

Civil Society Dialogue Network - Member State Meeting Austria

The EU, conflict prevention and peacebuilding: State of play and the role of civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

Thursday, 16 October 2014 (13h30 – 17h30)

Key Recommendations

This document gathers all of the key recommendations made by participants in the CSDN meeting. They may not be attributed to any participating individual or institution, nor do they necessarily represent the views of the organizers. A full report of the meeting will follow soon.

How can the EU become more effective in conflict prevention and peacebuilding?

- Increased leadership within the EEAS focusing on prioritising co-operation with the EC, development of policies that guide EU external action and negotiation of compromise between Member States.
- Development of policy and guidance to address the arbitrariness with which conflict prevention and peacebuilding principles are applied at the moment.
- Integration of contemporary thinking and evidence regarding analysis of security threats and how they can be tackled into EU policy-making to avoid the temptation to provide standardised responses to conflict situations.
- Ensuring that detailed context and conflict analysis is the starting point for the development of EU responses to conflict.
- Providing EU delegations with the right kind of expertise covering conflict and security analysis, through the creation and staffing of additional positions.
- Simplification of different regulations governing EU external action to reduce bureaucratic hurdles for co-operation with Member States and civil society. Involving the new Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Better Regulation in this process may be an opportunity.
- Integration of trade into the EU's comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises to ensure it does not undermine EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
- Agreement on criteria which define when a EUSR mandate is established and terminated and improvement of the current gender balance.
- Development of a broader understanding of the possible tools that can be employed for mediation purposes inside the EEAS, ranging from EU Special Representatives to CSDP missions and development assistance.
- Sensitising policy-makers who receive early warning information to ensure they act upon the information.

How can Austria support the EU's peacebuilding efforts?

- Integrate conflict prevention into European Neighbourhood Policy, through e.g. channelling expertise and seconding diplomats.
- Set-up a system for recruiting civilian experts into CSDP missions and crisis management bodies and investing in development of niche expertise for civilian CSDP.
- Contribute to the implementation of the EU's comprehensive approach which is similar to the 3 C (Coordinated, Complementary and Coherent measures in fragile situations) approach that Austria has developed.
- Share information about national initiatives and continue the support for the EEAS in this area of work.

What are the priorities for increasing the effectiveness of civilian CSDP and the European Council Summit in June 2015 where CSDP will be discussed?

- Ensure that CSDP is part of the EU's comprehensive approach: By integrating CSDP into overall EU strategies, the fragmentation of EU responses to conflict can be addressed. This would also counter the trend of overemphasizing short-term crisis response and enable a relation between CSDP missions and longer-term EU activity in a conflict-affected country.
- Clarify the role and function of CSDP, including where crisis management functions need to be carried out by a CSDP missions as opposed to a European Commission instrument.
- Increase work on capabilities and review the list of generic CSDP tasks agreed upon in Feira in 2000 to reflect the wide range of activities that CSDP missions undertake.
- Improve staffing, recruitment and training within the crisis management bodies and CSDP missions, including by easing bureaucratic burden, providing career incentives for returning staff and develop mechanisms for recruitment of civilian experts
- Standardise training modules for military, police and civilian staff respectively and include general training on CSDP in national curriculums for police, judges, custom officials etc.

How can CSDP contribute to conflict prevention specifically and what are the opportunities to develop the role of CSDP in conflict prevention?

- Integrate conflict analysis into mission planning to consider causes, actors and dynamics of conflicts, assess the impact of the mission on conflict dynamics and maximise conflict prevention potential.
- Revise policy guidance that underlies CSDP activities (SSR, police reform) to ensure that evidence about successful interventions in conflict contexts informs CSDP activities; simplifications of certain concepts is necessary as well.
- Improve relationship between CSDP missions and local population and seek a constructive working relationship with civil society.
- Introduce more rigorous assessment of CSDP missions and increase the current self-impact assessment.
- Explore the possibility of conflict prevention missions, meaning missions which have conflict prevention as their objective. This would be reflected in the activities they are undertaking and the expertise and profile of staff recruited;
- Introduce training for conflict sensitivity, not only for the Heads of Mission but for all staff in CSDP missions.

How can Austria as a Member State with expertise and interest in civilian CSDP further support its development?

Apart from supporting the priorities listed above, participants recommended that Austria:

- Improves swift recruitment and deployment of qualified civilian experts to crisis management bodies in Brussels and to CSDP missions. Certain participants suggested that concentrating on only fulfilling its responsibilities regarding civilian CSDP (as Denmark does) could be a possibility.
- Supports operational and strategic training for crisis management, for instance by initiating a follow-up to Europe's New Training Initiative for Civilian Crisis Management (ENTRI).
- Advocates for research regarding conflict prevention and transformation of violent conflicts to inform policy responses including impact assessments of EU mechanisms and tools.
- Provides consistent support to the Austrian Peacebuilding Platform.