

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding inside the EEAS

The European External Action Service (EEAS) is taking shape: the organisational structure of the Service has been presented in the form of an organigramme and the transfer of staff from the European Commission (EC) and the Council of the EU has begun. EPLO applauds the creation of the Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Security Policy and within it a Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Unit; we have consistently argued that a strong Directorate is necessary if the Service is to meet its objective of preventing conflict.

We are concerned, however, that the Directorate may not be able to fulfil this role due to inadequate staffing of the Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Unit and because of limited integration with the other EU bodies which play a role in conflict and security policy. In addition, the lack of women in senior-management positions is embarrassing and damages the EU's credibility.

EPLO believes that the Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Security Policy should be the hub of conflict expertise within the EEAS. With the right resources and clout, it could:

- carry out conflict risk assessments and use conflict analysis to assess the impact of all EU policies and programmes on actual and potential conflicts;
- develop conflict mitigation strategies and conflict prevention packages for use in countries at risk of conflict;
- lead in the development of innovative policies by bringing contemporary thinking on peace, security and conflict into EU policy-making;
- contribute expertise on conflict, peace and security issues to the full range of EU policies, programmes and activities in conflict-affected countries and fragile situations by e.g. providing input into country strategies and policy programming;
- organise training on conflict issues for the regional managing directorates;
- expand the EU's capacity to prevent conflict so that crisis management can be used more sparingly;
- use the Instrument for Stability to support conflict prevention and peacebuilding and play a leading role in developing the Instrument for Stability (or its successor) as part of the new multiannual financial framework;
- ensure that a human security approach informs the work of the Security Policy Unit and that it addresses the root causes of conflict and other forms of instability in its work.

Transfer of staff to the Unit for Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation

The EC's problematic budget proposal would transfer the majority of conflict policy experts (crisis planners, senior staff from the Crisis Response and Peacebuilding Unit) into the Foreign Policy Instruments Service (FPIS), a technical implementation unit which remains part of the EC and therefore outside the EEAS. As a result, the Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Unit would only have three staff members which would not be sufficient for the Unit to carry out the basic tasks it is charged with, such as programming parts of the Instrument for Stability, let alone carrying out the strengthened role of providing conflict analysis and support to the regional directorates. Having a skeletal team of just three staff members would also prevent the EU from monitoring the extensive funds which it provides to external organisations, primarily the UN, and from co-operating with external actors. In addition, it would reduce the EU's ability to gather knowledge about developments in the field of conflict prevention as well as analysis from specific conflicts.

EPLO believes that the EC's budget proposal contradicts the agreement reached by all parties in July and is not based on the broader interests of the EU; we support the stance of the European Parliament and EU Member States in insisting on a new budget proposal that includes the transfer of conflict policy experts into the Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Unit.

Role of the Security Policy Unit

Within the Directorate, the Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Unit and the Security Policy Unit should work together closely. To ensure that the Security Policy Unit contributes to the EU's objectives to 'preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security' as set out in the Lisbon Treaty, it should:

- use the concept of human security, rather than state security to inform its work (as set out in the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy (2008));
- continue to expand its partnerships with non-state actors, including CSOs, in the EU and in the countries where the EU operates since non-state actors are both a cause of and potential solution to instability;
- develop policies, strategies and methodologies that will tackle the underlying causes of the long-term threats to European security;
- work closely with the relevant Council Working Groups to ensure an integrated approach to European security and to overcome the territorial battles which have characterised the EU's work on certain issues, in particular SALW and SSR.

Programming the Stability Instrument and integrating conflict expertise into regional and thematic work

The Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Security Policy will programme the Instrument for Stability, the EU's policy tool for conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding. This means that it will prepare the strategies which set out the narrower priorities and objectives for spending in the short- to medium-term in accordance with the broader regulations governing the Instrument. Without an additional transfer of conflict experts to the Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Unit, it will not be able to ensure that the Instrument for Stability is used strategically, effectively and consistently.

In addition, the Directorate will need the capacity to contribute expertise to the programming of other instruments. Most notably, it will need to contribute to the programming of the development instruments to ensure that they do not inadvertently fuel conflict. It will need the capacity to work with regional and thematic directorates on implementation of other policy commitments, such as those on Women, Peace and Security which will require close cooperation with the Directorate on Human Rights and Democracy and regional directorates.

