



## Civil Society Dialogue Network Member State Meeting Spain

### EU Common Foreign and Security Policy as a Peacebuilding Tool

Tuesday, 13 March 2012

*European Commission Permanent Representation in Spain, Madrid*

This meeting was organised by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) and Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITpax) in cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments of the European Commission. It took place within the framework of the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN), a project to facilitate dialogue between civil society and EU policy-makers on peacebuilding policies.

The objective of the meeting was to assess the peacebuilding potential of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) since the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Particular attention was paid to the functioning of the EEAS, the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and to Spain's participation in EU peacebuilding policies and CSDP missions.

The meeting was held under the Chatham House rule. This report gathers views expressed and recommendations made by participants in the meeting which are in no way attributable to the organisers, individual participants or participating institutions. This report is structured around the main themes discussed, drawing out the key points raised by the panellists and participants and highlighting recommendations.

For more information about this event, please contact [Josephine Liebl](#) (EPLO) or [Javier Olivares](#) (CITpax).

#### Welcome and opening remarks

The welcome session included the opening remarks by Ms. Marta Múgica Inciarte, Head of Communication, Partnership and Social Networks, European Commission Representation in Spain, Mr. Emilio Cassinello Director General, CITpax, and Ms. Catherine Woollard, Executive Director of EPLO. They emphasised the importance of the gathering, presented the agenda and welcomed panellists and participants, highlighting their great diversity, with people from the EU and Spanish institutions, CSOs and academia. In addition, the work of each organisation was presented and the purpose of the CSDN was explained.

During the opening session, it was noted that the economic crisis provides an opportunity to re-evaluate EU external affairs and foreign policy and lead to more collective action. The 2011 World Development Report<sup>1</sup> was cited to support the evidence that united and collective action by external actors is required in conflict-affected and fragile countries. Consequently, only if the EU can demonstrate its effectiveness and credibility, will Member States be able to unite behind it. In this regard, Spain can play a crucial role as a large and powerful Member State and as a country which recognises the importance of the European Union for its own security – as emphasized in the Spanish Security Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> [2011 World Development Report](#), World Bank, 2010.

## **Panel 1: The European Union and Peacebuilding after Lisbon: state of play, capabilities and challenges in a context of crisis.**

The first session included presentations by Andrew Byrne, Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation Division, EEAS, and Alicia Cebada, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid/London School of Economics. Presentations were followed by comments from Catherine Woollard, Executive Director, EPLO. The session was chaired by Cristina Manzano, FRIDE, and was followed by an open debate.

### *On CFSP and the role of the EU on the international scene*

According to some participants, the change from a unipolar world to a multipolar one should motivate the EU to question what role it wants to have in the world, in order to define what objective(s) should drive its external action.

Some consider that the EU is currently moving away from its role as a normative power on the international scene. It has for example established strategic partnerships with individual countries, rather than reinforced cooperation with other regional organisations. This is regrettable and it was suggested that the **EU should rather retain its specificity and promote the idea of “effective multilateralism”, understood as a tool to create a more just world.** Moreover, because of its history as a peace project, the EU in general and the EEAS in particular should focus on promoting sustainable peace.

For some participants, the EU can only remain an influential international actor if it has fewer but very clearly defined priorities. Given the financial constraints, the EEAS has been asked to “do more for less”, but it should focus on quality rather than quantity. For other participants, geographic prioritization would be extremely time- and resource- consuming given the different interests of Member States. For them, the real issue is that the Service is not doing enough, or is not effective. The participants did not reach an agreement on geographic prioritization but agreed on **the necessity to improve the quality of EU external action through more strategic thinking.**

Some participants said the **EU should not try to differentiate itself too much from the Member States, as they are the ones eventually defining its external action.** Even if it may not be optimal, some view the EU’s primary comparative advantage as a coordinator and shaper of common foreign and security policy at the behest of individual Member States. **Others considered that an alternative to this situation would be to further strengthen the European institutions.**

### *On the EU and peacebuilding after Lisbon*

The Lisbon Treaty brought a series of positive developments. According to the Treaty, one of the objectives of the EU’s external action is to “preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security” (article 21). This constitutes an unprecedented EU legal commitment to peace. It also created the position of High Representative (HR) / Vice-president of the Commission, who conducts CFSP, and established the European External Action Service to assist the HR in fulfilling her/his mandate.

