



Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting

The role of social media in preventing electoral violence: Perspectives from civil society

Thursday 17 March (14:00 – 16:00 CET), Online

Concept Note and Agenda

Background

In October 2020, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), together with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS), organised a [Civil Society Dialogue Network \(CSDN\) Policy Meeting \(PM\)](#) entitled '[Preventing Election-related Violence: Analysis from Civil Society](#)'. Several participants identified social media as a powerful tool to both contribute to and prevent electoral violence. While the use of social media in amplifying disinformation and exacerbating violence is well known and documented, there is little discussion on its role in preventing electoral violence. EPLO, the EC and the EEAS have therefore decided to organise a follow-up meeting specifically dedicated to the role of social media in the prevention of electoral violence.

The Conflict Prevention and Mediation Division (ISP.2), pertaining to the Integrated Approach for Security and Peace Directorate in the EEAS, is working on a report compiling lessons identified on social media and preventing electoral violence, with the aim of elaborating guidance for EU delegations. Participants will also have the possibility to discuss and contribute to these lessons identified. The United Nations (UN) will also be involved in the meeting as a follow-up to the 2021 Annual UN-EU Policy Dialogue on Conflict Prevention and Mediation, which identified the role of social media in preventing electoral violence as a policy area of mutual interest for cooperation.

Objectives

The overall objectives of this meeting are for representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs), the EU, the UN and other experts to (1) discuss the role of social media in preventing electoral violence; and (2) provide recommendations to the EU and other international actors on how they can engage and support efforts to harness the potentially positive impact of social media as means of preventing electoral violence.

Format

The meeting will consist of a combination of plenary and breakout group discussions, hosted on the Zoom platform. It will take place under the Chatham House Rule.

Participants

The meeting will bring around 30 participants, including CSO representatives and other experts, officials from the EC and the EEAS, and representatives from the UN.

Outputs

A public report will be prepared after the meeting.

Programme

14:00 – 14:10	<p>Introductory Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonya Reines-Djivanides, Executive Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) • Marc Fiedrich, Acting Director, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), European Commission (EC) • Guillem Riutord Sampol, Head of Division, Integrated Approach for Security and Peace (ISP.2), European External Action Service (EEAS) • Gianpiero Catozzi, United Nations Development Programme
14:10 – 14:30	<p>Presentation of the EEAS' lessons identified on the role of social media in preventing electoral violence and Q&A</p>
14:30 – 15:10	<p>Session 1 – breakout group discussion</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of social media in exacerbating electoral violence in the countries in which your organisation works? • What is the role of social media in preventing electoral violence in those countries? • What types of activities does your organisation undertake to harness the potentially positive impact of social media as a means of preventing electoral violence? <p>Possible issues to address: monitoring of violence; early warning; fact-checking; peace and civic education; dialogue and mediation support; public diplomacy</p> <p>Crosscutting issues to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender impacts of social media and electoral violence • Impacts of social media and electoral violence on marginalised groups
15:10 – 15:50	<p>Session 2 – Plenary session</p> <p>Presentation of small group discussion</p> <p>Plenary discussion: recommendations for the EU and other international actors' engagement</p> <p>Possible guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of activities should the EU and other international actors undertake in order to support the role of social media in preventing electoral violence? • How could international actors and the peacebuilding community strengthen their co-operation on harnessing the potentially positive impact of social media on preventing electoral violence? • What specific issues should be taken into account? • What lessons can be identified from previous and ongoing efforts?

15:50 – 16:00	Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EEAS, EC, EPLO, UN
---------------	---

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](#).