Civil Society Dialogue Network

Middle East and North Africa: The Role of Civil Society in Institutional Reform

Report

On Thursday, 1 December 2011, a Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) meeting, 'Middle East and North Africa: The Role of Civil Society in Institutional Reform' took place in Brussels. The meeting was organised by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) in the framework of the Civil Society Dialogue Network, with the support of the European External Action Service (Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Security Policy) and the European Commission (Service for Foreign Policy Instruments).

The objectives of the meeting were to consider the roles that civil society can play in institutional reform, particularly of the security sector and law enforcement agencies in the MENA region, and to identify the support (moral, political, financial and technical) that the EU and other actors, including EU-based civil society organisations (CSOs), can provide to civil society in the region. Participants included officials from the EU institutions and representatives of CSOs from the MENA region, Europe and elsewhere.

This report, by consultant Laura Davis, summarises the discussion and gathers the key recommendations made by participants during the meeting, which was held under the Chatham House Rule. No opinion expressed in the report may be attributed to any participating individual or institution, nor do they necessarily represent the views of the organisers.

For more information about the meeting, please contact Josephine Liebl at EPLO.

Panel 1: The EU's Response to Events in the MENA Region: An Overview

Institutional reform – as a way of changing the relationship between state and society, rather than only strengthening the institutions of the state - is increasingly recognized as important for peacebuilding (see e.g. the World Bank World Development Report 2011). The EU has considerable potential to support institutional reform and is currently reviewing its policies towards the MENA region: its new response includes commitments to both institutional reform and to civil society; this meeting aims to connect the two. Institutional reform may generate tension, and engaging civil society can be sensitive; reform initiatives should be presented in a way that does not feed conflict.

Since the demonstrations in Tunisia in December 2010, the EU noticed that discontent focussed on dignity, freedom, democracy and social justice. Dignity was an important factor and suggested the need to redefine the relationships between the individual, state and regime in terms of political rights and socio-economic factors.

The magnitude of the uprisings was unexpected and the EU tried to respond as quickly as possible. The strategic response was formulated in March 2011 with the Communication A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean. The Communication lays out EU support for political participation, dignity, freedom and employment opportunities. It also sets out 'More for More' an approach which rewards partners' progress in reform with more assistance and co-operation. This was followed by an overhaul of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP): A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood. This Communication explained that the EU was willing to commit in the long- and short-

term to supporting 'deep democracy': which goes beyond Constitution writing and free and fair elections, and includes creating and sustaining an independent judiciary, dynamic civil society and economic development, without which democracy will not take root. The security agencies must defend human rights as their core mission. This also helps prevent radicalisation.

The intention is to support each country on its own path, but there are certain commonalities including the three Ms: **money, mobility** and **markets**.

- **Money**: The EU added €1.2 bn to the existing €5.7bn provision in the ENP for 2011-2013. The European Investment Bank (EIB) made an additional €1bn of loans available and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) made € 2.5bn available for public and private sector investment, including for infrastructure. The new SPRING programme (Support to Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth) has €350m for support; on the basis of More for More; the Civil Society Facility for the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood has a budget for €22m in 2011 to strengthen the capacity of civil society, and to accompany state reform by increasing accountability. The Erasmus Mundus programme also has €30m available for the Southern Mediterranean.
- **Mobility**: the aim is to facilitate the mobility of citizens particularly in the Southern Neighbourhood through mobility partnerships, which include facilitating visa and readmission procedures. Progress has been made with Tunisia and Morocco and the EU hopes to start negotiations with other countries in the region. There will also be a major expansion of the scholarship programme under Erasmus Mundus.
- **Markets**: The EU is preparing to start negotiations on trade agreements with Morocco, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia. It will take time to finalise but the EU hopes the first preparatory work will start in early 2012, with formal negotiations starting mid-2012. Other measures to stimulate trade and commerce include setting up a Small Business Act for the region to support small businesses, the backbone of the economy.

EU Special Representative Bernadino Leon is responsible for coordinating the EU tools and instruments in the region and coordinating with the Member States. He is to enhance political dialogue and the impact of the EU, EIB, ERBD and other instruments. In September he held a meeting with EU private sector to encouraged EU private sector investment in the region.