The EU and the HR have a wide range of tools at their disposal to promote peacebuilding:

- Diplomatic tools, including political statements, EU Special representatives in specific situations, and EU delegations (which can now engage into a formal political dialogue with third countries and could help Member States to unite behind the EU in some third countries);
- Other CFSP tools such as civilian and military CSDP missions and joint actions with international organisations on certain issues, for instance, non-proliferation;

- Financial instruments for external assistance;
- Technical mechanisms for early warning and conflict assessment, such as the Situation Centre within the EEAS and other crisis management structures.

In addition, a Division on Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation was established within the EEAS and a Unit on Fragility and Crisis Management was established within DEVCO (the Commission Directorate General for Development and Cooperation), both of them composed of people with relevant expertise on conflict prevention.

During its first year of existence, the EEAS has achieved some success, for instance the Serbia/Kosovo agreement in the EU-facilitated dialogue, the coordination between the EEAS and the Commission on the response to the Arab Spring, the drafting of the Sahel Security and Development strategy<sup>2</sup> and the Comprehensive Approach to Sudan and South Sudan<sup>3</sup>. Yet all participants agreed that many challenges remain.

### *Overemphasis on crisis response*

The Service was criticised by several participants for acting in response to events rather than acting proactively on the international scene. With particular regard to conflict prevention and crisis management, there has been an overemphasis on crisis response (understood as operational coordination in crisis situations) at the expense of other more long-term objectives of the EEAS, such as peacebuilding. This limited approach also risks overlapping with humanitarian action.

Moreover, according to an external evaluation of the European Commission's support to conflict prevention and peacebuilding<sup>4</sup>, the EU can be more effective when it takes a long-term approach and uses all the tools at its disposal. **It is therefore crucial to avoid any institutionalisation of this overemphasis on crisis response. Instead, the EEAS should work on providing long-term strategic thinking, to better prevent crisis and conflicts.**

### *Coordinating with other EU institutions and with Member States*

With her double-hat as High Representative and Vice-president of the Commission, the HR is supposed to ensure consistency in EU's external action. However, in a letter on the EEAS signed by 12 EU Foreign Ministers<sup>5</sup>, the need for better coordination between EEAS and the European Commission was stressed. The first annual report on the EEAS<sup>6</sup> referred to the numbers of briefings requests that were handled by the EEAS for President Van Rompuy, President Barroso and Commissioner Füle. But no coordination with other DGs taking part in other aspects of EU external action (for instance DEVCO or Trade) was mentioned. Even if these sectors are not officially included in EU foreign policy, regular meetings and flow of information are necessary to make sure that the EU's policies are consistent.

Coordination with Member States could also be improved. The letter of the Foreign Ministers raises criticism against the lack of preparation for meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council and proposes an annual agenda planning. Some participants suggested the HR should try to foster a

<sup>2</sup> [Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel](#), EEAS, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> The Comprehensive Approach itself is not a public document. For the main elements of the approach, please consult the [Council Conclusions on Sudan and South Sudan from June 2011](#).

<sup>4</sup> [Thematic Evaluation of European Commission Support to Conflict Prevention and Peace Building](#), EC, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> [Joint letter from the Foreign Ministers of Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden](#), 8 December 2011.

<sup>6</sup> [Report by the High Representative to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission](#), 22 December 2011.

global approach and also ensure coordination with Member States' national instruments of external action. Some insisted that, in many cases, it was more rational for Member States to unite behind the EU to really make a difference, for instance, in countries like Nepal where EU Member States acting separately may lack impact.

According to some participants, EU Member States do not really want the HR and the EEAS to succeed, because it would decrease their own external influence. For others, the letter of Foreign Ministers proves that they genuinely want to improve the functioning of the EEAS.

A recurring question among participants was how can such coordination/synergies between EU institutions and with Member States, and an *overall* comprehensive approach, be ensured. **According to some participants, the EEAS should develop more common strategies, as it did for the Sahel region, Sudan and South Sudan. Thematic strategies would also be useful, for instance, a review of the Gothenburg programme on conflict prevention.** Timely and good strategies or plans prepared by the EEAS would enable Member States to unite behind the EU and coordinate effectively.

### *EEAS Staffing*

In order to define solid strategies and policies and to implement them successfully, the **Service should also be provided with appropriate means, budget and staff, despite the financial constraints faced by the EU at the moment.** There are currently negotiations on the next Multi-annual Financial Framework (the EU budget) and staffing across the EEAS and the European Commission is being cut by 5%.

A participant said that despite the different institutional cultures of people working in the EEAS (who come from the European Commission, the Council or Member States), cooperation was working very well. On the other hand, some participants raised concerns about the low level of morale from people working in the EEAS. Finally, a participant suggested the creation of a training academy for staff joining the EEAS.

