

# Partners in Conflict Prevention & Crisis Management: EU and NGO Cooperation

## *Final Report*

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Project "Partners in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management:  
EU and NGO cooperation"

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## Preface

The European Union today is one of the key actors globally in the area of conflict prevention and crisis management.

Over the past decades, the EU has significantly enhanced its instruments in this area. In terms of the broader conflict prevention agenda, the EU has adopted the Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflict (Gothenburg 2001), which underlines the Union's political commitment to pursue conflict prevention as one of its primary objectives in the field of external relations and to continue to improve its capacity to prevent violent conflicts.

At the same time, the EU has increased its engagement in conflict management. To date, there have been 17 ESDP missions (some ongoing and some completed) around the world. These missions cover a broad spectrum including military operations (e.g. EUFOR Althea), security sector reform (e.g. EUSEC DR Congo), institution-building (e.g. EUJUST Lex Iraq) as well as police and rule of law missions. Most recently, the launch ceremony for the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan) took place in Kabul on 17 June 2007. And in Kosovo, the EU will deploy its largest civilian ESDP mission ever, once the question of status has been clarified.

In order to deal successfully with the growing complexity and the scale of global threats and to meet the challenges confronting it, the EU pursues its objectives wherever possible in close coopera-

tion with other multilateral organisations, as well as with global bilateral partners and with non-state actors. All actors – national and international, state and non-state – need to work together, contribute their respective “added value” and provide each other mutual support in order to counter today's security threats. In this spirit, the European Security Strategy, adopted in 2003, called for increased civilian engagement.

The involvement of state and civil society actors in conflict prevention and crisis management efforts is not an “either/or” proposition – either state or civil society engagement – with one element substituting for the other. Rather, it is essential for both to make their contributions and deliver their added value to a coherent whole. This partnership cannot be random, or turned on and off at will. What we need is a “culture of cooperation” between state and non-state actors. This culture must establish itself and become both self-evident and self-sustaining. Above all, it must be independent of the personalities and circumstances involved.

Developing this culture is a process. It remains necessary to put aside any preconceived notions and to overcome any reluctance to cooperate.

This will not be achieved overnight, nor will it be accomplished in a single, final stroke. There is a need to press ahead and to make an ongoing commitment to continue developing and nurturing this culture of cooperation.





## Executive Summary

The project *Partners in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management: Role of Civil Society (RoCS II)*, which ran from October 2006 until August 2007, explored opportunities for enhancing the effectiveness of EU cooperation with European NGOs in tackling violent conflict. The underlying assumption was that effective peacebuilding must be based on effective partnerships.

Project activities were planned and implemented on the basis of a partnership between the German Federal Foreign Office, the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) and the Bertelsmann Stiftung. The target audience encompassed the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, EU member states and European NGOs cooperating with the EU at Brussels level and in the field.

In order to maximise input from experts in the field, the project engaged in thematic analyses, using geographic case studies, to explore new approaches for enhancing field-level cooperation between the EU and civil society actors. These case studies (the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia) were discussed at an expert and policy seminar attended by EU and NGO representatives and held in Brussels in March 2007. In addition, NGO representatives from the field were invited to attend selected meetings of the Committee for the Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom) to provide input into the planning processes for civilian missions conducted under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). A final conference entitled *Partners in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management: EU-NGO Cooperation* took place in Berlin on 20-21 June 2007.

The project demonstrated that cooperation between EU institutions and civil society actors, in such forums as CivCom, enhances a culture of common purpose and has the potential to increase policy relevance and commitment to the needs in the field. Nevertheless, it was evident

that there are certain difficulties and obstacles in interactions between the EU and civil society, for example in relation to exit strategies and gender issues. Civil society cooperation with the EU should be part of the EU's "DNA". This does not mean that NGOs become mere subcontractors or that they need to constrain their independence. The value added of joint cooperation lies precisely in complementarity.

The case studies demonstrated that cooperation is frequently heavily dependent on individuals. In addition, these studies underlined the importance of continuing efforts to link policy and concept development to real experiences in field situations. Given the complexity of the EU and the vast range of NGO engagement, the importance of clear communication and information strategies, at both the field and Brussels levels, cannot be underestimated.

While different views continue to exist on some issues, all actors mutually agree on the following key issues:

- the importance of developing a culture of cooperation that is independent from individuals and circumstances;
- the need to strengthen a common understanding that supporting state-building processes and strengthening civil society are both interlinked and necessary;
- the need for proactive and respectful engagement on both sides;
- the added value of consultation and mutual learning, as well as coherent and comprehensive joint analysis of the local context, i.e. through closer cooperation in the field;
- the importance of a joint focus on strengthening the capacity of local actors; and
- the need for rapidly accessible and flexible funding in crisis situations.

## Recommendations

As a result of the deliberations throughout the RoCS II process, the project team offers the following recommendations. They are designed to capture the current state of the discussion and to stimulate further debate.

### *EU Presidencies*

- Encourage coherent and comprehensive policy making in which EU organs, member states, development agencies and NGOs/CSOs join their efforts in a “whole of EU approach”, making use of their added value and comparative advantages and creating synergies in their activities.
- Ensure that NGO briefings at CivCom meetings are continued on a regular basis, with an option to expand these to involve the Political and Security Committee (PSC). The process must be made sustainable in both structural and financial terms.

### *Council of the European Union*

- Establish the NGO liaison officers proposed in the recommendations endorsed by the PSC in November 2006. NGO liaison officers must serve as effective champions for outreach and should disseminate the information they gather – such as mappings of NGO partners’ field activities – within their respective institutions and/or missions.
- Explore the possibility of establishing an EU-NGO peacebuilding advisory group for regular exchanges on thematic or geographic issues. The new opportunities offered by the Peacebuilding Partnership could provide a framework for a productive dialogue between Council bodies, the Commission and specialised NGO networks.
- Include NGOs as appropriate in the planning, operational and evaluation stages of ESDP missions, including Concepts of Operations (CONOPS) and Operation Plans (OPLAN). This NGO involvement should be based on

clear operational guidelines. Databases containing information on civil society experts should be used to help staff at Headquarters and in ESDP missions draw on the expertise of specialised NGOs for fact-finding missions, Civilian Response Teams, the mapping of local actors, rapid assessment updates and evaluation/feedback methodologies.

### *European Commission*

- Enhance strategic and operational collaboration with civil society actors. Opportunities provided by the Instrument for Stability, particularly the Peacebuilding Partnership, offer new possibilities for fostering strategic dialogue and stronger operational links with EC missions and delegations.
- Ensure that partners are selected appropriately according to local needs and contexts. A prerequisite is good working knowledge of the distinct, different and complementary roles of local and international NGO actors.

### *European NGOs*

- Develop clear guidelines on the opportunities and limits for reaching a common basis for cooperation with state structures. Such guidelines should aim to improve transparency and accountability on both sides and to overcome obstacles to the mutual understanding of the respective roles of state and NGO actors. This includes communicating the NGO mission effectively to government partners.
- Identify structures and interlocutors for dialogue with the EU, taking into account the needs of respective stakeholders and the broad diversity of the NGO/CSO community. This effort should also seek to ensure greater coherence among international NGOs (INGOs) in any given context, so that interactions with government actors will have the maximum possible impact.

## 1 Status Quo and Challenges of Cooperation

During and after violent conflict, the relationships and structures of a state are compromised and undermined. A return to stability requires the (re)construction of legitimate state institutions. This can only be accomplished if at the same time civil society is able to develop the capacity to play its part – of engaging with and legitimising the state through democratic processes. This often involves a phase when civil society organisations take on state functions for a time. A key aspect of the peacebuilding effort involves striking the appropriate balance between different service providers – both state and non-state. This can occur only if civil society has the capacity to decide, through democratic processes, what this appropriate balance is, and only if the state has the capacity to fulfil its roles and functions in terms of governance and service delivery. Both state and civil society institutions and actors must have the ability to deal effectively and peacefully with the inherent conflicts that arise in such political discourse; in other words, society and the state must be conflict-resilient.

At the heart of the EU's approach to conflict prevention is a commitment to developing a comprehensive approach, including all relevant policy areas and covering the entire conflict cycle that encompasses prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Creating posi-

tive synergies with European and local NGOs – as representatives of organised civil society<sup>i</sup> – is crucial to this comprehensive approach.

The EU has formally recognised the importance of organised civil society, and more specifically NGOs. By adopting the *EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts*<sup>ii</sup> in Gothenburg in 2001, the European Council recognised the importance of conflict prevention as a long-term policy commitment and as one of the main objectives of EU external relations. The Programme recognises the need for cooperative approaches to conflict prevention, in order to address the root causes of conflicts and thereby to facilitate peaceful solutions to disputes. Cooperative approaches likewise imply improved policy coherence, increased cooperation and effective partnerships with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental actors. The Programme states that “exchange of information, dialogue and practical co-operation with humanitarian actors such as the ICRC, relevant non-governmental and academic organisations should also be strengthened”.<sup>iii</sup>

The Council has also conceptualised the added value of cooperation with NGOs in other policy documents. The *ESDP Procedures for coherent, comprehensive EU crisis management (2003)*<sup>iv</sup> provide entry points for consultation with NGOs regarding early warning mechanisms, strategic and operational planning and mission implementation. These procedures explicitly note that “modalities

» *The single largest danger to the benefits of increased international cooperation, of interdependence and globalization, is probably regression through conflict and the breakdown of interdependency because of the breakdown of the ability of states to govern effectively. It is, therefore, in the genuine interest of Europe to become better, to excel in crisis prevention, in post-conflict management and reconstruction.* «



Josef Janning  
Member of the Management Committee,  
Head of the International Relations Programme,  
Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh

for coordination in the field between the EU and international organisations, local authorities and NGOs need to be developed". Moreover, the EU *Action Plan for Civilian Aspects of ESDP* (2004)<sup>v</sup> welcomes a regular exchange of views with civil society organisations regarding the general orientation of EU civilian crisis management and states that "NGO experience and early warning capacity are valued by the EU".

Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is not the only area where cooperation has been considered. In order to provide an overview of the EU's approach in this area, it is necessary to consider policies that address "non-state actors" (NSAs), "civil society organisations" (CSOs), "community-based organisations" (CBOs) and "non-governmental organisations" (NGOs). While all programmes that cover one or several of these terms seek to advance state- and society-building processes for the purpose of promoting peace, there are some specific implications and connotations in applying the various labels, notably in terms of the legal frameworks such as the *Cotonou Agreement*<sup>vi</sup> and in Communications from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, such as the Communication on the *Participation of non-state actors in EC Development Policy*.<sup>vii</sup>

The *Cotonou Agreement* (2000) highlights the support of civil society as an important task within peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution policies: "The activities in the field of peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution shall [...] include support for balancing political, economic, social and cultural opportunities among all segments of society, for strengthening the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of governance, for establishing effective mechanisms for the peaceful conciliation of group interests, for bridging dividing lines among different segments of society as well as support for an active and organised civil society".<sup>viii</sup>

In the Communication on the *Participation of non-state actors in EC Development Policy* (2002), the European Commission reaffirmed this commitment to a participatory approach which explicitly demands the inclusion of non-state ac-

tors in project and programme implementation. NSAs are defined here as a range of organisations that represent the principal existing or emerging structures of the society outside the government and public administration. NSAs are thus created voluntarily by citizens with the aim of promoting an issue or an interest, either general or specific.<sup>ix</sup> The Communication states that NSAs can be either operational actors or advocacy organisations.<sup>x</sup>

Hence, in order to assess the full range of the possibilities for cooperation between state and civil society actors in EU peacebuilding efforts, all instruments and their respective terminologies must be taken into consideration since they reflect the complexity of what is needed in order to engage in productive consultations, improve policy, and succeed in implementation on the ground. However, even though the EU – the Commission and the Council – has moved forward in the conceptualisation of cooperation with organised civil society in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management, modalities for regular information exchange have only recently been developed, and NGO experience and knowledge have not been drawn upon systematically. The recognition that greater efforts need to be undertaken to address these gaps led the Finnish EU presidency to launch the first phase of the project *Role of Civil Society in Crisis Management*, or RoCS I, during the latter part of 2006 to explore the role of civil society in crisis management.

### *Achievements during the Finnish EU Presidency: RoCS I*

During RoCS I, the Finnish EU Presidency worked together with the KATU Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network, the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) with the aim of further developing the capacities and operational efficacy of civilian ESDP missions. On the basis of a wide-ranging consultation process with EU and member state delegations as well as with European NGOs, a report entitled *Partners Apart: Enhancing Cooperation between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management in the Framework of ESDP* was completed in Sep-



Alessandro Rossi  
European Coordinator, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Brussels

» *International NGOs gathered in a platform represent a public interest concerning public policy. Therefore, at Brussels level, there is no doubt in my view that this public representation must be heard and there must be structures to do that.* «

tember 2006.<sup>xi</sup> This report examined how civilian ESDP measures might be strengthened by drawing on local knowledge and specialist expertise from the NGO sector. Specific NGO assets were identified, including their deep in-country knowledge, analytical capacity, ability to train personnel, and capacity to represent an independent view. Improved modalities for information-sharing and cooperation at both headquarters and in the field were explored in order to improve the planning, implementation and evaluation of ESDP actions.

One of the outcomes was the *CivCom agreement on Recommendations for Enhancing Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the Framework of EU Civilian Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention*,<sup>xii</sup> which were endorsed by the Political and Security Committee in November 2006. These recommendations recognised the

experience and knowledge of NGOs in the area of crisis management and conflict prevention and suggested a number of practical steps, such as (a) the establishment of NGO liaison functions within ESDP civilian crisis management missions and (b) routine information exchange with relevant civilian agencies and civil society organisations at field level.

RoCS I focused deliberately on the interactions between European peacebuilding NGOs and ESDP instruments. However, it was understood that NGOs and the EU also frequently collaborate on peacebuilding efforts in countries affected or threatened by conflict within the context of EC projects. Moreover, complementary, “flanking” or follow-on activities supported by the EC or member states and implemented by NGOs or civil society actors can directly support ESDP objectives.



Gernot Erler  
Member of the German Bundestag; Minister of State,  
Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

» *The German federal government has committed itself to strengthening networks among civil society and state actors engaged in the fields of crisis prevention and conflict resolution – this includes efforts at the international level and above all at the European level.* «

### *Toward Greater Cooperation and Coherence: The Context of RoCS II*

The priority of enhancing EU coherence reflects the issues raised by the conceptual division between EC conflict prevention and EU crisis management activity. From a peacebuilding perspective that views conflicts and crises as cyclical and as part of a single spectrum, it is important to foster greater coherence between these two aspects of EU policy and action. NGOs as well as member states play a crucial role in this effort: through flanking actions that build links between short-term crisis management and long-term conflict prevention work performed by different EU actors, both NGOs and member states can contribute to the coherence that is called for in both the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts (2001) and the EU Security Strategy (2003).

The new *Instrument for Stability*,<sup>xiii</sup> which was created as part of the reform of Community external financing instruments in 2006, provides an additional means for developing new mechanisms for increased coherence and for cooperation with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental actors. It provides the Union with a new strategic tool to ensure an effective, rapid and flexible response to political crises as well as to strengthen the capacity of NGOs over the longer term, specifically those NGOs with a mandate to engage in crisis prevention or crisis response.

Financial support for these objectives will be provided within the context of a wider Peacebuilding Partnership. This will build on the Conflict Prevention Network project. Particular attention will be given to ensuring that NGOs with strong grass-roots links in third countries are well represented. Arrangements will also be put in place with specialised NGOs allowing the EC to mobilise rapid support for peacebuilding and early recovery assistance in crisis situations. The *Instrument for Stability* clearly represents important progress, yet it remains to be seen whether potential limitations – including the short-term focus and the small proportion of SI resources al-

located to the Peacebuilding Partnership – can be overcome.<sup>xiv</sup>

Attention has also been paid to other intergovernmental organisations that cooperate with NGOs, in order to identify best practices for cooperation in the fields of conflict prevention and crisis management. At the UN level, such cooperation has been concretised through the Arria Formula, implemented for the first time in March 1992. The Arria Formula is an informal meeting that allows the UN Security Council to be briefed by external experts, including representatives of civil society, about international peace and security issues.<sup>xv</sup> Another UN body that has welcomed the attendance and participation of NGOs is the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (UN PBC). The *Provisional guidelines for the participation of civil society in meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission* (2007)<sup>xvi</sup> states, with respect to formal meetings, that “[t]he Chairperson... shall invite representatives of civil society organisations that are actively engaged in peacebuilding activities to make oral statements and provide information, as may be needed, that could contribute to the work of the Commission on specific matters ... pertaining to integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding”. These two examples show that the EU is neither the first nor the only intergovernmental organisation seeking concrete cooperation with NGOs, and that interesting experiences and lessons learned can be drawn from other contexts as well.



Dan Smith  
Secretary General, International Alert, London

»» We are left with the issue – the challenge – of developing a framework that can foster policy coherence. Starting from these keywords – diversity, enabling agendas, discourse – and recognising that civil society is so much more than simply a number of specific organisations, it is clear that a framework for policy coherence must reflect the same mode of thinking.◀◀

### *The Aims of RoCS II*

The RoCS process came into being in the context of increased awareness among representatives from the Council of the European Union, the Commission and European NGOs of the critical role that policy coherence, enhanced co-operation and effective partnerships play in the field of peacebuilding. As a follow-on project to the first phase of the project, RoCS II has been guided by specific questions and interests such as: How can cooperation and coordination between the EU and European NGOs working in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management be improved, enhanced and further developed? How can cooperation between the EU and NGOs be deepened beyond cooperation during the planning, implementation and evaluation of ESDP missions to include the activities of the European Commission, EU member states and local actors as well? How should the EU and European NGOs, together with their local partners, act in the most proper manner in order to enable comprehensive and coherent peacebuilding activities?

The project has sought to promote a culture of cooperation based on dialogue and mutual trust between the EU and its NGO partners. After all, effective peacebuilding must be understood as an activity that is ultimately based on effective partnerships.

For the EU, such effectiveness requires the active solicitation of input from NGOs in order to

benefit from their expertise, their understanding of the long-term situations and contexts and their engagement with local civil society.

For NGOs, such effectiveness requires proactive engagement with the EU at the EU, member state and field levels.

A framework for engagement and collaboration will make such a partnership more effective.

More specifically, the aims of RoCS II have been:

- to identify ways and means for improving the implementation and delivery of the EU's conflict prevention and crisis management activities in conflict zones by developing new modes of EU-NGO cooperation and enhancing existing ones;
- to develop policies that enable the European Union to cooperate effectively with European civil society with the aim of improving the coherence of EU action throughout the entire conflict cycle;
- in particular, to investigate new approaches to enhance field-level cooperation between EU institutions and NGOs (European NGOs and their partners).

## 2 Project Activities and Outcomes

### *Country Case Studies*

Within the framework of the RoCS project, two field-based case studies were conducted in order to:

- capture lessons and identify good practice by examining the relationship between the field operations of EU institutions (both ESDP and Community-led actions) and European NGOs, with a particular emphasis on cooperation in the areas of SSR/DDR and transitional justice;
- generate proposals on how field-level cooperation between the EU and relevant European NGOs and their partners can be made operational.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia were selected as case studies in order to provide one example (DRC) of a fragile state where the full range of EU instruments (ESDP missions, EU political engagement, an active EC development programme) were deployed and one example (Somalia) of a particularly difficult environment at a different point in the conflict cycle, where European NGOs are active and where European Commission instruments represent the primary means of EU engagement.

During the preparatory phase for the reports, the RoCS project conducted research on existing general and country-specific EU policy and project documents relevant to the case studies. The ensuing field work phase drew on various sources of information, such as the relevant EC delegation, European NGO partners, EU member state embassies, relevant national authorities, other representatives of the wider international community, and local NGOs. The case study for Somalia was carried out in Nairobi due to the security situation in Somalia. Most relevant actors were in Nairobi at the time although local NGOs operating in more remote parts of Somalia, who do not have representations in Nairobi, were less accessible. However, the project consultant had extensive knowledge of and contacts with the NGO community in both Somalia and Somaliland.

The field studies sought to test the generic concepts of SSR and transitional justice as applied by the EU and explore how they are operationalised in the field. In the case of SSR, the EU has developed a definition based on the work of the OECD Development Assistance Committee. This focuses on the transformation of the security system, which involves all security actors – their roles, responsibilities and actions – working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance and thereby contributing to a well-functioning security framework. EU SSR concepts now explicitly recognise the value added of civil society in SSR programmes and consider civil society involvement to be a key component of SSR implementation. However, the case studies found that much work remains to be done to translate these concepts into clearly understood approaches that are meaningful to local NGOs and that reflect the local context.

Similarly, in terms of transitional justice, the EU has drawn on internationally accepted definitions to develop its own concept of how best to confront past abuse as a part of programmes to support major political transformations – from war to peace or from authoritarian rule to democracy.<sup>xvii</sup> Strategies developed in transitional contexts must address the individual level as well as the community and national levels and must at all of these levels include and engage state and non-state actors. Theoretical analyses have emphasised the extent to which the peaceful transformation of post-conflict societies is inevitably a long and complex process that involves all layers and structures of a society. The case studies again found that the EU experiences significant difficulties in operationalising these concepts in a manner that is relevant to local NGOs.

The difficulty of attempting to explore the issue of EU-NGO cooperation through abstract and complex concepts that are not always context-relevant, such as transitional justice and SSR, highlighted the extent to which debates within the EU can become overly specialised and exclusive. This problem can prevent the EU from engaging in

straightforward communication and cooperation with organisations and individuals who are not familiar with these concepts, even though they may have concrete, hands-on experience in executing them. This fact underscores the importance of continuing efforts to link policy and concept development to real experiences in field situations and to feed lessons learned back into EU policy discussions.

