



Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting

How can peacebuilding actors counter disinformation? Perspectives from civil society

Tuesday 29 June 2021 (14.00-15.30 CEST (UTC+2))
&
September 2021 (dates TBC)

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

In recent years, EU policy-makers have devoted significant time and effort to considering the impacts of disinformation on conflict dynamics in various countries and regions, and on the EU's efforts to address them.¹

In this context, the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) have asked the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) to organise a [Civil Society Dialogue Network \(CSDN\) Policy Meeting \(PM\)](#) in order to gather some civil society perspectives on the issue of disinformation in conflict-affected countries and regions.

Following initial discussions with officials from the European Commission (EC) (Service for Foreign Policy Instruments Unit for Stability and Peace – Crisis Response, Conflict Prevention and Peace Building) and the EEAS (Division for Conflict Prevention and Mediation Support, and Division for Strategic Communications), EPLO has proposed to organise a series of online meetings on a variety of specific topics under the overall umbrella of countering disinformation.

Objectives

The overall objectives of this series of meetings are for representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) and other experts to (1) provide their analysis of the extent to which disinformation, especially through the use of social media, is prevalent and fuels tensions and violence in conflict-affected countries and regions; and (2) provide recommendations on how the EU can support efforts to strengthen states' and societies' resilience to it.

Format

The meeting series will consist of a series of standalone sessions on the Zoom platform. An introductory meeting on Tuesday 29 June 2021 will be followed by a maximum of three subsequent meetings in September 2021 (dates TBC).

¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/countering-disinformation/59411/countering-disinformation_en

The introductory meeting will consist of a single plenary session (maximum 90 minutes) in which participants will be given the opportunity to (1) discuss their organisation's experiences of the impacts of disinformation and work on countering it; and (2) identify key questions and propose specific topics and potential participants for the subsequent meetings.

Each of the subsequent meetings will be focused on a limited number of themes that will be selected from the suggestions made by EC and EEAS officials in May, and by participants in the introductory meeting in June.

The format of the thematic discussions will be determined by EPLO on a case-by-case basis in co-operation with the relevant EC and/or EEAS officials.

Participants

The introductory meeting will bring together 30-40 participants, including CSO representatives and other experts, and officials from both the EC and the EEAS.

The number and origin of participants in the subsequent meetings will be influenced by the outcome of the introductory meeting and will inevitably vary between meetings. However, EPLO will aim to limit the number of participants in each subsequent meeting to 30 (including EPLO staff members and EC and EEAS officials).

Language

The introductory meeting will be held in English. Interpretation into other languages may be provided if required.

Outputs

An internal report will be prepared after each meeting and shared with relevant EC and EEAS officials only.

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](#).

DRAFT AGENDA

Introductory Meeting

Tuesday 29 June 2021 (14.00-15.30 CEST (UTC+2))

14.00 – 14.15	Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Sonya Reines-Djivanides – Executive Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)</i>• <i>René van Nes – Head of Division, Division for Conflict Prevention and Mediation Support, European External Action Service (EEAS)</i>• <i>Simon Bojsen-Moller – Deputy Head of Unit, Unit for Stability and Peace – Crisis Response, Conflict Prevention and Peace Building, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, European Commission (EC)</i>• <i>Jurgis Vilčinskis – Deputy Head of Division, Division for Strategic Communications 2: Task Forces and Information Analysis, EEAS</i>
14.15 – 15.25	Round-table Discussion <p>Participants will be invited to consider the following questions with a view to guiding the selection of topics and participants in up to three thematically-focused meetings that are scheduled to take place in September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does disinformation affect your organisation's work in the conflict-affected countries/regions in which it operates?• What types of activities does your organisation undertake in order to counter disinformation?• In your opinion, what are the key topics that need to be addressed in a discussion about disinformation and possible EU support to strengthen states' and societies' resilience to it in conflict-affected countries/regions?• In addition to the organisations that are represented in this meeting, which civil society organisations (CSOs) and other experts would you recommend the organisers to invite to participate in discussions on the above-mentioned specific topics? <p><i>Facilitator: Dr Laura Davis – Senior Associate, EPLO</i></p>
15.25 – 15.30	Wrap-up <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Ben Moore – Assistant Director, EPLO</i>

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