



## Civil Society Dialogue Network Geographic Meeting

### Preventing conflict in different contexts: Anticipating crises and conflicts for focused preventive action

Friday 20 September 2019 (08:30 – 13:00)

Hotel NH Brussels Berlaymont, Boulevard Charlemagne 11/19, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

#### Concept note

##### Background

In its 2016 [Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy](#), the European Union (EU) emphasised that acting early to prevent conflict is 'more efficient and effective' than addressing crises after they have already broken out. It also highlighted the need for EU external action, including EU conflict prevention efforts, to be underpinned by a 'strong knowledge base' and 'deeper situational awareness'. As contexts and conflict situations evolve over time, it is key to have access to robust, up-to-date information and analysis in order to be able to identify risk factors, anticipate possible crises and prevent the outbreak of violence.

Civil society is a key partner of the EU in its conflict prevention efforts. Since civil society organisations (CSOs) which undertake peacebuilding activities in fragile and conflict-affected contexts have to monitor closely where tensions may rise and where conflict may erupt or escalate in the future, they are well-placed to help the EU identify risks and trends.

In order to support the EU's conflict prevention work, this meeting will bring together civil society experts who will share their insights and analysis of contexts at risk of (increased) conflict at different time horizons. Participants will also share lessons learned and experiences from their organisations' work in assessing conflict risks and in determining which contexts to prioritise for focused preventive action.

##### Objectives

The overall aim of this meeting is to gather civil society input and analysis on the contexts at risk of deteriorating and/or of escalating into violent conflict in the short to medium term.

The specific objectives of the meeting will be to:

- Identify contexts where tensions may escalate in the short term and/or where structural factors may lead to violent conflict in the medium term
- Examine the drivers of conflict and their possible effects in different contexts
- Discuss good practices in assessing conflict risks and in prioritising contexts for focused preventive action.



## Format

The meeting will take the form of a half-day round-table meeting with facilitated interactive sessions in which all participants will be encouraged to share their input. The discussions will take place under the Chatham House Rule.<sup>1</sup> The working language will be English.

## Participants

The meeting will gather 20-25 participants, including civil society experts and officials from both the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

### **The Civil Society Dialogue Network**

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a mechanism for dialogue between civil society and EU policy-makers on issues related to peace and conflict. It is co-financed by the European Union (Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace). It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), a civil society network, in co-operation with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The third phase of the CSDN will last from 2017 to 2020. For more information, please visit the [EPLO website](#).

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<sup>1</sup> When a meeting is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

## AGENDA

08.30 – 09.00	<b>Registration and welcome coffee</b>
09.00 – 09.15	<b>Opening remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• René van Nes, Head of Division, EEAS.ISP.2</li> <li>• Marc Fiedrich, Head of Unit, EC.FPI.2</li> <li>• Sonya Reines-Djivanides, Executive Director, EPLO</li> </ul>
9.15 – 10.45	<b>SESSION 1: Countries and contexts where the situation could deteriorate in the next 3-6 months</b> <p>Participants will be invited to identify the contexts which they consider to be the most relevant and the criteria which they use to prioritise them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which contexts could deteriorate considerably in the next 3-6 months?</li> <li>• What trends relating to peace and conflict dynamics do you observe in those contexts?</li> <li>• What are the possible triggers and relevant dates (e.g. elections, celebrations, etc.)?</li> <li>• What are the potential effects of any possible deterioration and what are their implications for the EU?</li> <li>• What can the EU do to prevent such a deterioration, or at least to mitigate its effects (which specific “early actions” and/or which other types of actions)?</li> <li>• What system(s) or specific criteria do you use for assessing and prioritising various contexts in the short term?</li> </ul> <p><i>Facilitated by Laura Davis (EPLO)</i></p>
10.45 – 11.15	<b>Coffee Break</b>
11.15 – 13.00	<b>SESSION 2: Countries and contexts at risk of violent conflict in the next 0-4 years</b> <p>Participants will be invited to identify the contexts which they consider to be the most relevant and the criteria which they use to prioritise them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do you see structural risks for the possible emergence or escalation of violent conflict in the next 0-4 years?</li> <li>• What are the drivers of conflict and the main areas of concern?</li> <li>• What trends do you see in the medium term?</li> <li>• What are the potential effects of the emergence of / escalation into violent conflict and what are their implications for the EU?</li> <li>• What can the EU do to prevent conflict, or at least to mitigate its effects (which specific “early actions” and/or which other types of actions)?</li> <li>• What system(s) or specific criteria do you use for assessing and prioritising various contexts in the medium to long term?</li> </ul> <p><i>Facilitated by Laura Davis (EPLO)</i></p>
13.00 – 13.15	<b>Closing remarks</b>
13.15 – 14.00	<b>Lunch</b>