### *Messages from the Brussels Seminars, 28-29 March 2007*

As explained above, discussions held during the inaugural phase of the project identified the need for more in-depth consultations with field-based NGO actors, focusing on how they view the practice of consultation in the field, what their needs are, and how NGOs can engage in more in-depth discussion with EU and member state delegates in Brussels. To foster this exchange, two seminars entitled "Learning from the Field" were organised by CMI and EPLO and held in Brussels on 28-29 March 2007. The first day brought together NGO experts, most of them field-based, and on the second day, EU policy makers and member state officials were invited to join. The aim of the workshops was to discuss the results of the research on Somalia/Somaliland and DRC and to formulate general conclusions and recommendations for EU-NGO cooperation in the field and at Brussels level by drawing on the participants' expertise from contexts such as East Timor, Kosovo, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The European Commission's outreach in Somalia was evaluated positively, and participants discussed the extent to which Somalia represents a good example of collaboration and partnership between the EU and NGOs.

On the positive side, the EC either fully funds, mainly funds or co-funds and participates in a number of coordinating bodies at different levels, with the aim of enhancing cooperation between INGOs and international donors in Somalia and improving the coordination of their actions. These bodies include other donors, international NGOs and local NGOs. Once a year, the EC delegation hosts meetings for all European NGOs according to different sectors.

However, it was also pointed out that EU-NGO dialogue in Somalia stayed focused on a narrow base of actors, and that the EU still experiences difficulty in reaching out beyond the main urban centres.

While European NGOs based in Nairobi generally reported that there was very good communication between them and the EC Delegation's Somali Unit, Somali NGOs did not feel the same level of partnership. Somali NGOs did express some praise for the EC staff's openness and flexibility, the EC's information policy, and the fact that Somali NGOs are integrated into the Country Strategy formulation process. Those without an office in Nairobi complained of being mere subcontractors. To access EC funds, an NGO must be registered in the EU or in an ACP country, a condition that Somali NGOs cannot fulfil.

The seminar also examined the EU's well-known and intensive engagement, through ESDP missions, in support of the Democratic Republic of Congo transition process, particularly in light of the turbulent events in Kinshasa in mid-March 2007. A key message from the field was that the end of a transition does not mean the end of peacebuilding, on the contrary: the end of a transition process marks the beginning of peacebuilding, which requires a long-term commitment on the part of all those involved, internal and external actors alike.

Participants emphasised that greater openness and transparency on the part of the EU would facilitate improved EU-NGO collaboration in the future. Equally, many highlighted the need to establish NGO liaison functions within EU field missions – something that the PSC had already recommended in November 2006.<sup>xviii</sup>

Many of the dilemmas and characteristics highlighted in the Somalia and DRC case studies were also present in other conflict zones, such as Sri Lanka, Kosovo, Nepal, and East Timor.

Participants with experience in all of these countries and regions reported that, in situations of state fragility, local and international NGOs at times take over service delivery functions – sometimes quite extensively – that might otherwise be viewed as responsibilities of the state. This can and does put NGOs in the invidious position where their role and

legitimacy may be compromised but where – in the absence of state services – someone clearly has to act. Peacebuilding must address this reality.

While NGOs in practice act as (a) privileged dialogue partners, (b) service providers, and (c) an independent and critical voice, there was an impression among seminar participants that, in the conceptualisation and practical implementation of policy, the EU and other governmental actors tend to reduce cooperation with NGOs simply to the issue of service delivery. In their view, state actors do not take the essential task of listening to a broad range of voices in policy dialogue sufficiently into account.<sup>xix</sup> This is partly due to the fact that NGOs do not have sufficient access to EU bodies. However, these participants argue that input from NGOs, and especially local organisations, is crucial for developing entry and exit strategies. These organisations play a key role in ensuring the sustainability of the peace effort and facilitating outreach beyond capital cities.

On the other hand, NGOs that had been demanding partnership recognised that they also need to make clear to state actors what the mutual benefits of this partnership are. One clear example is that information flows during crises are improved when established relationships exist and when NGOs have the ability to give advice on the appropriate criteria for selecting NGO counterparts. The role of international NGOs in identifying local interlocutors is one of their central strengths. INGOs can help to transfer know-how and skills to local NGOs involved in peacebuilding, and they serve an important bridging function between the EU and the local level.

In many of the cases discussed, the EU's openness to organised civil society seems to depend on the outreach culture of individual staff members in delegations and missions. Close cooperation and continuity are not always ensured when staff changes occur. Donor coordination does not always work well. This has a negative impact on the way donors in the international community operate, including the European Commission and ESDP missions. It was repeatedly emphasised that NGO/CSO liaison functions within EU field missions, as already recommended by the PSC, urgently need to be established.

Finally, field actors urged EU officials to improve and

develop more innovative financing mechanisms for responding to conflict situations. The need for rapid implementation and adaptability to fragile contexts does not fit easily with traditional EU funding regulations, which more often than not substantially inhibit NGO work, particularly the work of local NGOs. For example, while there appears to be greater de-concentration in favour of local organisations, this can impede partnerships between international and local NGOs. Planning processes for the Peacebuilding Partnership do demonstrate that attempts are being made to think about potential ways forward. Participants suggested additionally that traditional project proposals could be replaced with scenario proposals that set out different options under changing conditions in volatile situations.

#### *NGO Presentations at CivCom Meetings*

The report produced during the first stage of the RoCS project, *Partners Apart: Enhancing Cooperation between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management in the Framework of ESDP*,<sup>xx</sup> reviewed the current state of EU-NGO cooperation. The conclusion was that cooperation between NGOs, the EU Presidencies and EU crisis management decision-making bodies have been established and formalised to some extent while cooperation with regard to early warning and situation assessment remain undeveloped. The report also found that conceptual and operational planning processes involve only limited and ad hoc interaction with NGOs, with the exception of planning processes for the Aceh Monitoring Mission, in which the Crisis Management Initiative was heavily engaged.

During the Finnish Presidency the PSC took note of the Recommendations for Enhancing Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the Framework of EU Civilian Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention, as agreed by CivCom. During the German Presidency, EU-NGO cooperation at Brussels level took an important practical step forward toward the implementation of these recommendations, notably through the introduction of regular dialogue between CivCom and NGO representatives. On five different occasions, the German Presidency invited NGO field

experts<sup>xxi</sup> to Brussels to give presentations at official CivCom meetings. Particular care was taken to ensure that NGO input would feed into the early stages of planning phases for ESDP missions. The briefings were coordinated and prepared by EPLO and the German chair of CivCom, with EPLO ensuring that all presenters received extensive briefings on ESDP and EU structures and policies prior to the meetings.

CivCom delegates and NGO representatives underlined that it is most important and valuable for NGOs to provide input to CivCom already during the early stages of planning phases for ESDP missions. On the one hand, the expert presentations provided CivCom representatives with the NGO view from the field, which would not necessarily have been available to them otherwise. On the other hand, the presentations gave NGOs the opportunity to present their work and expertise in the field and to initiate a constructive dialogue with representatives of EU member states.

One CivCom delegate speaking at the final conference emphasised that both the EU and NGOs benefited from NGO briefings to CivCom, and that

At these meetings, NGOs provided input and analysis on the following ongoing missions:

- Afghanistan (civil society's view of the Afghan police; recommendations for EUPOL Afghanistan);
- Kosovo (presentation on key aspects of the justice sector in advance of the future Kosovo mission);
- the Democratic Republic of Congo (review of the EU police mission EUPOL, recommendations for the planning of a new EU SSR mission focusing on the police with linkages to rule of law issues);
- the Palestinian Territories (review of the EU Border Assistance Mission at the Rafah Crossing Point, EUBAM Rafah; recommendations for continuation); and
- Bosnia and Herzegovina (review of the EU Police Mission EUPM, lessons learned in police and justice reform).

regular meetings should continue during future EU Presidencies, perhaps even in a more structured form than is currently the case. Another delegate agreed that CivCom benefited from the NGO briefings and the new ideas presented in the RoCS I report.<sup>xxii</sup> This delegate argued that, while certain improvements would help to make such consultations even more effective, the process had been useful for CivCom, particularly with regard to the planning and evaluation of missions in Afghanistan and DRC.

In practice this has turned out to be a win-win situation in which diplomatic actors now gain access to field-level information – packaged in a digestible way – from the perspective of local civil society actors, and field-level actors are exposed to the realities of ESDP decision-making, which helps them to better understand how to play a constructive advocacy role. EPLO and one of its member organisations have also developed a briefing for experts from local NGOs on EU structures and activities, which is designed to help local NGOs gain maximum benefit from cooperative efforts.

The briefings therefore served to pave the way for a culture of cooperation between the Council and European NGOs and to promote a process of mutual learning and understanding. The review of the PSC-endorsed recommendations during the Slovenian Presidency (the first half of 2008) will push the implementation process further forward. The future Slovenian Presidency has already made committed itself to continuing CivCom's consultations with NGOs.

### *Outcomes from the Final Conference in Berlin, 20-21 June 2007*

The final project conference entitled *Partners in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management: EU and NGO Cooperation* was held at the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin on 20-21 June 2007 and organised by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in consultation with all project partners. The goals of the conference were (a) to provide a forum for constructive dialogue between EU and NGO representatives, (b) to

focus chiefly the challenges facing future EU-NGO cooperative efforts in the fields of conflict prevention and crisis management and (c) to raise the debate between governmental and non-governmental actors to a new level of understanding. The conference assembled approximately 150 participants representing a broad range of institutions and actors, including the Council, the Commission, the German EU Presidency, EU member states, the UN, the OSCE and NGOs active in conflict prevention



*Peter Grk  
Representative, Committee for Civilian  
Aspects of Crisis Management, Permanent  
Representation of Slovenia to the European  
Union, Brussels*

» *The NGO presentations were very useful and effective since they brought a clear added value to the EU efforts in the planning of future civilian operations. NGO presentations have given CivCom an excellent opportunity to hear clear and precise information about the situation 'on the ground' and also useful suggestions for future deliberations. The information which was presented by the NGOs was judged to be timely and was taken into consideration while discussing further EU civilian crisis management action in third countries. I believe that it would be appropriate and useful to continue with the NGO presentations and consultations in the future, since all agreed that only a holistic approach to conflict prevention and crisis management can provide an effective tool for the permanent stabilisation and development of crisis-affected countries and regions around the world.* «

» *During the Portuguese Presidency, we intend to strengthen the exchange of information exchange between NGOs and the appropriate bodies within the Council, particularly CivCom. We foresee that some NGOs will have the possibility to present to this committee concrete cases that will certainly contribute to enriching the debate on key aspects of present and future ESDP missions.* «



*Maria Mira Gomes  
Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Portugal, Berlin*

and crisis management. Participants hailed from EU countries, the Balkans, the Black Sea region, Central Asia, Kenya, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the United States.

Spanning two days, the programme encompassed various aspects of EU-NGO cooperation and coordination in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management. During the first welcoming session, the EU Presidencies of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia conveyed three main messages: the need to lay the ba-

sis for a culture of cooperation between the EU and NGOs, the importance of continuing and strengthening the process of information exchange between NGOs and appropriate EU organs such as CivCom, and the recognition of the added value that NGOs can bring to EU crisis management and conflict prevention policies.

