Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting

Capacity building of military actors in support of development and security for development (CBSD) 2018-2020: Informal exchange of views with international non-governmental organisations (INGOs)

Thursday 14 May 2020, Online

MEETING REPORT

Introduction

This Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) Policy Meeting (PM) took place on 14 May 2020 online. It brought together 30 participants, including INGO representatives and officials from the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The overall objective of the meeting was for participants to reflect and exchange on the implementation of CBSD over the period 2018-2020.

The final agenda of the meeting is available to download from the CSDN section of the EPLO website.

This report is a summary of the discussions which took place and of the key points and recommendations made by individual participants during the meeting. As the meeting was held under the Chatham House Rule, the views expressed may not be attributed to any participating individual or institution nor do they necessarily represent the views of all of the meeting participants, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) and its member organisations, or the co-organisers.

For more information about this CSDN meeting, please contact Ben Moore at EPLO (bmoore@eplo.org).

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 fourth phase of the CSDN will last from 2020 to 2023. For more information, please visit the EPLO website.

Session 1: Implementation of CBSD 2018-2020

The EC speakers presented CBSD and its implementation over the period 2018-2020:[1]

- CBSD is intended to address the linkages between security and development. It was created to fill a gap in the European Union's (EU's) external action instruments by allowing the EU to provide support to military actors in exceptional circumstances in order to preserve or restore conditions for sustainable development.
- CBSD actions fall under all three components of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). Actions under Article 3 (Response to situations of crisis or emerging crisis to prevent conflicts) and Article 4 (Conflict prevention, peace-building and crisis preparedness) are managed by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), while actions under Article 5 (Global and trans-regional threats and emerging threats) are managed by the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO).
- CBSD activities can be broadly categorised as follows:
  o training, mentoring and advice
  o equipment provision
  o infrastructure improvement.
- Activities which cannot be supported through CBSD include
  o recurrent military expenditures
  o arms or ammunition procurement
  o training designed to contribute to the fighting capacity of armed forces.
- The EU has developed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and risk assessment methodologies for all CBSD actions.
- In 2018, six CBSD actions were adopted under Article 3 in Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR), Somalia and Lebanon,) and CBSD funds were mobilised under Article 5 in CAR and Somalia. In 2019, additional actions were launched under Article 3 in Mali, Somalia and Tajikistan, a three-year action was launched under Article 4 in East Africa, and CBSD funds were mobilised under Article 5 in Benin and Burkina Faso.
- In terms of overall lessons learned so far:
  o given that CBSD is a new tool, EU officials and implementing partners have all had to learn how to use it
  o effective coordination with Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions is essential for achieving positive outcomes
  o the EU's implementing partners need to have the trust of the national ministry of defence
  o CBSD interventions need to be part of an integrated approach and broader strategy
  o strong local political engagement is also helpful.
- Regarding specific challenges related to the implementation of CBSD actions:
  o rehabilitation and construction activities can be challenging when taking place in complex contexts, especially in short time frames
  o the military actors which are being supported need to have positive relationships with their local populations and this has to be analysed as part of the risk assessment process
  o where relevant, a balance needs to be struck between CBSD and CSDP interventions in terms of scope and areas of activity in order to ensure that CBSD actions provide added value
  o it is essential to build a partnership with civil society in order to maximise the positive impact of CBSD actions.

The speakers from the external evaluation team presented their ongoing evaluation of CBSD.

---

[1] For more information, see the Regulation amending the Regulation establishing the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace and the background document which was prepared for this meeting.

Civil society participants raised the following issues and made the following recommendations:

- The EU's priority in relation to peace and security should be to address the root causes of conflict. To what extent are CBSD actions contributing to addressing the root causes of conflict?
- The EU should extensively consult and involve civil society as part of the design, implementation, and M&E of CBSD actions. However, engagement with civil society still seems to be quite variable depending on the context and on the type of action. As such, more effort should be put into systematically engaging with civil society in a substantive manner.
- Consulting civil society is essential to help ensure that CBSD actions:
    - are conflict-sensitive
    - contribute to human security, development, security sector reform (SSR), etc., rather than to narrow national security objectives
    - take into account local politics and power dynamics (civil society actors have access to communities, armed groups, political parties, etc., and may be able to understand how a given action will be received by them).
- Wherever possible, CBSD actions should integrate a 'community component' involving the empowerment and reinforcement of the capacities of civil society and local communities to identify threats, design solutions and engage with militaries on civilian protection.
- Which processes for civil society consultation have been explored as part of CBSD implementation?
- Given that CBSD actions are supposed to be guided by the 'EU-wide Strategic Framework to support Security Sector Reform' and the spirit of the EU's 'Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises', how are they combined with political dialogue with civil society and local authorities where they are implemented?
- Do the requests for CBSD actions mostly come from partner governments?
- To what extent are local civil society actors consulted on either the need for or risks involved in CBSD actions?
- Given that military actors in many of the EU's partner countries have highly problematic records with regard to both human rights violations and their ability to contribute to conflict resolution, it is important to take into account the good and bad practices from previous experiences of providing support to armed forces in conflict contexts. These can involve:
    - ensuring that there is robust civilian oversight of actions, including the systematic involvement of civil society in issue identification, ex ante evaluation, programme design, M&E, etc.
    - integrating training modules for military actors in partner countries on pursuing intelligent approaches to conflict resolution, measuring the impact of actions on conflict dynamics, respecting human rights, etc.
    - ensuring that codes of conduct are respected and that no harm results from the use of the equipment provided through CBSD.
- Did the 'local beneficiaries' who were interviewed as part of the evaluation include local civil society and members of the local population whose lives may be directly affected by CBSD actions?
- What indicators are used to measure the effectiveness of CBSD actions and do they take into account the human security of local populations?
- What has the evaluation revealed so far about safeguards for CBSD implementation, particularly the risk management frameworks which are used before and after actions are launched? Have these safeguards resulted in the termination or alteration of any CBSD actions?
- What is the timeline for the completion and publication of the evaluation of CBSD implementation 2018-2020?

In response, speakers from the external evaluation team said:

- There are examples of CBSD actions which contribute to addressing some of the root causes of conflict, sometimes as part of a larger approach and set of actions (e.g. in Tajikistan). CBSD actions can also contribute to opening access to fragile and conflict-affected areas (e.g. by securing airports) thus enabling other actors to engage. They may also reduce the negative impacts of military actors on local populations (e.g. by enabling them to sustain themselves without needing to take local resources) and enable them to provide useful services (e.g. medical care). Finally, elements of human rights training for military actors can also be helpful.
- Regarding the risk of CBSD actions focusing on state- rather than human security, two of the four actions in the Sahel involved working with local NGOs for their implementation and to support a dialogue between the military and the local populations. CBSD actions can be a helpful tool for encouraging partner governments and military actors to engage in dialogues with local populations, and for helping to build trust between the two (e.g. in Mali).
- CBSD actions can be helpful in providing opportunities to embed certain principles (e.g. human rights protection, gender mainstreaming etc.) into projects which may not otherwise have reflected them as other donors would not necessarily insist on tying military support to a requirement to respect them (e.g. in Central Asia).
- Given that CBSD actions under IcSP Article 3 are launched to respond rapidly to crisis situations, it may not always be possible to adopt a fully participatory approach to their design. However, civil society still has a key role to play in helping to design and implement actions in sensitive contexts (e.g. in Lebanon). Some implementing partners have engaged in dialogue with civil society during the inception phase of CBSD actions and established baselines regarding local populations' perceptions. However, this was usually done after the design of the actions was already completed.
- Risk management matrices are used as part of the design stage at the EU level (e.g. the EC developed a risk assessment and management matrix which has been applied to actions since January 2019). Issues relating to risk management, conflict sensitivity, 'Do No Harm', the avoidance of human rights abuses, etc., are taken very seriously. Regarding the implementation of CBSD actions, risk management and M&E modalities vary depending on the implementing partner but the EU does not yet have a robust, formal reporting/monitoring system in place for them.
- The 'local beneficiaries' who were interviewed were military actors and government officials.
- The final evaluation will be submitted to the EC by the end of May and the report will be presented to the European Parliament (EP) by the end of June.

EU speakers added:

- Regarding the extent to which CBSD actions address the root causes of conflict and involve civil society, it is important to note that they should be seen as part of broader EU engagements, and that they are therefore accompanied by other measures which may have a more direct impact.
- The EU takes safeguards and the issue of human rights violations committed by military actors in partner countries extremely seriously. In certain contexts, military actors can have a negative impact on conflict dynamics. The EU's risk assessment and management matrix allows it to determine whether it is better to provide military actors with certain types of support in order to promote better behaviour (possibly with mitigating measures) or not to provide any support at all.
- CBSD decision-making processes correspond to the respective processes for the three components of the IcSP. For actions under Article 4 and Article 5, it involves the IcSP Committee and for actions under Article 3, it involves dialogues between headquarters and the EU delegation (EUD) and, where relevant, the CSDP mission(s) present in the partner country.