The EU is painstakingly re-establishing dialogue with new governments and authorities. The structure for dialogue exists (the Barcelona process and Union for the Mediterranean). There are varying levels of co-operation with different countries: there is little change with Morocco, and the EU is re-establishing dialogue with Tunisia using the existing format. There are informal discussions with Egypt, while waiting for the government to be in place. The EU has never had this level of contact with Lebanon, and Syria is not part of Euromed as it did not ratify the Association Agreement. Where there is no Euromed framework, the EU uses normal diplomatic channels: High Representative Ashton, Presidents van Rompuy and Barroso for high level contact as well as official-level engagement. There are delegations in most countries except the Gulf (the EU has opened a formal delegation in Tripoli, and has an office in Benghazi), and there are corresponding missions from these countries in Brussels. Once the structures are in place, the content of the dialogues, including the levels of support can be discussed. The EU hopes to conclude negotiations with the Tunisian authorities and release frozen assets by end-2011.

Comments and questions from civil society participants focused on the following topics:

- **Anti-corruption**

Corruption in the government sphere is widespread. In Egypt, the Mubarak regime did not act against it. The example of the Palestinian Authority and how it has addressed corruption may be a useful model.

Recommendation from civil society participants:
➢ The EU should prioritise anti-corruption in all spheres of engagement in MENA.

- **From stability-seeking to democracy-promotion**

The EU has pursued a 'stability-seeking paradigm' in the past in MENA, although the 'stability' was mythical as support to authoritarian regimes created instability. It is now time to promote democracy. The EU had used the Barcelona process to push for political and economic reforms which contributed to events in the region. Although the EU is an important player in MENA, development aid is becoming more diverse with new actors, particularly from the BRIC and the Gulf states, and issues such as conditionality and untying of aid are becoming more complex.

Recommendation from civil society participants:
➢ The EU should not support stability at the expense of democracy. The events of the Arab Spring demonstrate that this approach is counter-productive (as well as being ethically questionable).

- **Beyond MENA : the Gulf**

The EU's relationship with MENA has to be seen in a panoramic perspective; it needs to promote democracy in the Gulf as well. The EU has co-operation with the Gulf via the Gulf Cooperation Council and is watching events carefully. For example: there is dialogue with the opposition in Bahrain, and high-level visits to the country. High Representative Ashton has raised issues such as democracy and political participation with the king.

Recommendation from civil society participants:
➢ The EU should adopt a consistent approach, including extending democracy promotion to the Gulf and Saudi Arabia.

- **How and with whom to engage**

In countries like Morocco, EU and Member State diplomats meet advisers close to the regime who have informal influence over the security agencies; this reinforces authoritarian rule and diplomats should only meet the executive and so strengthen democratic control of the security sector. However, EU and other diplomats are presented with interlocutors by the government, and these often change. In specific cases where individuals are named on sanctions/restrictive measures lists, EU officials cannot meet them. In Syria, a large number of people connected to the security sector are on these lists.

Recommendations from civil society participants:
➢ The EU and Member States should cease meeting personalities who have informal influence over the security sector and law enforcement agencies and who are close to authoritarian rulers (as this reinforces authoritarianism) but instead deal with *official* government representatives, thus supporting democratic control of the security and law enforcement agencies.
➢ The EU needs to be flexible enough to respond to the uncertainties in the region, including having a mechanism for dealing with those previously labelled as 'terrorist' or 'radical'.

- **Impact Assessment**

There are country-specific annual assessments of what has been achieved and normal project assessments, but no regional impact assessments. A number of academic and CSO reports have assessed EU and other donor support to the region and concluded they supported the wrong people. The Agenda for Change Communication from the Commission emphasises more focus on impact than on results, and this will be reflected in upcoming programming, as will greater policy coherence in areas important for development, such as trade.

Recommendation from civil society participants:
➢ The EU should assess the impact of its funding and policies towards the region, including the Southern Mediterranean Partnership.

- **Civil society engagement and support**

The role of civil society is crucial including structured dialogue with the EU and the relationship between civil society and government. Support to civil society is not only about money, but also about engaging governments to consult in a meaningful way. The relationships between government and civil society should not only be understood in terms of numbers of meetings held. In Egypt, for example, the regulatory framework restricts CSO activity and watchdog organisations are persecuted, so consultation with civil society is cosmetic. There are also other options such as including civil society monitoring mechanisms in trade agreements.

