conflicts with or undermines other policies, e.g. trade policy undermines human rights policy). The EEAS will help to overcome this challenge to some extent with the integration of aspects of development policy into the Service. However, other important external policies remain outside the EEAS, notably trade, energy/climate change, neighbourhood and enlargement. There is also a strong risk that internal policies continue to clash with external priorities, particularly in the areas of home affairs and agriculture. Thus, as well as a commitment to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, EEAS staff will need to have the appropriate status to negotiate effectively with other institutions in order to further the EEAS's objectives and to ensure an integrated, whole-of-EU approach with conflict preventing and peacebuilding among its objectives. This means:

- Charging members of the EEAS with the responsibility for promoting peacebuilding and taking the lead in coordinating with other EU institutions.<sup>5</sup>
- Requiring heads of delegations to raise issues of incoherence and to draw attention to policies which are inconsistent with the promotion of peace and the prevention of conflict in their countries of operation.
- Facilitating genuinely common EU strategies towards third countries, with conflict prevention and peacebuilding at their heart. This would involve all relevant EU actors working together to decide on common objectives, instead of deciding them separately and then ‘coordinating’ (i.e. sharing information) afterwards.
- Considering the development of a common framework of objectives, values and principles regarding conflict prevention and peacebuilding to be adopted by the European Commission and EU Member States, possibly in the form of a European Consensus on Peacebuilding or a European Strategy for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding.

## EPLO MEMBERS

Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management  
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 Crisis Management Initiative—CMI  
 European Network for Civil Peace Services—EN.CPS  
 European Centre for Conflict Prevention—ECCP  
 ESSEC Iréné  
 Fractal  
 Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior—FRIDE  
 German Platform for Peaceful Conflict Management  
 Glencree Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation  
 International Alert  
 International Center for Transitional Justice—ICTJ  
 International Crisis Group  
 Interpeace  
 Kvinna till Kvinna  
 Life and Peace Institute  
 Nansen Dialogue Network  
 NGO Support Centre  
 Nonviolent Peaceforce  
 Partners for Democratic Change International—PDCI  
 Pax Christi International  
 Quaker Council for European Affairs—QCEA  
 Saferworld  
 Search for Common Ground  
 Swisspeace  
 Toledo International Centre for Peace—CITpax  
 World Vision

## THE EUROPEAN PEACEBUILDING LIAISON OFFICE

### EPLO

EPLO is the platform of European NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks active in the field of peacebuilding, who share an interest in promoting sustainable peacebuilding policies among decision-makers in the European Union.

EPLO aims to influence the EU so it promotes and implements measures that lead to sustainable peace between states and within states and peoples, and that transform and resolve conflicts non-violently. EPLO wants the EU to recognise the crucial connection between peacebuilding, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development world wide and the crucial role NGOs have to play in sustainable EU efforts for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and crisis management.

EPLO advances the interests of its members through common policy positions and consequently advocating for those common positions. EPLO disseminates information and promotes understanding of EU policies of concern to its Members. The Office builds also solidarity and cooperation amongst its members and with other relevant NGO networks. Finally, EPLO raises awareness about the contribution the EU should make to peacebuilding and the need to hold the EU accountable to its own political commitments of helping secure peace within and outside its borders.

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<sup>5</sup> The EEAS should, for instance, review proposals for EIB investments outside the EU and trade agreements and be able to insert measures that promote peace; strategies developed by the EEAS should be included in the enlargement policies to prevent the accession process from becoming a purely technical exercise and guarantee that the EU operates with one agenda.