

Maximising EU support to the Women, Peace and Security agenda

Four years since the adoption of the [Comprehensive Approach to EU implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security](#) (Comprehensive Approach), the EU continues to support the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960), yet much remains to be done to match the EU ambitions on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

EU Member States are leading the way with the number (15) and quality of their National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS, the key policy instrument at national level on UNSCR 1325: 41% of all NAPs are currently from EU Member States. EU NAPs adopted and revised recently show considerable progress in including minimum standards (clear objectives and priorities, lines of responsibility, time-bound actions, committed resources and monitoring mechanisms) and yet they are neither strategically linked to each other nor to the EU's own Comprehensive Approach. If the EU is to fulfil its potential to push the WPS agenda forward in third countries as well as within its own system, active engagement and support of the Member States is crucial.

At EU level, this last year has seen the signing of a [new partnership between the EU and UN Women to enhance gender equality worldwide](#), the launch of the first [multi-country EU-UN joint programme to enhance women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict planning and economic recovery](#) and, recently, the revision of the operational document on the [Implementation of WPS resolutions in the context of Common Security and Defence Policy missions](#). These commendable initiatives do not replace the much needed effort to bridge the gap between policy and practice, which remains deep on a number of fronts, as EPLO has highlighted in previous papers¹.

To accelerate progress on implementation on the basis of existing commitments enshrined in the Comprehensive Approach, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP) could propose **EU priorities on WPS** identifying concrete, measurable, and, more importantly, attainable targets by the next UNSCR 1325 landmark anniversary in 2015, with one-year short-term objectives and three-year medium-term objectives.

On the occasion of the 12th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, EPLO would like to share an overview of existing challenges to the EU's full implementation of the resolution and to put forward some recommendations to maximise EU support to the WPS agenda in this context:

1. Translate EU WPS high-level commitments into measurable targets
2. Strengthen the EU WPS Task Force
3. Ensure Member States are fully involved in and supportive of EU WPS policy
4. Ensure meaningful and structured participation of CSOs, including women's groups from conflict-affected countries, in EU peace and security policies and programming
5. Improve gender balance at senior and decision-making levels in the EEAS
6. Build up gender expertise in the EEAS
7. Boost the practice of EU Delegations and EU Ambassadors in third countries on WPS
8. Improve cooperation between EEAS and European Commission on WPS
9. Fully integrate gender in the planning, conduct and review of CSDP missions

¹ See the [10 points on 10 years of implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Europe](#) and its [follow-up](#).

1. Translate EU WPS high-level commitments into measurable targets

HR/VP Ashton as the first female High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, has championed women's roles in peace and security ever since her appointment and has made a point of meeting with female civil society activists during visits to third countries. High-level support for the WPS agenda is essential to success in this area, it gives visibility to the multiple roles of women in conflict-affected countries, it helps reach out to a wider community of policy makers worldwide and progressively contributes to changing mind-sets in diplomacy. Yet it also raises expectations about what the EU can actually do to support women who have experienced armed conflicts.

Four years since the adoption of the Comprehensive Approach, the EU needs to be ready to address the many remaining challenges in its support to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions, as identified by the first [report on EU indicators for the Comprehensive Approach](#) (Monitoring Report), to make sure it continues to be perceived as a credible and leading actor. Challenges concern both, the internal and external dimensions of the EU's implementation of UNSCR 1325.

The internal dimension concerns primarily the extent to which the Comprehensive Approach has changed (if at all) the way the EU approaches peace and security policies in its own decision making with regard to, for instance, inclusiveness, gender sensitivity and focus on human security. Other internal challenges include reversing the perception of gender as a women's issue, ensuring adequate and compulsory gender training to all staff in the European External Action Service (EEAS), addressing the lack of gender balance at senior and decision-making levels in the EEAS, finding a solution to uneven reporting on WPS, tackling the patchy inclusion of UNSCR 1325 in Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) planning documents.

