



## **Civil Society Dialogue Network**

### **Policy Meeting**

### **Enhancing EU Stabilisation Practice**

**Thursday 16 February (9.00 – 17.00 CET)**

**Thon Hotel EU  
Wetstraat/Rue de la Loi 75, 1040 Brussels**

**And Online**

### **Concept Note**

#### **Background**

Over the last years, a number of lessons have emerged in relation to the stabilisation efforts of various international actors in complex conflict contexts. Together with the growing number of people in need of humanitarian assistance due to protracted recurrent and new crises, these lessons have also prompted a critical assessment of EU's stabilisation approach and actions aiming at bridging the gap between crisis response and longer-term recovery to prevent the cyclical re-emergence of violence.<sup>1</sup> This reflection comes at a moment when important challenges such as the massive use of disruptors like disinformation campaigns and more broadly hybrid threats have changed the context, and when a unified EU financial instrument (NDICI-GE), the European Peace Facility (EPF), Team Europe Initiatives and the adoption of the Strategic Compass represent key developments for EU response capacities.

The EU defines stabilisation as “a set of swift actions aimed at creating conditions supportive of a political process, helping locally legitimate actors to prevent or reduce violence amidst an active or recent conflict, and initiating efforts to address the drivers and the consequences of a crisis.” Stabilisation should be fully informed not only by country but also sub-national context and adapted to the local socio-political-administrative practices. Stabilisation is part of EU's Integrated Approach, and it is taken amidst an active or recent conflict, when parties to the conflict show a commitment waning down intensity of violence.

The objective of this meeting will be to engage in an exchange on how to strengthen EU stabilisation practice, learning from best practices and lessons learnt by civil society experts. As part of the EU's ongoing efforts to enhance its stabilisation practice globally, this meeting will bring together EU officials and civil society experts to discuss what is needed for the EU to support the transition from political and humanitarian crises towards a development agenda, helping to transform the conflict and enabling more robust peace processes.

Given the relatively narrow windows of opportunity in volatile contexts, EU stabilisation actions need to be more flexible and agile. The EU instruments should respond more swiftly to local needs and adapt to often fluid and dynamic contexts, so engaging in more timely and conflict sensitive ways. Moreover, since political buy in is at the core of any lasting peace project, the

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<sup>1</sup> The *EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy* (2016)

EU needs to ensure that its stabilisation interventions are more engaged with and responsive to the populations' needs and their perceptions, and so can help forge more inclusive political agendas.

### **Objectives**

The overall objective of this meeting is to share recommendations and best practices of civil society experts for strengthening the EU stabilisation practice for improved human security. In particular, the meeting will gather insights and feedback on how to better identify needs and objectives of local populations in stabilisation contexts marked by ongoing violence; how to maximise conflict sensitivity and timeliness of EU action in high risk and volatile contexts; and what are modalities/partnerships with civil society that have worked in building peace capital/confidence in peace processes at local, national and regional levels.

### **Participants**

The meeting will bring together approximately 40 participants, including experts from EPLO member organisations and other civil society organisations, other peace and security experts, and officials from both the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

### **Format and Structure**

The meeting will take the form of a facilitated round-table discussion under the Chatham House Rule. The meeting will be held in English and French.

### **Outcomes**

A report of the meeting with key takeaways will be shared with all participants and published on the EPLO website.

## AGENDA

**Thursday 16 February**

<b>9.00 – 9.30</b>	<b>Registration and coffee/tea</b>
<b>9.30 – 9.45</b>	<b>Opening remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Brice de Schietere</b>, Head of Division, Methodology and Implementation of the Integrated Approach (ISP.1), Integrated Approach for Security and Peace Directorate, EEAS</li> <li>• <b>Simon Bojsen-Moller</b>, Acting Head of Unit, Deputy Head of Unit, Rapid Response Africa &amp; Middle East (FPI.2), EC</li> <li>• <b>Sonya Reines-Djivanides</b>, Executive Director, EPLO</li> </ul>
<b>9.45 – 9.55</b>	<b>Tour de table (introductions)</b>
<b>9.55 – 10.30</b>	<b>Session 1: How does the EU approach stabilisation? (plenary)</b> <b>Introduction ‘EU Stabilisation Concept’</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Melis Alguadis</b>, Policy Officer, ISP.1, EEAS</li> </ul> <p>The aim of this session will be to enable participants to exchange on the EU approach to stabilisation, stabilisation lessons, the principles, and stabilisation assessment. In particular, the following questions will be discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the EU define stabilisation, in terms of objectives and approaches? What opportunities and challenges does this definition present for peacebuilding in complex contexts?</li> <li>• What is the role and relevance of EU stabilisation in the current global security environment? How can the EU maximise conflict sensitivity and timeliness?</li> <li>• How does the EU work with multilateral actors and its Member States for stabilisation around the world?</li> <li>• How does the EU work with CSOs as partners for stabilisation around the world?</li> </ul>
<b>10.30 – 11.00</b>	<b>Coffee and tea</b>
<b>11.00 – 12.30</b>	<b>Session 2: Civil society responses in volatile settings (plenary)</b> <p>This session will aim at sharing civil society responses that have worked in building peace capital/confidence in peace processes at local, national and regional levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are modalities that have proven to work best for civil society actors operating in volatile settings?</li> <li>• Concrete examples of best practice regarding cooperation and dialogue of the EU with civil society (local CSOs, INGOs) in stabilisation contexts? What challenges have been identified, and lessons learnt?</li> </ul>
<b>12.30 – 13.30</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>
<b>13.30 – 15.00</b>	<b>Session 3: Enhancing EU stabilisation practice (small groups)</b> <p>This session aims at sharing insights gained during the concrete implementation of stabilisation actions in volatile contexts around the world.</p> <p><b>Group 1. Ownership, legitimacy and accountability</b></p> <p>The following topics and others may be discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust building between populations and legitimate political authorities</li> <li>• Ensuring human security</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring outcomes and reinforcing accountability</li> </ul> <p><b>Group 2. Adapting analytical tools to stabilisation needs for better planning and more impact</b></p> <p>The following topics and others may be discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges and opportunities of ensuring that actions are gender sensitive and climate sensitive and informed by conflict analysis</li> <li>Adapting actions based on monitoring, evaluation and learning</li> <li>Joint analysis</li> <li>Criteria of “success” and transitioning to longer term peacebuilding and cooperation actions</li> </ul>
<b>15.00 – 15.30</b>	<b>Coffee and tea</b>
<b>15.30 – 16.45</b>	<p><b>Session 4: Recommendations for the EU on how to enhance its stabilisation practice (plenary)</b></p> <p>The session will start with reporting on the key points raised during the small group discussions in the previous session. Then, building on the points raised, participants will discuss how should the EU engage with civil society actors as part of efforts to ensure that its stabilisation action respond to local needs and objectives. The following topics may be discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When should the EU engage with civil society and how should it determine the scope of its stabilisation efforts?</li> <li>Are there pre-conditions to be met to engage in stabilisation contexts?</li> <li>How can stabilisation efforts maximise inclusivity?</li> <li>How does the EU address grievances, while balancing the need for timeliness/agility of its response?</li> <li>What are modalities that have proven to work best for civil society actors operating in volatile settings?</li> </ul>
<b>16.45 – 17.00</b>	<p><b>Closing remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Anne Koistinen</b>, Deputy Head of Division, ISP.1, EEAS</li> <li><b>EPLO</b></li> </ul>

#### **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](#).