

## Civil Society Dialogue Network Meeting

### The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Action: Gathering Civil Society Input

Wednesday, 30 January 2013, Brussels

#### Meeting Report

#### 1. Introduction

This is a report of the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) meeting on the 'European Union's (EU's) Comprehensive Approach to External Action' which took place on Wednesday 30th January in Brussels. The meeting brought together representatives from a range of EU institutions, Member States' representatives and representatives from civil society, including Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), think-tanks and the academic community.

The European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission (EC) are currently developing a Communication on the Comprehensive Approach which should clarify how the EU can best implement its commitment to comprehensive action in third countries.

The meeting was therefore timely and provided an opportunity for an exchange of views and experiences to inform this process. A discussion paper on the EU and the Comprehensive Approach was prepared by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) and circulated to participants prior to the meeting in order to help frame the discussion<sup>1</sup>.

The meeting was structured into three sessions.

**Session one: A comprehensive Approach for the EU: Civil Society's perspectives** provided an opportunity for more structured interventions on the key elements of the Comprehensive Approach by the EEAS and reactions from EPLO, as well as discussions on the scope of a Comprehensive Approach as well as the gaps and barriers to implementation.

**Session two: The Comprehensive Approach – specific aspects** allowed space for deeper discussion of specific topics, including the relationship of EU policies such as humanitarian affairs, development and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to an EU Comprehensive Approach.

**Session three: An EU Comprehensive Approach in conflict-affected countries** enabled civil society actors to present and discuss experiences of and lessons from EU comprehensive action in conflict-affected countries.

This report captures the key points made and discussed by the participants in the meeting and was collated by the meeting rapporteur *Sarah Bayne of theIDLgroup*. Although the meeting was not held under the Chatham House Rule, the opinions and recommendations presented during the discussions are not attributed to any individual participant or participating institution, nor do they represent the views of the organisers. For more information about the meeting, please get in touch with Josephine Liebl at EPLO ([jl Liebl@eplo.org](mailto:jl Liebl@eplo.org)).

Sections two and three summarise the two formal presentations from the EEAS and EPLO during session one which served to both inform and frame the meeting. Section four captures the key messages and recommendations emerging from the ensuing interventions and discussions amongst round-table participants. Section four is organised thematically, rather than in line with the meeting structure, in order to avoid repetition and to highlight recurrent issues and areas of convergence and divergence amongst participants. Some of the more structured interventions

---

<sup>1</sup> To download the discussion points, please visit the [CSDN website](#).

from civil society in relation to experiences of the implementation of a Comprehensive Approach in conflict-affected countries presented during session three are highlighted within boxes.

## 2. The Comprehensive Approach – an EEAS perspective

Bert Versmessen, Assistant to the Deputy Secretary General of the EEAS, presented the EEAS's perspective on the key elements of the Comprehensive Approach in relation to the goal and scope, the underlying principles, obstacles and approaches to implementation. These are outlined below.

The Comprehensive Approach is not a **goal** in itself, but a means to achieve greater impact and results. The **scope** should be consistent with the ambitious commitments in relation to External Action contained within the Treaties; this implies a broad focus that moves beyond crisis management and encompasses the full conflict cycle combining short and long-term actions.

A Comprehensive Approach is not about defining policy, but about *how* policy is made and implemented. Responding to the complexity and various phases of a conflict cycle requires the use of different instruments, sequenced and combined in appropriate manner. This is an iterative process and inevitably the task is not easy.

The **principles** of a Comprehensive Approach include:

- Collective ownership and responsibility: no one actor can claim the approach
- Obligation of transparency: this necessitates information sharing and coordination
- Action that is context not instrument driven
- Respecting the specificity and principles underpinning the different instruments (humanitarian, development etc.) whilst also considering the wider policy mix

The **obstacles** to implementing a Comprehensive Approach can be traced back to a number of sources: ideological; institutional structures and cultures, the different time-lines and decision making processes relating to instruments; legal issues (e.g. use of resources on military material); and political will to engage in EU processes and structures.