Key challenges in what could be called the external dimension of the EU implementation of UNSCR 1325 in third countries, include addressing little progress on women's participation in formal and informal peace processes sponsored by the EU, including reference to women's concerns and requests into peace negotiations held under the aegis of the EU, introducing UNSCR 1325 elements in the agenda of political dialogue between the EU and fragile states, conflict and post-conflict countries, analysing potential of other EU external policies, such as trade and energy policies, to adversely affect women in fragile states and proposing measures to prevent this from happening.

To address these challenges, the HR/VP could translate EU existing commitments into measurable targets by drawing up **EU priorities on WPS** linked to concrete action and indicators.

- *Short-term indicator of progress: In October 2012, the HR/VP makes a statement to reaffirm the EU's commitment in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and commits to identifying EU priorities on WPS to be launched as an annex to the 2013 Report on EU indicators for the CA.*
- *Medium-term indicator of progress: In October 2015, an assessment of the impact of the EU priority actions on WPS is carried out (both internally and externally) and priorities are revised accordingly.*

2. Strengthen EU WPS Task Force

Since its establishment in 2008, the EU WPS Task Force (TF) has been driving the EU implementation of the Comprehensive Approach amongst constant challenges. The TF developed (mainly quantitative) progress indicators to measure implementation of the EU WPS policy,

assembled the first monitoring report in 2011, led the revision of the operational document on the implementation of WPS resolutions in the context of CSDP missions, organised two Member State meetings on UNSCR 1325 and held regular consultations with civil society in Brussels. It has done so mainly relying on committed individuals who are over-stretched and work under considerable resource constraints.

The TF Force should be strengthened in two ways. First, it should be provided with adequate human and financial resources. The EU level of ambition on WPS as suggested by the HR/VP in her speeches and enshrined in the Comprehensive Approach cannot be met with the current level of human and financial resources underpinning the TF. The recent appointment of a Human Rights and Gender Adviser in the Human Rights and Democracy Directorate who will also be part of the TF is a welcome step, however double-hatting is unfortunate (Gender Advisers have sufficiently broad a portfolio to be stand-alone positions and women, peace and security intersects but it is not equal to women's rights). Also, much more could be done to build up gender expertise in the EEAS (see point 6 below) to support the work of the TF.

Second, the TF should be strategically linked to the Directorate for Security and Conflict Prevention and the geographic directorates in the EEAS. The TF was originally meant to be composed of staff working on gender equality and security yet it has so far worked mostly in isolation from the Directorate for Security Policy and Conflict Prevention as well as from the various geographic directorates. This limits the chances for the TF to carry out its role meaningfully and mainstream gender into all EU peace and security policies and practices. The EEAS Gender Focal Point should have a full-time gender portfolio and liaise regularly with the Directorate for Security Policy and Conflict Prevention and with the geographic directorates that are not currently part of the TF.

- *Short-term indicator of progress: By October 2013, the chair of the EU TF works full-time on gender and has a sufficient budget to carry out its activities.*
- *Medium-term indicator of progress: By October 2015, each geographic and thematic directorate has a gender focal point who is part of the TF. Also, the TF is provided with adequate human and financial resources from the EU budget (including for organising meetings in Brussels and consultations with women from and in conflict affected countries).*

3. Ensure Member States are fully involved in and supportive of EU WPS policy

An increasing number of EU Member States (MS) have adopted NAPs showing unprecedented commitment to the WPS agenda. MS are the key decision makers in the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), they propose candidates for EEAS top jobs, second personnel to CSDP missions and provide them with pre-deployment training, legislate on women quotas in parliaments, boardrooms et al., prosecute Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) crimes etcetera. At EU level however, most Member States – with a few notable exceptions - are shying away from a more active engagement on WPS, which is testified by the low level of attendance and participation of MS to the 2012 annual MS meeting on UNSCR 1325 (representatives from only eleven out of 27 MS attended the meeting).

In conflict-affected countries Member States carry out a number of activities and projects in support of women and girls. Afghanistan received roughly 25 % (roughly 30 million EUR) of all reported funding by EU MS in UNSCR 1325-related projects² yet multi-stakeholder cooperation among EU donors appears to be rather limited. Support to women's efforts in peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation in already volatile contexts would benefit from greater coordination

² See page 15 of the [report on EU indicators for the Comprehensive Approach](#).

among EU MS and the EU, through EU Delegations in countries. The TF in Brussels could demonstrate its value as a framework for coordination in addition to experience sharing.

