



**COMMENTS ON THE
CONTRIBUTION OF NGOS TO THE EU CIVILIAN
HEADLINE GOAL 2008**

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The Contribution of NGOs to the Civilian Headline Goal 2008

1. BACKGROUND

The EU Action Plan for Civilian Aspects of ESDP welcomes regular exchanges of views with civil society organisations on the general orientations of EU civilian crisis management and states that 'NGO experience and early warning capacity are valued by the EU'. The subsequent PSC recommendations of November 2006 recognise the considerable expertise and knowledge of NGOs and CSOs in the field of crisis management and conflict prevention and urge further efforts to enhance cooperation at every stage of the process from planning and fact-finding to recruitment and training to implementation on the ground, evaluation, exit strategies, and follow-up.

As ESDP missions become more complex and multi-functional, the relevance of the NGO contribution, both strategically and in the field, increases significantly. This paper makes concrete proposals as to how the EU could collaborate with European NGOs in order to make additional capabilities available under the EU Civilian Headline Goal.

2. CAPABILITIES OF PEACEBUILDING NGOS IN SUPPORT OF CIVILIAN ESDP MISSION NEEDS

2.1. Consultation

Peacebuilding NGOs are heavily engaged in a whole range of sectors of relevance to ESDP mission planning and evaluation both at headquarter and field levels, such as early warning, security sector reform (SSR), disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), women's issues, gender aspects, child protection, local capacity building, de-mining, human security and promotion of democracy and human rights. This paper cannot go into detail on all these activities, but there are a number of excellent books and reports which describe the work of both local and international NGOs in this growing sector¹.

The on-going work to build strategic dialogue and consultation between the EU institutions and European NGOs has been strongly supported by the Finnish and German Presidencies of the EU. A concrete development has been the regular informal exchanges between NGOs/CSOs and the appropriate level of Council bodies. This process is well developed with CIVCOM and has started at PSC level but has now to be broadened to all relevant Council structures. Further consideration can be given to drawing upon European NGOs in order to facilitate an exchange of views with and feedback from partners, local stakeholders and local populations' view of mission evaluation/lessons learnt processes.

2.2. Organisational Expertise

European-based peacebuilding NGOs' activities clearly intersect with the priority areas of ESDP, for instance: promotion of community-based policing, re-building of judicial capacities, strengthening of independent and inclusive media, ensuring women's participation in war crimes tribunals, gender mainstreaming, children

¹ Catriona Gourlay, *Partners Apart: Enhancing Cooperation Between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management in the Framework of ESDP*, KATU, CMI, EPLO, 2006; Catherine Barnes, *Agents for Change: Civil Society Roles in Preventing War and Building Peace*, ECCP-GPPAC, Issue Paper#2, September 2006; Paul van Tongeren et al, *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society*, London, Lynne Rienner Pub., 2005; Dylan Matthews, *War Prevention Works: 50 Stories of People Resolving Conflict*, Oxford, Oxford Research Group, 2001.

affected by armed conflict, monitoring court procedures, prison conditions and human rights legislation, and providing advice on matters of transitional justice and international law.

The NGOs who are doing this kind of work are regularly engaged in mission planning, fact-finding, recruiting and training personnel, managing and implementing field projects and evaluating them. There is a wealth of experience² as well as a store of lessons learnt and best practices for the EU to tap into. Specifically, this expertise could meet the immediate concern of civilian ESDP missions to rapidly adapt to unforeseen and unbudgeted issues.

Most of the key European NGOs engaged in peacebuilding activities are now part of EPLO – the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, which provides a ‘one-stop shop’ for European institutions and Member States to be able to access the combined experiences and resources of the NGO sector in the field of ESDP, and of peacebuilding more generally. EPLO is in the process of building a comprehensive database of the activities and expertise of its member organisations, so that EU officials can obtain accurate and timely information. For instance,

- at the *pre-planning* phase a request could be made for information on which NGOs are working on relevant issues in a given country or region and what information is available about their activities, their local partners and what they have learnt so far;
- specific relevant contextual information for the *conduct of an ESDP mission*, such as prison conditions, number of prisoners, and budget expenditure per prisoner may be readily available through NGO networks;
- where such information is not freely available, there may well be the possibility to contract very short term research from the NGO sector in order to meet ESDP mission needs³;
- where an ESDP crisis management mission encounters a *crisis situation*, NGO counterparts can be called upon to assist in rapid information gathering and provision of emergency service delivery. Peacebuilding NGO networks are generally highly flexible and adapted to function during an acute crisis phase.

