



## **Civil Society Dialogue Network Geographic Meeting**

### **20 years of EU engagement in Afghanistan: Gathering civil society perspectives**

**Tuesday 18 January 2022 (09.00-11.00 CET (UTC+1)), Zoom**

## **CONCEPT NOTE**

### **Background**

The fall of Kabul in August 2021 following the departure of international troops after almost 20 years of deployment marked another sea change not only for Afghanistan but also for international engagement in the country.

The European External Action Service (EEAS) is currently undertaking an assessment of the EU's engagement in Afghanistan over the past two decades with a view to identifying key political and operational lessons, including their relevance for other conflict-affected countries and regions.

In this context, the EEAS has asked the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) to organise a [Civil Society Dialogue Network \(CSDN\) Geographic Meeting \(GM\)](#) in order to gather international civil society actors' experiences and perspectives on the EU's support to Afghanistan since 2001.

### **Objectives**

The overall objective of the meeting is for representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) to (1) provide their analysis of the EU's engagement in Afghanistan over the past 20 years with a particular focus on the nature, timeliness and impact of EU support on the situation in the country; and (2) make recommendations that can help to inform future EU engagement in Afghanistan and other conflict-affected countries and regions.

### **Format**

The two-hour meeting will consist of two back-to-back plenary sessions on the Zoom platform.

The round-table discussions will take place under the Chatham House Rule.

### **Participants**

The meeting will bring together 20-30 participants, including CSO representatives and officials from both the European Commission (EC) and the EEAS.

## Language

The meeting will be held in English.

## Outputs

An internal report summarising the key findings and recommendations to the EU will be prepared after the meeting and shared with relevant EEAS officials only.

### **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](#).

# DRAFT AGENDA

Tuesday 18 January 2022 (09.00-11.00 CET (UTC+1))

09.00 – 09.10	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Sonya Reines-Djivanides – Executive Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)</i></li><li>• <i>Tomas Niklasson, EU Special Envoy to Afghanistan / Head of Division, Division for Afghanistan and Pakistan (ASIAPAC 2), EEAS</i></li><li>• <i>Jean-François Cautain – Adviser, Directorate for Integrated Approach for Security and Peace (ISP), European External Action Service (EEAS)</i></li></ul>
09.10 – 09.45	<b>Session 1: Key challenges for Afghanistan over the past 20 years</b> <p>Participants will be invited to consider the main turning points and factors over the past two decades that resulted in the fall of Kabul in August 2021 with a particular focus on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What were the key social, political and security dynamics in Afghanistan during this period?</li><li>• To what extent did the EU's engagement contribute to these dynamics?</li></ul> <p><i>Facilitator: Dr Laura Davis – Senior Associate, EPLO</i></p>
09.45 – 10.50	<b>Session 2: Key challenges for EU engagement in Afghanistan 2001-2021</b> <p>Participants will be invited to consider the following key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What impact did EU support have on the democratic transition in Afghanistan? (Possible issues to consider: elections, governance, state authorities etc.)</li><li>• What impact did EU support have on the security context? (Possible issues to consider: scale of interventions, impact on capacity building, involvement of civil society etc.)</li><li>• Was EU support sufficiently sensitive to the following (and other issues):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ the promotion of gender equality?</li><li>○ support for and engagement with civil society?</li><li>○ urban-rural dynamics?</li></ul></li></ul> <p><i>Facilitator: Dr Laura Davis, EPLO</i></p>
10.50 – 11.00	<b>Wrap-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Helena Sterwe – Senior Mediation Adviser, Division for Conflict Prevention and Mediation Support (ISP 2), EEAS</i></li><li>• <i>Sonya Reines-Djivanides, EPLO</i></li></ul>

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