Links between the Directorate and other parts of the Service

A key problem in the EU's response to conflict has been the separation of policy between the EC and the Council and the proliferation of actors working separately within the same conflict-affected countries and regions. This situation is wasteful, can be embarrassing and significantly undermines the EU's effectiveness.

The EEAS organigramme does not show links between the Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Security Policy and the relevant Council Working Groups, namely the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM), the Politico-Military Group (PMG) and the EU Military Committee (EUMC), the three groups which bring together EU Member State

representatives to prepare decisions under Common Foreign and Security Policy. The organigramme indicates that the regional and thematic directorates *will* be linked to the respective Council Working Groups, which is a welcome development. For example, the Directorate for Human Rights and Democracy is linked to COHOM.

An additional problem is that the crisis management structures (CMPD, CPCC etc) remain entirely separate from the regional and thematic directorates.

Closer coordination than is foreseen in the organigramme is required if the EU is to be able to take an integrated, “whole-of-EU”, approach to conflict. To capitalize on the opportunity presented by the EEAS, a formal link should be established between the Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Security Policy, the Council Working Groups and the crisis management structures. Similarly, the recently established crisis management board should be broadened to become a crisis management and conflict prevention board and include conflict policy experts. Without this, it seems likely that the competition that has characterized EU action on many peace and security issues will continue. To further contribute to integration, the envisaged mediation cell should be located within the Directorate.

Gender balance in senior-level positions

The organigramme has revealed the lack of women in senior positions within the EEAS, which is an embarrassment to the EU and will undermine the EU’s efforts to promote gender equality outside its borders. For example, the lack of women in leadership positions in the EU undermines its credibility when it tries to support the involvement of women in peace processes or tries to ensure that peace agreements reflect the concerns of women as well as men, both of which form part of its commitment to the implementation of UNSCR 1325. If the vast majority of EU leaders are men, any statement about the treatment of women in third countries sounds hypocritical: “Do as we say, not as we do”.

The line taken by Baroness Ashton and others throughout has been that measures to increase the number of women are wrong because they contradict the idea of merit-based recruitment. It is hard to believe that genuinely merit-based recruitment systems would lead to such disproportionate numbers of men and women in management positions.

Currently, the ratio of men to women at senior and mid-management levels within the Service is as follows:

- 6 Managing Directors – 5 men, 0 women (1 position vacant) (0%)
- 11 Directors – 7 men, 2 women (2 positions vacant) (18%)
- 41 Heads of Unit – 24 men, 8 women (9 positions vacant) (19.5%)
- 15 Chairs of working parties/committees – 8 men, 5 women (2 positions vacant) (33%)
- 11 EU Special Representatives – 10 men, 1 woman (9%)

Fortunately, the number of positions that remain vacant means this deficiency can be corrected to some degree in the near term.

Recommendations

To address the issues mentioned above, EPLO recommends:

to the *European Parliament*

- to use all measures at its disposal to insist that the EC puts forward a proposal regarding the transfer of Relex Staff to the Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Unit as stipulated in the budget reserve proposal agreed to by the Council and the EP;
- to scrutinise any further appointments in the Service and to demand gender balance.

to *EU Member States*

- to call upon the EC to produce a proposal that allocates sufficient resources to the Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Unit;
- to propose at least one woman to every man when proposing candidates for management positions in the Service.

to the *EEAS Management Team*

- to put the Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Security Policy on an equal footing with other directorates by resourcing it adequately for policy programming and establishing a formal relationship with CIVCOM, PMG and EUMC;
- to ensure that the Directorate's policy expertise is used most efficiently, the strict separation between the crisis management structures and the Directorate should be reconsidered and the links with geographic and thematic directorates should be strengthened;
- to consider opening up the recruitment for the position of Managing Director for Global and Multilateral Issues to candidates from outside the institutions and EU Member States' services to ensure that the appointee has the necessary expertise and qualifications;
- to broaden the scope of the crisis management board to become a crisis management and conflict prevention board which includes conflict policy experts;
- to rectify the lack of gender balance in any further appointments to senior-level positions.