

## Group C: Post-conflict and post-disaster recovery (including stabilisation)

### Guiding questions

1. What are the main building blocks of sustainable stabilisation and what types of related actions should the EU support in these contexts?
2. What role can local actors play in stabilisation processes and how can the EU best support them?

### Participants' comments and recommendations

- Several participants highlighted the need to have more clarity on the starting point for stabilisation actions. Since the EU's approach to the concept has gone from focusing on the post-violence period to also putting emphasis on prevention, the operationalisation of the concept would be helped by a commonly-accepted understanding of *when* the EU wants to engage in stabilisation actions.
- Stabilisation should not necessarily be about keeping in place the actors who are in positions of power. It should be transformational and address the root causes of instability/conflict.
- The EU should engage in robust context analysis and allow local actors, including civil society actors who have a lot of information to share and advice to give, to feed into its analysis of the local (political) dynamics of the areas in which it wants to launch stabilisation actions. EU delegations are not always sufficiently informed about local contexts and EU decision-makers should not rely only on their assessments. International non-governmental organisations who are engaged in those areas should also be consulted.
- Since the EU can engage in stabilisation during conflict, crisis response initiatives should take into account the "building blocks" and political aspects of stabilisation.
- The EU should also make use of the knowledge and advice of civil society actors to improve its early warning system and its monitoring and evaluation.
- It is sometimes difficult for civil society actors to know what information the EU needs and when it needs it.
- The EU should try to involve a wide range of actors in its stabilisation efforts. There is often a lot of focus on political actors and religious leaders (and one participant explained that engaging in outreach with religious communities can indeed yield positive results), but the EU should also try to engage local civil society actors.
- The EU should take into account the economic dimensions of stabilisation and work with a variety of economic actors (e.g. businesses, unions, cooperatives, etc.). It should support the creation of decent and inclusive job opportunities through a conflict-sensitive approach.
- The EU should pay attention to, and try to address, the various obstacles which often prevent some civil society actors from applying for EU support. Ongoing crises, short timeframes for application, the lack of a formal registration, etc., can make it difficult for civil society actors to engage with the EU or to receive EU support.
- The EU should be more coherent in its external action and policies. EU trade agreements with partner countries can sometimes have negative effects (e.g. result in land grabs). The EU should have a systematic "Do no harm" approach in its external action.
- Even in countries in which the government has little to no legitimacy, it can be fruitful to work with local actors, to progressively link local civil society actors to local authorities and to support and encourage them to work together. It is extremely important to build trust between different actors in order to achieve meaningful change.