The ENP allows for civil society participation in drawing up Action Plans and Progress Reports through consultation meetings and the internet. Ministries often do not like this tripartite assessment, but many get used to it and participate. This is one of the ways in which the EU can facilitate civil society engagement with the government.

Recommendations from civil society participants:
The EU should:
➢ Develop meaningful and long-lasting civil society support and consultation at all levels of engagement, including for example civil society monitoring of trade agreements or perhaps through a Southern Mediterranean Civil Society Forum.
➢ Support civil society directly as opposed to funding them via governments.
➢ Support and facilitate dialogue between state authorities and civil society, including where possible requiring state authorities to consult civil society in a meaningful manner and conditioning support to governments (for instance the SPRING programme) on their co-operation with civil society (for example by building civil society involvement into all support provided to government).
➢ Assess state/civil society dialogue through the use of indicators which take the context into account, including factors such as:
   → the regulatory framework in which CSOs operate;
   → the extent of freedom of association;
   → the persecution of human rights activists and watchdog organisations;
   → the freedom of the media; the influence of consultations on policy and practice.
➢ Improve human rights dialogues.

Civil society organisations should:
➢ Seek to be inclusive and representative, particularly of young people who make up a sizeable part of or even majority of the population in many countries in the region.
➢ Present their demands to governments in such a way that the EU can also hear these demands.

- **Arab/Israeli Conflict**

EU representatives explained that their and USA's view is that the peace process should move forward. But there are also views that due to uncertainties in the region, particularly connected to the peace agreements with Jordan and Egypt, Israel cannot move too fast. The EU, as part of the Quartet, is pushing hard for progress: the Quartet has issued a calendar for negotiations and both parties have been asked to put forward concrete suggestions for January 2012. The parties met in October and November, and will do so again in December. For the Quartet, the process is on track, although that is no guarantee of lasting peace.

- **Impact of the Eurocrisis**

The region is looking differently at the EU due to the Eurocrisis, and there is a concern that the EU's capacity to deliver may decrease. The Member States and European Parliament are discussing the 2012 EU budget, the increase currently planned is below the rate of inflation apart from for the EEAS. Many Member States have cut their development budgets; it is hoped that the EU can maintain its level of funding for the Southern Mediterranean.

- **Economic development**

Economic crisis is a threat to the region; economic development will be crucial for reform. The EU cannot solve the region's socio-economic problems, but is providing a combination of loans and grants for reform and long-term improvement.

Panel 2: Civil Society and Reform of Law Enforcement Agencies

- **Basis of reform**

There are opportunities for reform of the law enforcement agencies in the region, which is long overdue. Reform efforts should develop agencies for which the defence of human rights is a core value. Reform is long-term, and requires change in attitudes, behaviour and norms.

- **Civil society roles**

Civil society has a key role to play in

- pushing for and defining reform processes;
- representing all groups in society; contributing to local ownership and accountability;
- applying international standards and accountability;
- participating in reform process through formal and informal mechanisms.

There are significant challenges to civil society engagement including: a tradition of secrecy, state security prioritised over human security, a lack of independent CSOs, fragmented civil society, too little donor support, or negative effects of donor support.

- **Vision**

Institutional reform is long-term because it includes cultural change, and a different understanding of the role of the agencies in society: it is thus more than technical change. It requires a large early investment in a vision shared by security forces and the community. There is a dilemma: the urgency of reform and the need to take time to develop a shared vision. But if the vision is not developed, then the reform processes may be co-opted by the wrong actors. In South Africa, leaders bought time and held a space within which people could discuss and think about reform.

> ➢ The EU should support participatory processes which allow all citizens to contribute to the ideas for the future of the country. This should be prioritised over technical reform and the ideas developed should then be used to inform technical assistance.

- **Scope**

The Romanian experience suggests the importance of including reform of the justice sector as an integral part of broader institutional reform. If the courts do not stand by the citizens, new laws will not be put into effect. It was not possible in Romania to fire and replace all the officials in the law enforcement agencies as there was a risk that they would create a dangerous parallel state. Instead, it is necessary to create space within the system for good people, and to support reformers.

