EU IN THE WORLD UPDATE

October 2010

Council of the EU: The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) met on 25 October in Luxembourg. Ministers discussed the situation in the Sahel, the Middle East and Lebanon. They also adopted conclusions on Moldova, Uzbekistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and on the EU’s Eastern Partnership. Finally, they approved revised guidelines on the protection of civilians in CSDP missions and operations (see below).

The General Affairs Council (GAC) also met on 25 October in Luxembourg. Ministers decided to refer Serbia’s application for membership of the EU to the European Commission (EC) for an opinion. They also approved draft staff and financial regulations applicable to the European External Action Service (EEAS) (see below).

European Council: The European Council met on 18 September and 28-29 October in Brussels. In September, EU heads of state and government adopted conclusions on the EU’s relations with its strategic partners and issued a declaration on the situation in Pakistan. In October, they endorsed the Council of the EU’s conclusions on preparations for the upcoming Cancún conference on climate change.

European External Action Service (EEAS): On 20 October, the European Parliament adopted changes to the EU Financial Regulation, the staff rules and the 2010 EU Budget which were needed to enable the EEAS to be launched. The draft staff and financial regulations were subsequently approved by the Council of the EU on 25 October.

During the last week of October, HR Ashton appointed Pierre Vimont (France), as the Executive Secretary General of the EEAS, David O’Sullivan (Irelands) as Chief Operating Officer, Helga Schmid as Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs, and Maciej Popowski as the Deputy Secretary General for Inter-institutional Affairs. At a meeting of the GAC on 16 September and 28 October, the Council agreed on guidelines on the protection of civilians in CSDP missions and operations. The General Affairs Council (GAC) also met on 25 October in Luxembourg. Ministers decided to refer Serbia’s application for membership of the EU to the European Commission (EC) for an opinion. They also approved draft staff and financial regulations applicable to the European External Action Service (EEAS) (see below).

High Representative (HR): On 15 September, HR Ashton appointed 27 new heads of EU delegations and 1 deputy head of EU delegation. On 27 October, HR Ashton participated in an exchange of views with members of the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs.

European Parliament: The European Parliament had plenary sessions on 6-7 October in Brussels and on 18-21 October in Strasbourg. MEPs adopted a resolution on failures in protection of human rights and justice in the DRC and several resolutions needed to enable the EEAS to be launched. They also adopted a set of resolutions on the EU’s external financing instruments, including the Instrument for Stability, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, and the Development Co-operation Instrument (see ‘EU Documents’ on p. 4).

For more information about events in the European Parliament, please contact Ben Moore.

UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): EC President, José Manuel Barroso; HR / EC Vice President, Catherine Ashton; and commissioners Piebalgs, Georgieva and Hedegaard all participated in the High-level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which took place from 20-22 September in New York (see the special focus on pp. 2-3).

Civil Society Dialogue Network: The first meetings of the new Civil Society Dialogue Network will take place in November 2010 (see ‘Civil Society Dialogue Network’ on p. 6).
The following article is the executive summary of a recent report by EPLO member organisation, International Alert. The views expressed are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of EPLO or of any other EPLO member organisations.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will not be achieved by 2015. Progress is especially slow in fragile contexts, where institutions are weak and there is a risk of violent conflict. But a closer examination shows that the MDGs are in any case inadequate measures of development progress, and as such they represent an international development paradigm that is tired and confused. It is time to review what we mean by development, i.e. the very idea of human progress.

A more useful way to consider human progress is to consider a “developed society” as one with a defined set of characteristics, and to create from these a vision for change. Building on work by others, we propose a generic vision comprising six key characteristics:

1. Equal access to political voice, and the legitimate and accountable use of power.
2. Equal participation in a vibrant and sustainable economy.
3. Equal access to justice, and equality before the law.
4. Freedom from insecurity.
5. The ability of people to maintain their mental and physical well-being, to have aspirations and make progress towards them.
6. The self-reinforcing presence of institutions and values that support and enable equitable progress and peace.

While these characteristics provide a vision of human progress, they do not provide guidance on how to get there. This has to be defined and measured at a local, rather than a global level, and in figuring out how to do this, we need to learn lessons from history. History shows us that societies that have made substantial progress have done so by:

- Opening up access to political and economic opportunities, and developing an increasingly dynamic civil society.
- Establishing states accountable to and with a strong sense of membership by the people, and which adopt “developmental” goals and policies.
- Establishing, gradually extending, and eventually universalisng the rule of law
- Evolving from personal to impersonal forms of participation in the economy, politics and civil society – e.g. from personal to shareholder ownership of companies, and from “big man” political leadership to the idea of “political office”.
- Achieving sustained and shared economic growth.
- Developing a culture which supports the exercise of initiative and encourages creativity.
- Transferring control of organised violence from the hands of powerful individuals or factions, to the accountable state.
- Adopting increasingly democratic or representative and broadly accountable forms of government.

