

Human Rights and Peacebuilding Recommendations on the European External Action Service

This policy paper is intended to complement a more general paper entitled “Civil Society Expectations of the European External Action Service”¹, prepared by four networks of NGOs: EPLO, HRDN, CONCORD and Voice, representing respectively the peacebuilding, human rights, development and humanitarian aid sectors of European civil society. Whereas the general paper represents an overview of the most basic expectations of civil society, in an area where all of the sectors represented are important stakeholders sharing common interests, it was agreed that each sector would complement this general paper with more detailed recommendations specific to their own sphere of work.

HRDN and EPLO, representing the human rights and peacebuilding communities, have jointly prepared this supplementary paper in order to elaborate certain specific recommendations aimed at improving the EU’s capacity to address issues relating specifically to human rights and peacebuilding in the creation and implementation of the European External Action Service (EEAS). As stated in the general paper, the creation of the EEAS has the potential to significantly affect the EU’s external relations and in a way in which is potentially very positive, so long as the voices of all relevant stakeholders are taken into account.

Below are the peacebuilding and human rights-specific recommendations:

- For certain specific roles, which can only be adequately fulfilled by personnel with expert knowledge and experience (such as, for instance, human rights, gender, or civil crisis management), the EEAS should consider adopting a system along the lines of EuropeAid’s Technical Assistants database; in which posts are filled from a database of specialised experts rather than through the more generalised *concours* system. This system should apply equally at both EEAS headquarters and at Delegation level.
- The way in which the EEAS is structured and will function in the future should seek to address the lack of coherence resulting from the distinction between short-term second pillar crisis management and longer-term first pillar peacebuilding activities, with a view to developing a comprehensive and coordinated approach at an operational level. EU efforts, including the directing of resources, should be prioritised for long term prevention and management of conflicts, rather than short term crisis response as is currently the case, and it will be essential for the EU to build up its civilian capabilities for both of these tasks. The European Defence Agency should also be included in the remit of the EEAS, so to grant a more transparent and democratically scrutinised setting of its priorities.
- A specific Peacebuilding Directorate should be established within the EEAS with the prime responsibility of coordinating all aspects of conflict prevention activities, peacebuilding, and crisis management missions, in order to ensure coherence and consistency in this field between the Council and the Commission, which has so far been lacking. Such a directorate should have as its main tasks: co-ordination of internal EU instruments; planning, mission support and evaluation for crisis

¹ reference

management missions; cooperation with external organisations and non-governmental organisations; training and recruitment of civilian personnel; and research and evaluation.² Building on this Directorate's coordination work, the EEAS structure should allow for the flexibility needed to build up standing civilian capacity for EU crisis prevention and conflict management in third countries without the necessity of further Council decisions.

- Action on human rights continues to be treated separately from other EU policies, despite commitments to mainstreaming made in 2006, and the impact of EU action on human rights would be far greater if there were more coherence between different policy areas. In light of growing concerns regarding high profile issues such as energy and security, and a sidelining of human rights by the trade agenda, there is a need for renewed political commitment to human rights, which should be reflected in the work and structure of the EEAS.
- The structural changes in the EU's diplomatic service provide a good opportunity to bring the promotion of human rights to the fore of the work of EU missions and delegations. In each mission and delegation, an individual responsible for human rights should be identified and this responsibility should be included in their objectives.
- The EU should focus on implementing the tools it has developed in the field of human rights, such as the human rights guidelines and, its dialogues with third countries, as these are not currently being used to their full potential. Greater efforts should be made in monitoring and evaluation of EU human rights policies in order to measure their impact and to suggest improvements for the future.
- The EU is capable of having a greater impact in international fora in the field of human rights and would be more effective if engaged in collective and multilateral approaches and built cross-regional partnerships. This could be included within the mandate of the EEAS.

² For more details see the EPLO policy paper on a European Peacebuilding Coordinating Cell, from January 2006, <http://www.eplo.org/documents/EPCCPolicyPaperCPP.pdf>