**Implementing** a Comprehensive Approach requires a number of key steps:

- Joint shared analysis which drives the policy mix and sequencing instruments and is updated regularly.
- A joint strategy that defines a political end state (examples include the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel or the EU's Strategic Framework to the Horn of Africa).
- Supporting cooperative behaviour between institutions and actors, through for example, collective training or the development of appropriate incentives.
- Enhancing the flexibility and speed of decision making relating to of financial instruments. Here there is scope for improving the rules.
- Recognising the central role of Delegations by empowering them to input into joint analysis and engage with local actors.
- Acting in concert with the EU Member States (MS).
- Engaging other actors beyond the EU.

Mr. Versmessen finished by noting that, whilst they are not insignificant, the barriers to an EU Comprehensive Approach can be overcome. Evidence from Mali suggests the approach is starting to work in practice: actors have come together in a joined up manner and are considering the response from different perspectives (development, humanitarian, political and diplomatic). *'It can work in practice, we now need to make it work in theory'*.

### **3. The Comprehensive Approach – an EPLO perspective**

Catherine Woollard of EPLO outlined some of the key discussion points prepared ahead of the meeting. She focused on EPLO's understanding of the Comprehensive Approach before examining the key obstacles, as well as her observations of the objections and areas of debate between different actors. These are outlined below.

EPLO subscribes to a broader understanding of a Comprehensive Approach which moves beyond a narrow civil/ military definition. Although CSDP is an important component of comprehensive action within an overall strategy - as is the case in the South Sudan strategy - it is not the only tool.

There is a need for a longer-term approach in order to meet the objectives for external action as defined within the Treaties. Furthermore, the comparative advantage of the EU, in terms of the ability to use different activities and engage in the long-term are lost if it focuses on short-term crisis response.

Obstacles and objections to the development of a Comprehensive Approach:

- Objections raised by MS to the development and use of a Comprehensive Approach by EU. These are founded on the fear the Comprehensive Approach will reduce the importance of and progress in relation to CSDP, in particular military CSDP.
- Objections raised by development actors. These are based on a concern that that the Comprehensive Approach may lead to politicisation of development cooperation.
- Concerns raised by humanitarian actors about the impact of the Comprehensive Approach on the adherence to humanitarian principles.
- Very strong resistance to integration from Directorate General (DG) for Trade on the basis that trade should not be used to support broader objectives.

Ms Woollard concluded by underlining the importance of an integrated approach for effective EU external action and emphasised that, if implemented effectively, a Comprehensive Approach would provide MS with a stronger incentive to work through the EU.

### **4. The Comprehensive Approach – Participants' perspectives**

Many participants spoke about the importance of a Comprehensive Approach for more effective EU external action. It was felt to be an opportune moment to define the approach given the internal and external context of the EU. From an internal perspective, the EEAS is not yet fully consolidated and there are ongoing discussions around the next financial perspectives, thus providing internal room for manoeuvre for adjustments necessary for the effective implementation of a Comprehensive Approach. From an external perspective, the Arab Spring has provided new contextual challenges and examples of different actors working together through Task Forces. Concrete examples of where the approach has enhanced impact and brought benefits in practice would help build a strong case amongst the various actors and institutions.

#### **4.1 The scope of the comprehensive approach**

The scope (the 'what') of the Comprehensive Approach - in terms of the mix of instruments, range of actors and institutions involved - should be defined by and explicitly linked to the purpose (the 'why'). Participants concurred that the overall purpose or *ambitions* of the Comprehensive Approach should go beyond short-term crisis response to encompass all stages of the conflict cycle and a positive definition of peace (i.e. beyond the absence of violence) in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty. This requires the involvement of a wide range of institutions, instruments and policies. This *broad approach* maximises the EU's potential for preventative action and helps ensure that individual instruments, particularly Civilian Crisis Management (CMM) mechanisms, are not stretched beyond their intended purpose as the context evolves.

Participants noted that ambitions need to be framed by what is possible in order for the process not to run into a 'brick wall'. This *pragmatic approach* recognises that it may not be possible for actors and objectives to be integrated and coherent all of the time. Particular attention should therefore be focused on limiting the most damaging and counterproductive instances of incoherence and poor coordination.