Recommendations from civil society participants:
- ➢ Programmes aimed at reforming the law enforcement agencies should include justice sector reform, as without a functioning justice sector new laws and reforms will not be implemented and enforced.
- ➢ The EU should provide support for reformist officials within institutions as not all officials can be replaced.
- ➢ Reform efforts should engage the citizens as well as officials. For example, in Tunisia, young police recruits and the public do not know their rights, so citizens do not know when their rights are abused. The police and citizens should be informed of their rights and obligations, including through the education system.
- ➢ Reform programmes should address problems faced by police officers, such as lack of resources and low salaries, which make them susceptible to corruption.

- **Capacity challenges for civil society**

Libyan and Tunisian CSOs are not very aware of the role they can play in institutional reform. Recently, a large number of CSOs have emerged which lack resources and training and would benefit from exchange with others. In Egypt, CSOs work under practically continuous terror; the European Parliament has been active in calling for the release of activists. In Jordan, the legal environment has a detrimental effect on CSOs. Civil society needs support and protection.

This is the first time that many people see themselves as citizens in their own countries. Most movements were driven from outside the traditional civil society structures, so civil society and external actors need to reflect carefully on how to reach these people – to be inclusive and not just engage with civil society elites.

Recommendations from civil society participants:
The EU and EU-based CSOs should:
- ➢ Support and protect civil society organisations engaged in reform initiatives.
- ➢ Where requested, support capacity building of civil society (including providing resources and training).
- ➢ Raise awareness of international human rights standards and best practice in Jordan to support CSO activity.

Civil society organisations should:
- ➢ Engage with the population beyond traditional civil society structures.

- **More constructive engagement by civil society**

Some CSOs have a tradition of protest and are not always able to participate in reform processes or make positive contributions when engaging with the authorities.

Recommendation from civil society participants:
- ➢ CSOs should develop cooperative strategies for working with the security institutions and not only act as watchdogs or protest movements.

- **Challenges to reform**

In Tunisia, human rights organisations do not want to engage with the police as they feel reform is cosmetic. The police are not committed to it and have not been held accountable for shootings during the uprising. The new government is afraid of deep reform and of removing corrupt officials as its focus is on the economy and stability.

- **Supporting technical assistance with conditionality**

In Egypt, CSOs are developing a role in monitoring human rights violations by police in police stations and prisons. CSOs push for a Human Rights Commissioner to be attached to each police precinct and have created a network of lawyers to provide legal aid to anyone questioned by the police. However, the police seem only superficially committed to reform.

Recommendation from civil society participants:
➢ The EU should combine technical assistance to police reform (e.g. training on interviewing techniques without using torture) with conditionality under More for More and incentives (e.g. Free Trade Agreement) to generate political will within the Egyptian police for genuine reform.

- **Proliferation of weapons and disarmament**

In Libya there is a proliferation of weapons in the hands of civilians: disarmament is a key priority. Disarming revolutionaries will be difficult and require incentives and sensitivity. In Egypt, the security forces appear to be using new gas which raises urgent questions about export controls.

Recommendations from civil society participants:
➢ The EU and Member States should stop exporting arms to countries in transition and make the Code of Conduct on Arms Exports legally binding. They should take the lead at the UN level advocating for an Arms Trade Treaty with teeth.
➢ The EU should urgently prioritise tackling the proliferation of weapons and disarming civilians in Libya and provide incentives (e.g. scholarships, work) for revolutionaries to disarm.

- **Opportunities: Constitutional reform processes**

Constitutional review processes in Morocco and Tunisia provide an opportunity for CSOs to debate security issues, the control of the security sector, the independence of the judiciary, guarantees of citizen's rights, and other key aspects of institutional reform.

Recommendation from civil society participants:
➢ Civil society organisations should use the opportunity of new Constitutional review processes to push for more control over the security forces, the independence of the judiciary and for guarantees of citizens' rights.

- **Tackling militarisation of the economy**

In countries in the region, the regimes have guaranteed the loyalty of the security forces by allowing them to develop strong economic interests in, for example, construction and fisheries.