The issue of ensuring gender-balance when appointing high-level EEAS staff was also raised. There are only three women in high level position in Brussels. Women are also underrepresented as Heads of EU delegations. Some participants deplored the fact that Catherine Ashton was very defensive about this topic.

### *Delegations*

According to several participants, more attention should be paid to EU delegations. There is a long way to go in bringing them to their full potential. Different reporting lines between European Commission and EEAS staff complicate their work, while they are expected to take on a leading role in ensuring cooperation with Member States' embassies.

A participant also suggested that **EU delegations could act as overarching coordinators for CSDP missions where relevant, in order to ensure consistency with other instruments of EU external action, including development funding.**

### *EU Security Strategy Review*

Some participants advocated for a review of the 2003 European Union Security Strategy – which is a topic currently debated within the institutions – because of the numerous changes on the international scene since it was drafted.

Others raised doubts about the need to revise it, since it was already reviewed in 2008 and included relevant revisions such as the inclusion of human security, working with civil society, or integrating security and development.

### *Working with Civil Society*

One participant raised the question how the EU can be more effective at ensuring sustainable peace. Part of the answer was to acknowledge that the EU is not always the right actor in all situations of crisis. However, its added value can be found in its long term approach.

In addition, **the EU should focus on how to ensure good relations between governments and civil society organisations, rather than working with both separately.**

Finally, the EU could draw more on civil society organisations' expertise, to see what works and what does not.

### **Panel 2: Towards a more coherent CFSP: lessons from CSDP missions**

The second session included presentations by Peter Hedling, EEAS, Crisis Management and Policy Planning Directorate and Cdr. Pedro Sánchez Arancón, EEAS, European Union Military Staff. Presentations were followed by comments from Alain Déléroz, Vice-President Europe, International Crisis Group. The session was chaired by Tom Morgan, European Parliament Representation in Spain, and was followed by an open debate

#### *On the Comprehensive Approach*

Most participants praised the general principle of a Comprehensive Approach (CA), by which all relevant actors – be they civil or military – apply their instruments in a coordinated manner to ensure the maximum effect on the ground. According to some participants, even if it is a work in progress, the CA has brought improvements. For instance, coordination meetings are planned across divisions and a few *ad hoc* regional strategies have been approved. Progress in Sudan, South Sudan and the Horn of Africa will be interesting to monitor as case studies for EU civil-military integration and the CA.

However, many challenges remain. First, conventional civil-military integration has a very narrow focus and does not include civil-civil integration, for instance coordination between civilian CSDP missions and development assistance. CA should look at the overall consistency of EU external action, with longer-term strategies. A participant mentioned a resolution of the European Parliament on CFSP calling upon the HR to “bring coherence to, effectively coordinate and fully exploit the potential for the CFSP-CSDP to act synergistically with the other sectors of EU external action and with EU internal policies with an impact and implications at the external level.”<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, as it stands, the CA is yet to be institutionalized at the operational and tactical levels. Even if joint planning is done, civilian and military instruments are currently deployed separately. One participant suggested separate deployments should remain the rule, provided synergies are ensured during strategic planning and in the review and evaluation processes.

One participant mentioned the 2009 evaluation of EUPM in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This evaluation declared that CSDP missions are good value for money. According to this participant, a proper CA could help save more money by ensuring more effective planning and evaluation to achieve an effective and rational use of resources. There was still a lot of unexploited potential for savings.

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<sup>7</sup> [Resolution on the development of the common security and defence policy following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty](#), European Parliament, 29 April 2011. This resolution also mentions that “contributing to peace and security in the world becomes a cross-cutting objective of EU external and internal action and the CSDP is one of its instruments”.

Finally, one participant suggested having a division responsible for the implementation of the CA within the EEAS.

#### *On the design of CSDP missions and what can be defined as a success*

One participant argued that, where deployed, the EU is helping to make a difference. The example of EUTM Somalia was used. It has trained roughly 2,000 members of the Armed Forces that are supporting Somalia's transitional federal government (TFG). The deployment of EUTM trained soldiers was also simultaneous to what seems a turning point in the TFG's struggle against Al-Shabab.

Other participants questioned this definition of success. According to one participant, the EUTM was counterproductive since some trained troops actually joined Al-Shabab because they were not paid. Another one mentioned the EULEX mission in Kosovo, which is usually praised as a successful mission and explained that it was not a success at all in the eyes of Kosovo civil society. Several participants agreed the EU has been focusing too much on outputs (e.g. number of people trained) rather than on longer-term outcomes (e.g. influence on conflict dynamics or democratization) in its missions.