Ideally, the TF should provide overall coordination and Member States could use this platform to showcase their own accomplishments and to steer the WPS agenda at EU-level in a collective fashion (or through a “coalition of the willing”) by contributing to setting the agenda for the TF meetings, identifying priority issues / regions (also in line with their own NAP priorities), sharing best practices on developing, implementing and monitoring NAPs and exerting constructive peer pressure on still reticent / under-performing EU countries.

- *Short-term indicators of progress: By October 2013, Member States are actively involved in the TF, attending all TF meetings, proposing and sponsoring concrete actions for the EU to further the implementation of WPS resolutions.*
- *By October 2013, MS put forward two candidates (one female and one male) for EU top jobs.*
- *The topic for the 2013 Member State Meeting on UNSCR 1325 is decided in consultation with MS and on the basis on a strategic decision for future collective action by the EU on WPS.*
- *Long-term indicator of progress: By October 2015, all Member States have adopted a NAP on WPS (or equivalent policy) and contribute to the implementation of the priorities set by the HRIVP for the EU on WPS.*

4. Ensure meaningful and structured participation of CSOs, including women’s groups from conflict-affected countries, in EU peace and security policies and programming

Women’s peace activism pre-dates UNSCR 1325. The ground-breaking adoption of the resolution was itself the result of intense lobbying of civil society groups to urge the UNSC to endorse a resolution meant to change the way conflict was addressed by the international community. Twelve years from its adoption, civil society organisations including women’s groups in fragile, conflict-affected and post-conflict countries continue to play vital roles in support of conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts, yet their voices rarely inform policy-planning and decision-making.

Consulting thoroughly with women’s groups, not just in Brussels and third country capitals, but also in remote regions is crucial in many ways. For example, it offers insights on the diverse security needs of different layers of the population, including refugees and communities living in rural areas, it allows to collect comprehensive early warning data and design appropriate responses, it can lead to the inclusion of often neglected issues (such as justice and reparations) in peace deals. In addition, given the widespread exclusion of women from political office and state institutions in many countries (including many European countries) one of the only ways to include women in political discussions may be through civil society participation.

At EU-level, systematic consultation mechanisms in place have proven beneficial (for instance many local civil society women’s groups feed their input into the annual Progress Reports in the EU Accession Policy) yet there is no long-term strategy for such engagement. EPLO welcomes the recently published EC Communication on Europe’s engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs) in external action³ which recognises the need for an enhanced and more strategic approach in engagement with local CSOs, including women’s groups, and considers the elaboration of EU roadmaps for engagement with CSOs as a first step in this direction.

³ See [The roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe’s engagement with Civil Society in external action.](#)

- Short-term indicator of progress: By October 2013, the EU roadmaps for engagement with CSOs have been developed with attention also to women's groups.
- Medium-term indicator of progress: By October 2015, quarterly consultations with women's civil society groups take place in Brussels, in fragile states and conflict affected countries on peace and security matters and reporting to the HR/VP on such consultations takes place regularly.

5. Improve gender balance at senior and decision-making levels in the EEAS

The EU supports the advancement of women's leadership in peace and security yet it is struggling to do so in its own house giving rise to allegations of double standards. This problem has been heightened by the small number of female candidates put forward by EU MS for EEAS senior-level positions. Although a positive trend has been registered over the last year with regards to the appointment of women Heads of EU Delegations in third countries, women are still struggling to get to the EEAS senior and top ranks, despite no shortage of well qualified and experienced women for these positions.

The HR/VP has recently confirmed ruling out of quotas for women in the EEAS. This is challenging in view of the scant results achieved by the current system, which, while in name merit-based, is failing to yield anything close to gender equality as the numbers in the table below show. In practice, senior-level positions in the EEAS have been filled on the basis of a variety of reasons including nationality and institutional background. In addition, to argue that in a merit-based system, women would occupy less than 25 % of the senior-level positions could appear sexist.