Recommendation from civil society participants:
➢ The EU and Member States should support the emergence of an independent business class and the disentanglement of the military from the economy by awarding contracts to independent businesses and not those connected to the regimes.

- **EU response**

The EU has used geographic and thematic (e.g. EIDHR, electoral assistance) funding programmes. Reform is long term, but also needs a quick start and the Instrument for Stability (intended for short term projects of maximum 18 months) has also been used for at least five big projects in MENA since the Arab Spring, among them: two projects each of €2m in Egypt (civil society capacity building, legislative reform, support to the Electoral Commission); €2m to prepare and supervise the elections and strengthen the

capacity of key civil society actors in Tunisia; €1.7m for training for civil society in Libya. There were fact-finding missions to Egypt, Tunisia and Libya to try and identify the right interlocutors, which was difficult.

The EU's project cycle management process means it is difficult for civil society to assess how the money has been spent. Assessments are written by consultants for the EU without civil society engagement. The EU procedures are cumbersome and new instruments are currently being designed which will endeavour to address this issue. But procedures are necessary to ensure political and financial accountability of the EU institutions.

Participants argued that people in the region do not see events as a crisis but an evolution to something new. The EU needs to develop smarter design, to be able to respond in a diverse and dynamic way to the relationships in MENA as they evolve. To date, the conversation, including with EU-based NGOs, has been perceived as one-way and, at times, condescending. 'Smart design' would find a way to arrive at policies and practical steps which are useful together with partners in the region. There is an opportunity now to review the engagement of the EU and EU-based NGOs with MENA and come up with a new, more friendly, more intelligent, and more mutual framework.

Recommendation from civil society participants:
➢ The EU should use a 'smart design' to develop a new framework for its relationships in MENA: engaging with civil society as equal partners and developing a smart way of designing policies and agreeing operational steps together with partners in the region.

Panel 3: Civil Society's Role in Reform and overall Governance of the Security Sector

There is no one-size fits all approach to reform and governance, but there are lessons from the transitions in Central Eastern Europe, Southern Eastern Europe and Southern Europe which may be useful. One way to transfer knowledge from North to South will be through the European Endowment for Democracy. This will be an non-governmental organisation (NGO) set up by EU Member States interested in promoting democratisation globally (initially in the Neighbourhood). It will support political movements and activists in fledgling democracies without the bureaucracy of the EU's existing instruments. It should be operational within six months and ready to work in the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood, and later with other countries.

- **Transitional Justice and National Reconciliation**

There is a need to start with transitional justice in Libya, but it is difficult to engage people who have been involved in the crisis to take part in workshops in the west of the country. National reconciliation has to be the starting point.

In Lebanon, where some feel that the civil war was erased from memory, the lack of reconciliation is one of the many reasons for ongoing conflict. National reconciliation needs to be inclusive; women's empowerment is therefore very important.

In Morocco, victims were compensated financially but the process had no political impact as victims were not allowed name torturers or killers of family members during proceedings of the truth commission. Perpetrators of human rights violations remain in power today. The reconciliation process must reconcile people with the state and with themselves.

Experience from Serbia suggests that peace is based on sustainable reconciliation meaning it is not imposed from outside or top down, but comes from the grassroots, is holistic and involves all of society.

It is difficult to talk about reconciliation when in Tunisia there has been no accountability for the deaths of demonstrators, and while torture continues in police stations and prisons.

Reconciliation is a long-term process: in Estonia, it has taken 20 years for those who suffered the worst repressions to speak out.

> *Recommendations from civil society participants*
> ➢ National reconciliation includes reconciling the people with each other, with the state, and with the past. Regional reconciliation involves improvements in relationship between countries and peoples within a region.
> ➢ National reconciliation and reform processes must be inclusive, which requires empowering women to participate.
> ➢ The EU should support neutral facilitators for reconciliation processes.

- **Timing**

> *Recommendation from civil society participants:*
> ➢ The immediate post-crisis period is very important for setting the principles and framework for reform and transitional justice processes. The international community has an important role to play in supporting this framework.

- **Transitional justice, reconciliation and institutional reform**

Security sector reform is precondition for reforming the legal, political and economic systems, and for the redistribution of power and resources.