Within these parameters, the purpose of a Comprehensive Approach should differ according to the particular situation and be based on a shared contextual understanding informed by conflict analysis (see section 4.4 below on conflict analysis). *'It cannot be a blueprint but needs to be tailored towards the specific context and point in time'*.

Consideration was given to the geographical scope of a Comprehensive Approach (the where?). It was noted that in some locations, such as the European Neighbourhood, the EU is deploying a broad range of instruments. In others the EU's engagement is limited to humanitarian and development assistance. Questions were therefore raised whether the EU's global ambitions as a humanitarian actor may conflict with geographically more narrow ambitions regarding the implementation of the comprehensive approach to a specific country, region or conflict. Some participants argued for a new EU global strategy that would support a Comprehensive Approach and define its geographical scope (for example, a successor to the European Security Strategy). Others felt that the EU's global vision and normative commitments are already evident within the Treaties<sup>2</sup> as well as the current EU Security Strategy which highlights the importance of a human security approach. Time and effort needs now to be focused on articulating the actions necessary to meet these commitments within (country/ regional) mid-level strategies. *'There are many ways to be more effective without developing a grand vision'*.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The forthcoming Communication should adopt a *broad understanding* of the Comprehensive Approach - encompassing all stages of the conflict cycle, not just crisis response - whilst at the same time clarifying the geographical ambitions of the approach.
- The purpose of a Comprehensive Approach will differ according to the particular situation being addressed and should therefore be defined by a *contextual understanding* informed by shared conflict analysis.
- Implementing a Comprehensive Approach requires a *pragmatic approach* with ambitions framed by what is possible. At a minimum, attention should be paid to addressing the most damaging and counter-productive instances of incoherence and poor coordination.
- Continue to develop mid-level strategies (country and regional) as a mechanism to support the implementation of a Comprehensive Approach.

## **4.2 Understanding the barriers to implementing a Comprehensive Approach**

A number of discussants highlighted the importance of taking a historical perspective when seeking to understand the barriers and challenges to the implementation of a Comprehensive Approach. This is because the notion is not new, but has its roots in the 2001 Communication on Conflict Prevention (COM 2001) and is an evolution of the discourse around the security/development nexus<sup>3</sup> and aid effectiveness. The latter considers how the EU can obtain greater impact with the instruments it has. It would therefore be worthwhile looking back at what has prevented earlier initiatives from moving forward as well as considering lessons from ongoing efforts towards greater integration (see box 2 on Afghanistan and Kosovo).

---

<sup>2</sup> Article 21.2 (c) of the Lisbon Treaty states the objective of EU external action is the 'preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security'.

<sup>3</sup> See Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Security and Development (2007).

Given that a key challenge in the past has been institutional bottle-necks and a lack of staff capacity to tap into concepts and build the bridges towards a wider and more integrated approach it was considered advisable to ask the following questions: Do the post-Lisbon institutional and decision making structures and capacities have, or are likely to have, the ability to address these issues? Are, for example the relevant units (in the EEAS and DG DEVCO) adequately staffed? Can EU priorities and internal EEAS processes become more linked?

Beyond these institutional issues, participants highlighted challenges posed by the varying degree of commitment and political will of MS towards the integration of tools and the coordination of actions; and differences in the definitions of security (human vs. state) on the part of different actors. In more practical terms, the planning timelines and horizons of the different tools, poor sequencing of interventions, weak partnerships, as well as the limitations created by a lack of physical presence due to security issues, were noted as key challenges to the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach.

Experiences such as EU engagement in Chad in 2008 (described in the third session) exemplified challenges relating to poor sequencing and choice of partners. In this instance, although the security perimeter was secured by EUFOR Chad, delays in supporting a locally led police presence alongside the weakness of this police presence led to an absence of security within the perimeter. This highlights the fact that intervention is *'only as good as the weakest link'*.

There was recognition amongst participants that progress has already been made in some areas. For example, institutions have been and continue to move towards acting more comprehensively; more effort is being made to bring in the views of civil society into the process; there have been advancements in terms of developing approaches and capacities in relation to conflict analysis and mediation; regional strategies have been developed; and delegations reinforced. CSDP is becoming more embedded within a political framework.