Although quotas are not a panacea and certainly not enough to ensure gender equality of the institutional working culture, data shows that quotas, as temporary measures, hold the best hope for leveling playing fields in this area (thanks to the introduction of the quota system conflict-affected countries such as Rwanda and Uganda have respectively 56.3% and 35% of women in their national parliament⁴ compared to the European average of 21.5%). Against this background, EPLO recommends the EEAS management and EU Member States to reconsider their position on the adoption of women quotas for the EEAS senior- and decision-making levels as temporary measures (for instance 5 years after which the system could be revised) to overcome the current *impasse*.

- Short-term indicator of progress: By October 2013, a 33% minimum quota for women in senior and decision-making positions in the EEAS is established as a temporary measure to address the gender gap.
- Medium-term indicator of progress: By October 2015, a 50% of women are appointed to new EU senior-level positions.

EEAS senior-level gender balance⁵			
	Female staff	Male staff	Total
HR/VP	1	0	1
HR/VP cabinet	5	6	11
Board of Directors	1	3	4
Managing Directors	1	6	7
Directors (regional and thematic)	2	7	9
Heads of Crisis Management bodies	0	5	5
Heads of CSDP missions / operations	0	12	12
EU Special Representatives	2	9	11

⁴ Data from www.quotaproject.org accessed on 10 August 2012.

⁵ As of 1 October 2012.

Heads of EU Delegations	21	56	77
Total	33	104	137
Percentage	24.2%	75.7%	

6. Build up gender expertise in the EEAS

Gender expertise is currently unevenly distributed across the EEAS (there are no Gender Focal Points for instance in the geographic directorates) and there is a lack of sector-specific gender experts (gender in Security Sector Reform for instance). Also, staff working on gender in the EEAS, including Gender Advisers in CSDP missions and operations, tends to wear multiple hats including human rights, child protection and other thematic areas. Ideally, at least one staff member per EEAS directorate should be dedicated full-time to gender.

As a young institution the EEAS has a unique opportunity to build up gender expertise within its ranks, include UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions in the gender training modules for all staff and integrate gender expertise as one of the desirable/expected requirements in all EEAS staff job descriptions. EU standardised gender training modules are currently being developed and should be launched in autumn 2012.

EPLO believes that basic gender training and, in the near future, specific UNSCR 1325 modules should become compulsory for all EEAS staff, including in Crises Management bodies, EU Delegations, EUSR teams and CSDP missions and male and female staff alike. This should progressively enable staff to, for example, assess the different impacts on men and women of EU external action and address different perceptions of security and needs when designing policies and tools which help prevent, analyse and resolve conflicts. Follow-ups and evaluations to assess the impact of the trainings on the knowledge, skills and practices on the job of the trainees should be performed on a regular basis.

- *Short-term indicators of progress: By October 2013, standardised gender training modules are adopted and being progressively delivered to all EEAS staff, including staff seconded by Member States;*
- *By October 2013, gender mentoring programmes for senior level staff are being piloted.*
- *Medium-term indicator of progress: By October 2015, gender expertise is included as a requirement into EEAS staff job descriptions.*
- *By October 2015, gender training, mentoring programmes and specific 1325 modules are made compulsory for all staff working on peace and security.*

7. Boost the practice of EU Delegations and EU Ambassadors in third countries on WPS

After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, EU Delegations (EUDs), former European Commission Delegations, represent the EU as a whole and for this reason are in a position to exert greater political leverage in their dialogue with the host country. EU Ambassadors with their upgraded status could provide leadership to the WPS agenda and champion women's participation in peace and security. Options to revive the EU presence in-country on WPS could include:

- Gender Focal Points in the EUDs take active part in the dialogues with all stakeholders on the development and adoption of NAPs on WPS in the host countries (as it is currently happening in the Philippines⁶),

⁶ In the Philippines EU MS and several EU-funded INGOs sit in the International Contact Group. The EU supports the International Monitoring Mission and is collaborating in a process to develop an International National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 for the Philippines to focus and coordinate donor inputs.