> *Recommendations from civil society participants:*
> ➢ Reforming the judiciary and separating the executive, legislative and judiciary are important for transitional justice. However, those with power do not just leave but may set up a dangerous parallel state. A realistic assessment of how far reform is feasible is crucial.
> ➢ The EU and Member States should pressure governments to reform the security agencies and train agents (e.g. police) in human rights and in techniques (e.g. for interviewing) which respect human rights and do not use torture.

- **Regional networks**

While each state is different, smart regional networking can be beneficial. For example, regional co-operation was important in the Western Balkans for regional reconciliation and for advocating for the regional truth commission (RECOM). In Croatia, *Documenta* worked with regional partners to document losses during the war, advocate for reparations for victims and monitor trials at the ICTY and in domestic courts.

Regional networking can also be beneficial for governments: the Visegrad group in Central and Eastern Europe co-operated on issues of common interest. It is very important to exchange experience to be able to draw on the best experiences of the past and not reinvent the wheel. Civil society in the Western Balkans is interested in engaging in cross-fertilisation, exchanging tools and approaches.

> *Recommendation from civil society participants:*
> ➢ Continue to support regional networking by CSOs as well as cross-regional (e.g. MENA – Western Balkans) networking.

- **The EU and human rights conditionality**

The EU and Member States can pressure governments to train security agents on human rights and how to interview without using torture. At the diplomatic level, there are usually conditions - carrots and sticks – attached to funding. Unfortunately, the donor community has overlooked these conditions in the past when their strategic interests trumped human rights concerns. At the local level, non-enforcement of

these conditions has discredited donors. There is now an opportunity for human rights conditionality to be implemented and enforced. (Some governments, such as in Egypt, may refuse aid).

Recommendation from civil society participants:
The EU and Member States should:
➢ Apply conditions on human rights grounds to their relationships in the region and implement them robustly.
➢ Monitor progress in reform, support civil society in monitoring human rights and in reporting back to donors.

- **ENP and Civil Society**

Commissioner Stefan Füle wants to involve civil society in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of ENP Action Plans. Negotiations for the new Action Plans have been launched with Morocco and Tunisia: civil society should take the initiative to engage via EU delegations. The first regional call for the new Civil Society Facility will be issued in December 2011, and local calls during 2012. The EU hopes amounts will increase, each delegation will decide on most appropriate way to programme the money in consultation with civil society and headquarters in Brussels.

Recommendations from civil society participants:
The EU should:
➢ Consult widely with civil society via EU delegations in programming the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility.
➢ Be fully transparent in its dealings with the government, so that where a government is less transparent, civil society knows when consultations will take place and can prepare for engagement rather than be presented with a fait accompli by the authorities.
➢ Insist that civil society as well as government participate in consultations.

EU-based CSOs should:
➢ Recognise the strength and expertise of civil society across the region and seek to engage with civil society without being condescending. Where requested – for example in the case of Libya –help civil society organisations develop their capacity in order to be able to develop, fundraise for and implement good projects meeting the needs of communities.

Civil society organisations should:
➢ Take the initiative to engage with the EU (via the delegations) in developing new ENP Action Plans and participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Action Plans.

Panel 4: Civil Society's Role in Institutional Reform (by country: Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco).

Recommendations from civil society participants:
EU delegations should:
➢ Host meetings – possibly under the CSDN - with a wide range of civil society in-country to consider in depth civil society needs and recommendations for EU policy in each country.
➢ Build ongoing, solid relationships with civil society in each country and carefully examine each government's relationships with civil society based on smart indicators (see above).

EU-based CSOs should:
➢ Consult meaningfully with civil society organisations and defer to regional civil society in their engagements in the region.

The needs and recommendations from each working group are listed by country. Participants felt that many of the recommendations from other countries were also relevant for their own and so did not repeat them. The following needs and recommendations should not therefore be read as solely applicable to the specific country.