These changes have historically come about through a combination of circumstances, leadership, negotiation, effective relationships, and when incentives for those in power are aligned with the direction of change. The task of those aiming to achieve and support human progress in fragile contexts is to lead, promote, harness and catalyse processes that produce comparable changes. To do so, they need to figure out how to work with the grain, to change the grain; i.e. work within the power dynamics of the political economy, while promoting changes to it. This is a much better way to conceptualise “development” and “development assistance” than the MDGs which tend to gloss over the political dimension.

With this framework in mind, we can see that some progress has been made since the millennium: for example, the number of extremely fragile states has reduced, and this is affected – partly positively and partly negatively – by a number of global trends. Because of the fluidity and mixed consequences of such global influences, and the challenges inherent in endogenous processes of change, there are good reasons to question whether the reductions in fragility so far achieved are sustainable, and whether people in other fragile contexts can make such improvements. The challenges remain immense. Therefore it is critical for the international community to adopt effective approaches to support development in fragile contexts. But despite the good ideas they often produce, international development institutions are failing to rise to this challenge, not least because of their own inertia and resistance to change.

We identify three broad areas for action:

1. The need for the development discourse to be reframed in ways which help create a better understanding of what constitutes development, and how change happens. Because of the inertia in the aid system, this will require good leadership from within the sector, and from politicians and in the media.
2. The need to create a new development narrative to replace the MDGs, based on a global vision for change, in which development is recognised as a local, endogenous process while the role of international agencies is to promote, catalyse and nudge change, based on a sophisticated understanding of the political economy.
3. The need to make international development institutions more fit for their purpose. This means first of all being clearer about their purpose, which we argue should be based on the vision-based approach outlined in our report. Organisational arrangements, staffing, incentives etc. will need to be aligned with the purpose. This will mean a radical change in the way many of the international institutions operate.

Click here to download the full report. For more information, please contact the authors.

**UN SUMMIT ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)**

**Introduction**

From 20-22 September 2010, approximately 140 heads of state and government gathered in New York for the three-day High-level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The aim of the “MDG Summit” was to accelerate progress towards the eight MDGs and to undertake a comprehensive review of best practices, lessons learned, challenges and opportunities with a view to developing concrete strategies for action during the five years which remain until the deadline in 2015.

**EU Involvement**

President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso; High Representative / Vice President Catherine Ashton, Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs; Commissioner for International Co-operation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva; and Commissioner for Climate Action, Connie Hedegaard, all participated in the MDG Summit.

In a statement on 20 September, President Barroso reiterated the EU’s commitment to achieving the MDGs and referred to the twelve-point EU action plan in support of the MDGs which was adopted by the Council of the EU in June 2010. He also announced the European Commission’s intention to allocate €1 billion to reward high-performing countries and to support those partner countries in which the MDGs are most off-track.

**Statement by the g7+**

On 20 September, the heads of state of the g7+ group issued a statement in which they highlighted the additional challenges which fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions face in their efforts to achieve the MDGs, and stressed the need for urgent action.

**Side-event on conflict, fragility and armed violence**

On 20 September, the governments of Timor-Leste and the United Kingdom, co-hosted a side-event entitled Achieving the MDGs: Addressing conflict, fragility and armed violence.

The aim of this event, which was supported by the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding and the World Development Report 2011 on Conflict, Security and Development, was to raise awareness about the damaging role which conflict, fragility and armed violence play in impeding progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. It brought together a panel of high-level speakers, including President José Ramos Horta of Timor-Leste; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, UK Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell; and Secretary-General of ASEAN, Surin Pitsuwan.

**Outcome**

On the final day of the Summit, UN Member States adopted an outcome document entitled Keeping the Promise: United to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The outcome document is divided into two parts. The first part is focused on lessons learned since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000 while the second section is entitled The way forward: an action agenda for achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and includes a review of each of the eight MDGs individually plus recommendations for advancing progress towards them.

In the third paragraph of the document, heads of state and government reaffirmed ‘the importance of freedom, peace and security, respect for all human rights, including the right to development, the rule of law, gender equality and an overall commitment to just and democratic societies for development.’

In paragraph 13 they recognised that ‘development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.’

In paragraph 15 they recognised ‘the specific development challenges related to peacebuilding and early recovery in countries affected by conflict and the effect of these challenges on their efforts to achieve the MDGs.’

Finally, in a section on MDG 3 (Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women), they committed to accelerating progress through ‘Taking action to improve the numbers and active participation of women in all political and economic decision-making processes, including by investing in women’s leadership in local decision-making structures and processes, encouraging appropriate legislative action and creating an even playing field for men and women in political and Government institutions, and intensifying (…) efforts for the equal participation of women and men as key stakeholders at all levels in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding processes.’

For more information about the MDG Summit, click here to download a summary from the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS).