- gender, peace and security is prioritised in local-level political dialogue,
 - links between Gender Focal Points in Delegations and Gender Advisors in CSDP missions (if present) are strengthened to lay the ground for the sustainability of 1325-related activities once the mission has left,
 - sex-disaggregated data on the human security situation in the host country are collected.
- *Short-term indicator of progress: By October 2013, gender, peace and security is included in the dialogue with host countries, EU Ambassadors champion women's participation in peace and security and include gender issues in regular reporting.*
- *Medium-term indicator of progress: By October 2015, Gender Focal Points in Delegations have with full-time gender portfolios.*

8. Optimise EEAS cooperation with the European Commission on WPS

The EEAS is not solely responsible for the whole of EU external action with the European Commission (EC) playing a key role in a number of areas, including Development, Humanitarian Aid, Enlargement and Trade. All these policies have implications for WPS and for this reason cooperation between the EEAS and the EC in this area is vital. The European Commission Directorate for Development Cooperation (DEVCO) has long expertise on integrating gender equality in development cooperation and the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) on incorporating gender considerations into EU humanitarian assistance, from which the EEAS could draw lessons. Active participation of DEVCO and ECHO Gender Focal Points in the TF is crucial to ensure cooperation and coordination on UNSCR 1325 across the institutions and share lessons learnt.

In 2010 the EC adopted the [2010-2015 EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development](#) (GAP) which also includes as a specific objective the support to partner countries in the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions, including through the development of NAPs (mainly through the EU Delegations present in partner countries). However, the first report on the GAP released in 2011 indicates that EU Delegations would need further guidance from Brussels on supporting the implementation of UNSCR 1325 through their development cooperation activities. This finding prompts a coordinated and adequate response by the EC and the EEAS, possibly with the support of the TF.

- *Short-term indicator of progress: By October 2013, EC representatives participate regularly in the TF meetings, coordinate the reporting on the GAP and the CA and jointly address existing gaps in their implementation.*
- *Medium-term indicator of progress: By October 2015, the TF in cooperation with DEVCO develops a toolkit on WPS and Development similar to the existing toolkit on mainstreaming gender equality in EC development cooperation.*

9. Fully integrate gender in the planning, conduct and review of CSDP missions

The revised EU policy in place on WPS in the context of CSDP missions commits the EU to the implementation of the resolutions from the early planning, to the conduct of CSDP missions and operations, including their follow-up and evaluation. Lessons and recommendations on how to mainstream gender into CSDP missions were collected back in 2010⁷ and are still valid today. As one of the tools of EU external action, CSDP missions represent an important vehicle of EU short-

⁷ [Lessons and best practices on mainstreaming human rights and gender into CSDP military operations and civilian missions.](#)

to medium-term stabilisation efforts and are, sometimes, the most visible EU interface in these countries, particularly in the case of large-scale civilian missions. Although limited in time and scope, CSDP missions can contribute substantially to implement the UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions provided that these are clearly integrated in the missions' mandates and linked to other, longer-term, EU engagement in the country to support women's roles in transitioning from conflict.

However, attention to UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions seems to be uneven across the mission cycle. Conflict analysis often lacks a gender component, inclusion of gender and the WPS resolutions in mission planning documents, reports and strategic reviews is patchy and there is little attention to gender considerations in designing and carrying out fact-finding missions as well as devising missions' exit strategies. These gaps show that mechanisms to integrate gender are not institutionalised but rely mostly on committed individuals and send mixed messages about how these issues are prioritised in practice⁸.

First and foremost a strong commitment to the implementation of the resolutions needs to be endorsed by the hierarchy and led from the top. For CSDP missions to be meaningfully supporting the EU WPS agenda in country, Gender Advisers need to be strategically linked to the senior management and supported in carrying out their roles. Gender Advisers in the missions and Gender Focal Points in Brussels often report that one of the greatest challenges they face are with their own colleagues to whom they often have to make the case for the importance of including gender to enhance the operational effectiveness of missions.

