

Civil Society Dialogue Network Meeting

The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Action: Gathering Civil Society Input

Wednesday, 30 January 2013

Martin's Central Park, Boulevard Charlemagne 80, 1000 Brussels

The Civil Society Dialogue Network

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project funded by the Instrument for Stability of the European Commission aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and EU policymakers. The CSDN contributes to strengthening international and regional capacity for conflict prevention and post-conflict co-operation (for more information www.eplo.org). It is managed by EPLO, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office in cooperation with the EEAS and the EC.

Background and objective

The EEAS and the EC are currently developing a Communication on the Comprehensive Approach which should clarify how the EU can best implement its commitment to comprehensive action in third countries.

Given the different policies and tools it has at its disposal, the EU is well positioned to address situations of instability in a comprehensive way. There is also widespread recognition of the need for the EU to act consistently.

Discussions on how the EU can overcome obstacles that hinder it taking a comprehensive approach and on the elements of the Communication on the Comprehensive approach are taking place at different fora¹. In EPLO's view, a comprehensive approach to EU external affairs implies:

- An overall EU strategy towards a particular country and region that is developed jointly by all EU institutions with a relevant mandate;
- A set of common objectives within the strategy;
- Selection of tools and instruments to be used in implementing the strategy based on the objectives decided;
- Integration – all EU institutions work together to meet the agreed objectives – rather than coordination where they act separately but inform each other of their actions.

The CSDN meeting aims to collect analysis and recommendations from civil society to provide input into the development of the Communication on the Comprehensive Approach.

As with all CSDN meetings the focus will be on dialogue, so formal presentations will be short to allow for time for discussion.

Output/Outcome:

A meeting report which summarises the discussion and highlights specific recommendations for EU policy makers and civil society will be prepared.

Participants:

The CSDN meeting will bring together a maximum of 50 participants, including EU policy-makers and representatives from civil society, including NGOs, think-tanks and the academic community.

¹ Such as the Wilton Park Conference organised in co-operation with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and in association with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands on 17/18 December 2012.

Agenda

8h45	Registration of participants
9h00	<p>A Comprehensive Approach for the EU: Civil society's perspectives</p> <p>Welcome remarks</p> <p>Presentation of key elements of the Comprehensive Approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bert Versmessen, EEAS</i> <p>Comments/reactions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Catherine Woollard, EPLO</i> <p>Followed by a facilitated debate</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Joëlle Jenny, EEAS</i></p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does an EU Comprehensive Approach entail? • What are the barriers to the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach by the EU at Brussels level? • How does civil society view gaps to EU implementation of the Comprehensive Approach in Brussels and third countries?
10h45	Coffee Break
11h15	<p>The Comprehensive Approach - specific aspects</p> <p>This session will provide the space for a deeper discussion of specific topics.</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Catherine Woollard, EPLO</i></p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the EU's Comprehensive Approach focus on crisis response or take a long-term approach including prevention of crises and conflict? • How can development assistance be integrated into the Comprehensive Approach? • How can it be ensured that the Comprehensive Approach respects the principles governing humanitarian assistance? • What should be the role of CSDP within the comprehensive approach and how can it be ensured that CSDP missions, most of them short-term in nature, are integrated as part of a longer-term engagement of the EU? • When the EU has (more) commitments on the Comprehensive Approach, what are the tools it has or should develop in order to implement these?
13h00	Lunch
14h00	<p>An EU Comprehensive Approach in conflict-affected countries</p> <p>Facilitated debate on experiences of implementing the Comprehensive Approach in conflict-affected countries.</p>

	<p>Moderator: <i>Heino van Houwelingen, EEAS</i></p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the barriers to the implementation of a Comprehensive Approach by the EU in conflict-affected countries?• When does civil society see EU response to conflict weakened by lack of a Comprehensive Approach?• Are there best practices from specific countries or regions or other actors?
15h30	End of meeting