2.3. Recruitment

In terms of recruitment of personnel for ESDP missions, the prerogative of Member States to retain control of the recruitment process is well understood. Nevertheless, NGOs have not only recruitment experience and best practices to share, but also access to experienced male and female professionals, some being former police officers, lawyers or civil administrators, who could potentially serve on ESDP missions. The CIVCOM recommendations and guidelines on the raising of personnel for EU civilian crisis management invite all Member States to seek expertise from *all potential sources, including the non-state sector* in order to ‘maximise the scope of expertise available for civilian crisis management missions’. Likewise, the recent PSC conclusions urge ‘Member States to consider, in accordance with their national legislation, expertise from the NGO and CSO sector, when establishing or developing rosters for deployment in civilian crisis

² For example the positive experience within the ESDP field in co-operating with CMI in the establishment of the Aceh monitoring mission.

³ This does not prejudice the necessary discussion as to whether the budgetary means to commission such fact-finding from NGOs should be within CFSP budget, EC flanking or from Member State’s own resources.

management missions.’ Some Member States are successfully implementing this conclusion, while most have not established any such mechanism.

A limited range of specific functions performed within the context of civilian crisis management missions, particularly those substituting for state authority, are best carried out by serving officials from within EU Member State administrations. This is most obviously the case with serving police officers. There is, however, a vast range of capabilities which can at times be best met by expertise from beyond the pool of people serving at any specific time within a Member State public administration. This includes former officials, experts within academia and training organisations, defence lawyers and human rights experts, legal experts and technical advisors in constitutional and international law, transitional justice, truth commissions, corruption, child protection, human trafficking, war crimes, refugee and nationality issues, property rights and many other specialist areas of legal or human rights expertise, media, gender issues, child protection, environmental policy, human resources, training, public relations, finance, IT and procurement.

A number of European NGOs maintain their own rosters or databases of professionals potentially available for this kind of work. As examples (and by no means a comprehensive survey):

- the largest NGO roster of the civil protection field is held by Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief/International Health Exchange (RedR/IHE) and contains more than 20,000 people in the humanitarian/emergency relief and medical fields;
- of more relevance to other areas of ESDP is the International Peaceworkers Register, which is managed by International Alert, and which currently has about 2,500 people in ten main categories of expertise and about 100 sub-categories designed for interoperability between the various EU institutions and other international organisations. These include all the categories of expertise of current interest to ESDP. This is primarily used by the UK, but other EU member states which do not have their own personnel rosters or easy access to professionals outside the relevant ministries could potentially benefit by accessing people on the Peaceworkers register who are from their country;
- in Germany, the Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze (ZIF) has a centralised database of personnel they have trained and selected for overseas missions. The German Civil Peace Service (Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst (ForumZFD)) has access to many hundreds of highly qualified civilian professionals who are trained and experienced in this type of work;
- the Austria Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) has been training civilians for UN and OSCE missions for many years and has a pool of several hundred alumni, many of whom are highly suitable for ESDP missions;
- the Expert Group for Nonviolent Alternatives (NEAG) is building up a pool of experts, including some that have been trained in cooperation with the Dutch military.

In addition, European NGOs without formal rosters of experts will still tend to have contact information for most of the world’s key experts related to the institution’s particular thematic and/or geographic focus. Furthermore non-EU states have good experience of drawing on NGO sources for personnel. For example, the Canada’s Civilian Reserve (CANADEM) runs a database with over 7,500

professionals covering over 200 categories of expertise, and the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM), holds a database of 250 professionals in the fields of good governance, human rights, elections, democratisation, legal reform, media, local government, gender, finances and general administration.