»During the German EU Presidency, NGO representatives gave presentations on Afghanistan, Kosovo, DR Congo, the Palestinian Territories and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The presentations have been useful for the planning or evaluation of civilian ESDP mission in these areas. The feedback we have received from colleagues was entirely positive. The added value of this exercise consists in an exchange of views which enriches both sides: member states receive input from a different source of information, based on analysis 'inside the conflict zone'. NGOs get to know better, through the questions and the discussions after the presentations, the positions and approaches of member states. NGO briefings to CivCom should definitively continue.«



Daniel Krebber  
Co-Chair, Committee for Civilian Aspects  
of Crisis Management, Permanent  
Representation of Germany  
to the European Union, Brussels



Gernot Erlner

»In the end, what we need is a culture of cooperation between state and non-state actors. This culture must establish itself and become both self-evident and self-sustaining.«



*Andrej Šter*  
State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ljubljana

The NGO side was represented during the inaugural session by Dan Smith, Secretary General for International Alert, a member organisation of EPLO, who emphasised that the independence of NGOs should be cherished and not regarded as problematic for the EU. According to Smith, a culture of cooperation needs above all “to be based on mutual respect for the roles, capacities and strengths of the different actors who sit around the table and seek to work together”.<sup>xxiv</sup>

In the presentations that followed, speakers highlighted issues related to the progress that has been made at headquarters level and in the field, but also emphasised areas of disagreement and future challenges.<sup>xxv</sup> Pilvi-Sisko Vierros-Villeneuve (Director General, Political Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland) stated that EU dialogue with civil society is well established through the briefings given by NGOs at CivCom meetings and that NGOs contribute to the framing of EU security policy, in particular civilian crisis management. “Member States and EU Presidencies have worked in favour of enhanced cooperation between NGOs and the Union. But it needs to be underlined that NGOs have gained their existing position on the basis of their own expertise”.

Despite this progress, much remains to be done to improve cooperation. As pointed out by Nicolas Beger, Director of EPLO, both the EU and NGOs need to overcome their misunderstandings of each other and to aim for better information-sharing and coordination. Beger reminded the conference that cooperation should not be seen

» Cooperation between the Union and NGOs is a main precondition for a modern approach to crisis management. Contacts that international NGOs have with local NGOs and civil society on the ground provide a valuable contribution to the Union's efforts in the fields of crisis management and conflict prevention. «

as an end in itself, but rather that the joint objectives – fostering peace in conflict-prone countries, tackling violent conflict better and improving the lives of millions of people living in these societies – should guide EU and NGO endeavours. “Seen from a civil society perspective, I would eagerly hope that the willingness to foster a culture based on dialogue and cooperation is a vision that we



*Pilvi-Sisko Vierros-Villeneuve*  
Director General, Political Department,  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Helsinki

» Member states and presidencies have worked in favour of enhanced cooperation between NGOs and the Union. But it needs to be underlined that NGOs have gained their existing position on the basis of their own expertise and the value of the contribution they can give. They have shown that they are seriously engaged and willing to contribute to the success of the EU in carrying out crisis management. «



Nicolas Beger  
Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, Brussels

» After all, cooperation is not an end in itself – we firmly believe that enhanced cooperation between the EU and civil society will contribute to improved coherence of EU action throughout the conflict cycle and facilitate the tackling of violent conflict. And to make progress we need to honestly name the assumptions, fears, and ideas we have about each other, since they are the issues that silently dominate when we haggle about a liaison officer here and access to documents there. «

» This culture [of cooperation], as soon as we have that, will in a certain way enable us to become independent of needing to have specific individuals or actors present in Brussels at a specific time. Then it will really work. Such a culture ... or such a partnership has to be based on knowledge of each other's structures and motives, in order to get rid of myths. And this, of course, will help to reduce prejudices. «



Friedrich Daeuble  
Ambassador; Commissioner for Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

do share with our EU partners and with all the member states in the EU". In order to enable such a culture, EU-NGO cooperation should not rely on the good will of certain dedicated individuals only. Therefore, there is a need to structure the dialogue between the EU and NGOs and to move from ad hoc measures to consistency and continuity.

Friedrich Daeuble, Ambassador and Commissioner for Crisis Prevention at the German Federal Foreign Office, agreed with the other speakers and urged a structured and coherent dialogue between the EU and NGOs, which should be characterised by the identification and inclusion of relevant interlocutors. "We need ... mechanisms that provide for permanent and continuous ex-

change and make sure that the expertise of the other side is fed into our decision-making". Such mechanisms should by no means be rigidly outlined but rather be flexible and adaptable to the requirements of each specific situation.

Extensive workshop sessions focused on the achievements and challenges of EU-NGO cooperation. At these workshops, four different panels reflected on lessons learned from cooperation at the strategic level and in the field, possibilities for EU-NGO collaboration in the upcoming ESDP mission in Kosovo, and how to foster policy coherence between the EU and civil society. The main conclusions of discussions in the working groups included the following key points:

## Panel A:

*Cooperation at the Strategic Level.* While many advances have been achieved in EU-NGO cooperation – such as improved opportunities for NGOs to share their expertise in ESDP missions, early warning and capacity building – is it nevertheless necessary for EU institutions to become more easily accessible to NGOs. NGOs should be more involved in Commission policy making, fact finding missions and needs assessments. The panel's rapporteur, Christian Berger (Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention Unit, European Commission), proposed an *extensive mapping of mutual needs*, i.e. an examination of what the European institutions want from NGOs, what NGOs need from them, and how both can facilitate each other's work. This would eventually support the development of a more comprehensive European approach to conflict prevention and crisis management, embraced by member states, Commission representatives and NGOs.

## Panel B:

*Cooperation in the Field.* This panel concluded that the EU must explain its presence or its missions to local actors and international NGOs working in a specific conflict region, by approaching them proactively. According to the panel's rapporteur, Kristiina Rintakoski (Director of the Crisis Management Programme at the Crisis Management Initiative), this could be achieved by *appointing civilian liaison officers* to ESDP missions who engage proactively with local civil society representatives. This should entail reaching out beyond capital cities to more remote parts of the country and to local organisations, which are not necessarily familiar with EU policies and structures. The panel suggested that *local civil society should be empowered to take part in policy dialogue*.<sup>xxvi</sup>

» Plurality in the society itself is a good thing, and working with NGOs is part of building that healthy plurality .... Cooperation with civil society will also contribute to restorative justice and increase possibilities for reconciliation between the protagonists. «



Kristiina Rintakoski  
Director, Crisis Management Programme,  
Crisis Management Initiative, Helsinki

## Panel C:

*The ESDP Mission in Kosovo: Possibilities for EU-NGO Cooperation.* As this mission will be the biggest ESDP mission ever, involving around 700 people from the police and judicial sectors, there should be a *clear communication strategy and information structure* regarding the mandate of the mission, including the tasks and responsibilities of the actors involved. Channels and mechanisms of communication should be created between representatives from governments, NGOs and local society. This would entail an accessible, clearly identifiable *contact unit* with appointed contact persons responsible for outreach and information-sharing. The panel's rapporteur, Klemens van de Sand (Deputy Director General at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) also recommended the establishment of a structure for cooperation involving *regular meetings between NGOs, government actors and mission representatives*. In this cooperation, it is equally crucial to liaise with other international actors, especially the OSCE.



*Klemens van de Sand  
Deputy Director General, Commissioner for Asia and South-Eastern Europe, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Bonn*

## Panel D:

*Fostering Policy Coherence: An EU Civil Society Strategy.* This working group concluded that those involved in peacebuilding efforts must possess an understanding of the diversity of actors, in particular NGOs, as well as the diversity of situations and voices. Dan Smith (Secretary General for International Alert), the panel's rapporteur, argued that, apart from the unconditional need to analyse each situation appropriately, there is no pre-defined template for how a particular international actor should engage in a specific context. The *emphasis needs to be on the local and the specific, on supporting peaceful development* without forcing the pace or narrowing the agenda, since peacebuilding after all is about enabling a larger social process that includes the participation of the broad mass of society. Therefore, an *EU-NGO policy framework cannot be established on the basis of prescriptive generalisations*, but needs to reflect the principles of transparency, mutual respect, inclusiveness and public participation. In outlining this policy framework, Smith concluded that it remains to be seen whether the principle of human security – as an alternative to the strategic narrative of the “War on Terrorism” – can be used as a unifying theme for the EU's civil society strategy.

» *Human rights, basic justice for people, freedom of movement, and gender are the most relevant challenges to be tackled by the ESDP mission .... Regarding local NGOs – and I would include the international NGOs as well – there is already a pool of local knowledge, local resources, and local skills that is available and that is maybe often underestimated. The challenge for the mission is how these existing skills ... can be incorporated into the mission itself.*«

In the closing plenary session, Stefani Weiss, Project Manager for the Bertelsmann Stiftung's International Relations Programme, argued that while the RoCS project succeeded in gaining the active participation of both government and NGO representatives, the cooperative process should be driven more from the bottom up and not from top-down, high-level theoretical discussions. If the UN Peacebuilding Commission has succeeded in creating modalities enabling civil society organisations to participate in its formal and informal meetings,<sup>xviii</sup> the EU should also be able to function in a similar manner. In this process the pivotal role of NGOs is to remind EU member states that the European public expects the member states to act coherently in order to deliver on its stated objective of effective multilateralism.

» *The most urgent role for NGOs is to remind the member states that the European public expects the member states to act coherently in order to deliver on its stated objective of effective multilateralism.* «



*Stefani Weiss  
Project Manager, International Relations Programme,  
Bertelsmann Stiftung, Guetersloh*

» *Civil society cooperation with governments needs to be part of the EU's "DNA". This is what makes the EU different.* «



*Antje Herrberg  
Director, Interpeace Europe; President, European Peacebuilding  
Liaison Office, Brussels; Director, Martti Ahtisaari Rapid  
Response Facility, Crisis Management Initiative, Brussels*

Antje Herrberg, EPLO President and representative of the Crisis Management Initiative and Interpeace, concluded that the question is no longer about whether there is a need to work together but rather how and on what issues. NGO cooperation with governmental institutions needs to be part of the EU's "DNA". Both the EU and NGOs must be prepared to listen to each other, and the EU needs to be willing to provide time, space and resources to NGOs to enable them to become respected dialogue partners in mutual cooperation. While it is recognised that the EU and NGOs have different positions, it would nevertheless be helpful for the NGO peacebuilding sector to be part of the entire policy cycle and to have more genuine opportunities for networking with the EU.

One of the conference's central outcomes was the recognition that effective peacebuilding efforts must be characterised by a fundamental interdependence between government and NGO actors. On the one hand, ESDP missions and European Commission activities are crucial due to their ability to engage directly with government actors through political dialogue, to build capacity in such areas as security, and to provide broader institution-building support. On the other hand, European NGOs can play a pivotal role as bridge builders between EU missions and local civil society by providing valuable field experience to the EU. In this regard, organised NGO networks like EPLO can facilitate cooperation and coherence not only between European peacebuilding NGOs themselves, but also between the EU and the local NGO peacebuilding sector. EU-NGO collaboration becomes a practical imperative for effective peacebuilding both because collaboration is necessary for building effective networks of action and because local ownership requires inclusive and enabling approaches to local capacity building.

