

EPLO Roundtable

EU external action: longer-term scenarios and opportunities for reform

Friday, 23 November 2012

Amazone asbl
Rue du Méridien 10, 1210 Bruxelles

Background

The EU is currently experiencing a serious economic and financial crisis which will constitute a crucial factor in determining the development of EU foreign and security policy. At the moment, economic recovery within the EU is overshadowing its foreign policy aspirations. In the longer term, cuts in Member States' budgets may lead to an increased effort to develop collective EU foreign policy, with Member States aligning behind commonly defined EU objectives and engaging in sharing of responsibilities. The European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU's own foreign service, which was launched beginning of 2011 with the objective of supporting the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in ensuring the 'unity, consistency and effectiveness of action' should lead these efforts. The upcoming Joint Communication on the Comprehensive Approach should further illustrate how the EEAS, the European Commission and Member States can develop a common approach to conflict-affected countries and how the different EU policy tools can address the different stages of the conflict cycle.

The round-table will provide the platform for stakeholders including civil society - and the peacebuilding community more specifically - EU officials from the EEAS and beyond, representatives of Member States, and academics to discuss the future of EU external action, the Joint Communication on the Comprehensive Approach, possible longer-term scenarios and recommendations for reform. The EEAS review in mid-2013, two and a half years after its formal launch, provides an opportunity to highlight how the EEAS' potential regarding conflict prevention and peacebuilding can be further realised and to introduce the necessary changes for this to happen.

This roundtable follows from the series of roundtables EPLO organised in the run-up to and shortly after the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, which provided a framework for an open debate on the EEAS among interested stakeholders.

Programme

9h00	Welcome and introduction: Sophie Haspeslagh, Conciliation Resources and Chair of EPLO's Steering Committee
9h15	Session 1: Future of EU external action: discussing longer-term scenarios Questions to be addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the implications of the financial crisis for EU external action?• What role do Member States want the EEAS to play in conflict-affected countries?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could the Communication on the Comprehensive Approach make the EU more effective in conflict-affected countries? <p>Chair: Aurélien Colson, ESSEC IRENÉ</p> <p>Interventions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denisa-Elena Ionete, Head of Unit for Fragility and Crisis Management, DEVCO • Piritta Asunmaa, PSC Ambassador, Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU • Stefan Lehne, Visiting Scholar, Carnegie Europe <p>Followed by a facilitated discussion</p>
10h45	Coffee break
11h00	<p>Session 2: Remaining challenges and opportunities: using the 2013 review of the EEAS</p> <p>Questions to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the establishment of the EEAS made the EU more effective as a peacebuilding actor? • What are the expectations for the mid-term review of the EEAS and what recommendations can be put forward? <p>Chair: Meeri-Maria Jaarva, CMI</p> <p>Interventions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerrard Quille, Senior Adviser to the Foreign Affairs Committee, European Parliament • Alexander Marschik, PSC Ambassador, Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU • Mary Martin, Associate Research Fellow, London School of Economics and Political Sciences, • Catherine Woollard, Executive Director, EPLO <p>Followed by a facilitated discussion</p>
12h30	End of meeting