2.4. Training

Training is another area where NGOs have an important contribution to make to ESDP capabilities. Some NGOs, like ASPR or Peaceworkers/International Alert, have been involved for some time with the EC Project on Training for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management on behalf of their respective Member States, more recently coordinated by the Folke Bernadotte Academy. The International Security Information Service (ISIS-Europe) and EPLO have also conducted gender training at the Commission. Other NGO training networks, also funded by the Commission, include the Associations and Resources for Conflict Management Skills (ARCA) and the Adult Learning Consortium for Conflict Management (Alpicom). Both of these networks are currently engaged in sharing of training experiences and development of common training standards in allied fields where NGO training capacities are growing to fill gaps in many Member States, especially in the newly acceded Member States. In Switzerland, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) organises an integrated training course for Swiss and international participants in civilian peacebuilding missions on behalf of the Foreign Ministry. This is organised in partnership with and SWISSINT, the Swiss Armed Forces International Command, and swisspeace for the NGO-side. Several of the experts trained in this course have also participated in EU-missions.

The training required for an ESDP mission is not dissimilar to the training required for any other peace-related mission, whether it is generic pre-mission training to prepare people for using their domestic expertise in a post-conflict environment or mission-specific training to prepare people for the realities on the ground in a given country. NGOs also need to prepare their people properly for the work they will do in such settings and need to ensure they have met their duty of care in terms of personal safety and security training, including first aid. Since NGOs have been designing and running this kind of training for many years, it is also logical that they may have something useful to contribute to training for ESDP in terms of training practices and requirements as well as in terms of contributing experienced trainers and relevant training materials to ESDP-specific courses. One area where civil society's expertise will be essential is capacity building and confidence building with civil society on the ground, notably in developing an understanding of how civil society interacts with police, justice systems, parliaments, and governments in a democratic society.

3. CONCLUSION

Of course there are obstacles and challenges in the way of closer cooperation between NGOs, Member States and the Council Secretariat on ESDP matters. It would, for example, be a misunderstanding to conclude that NGOs could be or wish to be included generally in a 'chain of command' of EU operations. For this reason we suggest to look at the added value contribution of NGOs in the four distinct areas of a) consultation, b) organisational expertise, c) training where the above would not be the case and d) recruitment where an individual would serve under the full rules of the mission.

Some of the challenges that have been raised existed in the UN-NGO relationship at one time as well, until Member States and UN bodies came to the positive

realization that NGOs provide considerable added value to UN activities at all levels.⁴

In the case of Europe, European NGOs represent a significant body of expertise and experience in a field in which the EU is still a relative newcomer. They represent a commitment to high standards of professionalism in a sector which itself is still quite new. They also represent an approach to civilian crisis management which must be a serious consideration for the EU:

- a bottom-up approach based on the needs of the people in the conflict situations, and
- a long-term perspective because such conflicts take a very long time to resolve.

Wherever the EU may deploy a civilian crisis management operation in the future, NGOs will have almost certainly to have been working there already and will almost certainly be still working there long after the mission leaves again. With this in mind, the following concrete proposals are recommended to enhance the capabilities available under the Civilian Headline Goal 2008:

- continue regular informal exchanges between NGOs/CSOs and the appropriate level of Council Bodies; this should include as a minimum: CIVCOM, PSC, CODEV, the management committees for the external action instruments as well as representatives of the General Secretariat and the Commission;
- routinely request information from the EPLO database on the presence of European peacebuilding NGOs in any mission area; this should be a standard item in the terms of reference for fact-finding and pre-planning missions;
- share the calendar of mission evaluation and lessons learnt exercises through European peacebuilding NGO network to enable informed feedback at the right time;
- include routine information exchange with field based civil society in the mandate of any missions; this should be at an appropriately senior level in the mission to impact on the whole mission;
- compile inventory of Member States practice in drawing on NGO and CSO sector for rosters for deployment in civilian crisis management missions; encourage Member States to make use of existing European NGO resources to identify experts in their country; and encourage those Member States who have not yet developed methodologies in this area to do so in consultation with experienced European NGOs;
- collaborate with expert NGOs for further development of EU-level training modules and provision of experienced trainers.

⁴ For example, the ICTJ has a very active relationship with the UN. Among other things, it has addressed the Security Council at several Arria Formula meetings; it has prepared operations manuals for DPKO, UNDP, and OHCHR on how to conceive and implement effective and fair SSR policies (including vetting policies and census and identification programs), truth commissions, mixed criminal tribunals, and reparation programs; it is providing technical assistance to the new UN Peacebuilding Commission; and it regularly provides trainings and post-mission briefings to staff in UN peace operations and the UN secretariat.



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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