However, as the messages of the conference speakers reflected, being an equal dialogue partner by no means implies that NGOs seek decision-making power in formal governmental or intergovernmental processes. The contribution of NGOs to such processes is that of providing advice and expertise, in particular with regard to their specific experience in the field. Any more expansive role might carry the risk that NGOs would be required to demonstrate loyalty in implementing subsequent decisions and thus forfeit what is one of their main assets – namely their independence from government influence – or at least create the impression of such a loss of independence.

» *Even though the sun was shining outside the conference venue in Helsinki last September, the atmosphere inside the hall was chilly. The partners (NGOs and ESDP actors) were actually apart as the conference title indicated. However, now in Berlin, I feel a completely different atmosphere.* «



*Christian Berger  
Head of Unit, Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention Unit,  
Directorate General External Relations, European  
Commission, Brussels*

### 3 Key Conclusions and Future Challenges

The interaction between NGOs and the EU in the RoCS II process was built on the shared understanding that peacebuilding is a broad process that includes economic, social, economic, environmental and other measures in which involved actors should not view each other as isolated partners but rather as interdependent entities in a network where all have a different role to play. In order to be successful, peacebuilding objectives and strategies must be based on an agenda of sustainable enablement. Yet, any agenda of enablement must include elements of both state- and society-building, and it is this insight that necessitates interaction and partnership between the EU and NGOs in the areas of policy development and implementation.

The RoCS project represents an important step in a longer process. The goal of this process is to enable the EU and NGOs to make a more effective contribution to conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding, and ultimately to a more peaceful world.

»While I know some places where I believe that the most important thing to do in supporting civil society right is precisely to fund local non-governmental organisations, it is very often the case that external international funding to a local NGO damages both its capability and its credibility, and with that undermines their function.«



Dan Smith (left)

There are, however, further steps that must be taken:

- Both the EU and NGOs must further develop their understanding of the linkages between foreign policy, development, security, and peacebuilding and the consequences that these linkages have for interventions.
- The EU and NGOs must continue to develop a mutual understanding of their respective roles and how these roles can complement each other.
- The EU must ensure that its short- and long-term strategies and policies work together coherently, and NGOs must continue to provide information, advice and input to reinforce this message.
- All partners need to develop a common understanding of the role and nature of civil society. In addition, they must help local civil society to develop its capacity to play its essential role as
  1. partners in dialogue with state structures;
  2. service providers of publicly funded services, where appropriate;
  3. an independent and critical voice.
- The EU should be a champion for the recognition that NGOs, in their engagement with state structures, are a crucial component of a country's social fabric.
- International NGOs should work to assist local and emerging NGOs to develop a confident voice in a democratic society.
- All partners need to recognise that the EU has an important role to play in supporting the development of good governance and functioning democracy by helping to foster stable state structures in fragile states.

- Both the EU and NGOs must develop a shared understanding of the diverse roles of external actors in crisis situations and the dangers implicit in these roles.
- The EU and NGOs also need to sharpen their understanding of situations of fragility in order to ensure that intervention serves to strengthen the whole of the social fabric, with the ultimate objective of achieving conflict resilience in a democratic framework.
- In those circumstances where there are no functioning state structures, it is important to recognise the special role that NGOs play in maintaining basic services. When state structures become more stable, the state can redress this imbalance by improving its service delivery and integrating key NGO actors into this process.
- The EU and NGOs must ensure that their engagement in any third country includes appropriate exit strategies.
- The EU and NGOs would also be well-advised to heed the advice of Lakhdar Brahimi (see quotation next column).
- The EU and NGOs must understand the context of the respective conflicts they are seeking to help prevent, manage or resolve. Moreover, they must ensure that they do not impose their own conceptions of effectively functioning state and social structures upon contexts where such conceptions are not appropriate.
- Finally, both the EU and NGOs must grasp the various roles – positive and negative – of different groups within a particular conflict and must engage with these different groups in appropriate ways. It is important not to exclude key stakeholders from the peace-building process, in order to ensure that they do not remain or become spoilers.

The recommendations presented in the Executive Summary of this report were elaborated on the basis of these conclusions. In the spirit of open collaboration between actors with different interests at stake, recommendations cannot be prescriptive guidelines. Indeed, different partners within the process continue to have different views on some of the issues.

» *We never know enough about the places we go to. Never, never, never. And I think, we are far too often too arrogant to realise that we don't know.* «



*Lakhdar Brahimi  
Ambassador; Director's Visitor, Institute for Advanced Study,  
Princeton University; Former Special Advisor of the Secretary  
General of the United Nations, New York*

The aim of the RoCS project was to capture the state of the discussion and to spur further debate on the principles and actions that are best-suited to the development of better policies. These principles and actions include the creation of a culture of cooperation between state and civil society actors; proactive and respectful engagement on both sides; added value structures of consultation and mutual learning; coherent and comprehensive joint analyses of local contexts; funding relationships with the flexibility to adapt to the rapid changes inherent in crisis situations; and a focus on building the capacity of local actors.



## Annex 1: Conference Programme

*„Partners in Conflict Prevention  
and Crisis Management: EU and NGO Cooperation“*

Wednesday, 20 June 2007

**12:00 noon**  
*Europasaal*

### **Welcome**

“Three presidencies – one aim: Operationalising EU-NGO cooperation in conflict prevention and crisis management”

#### **Gernot Erler**

Member of Deutscher Bundestag; Minister of State,  
Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

#### **Maria da Graca Mira Gomes**

Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Portugal, Berlin

#### **Andrej Ster**

State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ljubljana

#### **Dan Smith**

Secretary General, International Alert, London

#### *Chair:*

#### **Josef Janning**

Member of the Management Committee; Head of the International Relations Programme, Bertelsmann Stiftung, Guetersloh; Director, Bertelsmann Group for Policy Research, Center for Applied Policy Research, Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich

**1:45 – 3:00 p.m.**  
*Europasaal*

### **1st Plenary Session:**

“Enhancing EU-NGO cooperation – progress so far and challenges ahead”

#### **Pilvi-Sisko Vierros-Villeneuve**

Director General, Political Department,  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Helsinki

#### **Nicolas Beger**

Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, Brussels

#### **Friedrich Daeuble**

Ambassador; Commissioner for Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

*Chair:*

**Danilo Tuerk**

Professor of International Law and Vice Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana; former Representative of Slovenia to the Security Council; former Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, United Nations, New York NY

**3:15 – 6:30 p.m.**

*Willy Brandt Saal*

**Parallel discussion groups (4)**

**Panel A –**

**Lessons learnt from cooperation at strategic level**

*Chair:*

**Angelika Beer**

Member of European Parliament, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Brussels

Introductory Remarks:

**Veronica Cody**

Head of Unit, Horizontal Issues, Directorate General External Economic Relations, Politico-Military Affairs, Civilian Crisis Management, General Secretariat, Council of the European Union, Brussels

**Catriona Gourlay**

Marie Curie Fellow; Project Manager, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Geneva

*Rapporteur:*

**Christian Berger**

Head of Unit, Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention Unit, Directorate General External Relations, European Commission, Brussels

*Adenauer Saal*

**Panel B – Lessons learnt from cooperation in the field**

*Chair:*

**David Bloomfield**

Director, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin

Introductory Remarks:

**Jeremy Lester**

Head of Unit, Relations with Horn of Africa, Eastern Africa and Indian Ocean, Directorate General Development, European Commission, Brussels

**Faisa Loyaan**

Project Coordinator, Saferworld, Nairobi

*Rapporteur:*

**Kristiina Rintakoski**

Director, Crisis Management Programme, Crisis Management Initiative, Helsinki

Stresemann Saal

### Panel C – The ESDP mission in Kosovo: Possibilities for EU-NGO collaboration

*Chair:*

**Pieter Cornelis Feith**

Deputy Director General, Directorate General External Economic Relations, Politico-Military Affairs, General Secretariat, Council of the European Union, Brussels

Introductory Remarks:

**Juergen Schulz**

Deputy Head of Division, European Security and Defence Policy, Political Directorate General, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

**Dick Oosting**

Director, Amnesty International, European Union Office, Brussels

*Rapporteur:*

**Klemens van de Sand**

Deputy Director General, Commissioner for Asia and South-Eastern Europe, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Bonn

Rathenau Saal

### Panel D – Fostering Policy Coherence: An EU civil society strategy

*Chair:*

**Alojz Peterle**

Member of European Parliament, Committee on Foreign Affairs; Vice President of European People's Party, Brussels; former Prime Minister of Slovenia, Ljubljana

Introductory Remarks:

**Stephan Kinnemann**

Economic Advisor to the Afghan Government 2002-2006; Managing Director, International Infrastructure Services GmbH, Bonn

**Mary Kaldor**

Professor of Global Governance; Co-Director, Centre for the Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics and Political Science, London

*Rapporteur:*

**Dan Smith**

8:00 p.m.

**Dinner**

at the Berlin House of Bertelsmann AG and the Bertelsmann Stiftung, Unter den Linden 1

*Dinner Speech by*

**Lakhdar Brahimi**

Ambassador; Director's Visitor, The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton NJ; former Special Advisor of the Secretary General of the United Nations, New York NY

Thursday, 21 June 2007

**9:30-11:30 a.m.**  
*Europasaal*

## **2nd Plenary Session**

"Making cooperation work ..."

*Statements by the Rapporteurs:*

**Christian Berger**

**Kristiina Rintakoski**

**Klemens van de Sand**

**Dan Smith**

*Chair:*

**Tilman Evers**

Assistant Professor; Chairman, Executive Committee,  
Forum Civil Peace Service, Bonn

**12:00 – 1:00 p.m.**  
*Europasaal*

## **3rd Plenary Session**

General debate and conclusions

*Chairs:*

**Antje Herrberg**

Director, Interpeace Europe; President, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office;  
Director, Martti Ahtisaari Rapid Response Facility,  
Crisis Management Initiative, Brussels

**Stefani Weiss**

Project Manager, International Relations Programme,  
Bertelsmann Stiftung, Guetersloh

**Friedrich Daeuble**

Ambassador; Commissioner for Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and  
Peacebuilding, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin



## Annex 2: Keynote Speeches at the Berlin Conference

*Gernot Erler*

*Member of the German Bundestag;  
Minister of State, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a great pleasure for me to open the conference "Partners in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management: EU and NGO Cooperation". I am pleased that this event has stimulated such a high level of interest and that we have the opportunity today to host approximately 140 participants. I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The German EU Presidency is now coming to a conclusion. During the past six months, the EU has once again impressively demonstrated its commitment to conflict resolution. Currently, there are 16 ESDP missions being conducted around the world – more than ever before. The great majority of these – 13 – are civilian missions. They encompass a broad spectrum of tasks, including the European Union Police Mission EUPM and the EU-led military operation Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah, and the EU Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq (EUJUST LEX). Through these missions, the EU contributes both to the resolution of conflicts and to the prevention of new violent struggles. In the past year, the military mission EUFOR RD Congo – under German command – succeeded in securing parliamentary elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, safeguarding the election process there does not mean that our task has been fulfilled: the priority now is to consolidate these initial successes in fostering democracy and to establish the preconditions for sustainable and peaceful political, economic and social development in this African country. The EU is needed in these areas as well. In Kosovo, once the question of status has

been clarified, the EU will launch the largest civilian ESDP mission that has ever existed. Preparations for this mission have made good headway in recent months. And just a few days ago, the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan went into operation. This mission underscores the EU's continued commitment to this country and supplements its current support for the reconstruction and stabilisation of Afghanistan in a crucial area: the establishment of an effective police force. This mission builds on earlier measures under German leadership.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

These are just a few examples to highlight the extent to which the EU is challenged to deliver its contribution to peace and security throughout the world. To succeed in these efforts, the Union needs a broad range of instruments and capacities. Therefore, during its Presidency, Germany has made an active effort to strengthen the EU's crisis management capabilities.

