

CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE NETWORK

The Role of the EU in the conflict regions in the South Caucasus

Thursday, 7 July 2011

Martin's Central Park, Boulevard Charlemagne 80, Brussels

Introduction:

The purpose of the meeting is to gather civil society's analysis of EU actions and support for peacebuilding in the South Caucasus. The meeting will cover three conflicts in the region, Nagorno Karabakh conflict and conflicts regarding South Ossetia and Abkhazia. For each conflict efforts to prevent re-escalation of violence and build sustainable peace will be reviewed with the aim to provide recommendations on how EU policy and practice can help to reduce the risk of violence and invigorate peace processes at all levels. . A concluding session will look at the EU's approach to the region as a whole and provide input on how to integrate conflict prevention into regional policy and planning.

Objectives:

- To present and discuss EU policy and actions in the South Caucasus, with a focus on conflicts and peacebuilding matters, foster debate about and gather civil society input into EU strategy on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the South Caucasus
- To review efforts by civil society to prevent re-escalation of the conflict, keep communication between the sides open and facilitate official and unofficial talks and confidence building measures in the cases of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and conflicts regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia. To discuss possibilities for civil society's enhanced engagement, including through more regular consultations and cooperation with the EU
- To review efforts on behalf of the EU to engage with Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the August 2008 war; to compare notes with civil society organizations that engage with stakeholders from Abkhazia and South Ossetia in their conflict resolution projects
- To contribute to linking the official/political negotiations and civil society-led peace processes, review past experience, both positive and negative, and discuss possibilities to enhance synergies between the different levels of peace processes
- To assess the gender aspects of the formal and informal peace processes in the South Caucasus

Participants:

There will be a total of 50 participants, including civil society organisations from the South Caucasus and from Europe; EU policy-makers, including from the EEAS, European Commission, and European Parliament; and representatives of international organisations active in the region, including UN agencies and OSCE. Representatives from EU member states and partner governments will be invited to participate as observers.

08.30 – 09.00	Registration of participants
09.00 – 09.30	<p>Welcome and opening remarks</p> <p>Gunnar Wiegand, EEAS – Director Russia, E Partnership, Central Asia, Regional Cooperation and OSCE</p> <p>Catherine Woollard, EPLO – Executive Director</p>
09.30 – 11.15	<p>The EU and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict; relations with Azerbaijan and Armenia Moderator: Laurence Broers, Conciliation Resources</p> <p>Introductory remarks followed by an open debate covering, <i>inter alia</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific roles can civil society active in Nagorno Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan play in peace process? • Civil society-led dialogue and the Minsk process: how to bridge the gap? • The effectiveness of civil society efforts: identifying changes in the conflict context and in the respective societies brought about by civil society peace work in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict • Recommendations for future civil society activities in support of a peaceful resolution of the conflict • EU support for the peacebuilding civil society activities • Using EU leverage to invigorate peace process in the case of the conflict over Nagorno Karabakh, including the role of a new EUSR.
11.15 – 11.45	Coffee
11.45 – 13.15	<p>The EU and conflicts regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia; EU relations with Georgia Moderator: Magdalena Frichova Grono, Search for Common Ground</p> <p>Introductory remarks followed by an open debate covering, <i>inter alia</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Engagement without recognition”: what does the EU’s policy mean in practice? • How does the Georgian governmental framework (Law on Occupied Territories, State Strategy, Action Plan and Modalities) and the way it is being implemented affect civil society engagement in conflict resolution? • EU direct engagement in conflict resolution: Geneva talks, IPRM, EUSR. How do civil society peacebuilding activities relate to the EU third party mediation efforts? • Peace conditionality: enhancing EU leverage through trade, investment and political support for Georgia • The scope for civil society conflict prevention/peacebuilding activities with/in

	<p>Abkhazia and South Ossetia and lessons learned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations for future civil society activities in support of a peaceful resolution of the conflict. • EU support for the peacebuilding civil society activities
13.15 – 14.30	Lunch
14.30 – 16.00	<p>The EU and Peacebuilding in the South Caucasus</p> <p>Moderator: John Kjaer, Head of Division, EEAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of conflict prevention and peace-building in the framework of the Eastern Partnership and ENP • The influence of EU democratization and human rights support on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the region • The potential of regional cooperation in peacebuilding; engaging other regional actors in peacebuilding • Enhancement of the role of civil society in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, including through the Eastern Partnership civil society platform • The EU Comprehensive Approach on UNSCR 1325 and peacebuilding in the South Caucasus • The potential for increasing the role of civil society in dialogue, confidence-building and negotiations.
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee break
16.30 – 17.30	Policy recommendations and conclusions

17.30 to 19.00 Informal drinks reception for all participants – Martin’s Central Park

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. For more information about the Civil Society Dialogue Network, please visit the [EPLO website](http://www.eplo.org).