Click here to read Phil Vernon’s (International Alert) reflections on the outcome of the MDG Summit.
EU Agenda

High Representative (HR) / President of the European Council / Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)

26 October - Remarks made by HR Ashton after EU - Ukraine Ministerial
18 October - Press Statement of the Third Joint Consultative Meeting between the EU PSC and the AU PSC
18 October - Statement by HR Ashton on the removal of the Russian checkpoint from the village of Perevi in Georgia
14 October - Remarks made by HR Ashton on Pakistan
14 October - Statement by HR Ashton on the ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC by the Republic of Moldova
11 October - Statement by HR Ashton on the Kyrgyzstan elections
8 October - Statement by the spokesperson of HR Ashton on the appointment of Admiral Bubu Na Tchuto
8 October - Statement by HR Ashton on Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to Liu Xiaobo
6 October - Declaration by HR Ashton on behalf of the EU on the OHCHR Report of the Mapping Exercise documenting the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between March 1993 and June 2003
5 October - Statement by HR Ashton on the 10th anniversary of democratic changes in Serbia
5 October - Statement by HR Ashton on elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina
1 October - Statement by HR Ashton following her visit to the Middle East

Council

26 October - EU Statement: Ninth Meeting of the EU-Jordan Association Council
15 October - Joint Communiqué: Friends of Democratic Pakistan Third Ministerial Meeting
13 October - Joint Press Communiqué: 13th EU-China Summit
6 October - Joint Press Statement: EU-Republic of Korea Summit
28 September - Joint Communiqué: Third South Africa-European Union Summit

Commission

19 October - Green Paper on the future of EU budget support to third countries

Parliament

20 October - Resolution on Council's position on draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011 – all sections
20 October - Resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Communities and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of those Communities
7 October - Resolution on failures in protection of human rights and justice in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Council of the EU: The next meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council and the General Affairs Council will take place on 22 November in Brussels, and the European Council will meet on 28-29 October in Brussels. The following Council committees and working parties will also meet in November:

- Political and Security Committee: 3, 5, 9, 12, 16, 17, 19, 23, 26 and 30
- Committee for the Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management: 3, 8, 11, 15, 17, 18, 22, 24 and 29
- Working Party on Development Co-operation: 4, 8, 11 and 24
- Africa Working Party: 3, 10, 15, 17 and 24
- Working Party on Human Rights: 9, 10, 17 and 23

European Parliament: The next European Parliament plenary sessions will take place on 10-11 November in Brussels and 22-25 November in Strasbourg. The following parliamentary (sub-)committees will also meet in November:

- Foreign Affairs: 9, 18 and 30
- Development: 18 and 25-26; and 8-9
- Security and Defence: 25-26; and 15 and 29-30
- Human Rights: 25-26; and 8 and 29-30
- Women's Rights and Gender Equality: 27-28; and 8 and 29-30
- Budgets: 26; and 9 and 18
- Constitutional Affairs: 8-9 and 29-30

For more information about meetings in the EU institutions, please visit the EU Events section of the EPLO website.
The Initiative for Peacebuilding is a consortium led by International Alert and funded by the European Commission. It draws together the expertise of 10 civil society organisations and their networks to develop and promote international knowledge and expertise in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

For more information about the Initiative for Peacebuilding, please contact Herta Eckert from International Alert or visit the website.
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 worldwide 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 also builds solidarity and co-operation 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.

EPLO welcomes applications from peacebuilding organisations. The next deadline for membership applications will be in Spring 2010. Click here to download the application form.

CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE NETWORK

Policy Meeting: The EU, Peacebuilding and Situations of Fragility
Tuesday 9 November 2010 (09.00 – 17.30)
International Press Centre – Résidence Palace, Rue de la Loi 155, 1040, Brussels
For more information about this meeting please contact Ben Moore

Policy Meeting: Women’s Participation in Peace Processes
Tuesday 23 November 2010 (09.00 – 17.30)
Centre Borschette, Rue Froissart 36, 1040, Brussels
For more information about this meeting please contact Sanne Tielemans

Financial Instruments Meeting: Instrument for Stability
Friday 17 December 2010
Brussels
For more information about this meeting please contact Ben Moore

Civil Society Dialogue Network

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project funded by the European Commission aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and the EU institutions. It will contribute to strengthening international and regional capacity for conflict prevention and post-conflict co-operation.

CSDN meetings will be organised by EPLO and will be open to all interested civil society actors. They will take place in Brussels, EU Member States and conflict-affected countries with EU presence.

The CSDN will discuss policy, strategic and programming aspects of the Peacebuilding Partnership, transversal thematic issues relating to peacebuilding and crisis-specific situations. The project also foresees the organisation of a series of training seminars for civil society on peacebuilding and EU policy and practice.

For more information, please visit the Civil Society Dialogue Network section of the EPLO website.

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RECENT EPLO PUBLICATIONS

- Towards A Peacebuilding Strategy for the European External Action Service (September 2010)
- UNSCR 1325 in Europe: 21 case studies of implementation (July 2010)

For older EPLO publications, please visit the Publications section of the EPLO website.