However, the increasing expectations directed toward the EU, and the enormous financial and human resources required to conduct such missions, demonstrate how important it is – wherever possible – to work toward the prevention of crises and conflicts before they occur, in order to avoid expensive and risky conflict resolution measures. Consequently, conflict prevention is and remains a central task for the EU, and its capacities in this area must therefore be expanded and strengthened. This applies not only to the prevention of conflicts between states but also to challenges such as international terrorism, organised crime, ethnic and intra-state conflicts, struggles over the distribution of resources, and – not least – the consequences of climate change. During the German Presidency, the EU's decisions on the reduction of CO2 emissions have set standards for combating climate change and its consequences. Under our



Presidency, two conferences held in Berlin and Brussels this past spring focused on the linkages between the environment and development. The European Commission is currently serving as chair of the Kimberley Process, a position which allows it to play a decisive role in measures aiming toward the more effective prevention of trade in so-called “blood diamonds”.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We will be able to counter these diverse threats only if all key actors – national and international, state and non-state – work together, contribute their respective “added value”, and provide each other mutual support. For the European Union, this means building efficient, trust-based partnerships with other actors. At the beginning of June, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier signed a joint statement on enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in the field of international crisis management. The EU also needs strong partnerships with countries outside the Union as well as with non-state actors, particularly from civil society. The European Security Strategy and the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts have set clear parameters in this respect. There are important national programmes in this area as well: for example, with its Action Plan on “Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution, and Post-Conflict Peace-Building,” the German federal government has committed itself to strengthening networks among civil society and state actors engaged in the fields of crisis prevention and conflict resolution – this includes efforts at the international level and above all at the European level. This conference is designed to contribute precisely to this networking process.

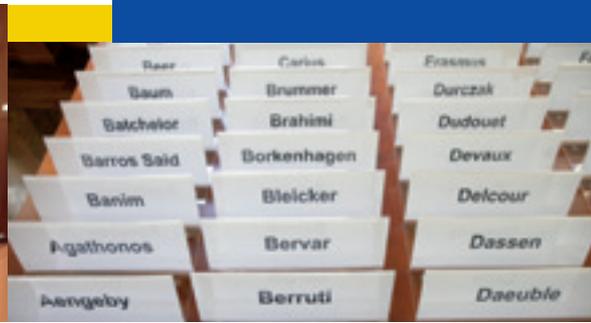
The involvement of state and civil society actors in conflict prevention and crisis management efforts is not an “either/or” proposition – that is,

either state or civil society engagement, with one element substituting for the other. Rather, it is essential for both to make their contributions and deliver their added value to a coherent whole. The partnership between state and civil society actors is grounded in the common guiding values and norms of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and good governance. This is the precondition for achieving a coherent and cooperative basic understanding within this partnership, despite the many differences in both sides’ interests and working methods.

In addition, this partnership cannot be random, or turned on and off at will. In the end, what we need is a “culture of cooperation” between state and non-state actors. This culture must establish itself and become both self-evident and self-sustaining. Above all, it must be independent of the personalities and circumstances involved – personnel changes and rotations must not be allowed to weaken it or disrupt it completely. At this conference, it is our goal to identify ways and mechanisms for establishing and sustaining such a culture of cooperation.

Ultimately, developing this culture is a process, even today. It still remains necessary to put aside preconceived notions and to overcome the reluctance to cooperate. We will not accomplish this overnight, but we must press ahead and make this an ongoing, continuous process.

For this reason, I am particularly pleased that we are able to conduct today’s conference under the aegis of what has been termed the “Trio Presidency” of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia. Unfortunately, the State Secretary of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, Prof. João Cravinho, had to cancel his participation at short notice. I am delighted that Ms Mira Gomes was prepared to jump in at the last minute to represent Portugal. I am pleased to also extend a very warm welcome to Mr. Andrej Šter, State Secretary of the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thank



you very much for coming to Berlin and for demonstrating, through your presence here today, that your country will press ahead with the process of enhancing EU and NGO cooperation. I am confident that the upcoming Portuguese Presidency will also pave the way for further progress. I can assure you that the German federal government will continue to actively support this process even after the German Presidency has concluded. The review conference under the Slovenian Presidency, which is planned for early 2008, will soon provide us with the opportunity to perform an interim assessment and to give new impetus to our efforts to strengthen the cooperation process.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Dan Smith, the Secretary General of International Alert in London, who is representing our participants from civil society during this panel discussion. I believe that I may speak for my colleagues from Portugal and Slovenia when I say that, by opening this conference jointly, we stand for the spirit of cooperation that is meant to characterise this event.

I would also like to direct a word of thanks and appreciation to the co-organisers of this conference: the Bertelsmann Stiftung, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), and the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI). Today's conference represents both the conclusion and the culmination of a project that, from its very outset, you have actively planned and implemented in close cooperation with the German Foreign Office. Without your consistent, powerful commitment, neither the second phase of the project "The Role of Civil Society in Crisis Management" nor this conference would have come to fruition.

In conducting this project, we have not only been able to depend on the immense expertise of our partners but have also been able to build upon the outstanding groundwork laid by our Finnish colleagues during their EU Presidency in the sec-

ond half of 2006. During the first phase of the project "The Role of Civil Society in Crisis Management," a series of seminars and workshops, as well as a high-level conference held in Helsinki in September 2006, led to the formulation of concrete recommendations for improving cooperation between the EU and NGOs within the framework of ESDP missions. These recommendations were then discussed in Brussels by the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom) and ultimately endorsed by the Political and Security Committee (PSC) in November 2006. This represents a significant advance because we now have, for the first time within the framework of the EU, officially endorsed recommendations for steps toward structured cooperation between the EU and NGOs. We want to build upon this important advance. Our EU Presidency has given us a special opportunity to do so, and we have gladly taken up the challenge. During these past months, we have received valuable assistance and support from our Finnish partners. Therefore I am particularly pleased that the Director-General for the Political Department of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Vierros-Villeneuve, is present here today, and I would like to extend her a very warm welcome indeed.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The two days that lie ahead will provide you with the opportunity to engage in an intensive exchange of views, wide-ranging debates, and results-oriented work within four working groups. In terms of outcomes, my hope is that this conference will make a small contribution toward identifying ways to enhance the effectiveness of cooperation between the EU and NGOs in the fields of conflict prevention and crisis management – on the basis of our common values and in the interest of our common goal of establishing peace and security. I wish you much success in this endeavour.



### *Maria Mira Gomes*

*Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Portugal, Berlin*

Text presented on behalf of the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation of Portugal, João Gomes Cravinho

The Portuguese EU Presidency will be focusing on the EU's approach to fragile states and the coherence between development and security policies as two of its priorities in the area of development cooperation. These are two areas that are directly linked with the theme of this conference and that we expect will bring additional elements to the framework of the EU's approach to conflict prevention and crisis management, including the operationalisation of effective EU-NGO cooperation in this domain.

When talking about fragile states, the international donor community, and the EU as the major donor, does not intend to create another classification of countries but simply to systematise common features of states that lack the political will or the capacity to provide what is currently understood as human security – on the basis of properly functioning, legitimate political institutions; sound economic management; and social services – to the general population. Such countries are often the ones that experience conflicts and crises, but state fragility is not restricted to conflict situations. Through this exercise of systematisation, that has so far been led by the OECD, the international community has identified ten principles for better engagement in these countries as well as for an integrated and comprehensive and thus more effective response.

The Portuguese Presidency intends to launch, within the EU, the process that will provide for a suitable strategic European Union response to fragile states and partnerships requiring particular attention. This kind of situation demands very

effective coordination among the various actors. In these specific contexts, where it is difficult for donors and for local structures to work side by side, local NGOs may play a particularly relevant role and they remain an important EU partner, while maintaining their autonomy, which we consider an essential element to be preserved. The NGOs on the ground are included among the EU's partners and play an important role in dialogue with local authorities as well as within national stabilisation, reconciliation and development processes. It is therefore important to highlight the role NGOs play on the ground in various countries, which includes supporting some ESDP missions.

In concrete terms, we consider that also in Brussels it is now time to move from a conceptual phase to the consolidation of the cooperation between the EU and NGOs.

According to this perspective, during the Portuguese Presidency, we intend to strengthen the exchange of information between NGOs and the appropriate bodies within the Council, particularly the Committee for the Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom). We foresee that some NGOs will have the possibility to present to this committee concrete cases that will certainly contribute to enriching the debate on key aspects of present and future ESDP missions. The Portuguese Presidency will pay particular attention to the consolidation of the dialogue process and the exchange of concrete experiences that will allow better interaction on the ground.

We want to underline that in the Presidency's annual report on the prevention of violent conflict – which will be endorsed by the European Council this week – the EU intends to examine the possibility of including the relevant activities of member states in the field of conflict prevention. Portugal, before taking over the EU Presidency, is reflecting upon how the member states



can provide information on these activities, so that they can be included in next year's report in order to make it a continuous trend.

When it comes to the definition of broader policies related to development policy that are included in the 18-month Programme of the "Trio" Presidency, Portugal has commissioned a study on the EU's approach to fragile states. We also expect the European Commission to present a Communication on this issue. These reflections will be subject to public consultation during the Portuguese Presidency. NGOs will have the opportunity to influence policies on this matter.

The Portuguese Presidency also intends to deepen the work done by the EU regarding Policy Coherence for Development, mainly by promoting coherence between development and security policies. The link between development and security is a fact whose importance has been repeatedly demonstrated. With this in mind, we are committed to promoting this debate in the Council and wherever relevant, during the next few months, including at a joint meeting of Development and Defence Ministers. This will mark the beginning of a concrete dialogue process that can benefit from the input and ideas of relevant NGOs so that their perspectives on the civil-military relationship in crisis management and post-conflict situations can be put forward.