Libya

- ➤ Libyan civil society organisations are very new and need funding and technical support to create strong CSOs which can implement good projects.
- ➤ There is a need for a database of CSOs across the country, and for developing links between CSOs in the east and west.
- ➤ International CSOs tend to work with the same partners; they should rather work with a broad range of CSOs.
- ➤ Women's rights and empowerment are very pressing issues.
- ➤ Transitional justice and reconciliation are important questions; civil society is now discussing what kind of mechanisms/approaches would be most suitable.
- ➤ Civil society, the government, the EU and other international actors have to develop a strategy for disarming civilians and addressing the proliferation of weapons as a high priority.

Tunisia

- ➤ Tunisia needs a strong civil society to balance conservative discourses around politics and the role of tradition and religion in the state; developing civil society capacity – which is currently weak - to organise and engage in these discourses is a priority.
- ➤ There needs to be a thorough needs assessment of civil society organisations, and a strategy to support strengthening their capacity.
- ➤ There is a pressing need to reform the police and education system including raising awareness of citizenship and rights.
- ➤ The media needs reform as it appears to support those in power.
- ➤ The EU should establish a budget line or facility to support entrepreneurship, as this is lacking in Tunisia and could have a positive impact on economic development.

Egypt

- ➤ The EU should support civil society, including through helping to guarantee a safe environment for CSOs to work in, and pushing for a new regulatory framework.
- ➤ The EU should be stronger in conditioning its aid.
- ➤ The EU could help raising awareness and understanding in Egypt of the EU institutions, and the roles of the different EU institutions and Member States.

Jordan

Participants recommended that the EU:

➢ Support mapping of civil society to help identify who is doing what and to clarify the confusion between traditional civil society structures and civil society more broadly. This should be a continuous process which is regularly updated.

➢ Engage directly with civil society and start fresh dialogue with civil society in parallel to negotiations with the government, and then bring government and civil society together later in the process.

➢ Support new social media initiatives to engage young people.

➢ Include civil society activists as a category to benefit from increased mobility between MENA and the EU.

➢ Bring civil society organisations to the table as independent, equal partners that participate in programming from A to Z: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Participants recommended that European CSOs:

➢ Support Jordanian civil society organisations by exchanging information and experience (especially with Central and Eastern Europe), engaging in twinning and joint projects which would be mutually beneficial and a two-way learning process.

Morocco

In broad policy terms, participants recommended that the EU:

➢ Support the outcome of the elections and ensure that the cabinet has real executive power.

➢ Move away from the predominantly positive perception of Morocco to a more realistic view that recognises the shortcomings in the political context.

➢ Deal with the formal representatives of the cabinet and parliament and not informal, influential figures.

➢ Encourage the adoption of independent legal mechanisms to uphold the rule of law and human rights, including ensuring the independence of the new National Council of Human Rights.

➢ Increase financial support on condition of democratisation and the implementation of the distribution of power and the independence of the judiciary, as stated in the new Constitution.

➢ Encourage the Moroccan authorities to implement the recommendations of the truth commission report of 2004 and pursue gender equality through the implementation of the 2003 Family Code.

➢ Enhance criminal justice and addressing corruption within state institutions.

In relation to engaging independent civil society, participants recommended that the EU:

➢ Encourage independent media and free speech by supporting and meeting independent journalists.

➢ Create a formal process through which civil society actors are consulted when EU representatives deal with government authorities.

- ➢ Have regular and institutionalised meetings with civil society actors in different fields.
- ➢ Raise important environmental issues by supporting awareness-raising campaigns and projects, and by encouraging Moroccan authorities to make environmental concerns a state priority.
- ➢ Support capacity building of civil society through the financial instruments.
- ➢ Reach out to civil society in Arabic.
- ➢ Encourage dialogue between the state and civil society.

Regarding security sector reform, the EU should:
- ➢ Call for the security institutions to be controlled by the parliament and formal institutions of the state.
- ➢ Ensure that an independent Ministry of the Interior has the legal and administrative control of the secret agencies and push for civilian monitoring of the military and secret services
- ➢ Encourage the Moroccan authorities to remove the secret agencies from the judicial police as this gives them de facto immunity under the new Constitution.
- ➢ Address corruption in the military and push for a disengagement of the military from business and the economy.
- ➢ Support reform initiatives from within the military institutions through training for officers.

Civil Society Dialogue Network

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project funded by the European Commission aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and EU policy makers. It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO). For more information please visit the EPLO website.