



## **Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting**

# **The implementation of the EU-wide Strategic Framework to Support Security Sector Reform: Gathering Civil Society Perspectives**

**Wednesday 14 June (09.00–16.30 CEST)**

**Martin's Brussels EU  
Boulevard Charlemagne 80  
1000 Brussels, Belgium**

## **Concept note**

### **Background**

The European Union's 2016 [Joint Communication on Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform](#) (JC on SSR) aims to help the EU better promote and support its partners' efforts in making their security sectors more effective, legitimate and sustainable. It defines SSR as 'the process of transforming a country's security system so that it gradually provides individuals and the state with more effective and accountable security in a manner consistent with respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the principles of good governance.' The JC on SSR was followed by [Council conclusions](#) in November 2016. The Strategic Framework to support SSR (SF to SSR) applies to all EU actors and instruments, ranging from European Commission (EC) programming to Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) civilian and military missions.

The SF to SSR puts human security at the centre of the EU approach, stating that 'a national security system must be to ensure the security of individuals, as perceived and experienced by them.' It also emphasises the participation and engagement with diverse civil society actors (e.g. in development and monitoring of security and justice policy and activities; improving accountability, sustainability and national ownership).

After seven years of implementation of the SF to SSR, the EU as one of the major donors in support to the security sector of partner countries, remains committed to identifying lessons and to learning to improve its support. The EU works with a multitude of state and non-state actors. Support to and engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs) in partner countries is fundamental for human security in the implementation of the SF on SSR.

In the framework of the [Civil Society Dialogue Network \(CSDN\)](#) EPLO will hold a Policy Meeting in June 2023 in Brussels. The meeting is organised in co-operation with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

### **Objectives**

The overall objective of this meeting is to exchange and gather civil society insights and recommendations for strengthening EU support to SSR for improved human security. The meeting

will provide inputs into the internal overall review process of the JC on SSR. The overall objective will be achieved by two sub-objectives:

- Share civil society experts' assessments of previous and ongoing EU support to SSR; with lessons identified and good practices on working with security and justice actors; and for engaging and supporting civil society organisations (CSOs) as partners to the EU;
- Formulate practical recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of EU support to SSR and to enhance the roles of CSOs and other civil society actors as partners to the EU.

### **Participants**

The meeting will bring together approximately 30 participants, including experts from EPLO member organisations and other CSOs, other peace and security experts, and officials from both the EC and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The geographic focus will be on four countries: Mali, Niger, Iraq and Georgia.

### **Format**

The meeting will take the form of a facilitated round-table discussion under the Chatham House Rule.

### **Language**

The meeting will be held in English and French.

### **Outcomes**

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

#### **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

9.00 – 9.15	<b>Registration and coffee/tea</b>
09.15 – 9.45	<b>Welcoming remarks and introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brice de Schietero, Head of Division, ISP.1, EEAS</li> <li>• Eva-Maria Engdahl, Deputy Head of Unit, INTPA.G.5, EC</li> <li>• Sonya Reines-Djivanides, Executive Director, EPLO</li> </ul>
9.45 – 10.00	<b>Introduction of participants</b>
10.00 – 11.00	<b>Session 1: State of Play: Key trends and challenges in the EU support to SSR (Plenary)</b> The aim of this session is to allow participants to exchange on the key trends and challenges in the EU support to SSR in the four country contexts. The following may be discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key trends, challenges and needs that may impact EU support to SSR in the four country contexts?</li> </ul> <i>Introduction by official(s) from the EC and/or EEAS</i>
11.00 – 11.30	<b>Coffee and tea</b>
11:30 – 12.30	<b>Session 2: Lessons identified from EU support to SSR and the roles of CSOs as partners to the EU (Plenary)</b> The aim of this session is to share insights gained during the implementation of EU SSR support in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The following issues may be discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the EU engaged with local CSOs in its SSR support?</li> <li>• What are the concrete examples of best practice regarding cooperation, dialogue and funding for CSOs and other civil society actors?</li> <li>• How can the EU better enhance the roles of CSO in the implementation of the SF on SSR?</li> </ul>
12.30 – 13.30	<b>Lunch break</b>

13.30 – 15.00	<p><b>Session 3: Country-specific and/or thematic recommendations for improved EU SSR support and civil society engagement (two parallel working group discussions)</b></p> <p>The aim of this session is to share lessons identified by civil society actors during the implementation of SSR-related activities and gather their recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of EU SSR support. The following topics, <i>as relevant to the country contexts and thematic expertise of participants</i>, may be discussed:</p> <p><b>Community security<sup>1</sup> and people-centred approaches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What best practices have been identified for improving community security? What has worked for empowering individuals and CSOs to advocate for their security needs and providing their security solutions?</li> <li>• What practical solutions have been identified for building trust between security forces and communities?</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender-responsiveness and inclusivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What practical solutions have been identified to improve gender-responsiveness and inclusion of a wide range of actors in EU support to SSR?</li> </ul> <p><b>Oversight mechanisms and human rights based approach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the challenges and opportunities for civil society in enhancing the accountability of the security sector?</li> <li>• How can the EU support civil society in its oversight role? What has (not) worked and how can EU support be improved?</li> <li>• What are some of the key challenges in applying a human rights based approach to security sector support?</li> </ul> <p><b>Wider context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can civil society needs and solutions be better linked to political dialogue?</li> <li>• How can practical 'bottom-up' approaches for increasing human security be leveraged and scaled up?</li> <li>• How can the partnerships between the EU and CSOs be strengthened to jointly advance the effective implementation of the SF on SSR?</li> <li>• What are the opportunities and risks in engaging with non-state security and justice providers?</li> </ul>
15.00 – 15.15	<b>Coffee and tea</b>
15.15 – 16.15	<p><b>Session 4: Way forward</b></p> <p>The session will start with reporting on the key points and recommendations raised during the small group discussions and will be followed by an exchange by all participants.</p>
16.15 – 16.30	<p><b>Closing remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EEAS</li> <li>• EC</li> <li>• EPLO</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> 'Where violence and conflicts are linked to political, social and economic issues that are strictly local or national security forces are unable to provide vital security services, the EU can finance support initiatives whereby the population is provided with security and justice benefits through a community security approach, involving (official and/or traditional) local authorities, where possible, the residents of the communities and neighbourhoods in question and local security forces. The aim will be to improve the security of local communities, resolve conflict and address local root causes of violence, and ultimately to ensure that national authorities are able to address security and conflict problems at local level' (JC on SSR, 2016)