



## Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting

# The EU Concept on Cultural Heritage as a Component for Peace and Security in Conflict and Crisis Zones: Gathering Civil Society Input

3 March (10:30-12:00 CET) and 4 March (10:30-12:00 CET) 2021

Online

## Concept note

### Background

Although the existence of international legal frameworks relating to the protection of cultural heritage is not new,<sup>1</sup> recent years have seen increased attention being paid to how cultural heritage can be harmed by conflict, both as collateral damage and as a direct target for conflict actors.<sup>2</sup> The destruction of tangible and intangible cultural heritage can have profound and differing effects on people and societies, including by weakening the foundations for social cohesion and dialogue, and the motivations for targeting particular sites or practices may be heavily gendered. Conversely, protecting and restoring cultural heritage through processes that protect the rights of minority and further gender equality can support the existence of a sense of shared belonging and identity across populations, strengthen the resilience of communities, and contribute to sustainable peace.<sup>3</sup>

Since 2015, the European Union has taken a number of steps to enhance the way it takes into account and addresses the linkages between culture, development and peace, and the need to protect cultural heritage.<sup>4</sup> On 27 October 2020, the European External Action Service (EEAS) received a formal mandate from the EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC) to develop a dedicated EU Concept on cultural heritage as a component for peace and security in conflict and crisis zones, which will detail in particular the relevant EU principles and conceptual approach.

As part of this process, this meeting will bring together EU officials working on these issues and civil society experts with experience in analysing and addressing the linkages between cultural heritage, conflict and peacebuilding, including their gendered aspects.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example the [Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war](#) (1949) and its Additional Protocols [I](#) and [II](#) (1977), the [Hague Convention for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict](#) (1954) and its [First](#) and [Second](#) Protocols (1954 and 1999), and the [Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage](#) (2003).

<sup>2</sup> The climate crisis may also exacerbate some of these impacts.

<sup>3</sup> It has to be noted that the 'cultural heritage' designation itself is not necessarily uncontested or universally held to be impartial, however.

<sup>4</sup> See for example the [Council conclusions on Culture in External Relations](#) (2015), the Joint Communication '[Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations](#)' (2016), the [Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on the establishment of a Civilian CSDP Compact](#) (2018), which highlight 'the need to preserve and protect cultural heritage', the [Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action](#) (2019), the [Council Conclusions on EU External Action on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism](#) (2020), which call on the EU 'to reflect on how to assist further affected countries to protect their own cultural heritage', and the [Council Conclusions on EU Peace Mediation](#) (2020), which underline 'the importance of cultural heritage in conflict prevention and resolution'.

## Objectives

The overall aim of this meeting is to gather analysis and recommendations from civil society experts on the EU Concept on cultural heritage as a component for peace and security in conflict and crisis zones (as it relates to both tangible and intangible cultural heritage).

Specifically, the meeting will seek to gather input on:

1. The general rationale of the Concept and the surrounding factors which would contribute to its successful implementation.
2. The specific contents of the different sections of the draft Concept (in particular with respect to how it discusses issues relating to conflict sensitivity; early warning and conflict analysis; balancing the protection of cultural rights, the rights of minorities and gender equality; inclusive local ownership; the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; etc.).

## Format

The meeting will include two (plenary) sessions lasting 90 minutes each, and it will take the form of a facilitated online round-table discussion under the Chatham House Rule.<sup>5</sup> It will be held over two days via the online platform Zoom.

## Participants

The meeting will bring together 15-20 participants, including civil society experts and officials from the EEAS and the European Commission. Participants will be expected to take part in both sessions.

## Background document

The EEAS provided a guiding document to civil society participants in advance of the meeting to ensure an appropriate level of preparation. Participants are asked to treat this working document as confidential.

## Language

The discussions will be held in English.

### 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 (Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace). It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), a civil society network, in co-operation with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The fourth phase of the CSDN will last from 2020 to 2023. For more information, please visit the [EPLO website](#).

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<sup>5</sup> Participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed (see: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/chatham-house-rule>).

## Agenda

Please consult the **EU guiding document** that was shared with you for specific guiding questions and requests for input on the contents of the draft EU Concept.

Participants should feel free to raise any issues they consider to be relevant as part of the discussions.

<b>Wednesday 3 March, 10.30 – 12.00 CET (Brussels time)</b>	
10.30 – 10.40	<p><b>Welcome and introductory remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laura Davis, Senior Associate (EPLO)</li> <li>• Brice De Schietera, Head of Division, Methodology and Implementation of the Integrated Approach (EEAS)</li> </ul>
10.40 – 12.00	<p><b>Session 1: A strategic approach to cultural heritage in conflicts and crises</b></p> <p>In this session, participants will be invited to reflect on the key issues to understand and to address as part of a strategic approach to tangible and intangible cultural heritage in conflicts and crises.</p> <p><i>For example, the discussions may touch on how to understand cultural heritage as a (potential) driver of conflict and of peace; how to balance different (cultural/ethnic, gender, age, religious...) perspectives on cultural heritage in peacebuilding; the challenges and resources for external interventions; the principles that should guide EU strategies; and recommendations for EU strategic support to the roles of cultural heritage in peacebuilding.</i></p>
<b>Thursday 4 March, 10.30 – 12.00 CET (Brussels time)</b>	
10.30 – 11.55	<p><b>Session 2: Cultural heritage as a driver of peace: best practices and lessons learned</b></p> <p>In this session, participants will be invited to discuss best practices and lessons learned in ensuring that tangible and intangible cultural heritage contributes to peace.</p> <p><i>For example, the discussions may touch on ensuring that appropriate gender- and climate-sensitive analysis informs the preservation and safeguarding cultural heritage; approaching cultural heritage as part of reconciliation, mediation/dialogue and reconstruction processes; improving the inclusivity of cultural heritage narratives, policies and institutions; and which approaches have or have not been successful in connecting cultural heritage and peacebuilding, and why.</i></p> <p><b>Session 3: Recommendations for the European Union</b></p> <p>In this session, participants will be invited to put forward concrete recommendations on how the EU should engage in the short, medium and long terms on tangible and intangible cultural heritage in conflicts and crises.</p> <p><i>For example, the discussions may touch on how the EU should further engage with diverse civil society to protect and support cultural heritage as an inclusive driver of peace; the types of actions, processes and institutions it should carry out, adapt and/or support in priority; how it should use its different external instruments and engage with (national and local) authorities; and how it should monitor progress.</i></p>
11.55 – 12.00	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guillaume Décot, Policy Officer, Methodology and Implementation of the Integrated Approach (EEAS)</li> </ul>