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CSDN NGO-Roundtable Meeting in Denmark

Meeting Communication

Copenhagen
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European Peacebuilding Liaison Office

The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) is the independent civil society platform of European NGOs, NGO networks and think tanks that are committed to peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict. EPLO's mission is to influence European policymakers to take a more active role in securing peace and resolving and preventing conflict through nonviolent means in all regions of the world, and to do so more effectively.

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 (Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe). It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), a civil society network, in cooperation with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The fifth phase of the CSDN will last from 2023 to 2026. For more information, please visit the [EPLO website](#).



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EPLO NGO-Roundtable Meeting in Copenhagen

Background

On 26 March 2025, EPLO organised a Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) NGO-Roundtable meeting (RTM) in Copenhagen. The objective of the meeting was to enable representatives of Danish-based NGOs working on peacebuilding to explore options for **influencing Denmark's conflict prevention and peacebuilding (CPPB) agenda in relation to the European Union (EU)**, including during the **Danish presidency of the Council of the EU**. Specifically, participants discussed how Danish civil society's CPPB priorities may be linked to the thematic priority areas of the EU and Denmark including during its Council presidency, identified strategic entry points for promoting CPPB by and in the EU, and formulated advocacy messaging and recommendations to be presented to relevant stakeholders.

The meeting brought together around 20 Danish-based civil society representatives working on peacebuilding. The discussions were held under the Chatham House Rule. There was no attempt to reach a consensus during the meeting or through this meeting communication, which presents the key points and recommendations put forward during the discussions.

Key Discussion Points

Tackling dilemmas amid rapid global shifts

The discussion explored how Danish NGOs working on peacebuilding can strategically position themselves within the quickly evolving political landscape, where there is an increasing focus on security and militarised solutions to conflict. Participants reflected on the tension between **maintaining a principled approach** to peacebuilding and connecting to the Danish and EU political agenda, particularly in relation to migration and security concerns. They also acknowledged the broader shifts in the international aid infrastructure and the dilemmas this creates for upholding Danish values. As a response, Danish NGOs working on peacebuilding can identify opportunities for the EU to fill in the emerging global soft-power vacuum, instead of reverting to an increasingly fear-driven nature in its external action. They can call for reverting to Nordic and European values and to **link peacebuilding to the broader case for a rights-based international order**. Participants also highlighted the need to frame peace and security as mutually reinforcing, and the value of delivering concrete examples to support this perspective. A key challenge remains how to frame peacebuilding as a **constructive and policy-relevant contribution** without compromising on core values.

Thematic priorities for advancing conflict prevention and peacebuilding

The discussions focused on **three key thematic areas**, alongside a **diverse range of geographic contexts**, where the community holds valuable expertise that could be leveraged more concretely. First, participants emphasised the need to **maintain engagement in conflict-affected contexts**, highlighting the importance of **long-term, locally-led peacebuilding**. This was particularly relevant in light of the diminishing presence of other international actors, reinforcing the need to stress both the sustained nature and value of peacebuilding efforts. Second, the discussion explored necessities to **link climate adaptation efforts with conflict prevention** more effectively, building on already established connections with local partner organisations. The role and inclusion of private sector actors was noted as a potential advantage in this area. Third, participants highlighted Denmark's rich experience and collaboration with the Danish Ministry of

Foreign Affairs (MFA) on **Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)**, particularly through engagement in shaping Denmark's 5th National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS and initiatives such as the Nordic Women Mediators Network.

Several **further concepts were discussed as potential entry points** for peacebuilding advocacy, including **social cohesion, protection of civilians and human security**. There is also an opportunity to draw on **human rights, self-determination and decolonisation** discourse, building on narratives around protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples and ensuring their recognition and participation as a precondition for successful peace processes. Participants noted the need for **clear definitions and concrete strong evidence and examples** to prevent instrumentalisation or dilution of peacebuilding's core objectives.

Structural entry points

The discussion identified several structural entry points within the Danish MFA and EU external action frameworks. Participants highlighted the importance of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (**MFF negotiations**) as a key short-term entry point for advancing Danish values and principles. Given the shifts in the global order, there is a need to **focus Denmark's peacebuilding and security focus more toward the EU**. Concrete connections between Danish NGOs, the new Danish Special Representative for the African Great Lakes and Sahel Region and EU Special Representatives (EUSRs), such as for the Sahel and for the Great Lakes Region, were also seen as a fruitful entry point for collaboration. The Danish Presidency provides opportunities for **joint events, briefings, and closed-door discussions** across various EU institutions, including **Council working groups**, the Danish **Permanent Representation to the EU** and **Danish Members of European Parliament (MEPs)**, ensuring **stronger advocacy** through Denmark in the EU.

Value of the Danish multi-mandated approach

While securing peacebuilding-specific funding and recognition remains a challenge, Denmark's **multi-mandate civil society sector** was highlighted as a key strength that can be leveraged more confidently. Many Danish NGOs operate across **humanitarian, development, and peace-building contexts**, providing diverse expertise and access to a wide range of fora. Strengthening **capacity-building efforts** among Danish civil society to further mainstream peacebuilding was seen as an important measure to increase effective collaboration with Denmark and the EU. Additionally, many Danish NGOs have a **presence in countries where Denmark has no official representation**, offering a valuable bridge for engagement. The multi-mandate approach also facilitates **access to innovative initiatives and diverse international platforms**, which is another opportunity to enhance Denmark's reach and influence in global peacebuilding efforts.

Conclusion

Denmark's civil society's multi-mandated expertise offers important opportunities for strengthening peacebuilding efforts, particularly through enhanced EU engagement. Drawing on Danish principles and values can guide Denmark's role in shaping the EU's peace and security agenda. Continued evidence-based advocacy and collaboration across EU institutions are key to advancing peacebuilding amidst a shifting global order.