Although clear short-term objectives are essential to ensure smooth implementation of CSDP missions, they should fit into a longer-term strategy. **Some participants insisted the missions should not aim at providing stability for the sake of it, but rather aim at transforming countries into genuine democracies.** It would therefore be essential to consult with local CSOs during planning and conduct to better anticipate and monitor the overall impact of the missions.

To some participants, however, the expectations of CSDP should not be unrealistic. The decision-making procedures for CSDP missions make their design very complicated, and it is already quite difficult to get clear short-term objectives for each mission. Actually, agreeing on a mission could be considered as a success in itself and one participant mentioned it might get more and more difficult for the 27 to agree on CSDP missions.

Another one argued that no CSDP mission could be deployed without a big Member State taking the lead on it. Therefore advocacy efforts should be directed at Member States with the biggest capabilities.

Some participants also highlighted that **before supporting the creation of a CSDP mission, Member States should make sure they can provide the necessary means (especially qualified staff) to implement it successfully.**

#### *On evaluation of CSDP missions*

One participant noted that before the creation of the EEAS, evaluations of EU foreign policy measures was conducted by the evaluation unit of the DG Relex/European Commission. Since there is no such evaluation unit within the EEAS yet, it is not clear how evaluations will take place. At the moment, only political evaluations by the Member States are conducted. However, the EU could consider the examples of the UN, the UK and to some extent NATO, and engage more with external/independent evaluators.

Several participants noted that the **EU should invest more in evaluations of CSDP missions and be more transparent about it, even for military missions.** One mentioned that the EU was starting to use opinion polls to better evaluate the impact of its mission. Thanks to these tools, evaluations do not only rely on views of officials in the host country or EU Member States and they should be further utilised. Evaluations should also include a section about the mission impact on conflict dynamics. Finally, the EU should engage with civil society representatives for the evaluation of CSDP missions.

### *Improving capabilities for civilian and military CSDP missions*

**Several participants recommended the creation of an EU permanent civil-military planning and conduct capability, to be able to deploy its biggest missions rapidly without relying on NATO.** For some participants, the bilateral Defence and Security Cooperation Treaty between France and the United Kingdom – outside the framework of the EU defence policy – might be detrimental to this cause. According to other participants the creation of such a permanent capability is just a matter of time.

**Several participants also called for the continuation of the pooling and sharing initiative under the coordination of the European Defence Agency.** One explained that this initiative may help provide a solution to some of the capabilities shortfalls faced by the EU.

### *On staffing*

**One participant suggested an adequate balance between personnel with civilian and military background in EEAS CSDP structures should be ensured.** Staff with military background is over-represented although most of the missions are civilian ones. While military planning is certainly the best one for military CSDP missions, it may not be the case for civilian ones, which require a much longer-term perspective and extensive liaison with local civil society.

### *The role of the European Parliament*

The new role of the European Parliament (EP) after Lisbon was mentioned. The EP contributes to the formulation of long-term strategies; it must ratify Treaties and must be consulted on CFSP. It also approves the High Representative and has regular debates with her.

The EP is also taking a greater role than expected thanks to its budgetary and legislative power. Not only does it jointly legislate on foreign instruments, together with the Council, but it also adopts their budgets – including the EEAS budget and the civilian missions' budgets, but not the military ones. The EP is currently pushing for an increase of Budget heading 4, "the EU as a global player" in the next Multi-annual Financial Framework in order to strengthen EU external action.

### *The use of development money for conflict prevention and peacebuilding*

One participant declared that although both development and security are very important and interconnected, EU development funding should be focused on the poor and should not fund conflict prevention and security activities.

Other participants replied that conflict prevention and peacebuilding were actually development action and are included in the OECD/DAC eligibility criteria. It does not mean that reformed development assistance should be used for military purposes. But there are many conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities which have absolutely no military aspect and aim at tackling root causes of conflicts, for instance, in fragile states. The 2011 World Development Report<sup>8</sup>, from the World Bank, reinforced this paradigm shift towards more effective and useful engagement in developing countries.

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<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*

### Panel 3: Spain's Peacebuilding Priorities at the EU

The third session included presentations by Elena Gómez Castro, Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Deputy Director of Security Affairs and Peacekeeping Missions and Alberto de Blas Pombo, Spanish Ministry of Defence, European Union Unit. Presentations were followed by comments from Sophie Haspeslagh, Conciliation Resources and Chair of EPLO's Steering Committee. The session was chaired by Andreu Bassols Soldevila, European Institute for the Mediterranean.