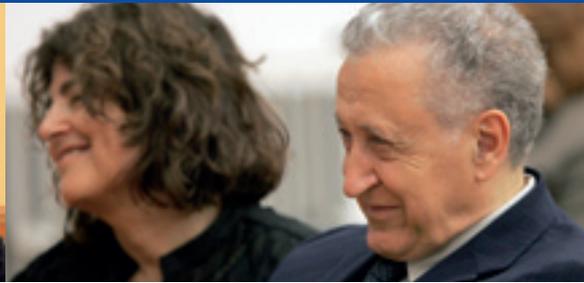
The EU is committed to "treating security and development as complementary agendas, with the common aim of creating a secure environment and of breaking the vicious circle of poverty, war, environmental degradation and failing economic, social and political structures" and also to "enhancing its policies in support of good and effective governance and the prevention of state fragility and conflict, including by strengthening its response to difficult partnerships/failing states."

The Portuguese EU Presidency intends to consistently foster a better response to these

situations. We will be guided by an integrated perspective involving the different sectors and partners, giving continuity to the European Security Strategy and thereby stimulating its operational capability and effectiveness. All of this, of course, depends on a set of synergies.

It will therefore be with great enthusiasm that we will try to follow up the important conclusions that will be adopted at this conference. These will certainly allow more structured cooperation between the EU and NGOs in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management.

*Thank you very much.*



### *Andrej Šter*

*State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Slovenia*

Thank you very much. My dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me begin by thanking my colleague Gernot Eler from the German Federal Foreign Office for his invitation to attend this conference as well as our partners at the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, the Crisis Management Initiative and the Bertelsmann Stiftung for organising this event. I warmly welcome the decision of the German Presidency to continue the dialogue with NGOs that was launched by Finland's presidency in 2006.

This conference stands as a confirmation of our conviction that NGOs are an indispensable partner in EU crisis management. This is certainly not surprising, since we share the same objectives, as is evident from the very title of this conference. All international actors – whether states, international organisations or NGOs – agree that the current crises require new multi-phased and coordinated approaches and activities on the part of all actor who are working to resolve them. A coordinated approach by the European Union and NGOs has become a prerequisite for comprehensive conflict resolution. Only such cooperation will result in the sustained stabilisation and normal development of crisis areas.

I am convinced that the participants at this conference agree that there can be no development without security. If security is not guaranteed in crisis areas, it will be impossible to ensure development as well as promote and strengthen human rights and freedoms. Security and development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. They are vital for the expansion of the limits of freedom. It is therefore particularly important for international actors such as the European Union, who implement crisis management mechanisms to promote security and

development, to coordinate their activities with NGOs which are flexible enough to reach every nook and cranny of civil society. Complex conditions in crisis areas call for a coordinated approach by all actors.

It is particularly important to understand that a common objective should be pursued; our actions should be directed towards this common goal – the well-being of the people. If we jointly pursue this objective, our actions will promote coordination and avoid competitiveness. Uncoordinated actions and competitiveness diminish overall effectiveness, and resources, capabilities and time are wasted in vain. Time is indispensable in crisis situations, especially to those who need our help. We should therefore spend it wisely. The recent development of the European Union has been marked by exceptional speed and diversity, particularly in the political and security dimensions. This is particularly due to the altered circumstances in the international system. The EU has faced the necessity, and demonstrated its willingness, to assume its shared responsibility for stability and development in crisis areas. As a result, the Union has strengthened its crisis management mechanisms and instruments. After modest initial steps, our successes and errors have helped us to further develop these mechanisms, which have been upgraded and adapted.

Cooperation between the EU and NGOs is a main precondition for a modern approach to crisis management. Contacts that international NGOs have with local NGOs and civil society on the ground provide a valuable contribution to the Union's efforts in the fields of crisis management and conflict prevention. However, we understand that such cooperation needs to be enhanced and improved. This conference will undoubtedly produce initiatives and proposals for further enriching our cooperation with



NGOs and for taking a structured and planned approach to the development of the EU's conflict prevention and crisis management capabilities.

The cooperation process between the EU and NGOs that was initiated during the Finnish EU presidency and that is currently being carried forward very successfully by Germany, must certainly be continued. The progress we have achieved in strengthening cooperation must be further developed and enhanced within the given possibilities. The steps made in recent years were significant and have already yielded concrete results. Slovenia believes that the NGO briefings organised by the German presidency at the working level have significantly improved our knowledge of the situation on the ground, thereby contributing to the planning of more efficient and coherent EU action, for example in Congo and Afghanistan. The integration of NGO experience and knowledge into EU civilian crisis management activities has contributed to the formulation of more effective concepts and policies. This practice must certainly be continued in the future. These are, however, only two examples of cooperation. There are many more proposals on the table, and most of them still remain to be assessed and implemented in one way or another. At conferences such as this, we can work to agree on policy proposals as well as methods and time frames for implementation.

The Union will soon launch its largest civilian ESDP mission ever. Certainly, this does not depend only on us. After the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution, the EU will replace UNMIK in Kosovo and carry forward with the international community's efforts to achieve stabilisation and development in this region. In this regard, effective cooperation between the EU and NGOs will be the key to our success. I am convinced that today's discussion on this issue will contribute to more effective EU-NGO cooperation in Kosovo.

May I conclude by assuring you that, during its Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2008, the Republic of Slovenia will promote cooperation between the EU and NGOs based on the experiences and hard work performed by prior EU Presidencies. We will strive, to the best of our ability, to achieve greater cooperation and trust. I would like to thank all of you for your attention. And I wish this conference the best of success.



## Dan Smith

Secretary General, *International Alert*, London

I would like to begin by thanking and congratulating those who have taken the initiative to organise this conference: the German Federal Foreign Office together with the other two members of the Trio Presidency, Portugal and Slovenia, and of course the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, the Crisis Management Initiative and the Bertelsmann Stiftung. I think this is an extremely important and timely conference. And I hope that my remarks will briefly explain why I think that.

I would like to take as my starting point the same theme that State Secretary Šter emphasised – that is, the importance of addressing peace and security questions constructively and creatively in order to meet the European Union's development and international security goals. The EU faces a great many challenges as it becomes a more important and more direct actor in the field of conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding. Leaving aside the sometimes mind-bogglingly complex difficulties of engaging in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America that have been torn apart by armed conflict and are threatened with renewed violence, and leaving aside the specific complexities of each case, there are generic challenges that the EU faces.

The first challenge is to have the right kind of expertise available. The EU needs relevant expertise, both on the cross-cutting issues which arise time and again in different cases of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and crisis management, as well as country-specific knowledge. As anybody with any experience can testify, both kinds of knowledge are in quite limited supply. What makes it a more demanding challenge is that in-country knowledge would preferably mean knowledge derived from getting outside of the capital from time to time, and talking to people

who are not part of the country's social, political and economic elite from time to time and gaining the benefits of their knowledge and awareness. It is a challenge for governments and intergovernmental organisations to develop the means to acquire this expertise.

A further challenge is how to shape actions in crisis management, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, so that they reflect the policies and the politics, and the norms and values, of the European Union, while also responding to the realities on the ground. It is often a subtle and complex task to balance these two reference points together, so that the actions are responsive to both imperatives.

A major problem for the EU as for any other external actor lies in the capacity of beneficiary countries to absorb the action which is being undertaken. I think we're quite familiar with this discussion now in terms of absorptive capacity and in relation to development cooperation funding. Research and experience both indicate that the funding which is provided in the first two or three years after a peace agreement has been adopted is much harder for the country to absorb than financial assistance provided in years four to six. And yet the pattern of development assistance after peace agreements is that the funding begins to tail off just as the capacity to absorb it starts to increase. I think we're familiar with that debate.

There is, however, another debate that we need to put alongside it, which we can perhaps refer to in terms of absorptive governance capacity. Does the beneficiary have the governance capacity to absorb the assistance directed at it? For example, at the most mundane level, do beneficiary countries actually have the ability to spend the time which is required to meet all the international delegations as they come through? You very often talk to people in post-conflict countries



in official positions, and a half to two-thirds of their working time is spent meeting the donors. Quite often this leads or is related to what I think we could call the alignment deficit, and I'll come back in minute to this issue of policy alignment.

A further challenge is how to get the approach to each country right – how to do the detailed planning, how not to use a template with the same approach in every case, and how be a positive influence without imposing a purely donor-driven agenda.

Donors place great emphasis on alignment and local ownership. But how do you get local ownership and alignment, when the most obvious local owner or owners may be a fundamental part of the problem? How do you plan and how do you work if aligning with the local owner would mean actually aggravating problems in the long term, rather than alleviating them? How do you encourage what we want to see, which is a responsive and functional state emerging out of the debris of the post-conflict situation, without being simply directive and instrumental in approach? How does an actor like the EU become an enabler, enabling the right conditions in which a responsible state can grow, rather than trying to lay down the law? Because we know that an attempt to lay down the law is generally counterproductive. And in such a subtle and nuanced exercise, how do you get coordination amongst all the different actors? Indeed, how do you get coordination within the EU, let alone between the EU and the other actors? And finally there is the challenge of being holistic in the face of all these daunting challenges: how do you manage to engage in peacebuilding across the board in a given country and not just pay attention to those bits of it that are particularly convenient, particularly accessible to the international actor?

This meeting is not only a chance for us to state intentions; it's also a chance to assess. I'm not right now going to get into an assessment of

how well I think the EU is doing in facing these various challenges. But I think that is a task we can carry out during the next two days, and it will be an important part of what comes out of this meeting. We need not simply talk about what could and should be in the future, but also to discuss what progress has been made.

Both international NGOs and local NGOs bring a number of important assets to the table which are really part of the process of meeting the challenges which I've just set out. These assets include relevant expertise, in terms of deep in-country knowledge and analytical capacity, as well as the ability to train personnel deploying in civilian peace operations, and not least the independence of NGOs. This independence – among local and international NGOs alike – is something that should be cherished by governments and intergovernmental organisations, and not something to be regarded as problematic. Minister of State Erler referred quite richly and productively to the idea of a culture of cooperation. If that is what we are going to aim for, it has to be based on a mutual respect for the roles, capacities and strengths of the different actors who sit around the table and seek to work together. As Ms. Gomes was saying on behalf of Professor Cravinho, one important role of international NGOs in countries where an effort is being made to assist with conflict prevention, peacebuilding or crisis management, is to provide a networking link to local civil society and other actors in the private sector, politics and business. This grows from NGOs' particular capacity for long-term commitment. From this grow knowledge, expertise and networks. This would not be possible without the NGOs' independence. So if you want to benefit from the knowledge and networks of NGOs, recognise what they are based on.

Perhaps that's another challenge for intergovernmental organisations and governments. They need to understand how to have a cooperative



and productive relationship without trying to be in charge and to lay down the law. I've often heard it said by friends and colleagues who work in government that NGOs are hard to work with. I don't want to offer a representative NGO reply to that charge, just my own personal view. And my view is that NGOs should be quite proud of being hard to work with. It's because of the independence. It's because it's such an important asset, worth protecting. But let me also turn this back to government and intergovernmental organisations. You know, compared to you, we NGOs are really easy to work with. You can easily see what I mean if you just see how hard governments and IGOs find it to work with each other, let alone with NGOs.

