

EPLO activities in EU Member States aimed at strengthening EU peacebuilding policy

Recommendations from Member State meeting

This document summarises the recommendations to the EU, Irish government and civil society from Ireland which came out of the meeting entitled '**Bringing the experience of the Northern Ireland Peace Process into EU policy-making**' which took place in Dublin on 17 April 2013. For more information, please visit [EPLO's website](#).

The following issues were discussed during the meeting: EU peacebuilding policy and practice, lessons from the Northern Ireland Peace Process, EU support to transitional justice as well as police and security sector reform. This document captures the recommendations according to these issues.

Irish Foreign Policy and the EU: Supporting Peace?

Recommendations to policy makers:

1) EU officials:

- Use the mid-term review to ensure that the EEAS continues to build and consolidate its capacity on conflict prevention and peacebuilding;
- Improve co-operation with both Member States and peace practitioners;
- Ensure that the EU delivers its commitments regarding women, peace and security; lead by example by appointing more women to top-level positions and support women as high-level track 1 mediators;
- Integrate conflict sensitivity into policies on economics, investment and trade.

2) Government officials:

- Ensure that peace and a human security approach are at the heart of EU external action, for instance in Common Foreign and Security Policy;
- Keep conflict prevention and peacebuilding on the agenda of the EU (by, e.g. building consensus among EU Member States on the need to integrate conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the communication on the comprehensive approach);
- Use the current opportunities to integrate a peacebuilding perspective into EU policy: EEAS mid-term review, December 2013 European Council summit on CSDP, ongoing Multiannual Financial Framework discussions, development policy reform;
- Second officials to the EEAS or for specific activities (such as scoping missions on specific aspects such as policy reform in conflict-affected countries) to increase the EU's expertise on conflict prevention and peacebuilding;
- Engage in a discussion on the new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission (HR/VP);
- Continue advocating for women's involvement in peace processes;
- Apply lessons from the peace process (e.g. on issues regarding engaging non-state armed actors, intractability and long-term responses to conflict, funding support to peace work) in Ireland's foreign policy and through its role in the EU;
- Export lessons learned and provide a 'reality check' for actors in other conflicts, explain that peace is a process and not an event and needs sustained effort and time;
- Use the opportunity to position Ireland as a promoter of peace and work more with similar-minded Member States, most notably Finland.

Recommendations to civil society:

- Monitor and support the Irish government to ensure that it applies lessons from the peace process in its own foreign policy and through its role in the EU, which is more useful than trying to export lessons;

- Continue convening fora and engaging with government officials to support a better understanding of policy-making related to conflict;
- Join the debate on the new HR/VP and use it as an advocacy opportunity to stress the need for a HR/VP who understands conflict issues;
- Raise the issue of peacebuilding in relation in EU external action to ensure that it remains high on the political agenda.

Lessons from the Northern Ireland peace process

Recommendations to policy makers:

1) EU officials:

- Clarify what the EU means by reconciliation when it is active in conflict-affected countries;
- Use the EU's more neutral position (compared to individual Member States) and experience to support peace processes inside and outside the EU;
- Ensure investment is consistent while planning and implementing peace programmes;
- Allocate more financial resources for integration of communities and shared learning (PEACE IV).

2) Government officials:

- Consider the challenges that the complexity of financial regulations hold for peace work and address this;
- Work closely with civil society to identify issues that are most relevant in a specific context;
- Ensure group buy-in in the process by working at all levels and get community feedback; recognize the challenges of inclusive processes;
- Provide more funding to revive civil society activities, particularly in order to introduce programmes on reconciliation and dealing with the past;
- Share experience to inform other peace processes.

Recommendations to civil society:

1) Civil society organisations:

- Work with media representatives to address the conflict divide and include them in the process of reconciliation;
- Revive activity aimed at addressing the issue of reconciliation.

2) Academia:

- Rather than only extracting knowledge, consider how the analysis and reflection can be brought back into peacebuilding practice;
- Address the disconnect between findings of researchers and the information that is accessible to practitioners.

EU support to transitional justice processes

Recommendations to policy makers:

- Develop EU policy on transitional justice, following up on the commitment in the EU's Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy from June 2012;
- In developing the policy, take into account the emerging legal landscape (norms on excluding amnesty for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as crimes of sexual violence);
- Link security sector reform and transitional justice as the reform of public institutions

(particularly the security institutions) is a prerequisite for any transitional justice endeavour;

- Make sure that the approach to transitional justice and support for the ICC are consistent;
- Ensure ample space for social activism, bottom-up approaches and creativity. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are not the only option.

Recommendations to civil society:

- Adopt an approach that includes every person and every part of society, consider different approaches for bringing victims and ex-combatants together and address the difficult issue of reconciliation.

EU support to police and security sector reform

Recommendations to policy makers:

- Go beyond the technical reform priorities to affect transformational change, i.e. change in terms of behaviour, culture and composition;
- Clearly assign responsibilities for SSR implementation and introduce regular reporting;
- Ensure there is strong political will, a strong legislative framework and a robust governance system for implementation;
- Make sure that SSR is holistic and deals with all aspects of the judicial process. Do not just focus on the police, but also on magistrates, judges and advisors;
- Consider where internal and external security needs may coincide and which capacities are needed and can be shared;
- Better engage with communities and concentrate on relations between institutional providing security and societies in which they operate;
- Change symbols, dispose of armoured police stations and cars, ensure that the police is a service, a civilian instrument and that it is perceived as such.

Recommendations to civil society:

- Inform police about how communities perceive the police and what their security needs are.

EPLO's suggestions for follow-up and possible next steps:

EPLO will be taking forward the recommendations related to the EEAS' role in making the EU more effective in peacebuilding in its work on the mid-term review of the EEAS throughout 2013. Together with Glenree, EPLO will support Ireland in applying the lessons from the peace process in EU policy-making. For more information, please contact Josephine Liebl (jl Liebl@eplo.org).

EPLO will be providing input into the discussions on policy reform and civilian CSDP in the run-up to the European Council meeting in December 2013 which will discuss, among other things, the effectiveness, visibility and impact of the CSDP. For more information, please contact Josephine Liebl (jl Liebl@eplo.org).

EPLO will be working on the EU's role in peace processes work towards implementing recommendations included in the recently published policy paper on EU support to peace processes. For more information, please contact Giulia Pasquinelli (gpasquinelli@eplo.org).