Gender training is also crucial, as highlighted in section 6, as is increasing the number of women seconded to missions, including in senior-level and decision-making positions, implementing the zero-tolerance policy against gender-based violence and introducing adequate public complaints mechanisms, consulting with women's groups on a regular basis and avoid double or triple-hatting of Gender Advisers.

- *Short-term indicator of progress: By October 2013, all staff in Crisis Management bodies and in mission undergoes gender training. Consultation with Gender Focal Points and Gender Advisers takes place throughout the mission cycle including the drafting of planning documents, strategic reviews and evaluations.*
- *Medium-term indicator of progress: By October 2015, at least two women are appointed Heads of Mission or Operation. Gender considerations and UNSCR 1325 are consistently integrated in CSDP missions' mandates and Heads of Missions report regularly on progress in implementation.*

Conclusions:

The EU, as a predominantly civilian actor engaged in a number of stabilisation processes in third countries including monitoring the implementation of peace agreements, supporting transition towards the establishment of democratic institutions, fighting corruption in security bodies, addressing impunity for SGB violence in conflicts, has the potential to provide a role model for other regional organisations in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions.

The Comprehensive Approach and the revised operational document on WPS resolutions in CSDP missions set a very high level of ambition for the EU in this area which resonates well with the HR/VP's strong messages in support of women's peacebuilding roles in her speeches and high-level meetings. However, the EU should be wary of raising unrealistic expectations on what it can

⁸ See for instance [recommendations from CSDN meeting on Women, Peace and Security in EU CSDP missions and operations](#).

achieve if it is not ready to back it up with the necessary human and financial resources, which are currently limited. High-level commitments should be translated into measurable targets in preparation for the next landmark anniversary of the resolution in 2015 and focus should be now on addressing the gaps identified by the first Monitoring Report in 2011.

An avenue to bring renewed impetus to the WPS agenda would be bringing Member States more consistently on board and encourage their more active engagement in the EU framework (through the TF) as they hold valuable experience in supporting the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions also through the adoption, implementation and monitoring of their NAPs. As the key decision makers in CFSP and CSDP, the EU cannot expect to provide its full support to the WPS agenda if MS are not ready to be engaged collectively.

As the body that gathers gender experts from the various EEAS directorates, from the EC and EU Member States, the EU Task Force on WPS, which has been steering the drafting, implementation and monitoring of the Comprehensive Approach needs to be strengthened. It should be provided with adequate human and financial resources and strategically linked to the senior management of the Directorate for Security Policy and Conflict Prevention as well as the Geographic directorates. Only if strategically linked to the other directorates in the EEAS will the TF be able to carry out its role meaningfully.

Also, to continue being a credible actor the EU needs to “practice what it preaches”. The limited number of women in senior and decision-making levels in the EEAS, including women as EU Special Representatives, Heads of CSDP missions and operations, Heads of EU Delegations, may demonstrate double standards, giving the impression that gender equality is something that the EU helps others to do without applying itself. The limited results achieved by the current system show that substantial progress can only be obtained by adopting temporary measures to overcome the *impasse* (for instance quotas).

Specific recommendations to the EU Women, Peace and Security Task Force:

1. Support the HR/VP in developing **EU priorities for WPS** linked to clearly defined targets, actions and time-bound indicators;
2. Encourage Member States’ active participation in the TF and design options for them to take leading role on priority issues / countries on a rotating basis;
3. Forge closer links with the European Commission, particularly DG DEVCO, ECHO and Enlargement on WPS;
4. Request that Gender Focal Points in the Crisis Management bodies and Gender Advisers in mission are regularly consulted upon throughout the CSDP mission / operation cycle, including for planning, evaluation and strategic reviews;
5. Launch a broad consultation process to develop qualitative and impact-oriented indicators to measure the CA;
6. Combine the reporting on the CA with the GAP reporting to minimise burden for the EU Delegations and maximise effects of the exercise (quality of data collected, cross references etc.);
7. Create a web-page with all the relevant EU WPS resources. The web-page could also host a resource section where Member States can share information on the implementation of their NAPs and other WPS policies.