#### *Re-defining CFSP and CSDP goals*

Several participants mentioned the need for a redefinition of the goals of CFSP and of CSDP missions. They explained it should not be about bringing stability only. It is not about the short-term absence of violence, but rather about improving relationships between governments and local population. One participant said the **missions' goal could be to bring sustainable stability in line with human rights and human security concerns, by making sure that after a mission has left, a similar one will not be necessary five years later.** They reaffirmed the need for long-term strategic approaches to crisis and conflicts, instead of *ad hoc* responses.

One participant insisted that the EU had a real added value in promoting conflict prevention – part of it stemming from its Member States' historical experiences of democratic transitions.

It was also mentioned that the most effective tool for the EU to bring about positive changes was its enlargement process. However, some participants raised the fact that the EU was losing its attractiveness and overall its legitimacy as a different (?) and normative power. One participant also said that in cases where the enlargement perspective was not relevant, the need for a coordinated approach of all EU and Member States instruments was particularly needed in order to have an impact.

The attempts of the EU at influencing other countries were also discussed. It was mentioned that pure criticism from an outsider was not effective because it could be seen as a threat to state sovereignty. One participant also said that the most difficult was not to analyse the issues at stake, but rather to design an effective answer to tackle them. Another participant mentioned the importance of developing the EU's expertise, through Divisions such as the one on Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation, and to draw on civil society's analysis to better anticipate and design these responses to conflict and crises.

The difficulty to get Member States to unite in foreign policy was also very much discussed. One participant explained that the EU's added value has to do with tackling root causes of conflict through a long-term and coordinated approach<sup>9</sup>, and that conflict prevention and peacebuilding is not a controversial topic between Member States. Therefore the participant suggested **the EEAS should focus on conflict prevention to draw consensus between Member States, as a first step to move forward with CFSP in general.**

#### *The role of civil society*

The important role of civil society in the implementation of CSFP, and more particularly CSDP, missions was also discussed. Participants explained that CSOs can be very useful sources of information for early warning and conflict assessment. They can help design the exit strategy of a CSDP mission. They can also participate in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the missions, in order to increase their accountability and effectiveness.

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<sup>9</sup> [Thematic Evaluation of European Commission Support to Conflict Prevention and Peace Building](#), EC, 2011.



### *Spain's commitment to CSFP*

According to most of the participants, CFSP is fundamental for Spain and the country has been firmly committed to this policy. Spain has always answered EU's requests for missions, for example, in Lebanon. Every time Spain supported a mission, it contributed to its deployment. Spain is actively involved in three military CSDP missions (Atalanta, EUTM Somalia and Althea) and in eight civilian missions.

Spain strongly supports the development of capabilities for swift deployment of CSDP missions. In this respect, it has actively participated in the pooling and sharing initiative and favours its continuation and extension. With regards to this issue, a participant asked whether such an initiative could also be replicated for civilian activities.

Some participants highlighted the imbalance between civilian and military CSDP missions with 16 missions out of 24 being civilian ones. For civilian missions, a Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) exists, but there is no counterpart for military missions.

Spain supports the creation of an EU permanent civil-military planning and conduct capability. For instance, one of the obstacles to an intervention of the EU in Libya was the lack of such a body. However, due to the current financial situation, this project, which would require significant investment, is on hold.

Some participants deplored the fact that despite its important participation at operational levels, Spanish nationals were under-represented at high-level positions within the EEAS.

Finally, Spain is in favour of a good symmetry between civilian and military capabilities. One participant argued it was necessary to raise awareness among EU institutions and citizens on the added value of the military, including dealing with intra-EU natural or terrorist disasters. Another one rather emphasized that military means should always be a last resource option to complement civilian capabilities.

### *On staffing of CSDP missions*

Some participants raised again the issue of staffing in CSDP missions and questioned the appropriateness of having people with a military background heading civilian missions. For one participant, the problem is stemming from the fact that Member States are not sending the most appropriate or qualified civilians to head missions. Participants overall agreed that ensuring the most qualified and appropriate people are appointed in CSDP missions is a key factor for their success.

Other participants also emphasized that **Member States should make sure deployed staff is properly trained on CSDP procedures and on the overall EU intervention and political objectives towards the host country.**

#### **Civil Society Dialogue Network**

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project funded by the European Commission aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and EU policymakers. The CSDN contributes to strengthening international and regional capacity for conflict prevention and post-conflict co-operation. The CSDN is managed by EPLO, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, in cooperation with the EEAS and the EC.

For more information about the Civil Society Dialogue Network, please visit the [EPLO website](#).