



Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting

The EU-wide Strategic Framework for Security Sector Reform: Consultation workshop with civil society organisations

Friday 4 December 2015, Brussels

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This document is a compilation of the key recommendations made by participants in the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) Policy Meeting entitled 'The EU-wide Strategic Framework for Security Sector Reform: Consultation workshop with civil society organisations' which took place on Friday 4 December 2015 in Brussels.

(NB/ The following recommendations do not necessarily represent the views of the organisers, nor can they be attributed to any individual participant or participating institution.)

A full report of the meeting will be available soon.

1. Political engagement to support implementation

Participants in the Working Group on 'Political engagement to support implementation' made the following recommendations:

- The regional dimension needs to be taken into account when designing security sector reform (SSR) processes.
- Context analysis, especially the assessment of local contexts focusing on the political economy, donor coordination, etc. is very important and must be given due regard before developing SSR processes.
- Regarding political will, the EU could consider capitalising on peace agreements.
- The EU should consider whether and to what extent it should apply conditionality. In this context, the EU should take into account lessons learned from its own enlargement process as it can offer important guidance on using conditionality and embedding leverage into programming.
- Regarding support for political dialogue, the EU should make use of existent dialogue mechanisms and simply add other actors to them. Civil society organisations (CSOs) could take up this task, including by helping to share information on existent initiatives and coordinating with the EU and other donors.

- It is important to develop indicators to assess the implementation and impact of SSR processes, including in terms of tangible benefits for the local population and community service delivery.
- The EU needs to address the gender dimension in its Common and Security Policy (CSDP) missions, including by increasing the number of female staff members. This should help it to have better leverage when advocating gender mainstreaming in structures in its partners countries.
- To improve its SSR practice in general, the EU should avoid deadline diplomacy and be more modest in the way it brands and packages SSR, including by ensuring that it adopts the right terminology for each local context.
- The EU should consider working through civil society actors to reform institutions, and supporting CSOs to train and provide technical expertise to SSR actors.

2. Governance, accountability and effectiveness

Participants in the Working Group on 'Governance, accountability and effectiveness' made the following recommendations:

- Given the importance of adequate capacities and political will for SSR processes, when they are lacking at the national level, the EU should seek to engage at lower levels, including at the community level.
- Given the difficulties faced by CSOs in many contexts to engage with authorities and with each other, a potential role for the EU in SSR processes could be to bring actors together in order to facilitate dialogue and productive partnerships.
- In addition to supporting state institutions, the EU should also support CSO capacity building for ensuring oversight of SSR processes.
- SSR processes need to be informed by local needs. It is important to ensure that local communities are engaged in conflict analysis, and throughout the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SSR processes.
- Regarding the issue of accountability towards different stakeholders, the EU should engage with women and men, try to address the gender dynamics at play in specific conflicts, and pay due regard to the diversity of social, cultural, ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds.
- When engaging with different stakeholder groups, it is essential to reach out beyond capital cities and to prioritise small, grassroots organisations which do not necessarily have the capacities to implement the size of the programmes which the EU and other donors might be envisaging.
- Education is a key aspect in the governance debate: it is essential to raise awareness at the community level about SSR processes, including about the security actors involved and their respective roles. It is also important to educate local populations about security issues, including taboo subjects such as gender-based violence.
- Poor governance should make the EU and other donors reflect seriously on the type of support they provide.
- Accountability should be provided through a whole-of-society, people-centred approach.
- Effectiveness can be provided by strengthening the capacities of CSOs to engage in SSR processes.

3. Supporting local ownership and building sustainable solutions

Participants in the Working Group on 'Supporting local ownership and building sustainable solutions' made the following recommendations:

- Local ownership needs to incorporate ownership by security actors themselves.
- It is important to balance national-level ownership with community-level ownership.
- It is important for SSR processes to reach beyond capital cities and to include small, grassroots initiatives.
- There is a need for both quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring trust in security providers.
- Sustainability needs to be rooted in local demands. However, the EU should also demand change and lend its support to ensuring that less powerful voices are also heard.
- It is very important to ensure the correct design of SSR processes from the outset. Therefore, more diversified funding instruments and broader consultative processes prior to the launch of processes are required.
- SSR processes need to be flexible enough to facilitate engagement at different levels and with different groups, including with informal structures. There is a need to ensure that SSR structures are not established without roots in local communities and without careful consideration of traditional mechanisms which are often ad-hoc/informal.
- The high turnover of staff in EU delegations could have potentially disruptive effects on SSR processes which are, by definition, long-term and reliant on trust-building.
- Trust-building at different levels, including within local communities, and between local communities and different security actors involved in SSR processes, needs to be considered carefully. CSOs can play a key role by facilitating communication between security actors and local communities. The role of the media in trust-building is also very important and should be further strengthened.
- There is a need to have special oversight organisations in SSR processes, as well as clear procedures for guaranteeing accountability, transparency and better coordination among the different actors involved.

4. Community security and service delivery-focused interventions

Participants in the Working Group on 'Community security and service delivery-focused interventions' made the following recommendations:

- Community security requires space for dialogue, trust-building, and information sharing at various levels.
- The needs of local communities should be reflected in all SSR-related decisions.
- CSOs can play a key role in ensuring a context-specific, people-centred approach to community security by liaising directly with local populations and by assessing community needs. CSOs can also facilitate monitoring by local communities following interventions.
- The EU should focus on outputs rather than inputs in order to enhance service delivery.
- SSR processes should be rooted in the 'Do No Harm' principle and balance practical impact with accountability. The risk of processes being donor-driven must also be carefully assessed.

- The potential risk of SSR processes being perceived as too technical can be minimised through proper information sharing and communication with all relevant stakeholders.
- SSR should not be seen as too sensitive to be communicated to CSOs. The EU should push for greater clarity about what can and what cannot be considered as confidential.
- In order to increase the sustainability of actions undertaken, CSOs should share information about their programmes both with each other and with the EU.
- There is a need for the EU and other donors who engage in SSR processes to seek to better understand both the context in which they are providing support and the diversity of actors involved.

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](#).

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