What I draw from this is that there is a general work of partnership and cooperation that we are undertaking. Let us not think of it as just between governments and NGOs, or between the EU and NGOs. It needs to be thought of in much broader terms than that, because the issue of cooperation does not arise as an issue between two sides. The issue arises as between different players, groups and organisations sitting around the table, bringing their different assets and their strengths together. I think we've been moving forward in a lot of ways on these issues in the EU context in recent years. There are more opportunities coming up. The Stability Instrument, for example, provides new opportunities which we're going to see exploited over the next two or three years. And as we move forward, an exchange of views like this conference is extremely important.

Again, I welcome the initiative of this conference and I'm really looking forward to it, and I know all of you are as well. Thank you very much.

## Annex 3: List of Relevant Documents and Previous Reports

### Auswaertiges Amt (German Federal Foreign Office)

2006 Sicherheit und Stabilität durch Krisenprävention gemeinsam stärken. 1. Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Umsetzung des Aktionsplans „Zivile Krisenprävention, Konfliktlösung und Friedenskonsolidierung“. Adopted 31 May 2006. Available at: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Aussenpolitik/FriedenSicherheit/Krisenpraevention/Aktionsplan1BerichtBuReg0506.pdf>

### Beger, Nicolas and Bartholmé, Philippe

2007 The EU's quest for coherence in peacebuilding: between good intentions and institutional turf wars. *Studia Diplomatica*, vol. 60, no. 1, pp. 245-265.

### Council of the European Union

2003a European Security Strategy. Document number 15849/03. 5 December 2003. Available at: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/03/st15/st15849.en03.pdf>

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### Council of the European Union

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### Council of the European Union

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### Council of the European Union

2006b Transitional Justice and ESDP. Document number 10674/06. 19 June 2006. Available at: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st10/st10674.en06.pdf>

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[http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/agr01\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/agr01_en.pdf) or <http://www.acpsec.org/en/conventions/cotonou/accord1.htm#PART%204:%20DEVELOPMENT%20FINANCE%20COOPERATION>.

### European Commission

2002 Participation of Non-State Actors in EC Development Policy. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, COM (2002) 598. 7 November 2002. Available at:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/ong\\_cd/fichiers/rapp\\_com2002\\_0598\\_nsa\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/ong_cd/fichiers/rapp_com2002_0598_nsa_en.pdf).

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2006 A concept for European Community support for security sector reform. COM/2006/0253, final. 24 May 2006. Available at:  
[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006\\_0253en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0253en01.pdf)

### European Council

2001 EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts. Adopted in June 2001. Available at:  
<http://www.eu2001.se/static/eng/pdf/violent.PDF>

### European Council

2004 EU Action Plan for the Civilian Aspects of ESDP. Adopted 17-18 June 2004. Available at:  
[http://www.intermin.fi/intermin/hankkeet/skh/home.nsf/files/ActionPlanfor%20CivilianAspectsofESDP/\\$file/ActionPlanfor%20CivilianAspectsofESDP.pdf](http://www.intermin.fi/intermin/hankkeet/skh/home.nsf/files/ActionPlanfor%20CivilianAspectsofESDP/$file/ActionPlanfor%20CivilianAspectsofESDP.pdf)

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2006a Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. Available at:  
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### The European Parliament and Council of the European Union

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[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/documents/legislation/legal\\_bases/stability\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/documents/legislation/legal_bases/stability_en.pdf).

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[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/eidhr/pdf/reg\\_1889\\_2006\\_jo\\_l386\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/eidhr/pdf/reg_1889_2006_jo_l386_en.pdf)

### The European Parliament and Council of the European Union

2006d Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation. Document number PE-CONS 3663/06. 18 December 2006. Available at:  
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**European Peacebuilding Liaison Office**

2006 Five Years after Göteborg: The EU and its Conflict Prevention Potential.  
Available at: <http://www.eplo.org/documents/eplo5yearafterweb.pdf>.

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[http://www.eplo.org/documents/EPLO\\_CHG2008final.pdf](http://www.eplo.org/documents/EPLO_CHG2008final.pdf).

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## Annex 4: Acronyms

ACP	Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (Group of States)
CBO	Community-based organisation
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CivCom	Committee for the Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management of the Council of the European Union
CMI	Crisis Management Initiative
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CSO	Civil society organisation
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
EIDHR	European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy
EPLO	European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUBAM	EU Border Assistance Mission at Rafah Crossing Point in the Palestinian Territories
EUMS	European Union Military Staff
EUPM	EU Police Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina
EUPOL	EU Police Mission in Kinshasa (DR Congo)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IFS/SI	Instrument for Stability or Stability Instrument
IO	International organisation
KATU	Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network (network based in Finland)
MONUC	United Nations Mission in DR Congo
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSA	Non-state actor
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPLAN	Operation Plan
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PBP	Peacebuilding Partnership
PSC	Political and Security Committee
RoCS	Role of Civil Society
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UN PBC	United Nations Peacebuilding Commission
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo



The **Bertelsmann Stiftung** is both a think tank and an agent for social change. It is a private, non-partisan foundation that runs its own projects. Its primary goal is to make a meaningful and enduring contribution to the peaceful development of society. In pursuing this aim, the Stiftung develops strategies and policy recommendations to strengthen the European Union's ability to become a global foreign and security policy actor.

<http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/>

The **Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)** is an independent, non-governmental organisation that innovatively promotes and works for sustainable security. CMI works to strengthen the capacity of the international community in comprehensive crisis management and conflict resolution. Its work combines analysis, action and advocacy and builds on wide stakeholder networks. CMI is chaired by its founder, President Martti Ahtisaari.

<http://www.cmi.fi/>

The **European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (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. Together its members are active in all conflict zones of the world and possess considerable expertise in a wide range of peacebuilding and conflict prevention practices, including DDR/SSR and transitional justice.

<http://www.eplo.org/>

- <sup>i</sup> There is a tendency to use interchangeably such terms as “non-governmental organisations” (NGOs), “non-state actors” (NSAs), “civil society”/“civil society organisations” (CSOs), and “community-based organisations” (CBOs). The aim of this paper is not to go into further discussions on the terms mentioned above or elaborate the meaning of civil society. However, the need to specify the terminology used in this report has been recognised. Since this project has explicitly focused on the cooperation between the EU and NGOs, the authors of this report choose to use the term “NGOs” as an example of a way in which civil society organises itself. Nevertheless, in some cases other terms might be more appropriate and will be used accordingly, such as “organised civil society” for more generic statements or “NSAs” for denoting e.g. combatant factions. For further reference on civil society, see e.g. Kaldor, Martin and Selchow 2007; Lederach 2001; Paffenholz and Spurk 2006; World Bank 2006.
- <sup>ii</sup> European Council (2001), <http://www.eu2001.se/static/eng/pdf/violent.PDF>.
- <sup>iii</sup> <http://www.eu2001.se/static/eng/pdf/violent.PDF>. See also European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (2006), <http://www.eplo.org/documents/eplo5yearafterweb.pdf>, and Beger & Bartholmé (2007).
- <sup>iv</sup> Council of the European Union (2003b), 11127/03, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/03/st11/st11127en03.pdf>.
- <sup>v</sup> European Council (2004), <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Action%20Plan%20for%20Civilian%20Aspects%20of%20ESDP.pdf>.
- <sup>vi</sup> European Commission (2000), [http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/agr01\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/agr01_en.pdf).
- <sup>vii</sup> European Commission (2002), [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/ong\\_cd/fichiers/rapp\\_com2002\\_0598\\_nsa\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/ong_cd/fichiers/rapp_com2002_0598_nsa_en.pdf).
- <sup>viii</sup> Article 11/2, Cotonou Agreement, [http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/agr01\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/agr01_en.pdf).
- <sup>ix</sup> NSAs are independent of the state and can be profit or non-profit organisations, such as non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, private sector associations and business organisations, associations of churches and confessional movements, universities, cultural associations, and the media.
- <sup>x</sup> European Commission (2002), [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/ong\\_cd/fichiers/rapp\\_com2002\\_0598\\_nsa\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/ong_cd/fichiers/rapp_com2002_0598_nsa_en.pdf).
- <sup>xi</sup> Catriona Gourlay (2006).
- <sup>xii</sup> Council of the European Union (2006a), <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st15/st15574.en06.pdf>.
- <sup>xiii</sup> The European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2006b), 1717/2006, [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/documents/legislation/legal\\_bas-es/stability\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/documents/legislation/legal_bas-es/stability_en.pdf)
- <sup>xiv</sup> Another change in the palette of possibilities during 2006 and 2007 were the new instruments on Human Rights and Democracy, the Development Instrument and the European Neighbourhood Instrument. Unfortunately, these instruments threaten the progress made by the EU in Gothenburg in 2001 due to internal tensions between the pillars of the EU. Failure to agree on institutional reforms to improve the coherence of its external action, combined with the refusal to include explicit reference to peace, security and conflict prevention in all but one of the Financial Instruments 2007 to 2013 sends a worrying signal that achievements will not be sustained, and will perhaps even be undone. For further reference, see Nicolas Beger & Philippe Bartholmé (2007). For more information about other financing instruments, see European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy (EIDHR) [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/eidhr/pdf/reg\\_1889\\_2006\\_jo\\_l386\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/eidhr/pdf/reg_1889_2006_jo_l386_en.pdf), Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st03/st03663.en06.pdf>, and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) ([http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/oj\\_l310\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/oj_l310_en.pdf)).
- <sup>xv</sup> <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/mtgsetc/arra.htm>
- <sup>xvi</sup> United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (2007).
- <sup>xvii</sup> Council of the European Union (2006), 10674/06, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st10/st10674.en06.pdf>.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Council of the European Union (2006a), <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st15/st15574.en06.pdf>.
- <sup>xix</sup> The World Bank recognises seven functions of civil society actors in peacebuilding: (i) protection; (ii) citizen-state intermediation; (iii) participatory socialisation; (iv) community building and integration; and (v) communication and public opinion formation (Annex 3). Two dimensions, (vi) monitoring and (vii) service delivery, which are generally emphasised in development cooperation practice, have been added. Other functions frequently attributed to civil society are dialogue and advocacy on behalf of the poor. World Bank Report (2006), <http://>

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<sup>xx</sup> Catriona Gourlay (2006).

<sup>xxi</sup> Search for Common Ground, Swisspeace, the International Center for Transitional Justice, and Amnesty International provided the relevant NGO field experts.

<sup>xxii</sup> Catriona Gourlay (2006).

<sup>xxiii</sup> The German Presidency was represented by Gernot Erler (Minister of State, Federal Foreign Office, Germany), the Portuguese Presidency by Maria Mira Gomes (Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Portugal, Berlin) and the Slovenian Presidency by Andrej Šter (State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia).

<sup>xxiv</sup> The welcome speeches can be found in their entirety in Annex 1.

<sup>xxv</sup> Four different panels reflected on lessons learned from cooperation at the strategic level and in the field, on possibilities for EU-NGO collaboration in the upcoming ESDP mission in Kosovo and on how to foster policy coherence between the EU and civil society.

<sup>xxvi</sup> In this case, Saferworld's Somalia Programme is worth mentioning, since it managed to address the empowerment of local civil society in a successful manner. Without forgetting the specificity and uniqueness of each conflict situation, this programme could nevertheless provide some ideas for other programmes with similar objectives.

<sup>xxvii</sup> United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (2007).