#### **Box 1: Barriers to creating a Comprehensive Approach – lessons from Afghanistan and Kosovo**

The **EU's engagement in Afghanistan** has seen moves from a coordinated to a more integrated approach. This has taken place through development of the EU Action Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan, the 'double hatting' of the role EUSR and the Head of Delegation, increased Member State and Delegation coordination in areas such as human rights, and increased cooperation between the EUSR and the EUPOL mission.

Notwithstanding these efforts, the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan has faced several critical challenges.

- The Action Plan requires a sharper focus, more regular monitoring and updating, particularly in order for it to become adapted to the political realities post 2014 and the requirements for an exit strategy.
- The establishment of bi-lateral missions in the police sector have risked undermining a comprehensive approach in that sector.
- It is challenging for the EU to launch and maintain a meaningful Comprehensive Approach when the political agenda for international action is prepared and planned by others. Rather than determining its own Comprehensive Approach the EU has to adapt itself to the approach of others.
- In practical terms, effectiveness has been hampered by a lack of physical presence with many staff based outside the country. Those who live within the country are behind 'high walls'. This undermines dialogue with local civil society and the possibilities of meaningful support to national ownership.

- Varying staff levels and skill sets, organisational cultures and values, and poor information sharing amongst the different institutions involved has undermined cooperation.

The **EU's engagement in Kosovo** involves a wide range of different actors and instruments, including under CSDP - the EU's Rule of Law mission (EULEX); the Office of the European Union in Kosovo/ EUSR, Accession Instruments (Instrument for Pre-Accession) and the European Partnership for Kosovo.

Findings of the Court of Auditor's report for Kosovo (2012) as well as EPLO's own analysis suggest that there have been a number of barriers to effective, comprehensive and coherent EU action in Kosovo:

Lack of identification of clear objectives joint objectives for different policy areas within an overall theory of change. This has led to a lack of clarity of the roles and comparative advantages of different actors and instruments and challenges in measuring results.

Poor integration and sequencing of short-term instruments and planning horizons with longer-term pre-accession instruments.

There are however some signs of improvement. In particular in relation to exploiting synergies between the accession process and the high-level dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo where progress in the dialogue has been explicitly linked to the accession process.

#### **Recommendations:**

In order to further identify (and therefore address) the barriers to implementing a Comprehensive Approach the EU should:

- Identify what has prevented earlier (similar) initiatives from moving forward.
- Consider what can be learned from on-going efforts towards greater integration.
- Reflect on whether the post-Lisbon structures and processes are likely to address the barriers identified.

### **4.3 Understanding the tensions between the different objectives, approaches and perspectives of actors and instruments**

There are inevitable tensions between political and security objectives and actors, particularly those relating to Counter Terrorism (CT) activities, Counter Insurgency (COIN), and development and humanitarian actors. In particular there are concerns that a Comprehensive Approach will lead one sphere to dominate and/ or negatively impact on another. Participants noted that for a Comprehensive Approach to be successful it is vital to be clear on the nature of these tensions in any particular context and to have a clear strategy to overcome them. The second session provided space for deeper discussion about these issues.

#### **Addressing the impact of the Comprehensive Approach on principled humanitarian action**

Representatives of humanitarian organisations observed that, in the same way that a Comprehensive Approach is a tool for an objective, the principle of neutrality is a critical tool to ensure the access necessary for meeting humanitarian objectives. Integration within a Comprehensive Approach guided by political objectives can undermine the extent to which humanitarian NGOs are perceived as neutral and impartial and pose risks to the security of humanitarian personnel. Where humanitarian agencies have been integrated under political leadership of UN Integrated Missions, they have sometimes felt it necessary to 'take a step back' in order to maintain security and access to affected populations. A similar situation could be envisaged for the Comprehensive Approach.

In the context of an EU Comprehensive Approach it was felt that public communication pose the most serious threats to the perceptions of neutrality of humanitarian actors - particularly where statements (often by Member States) explicitly link humanitarian action to a political strategy.

### **Integrating Development into a comprehensive approach**

It was noted that fears around politicisation of development assistance are largely unfounded. There are, for example, appropriate safeguards in place to prevent the use of development funds for non-development objectives. What is of more concern however, is the debate about a Comprehensive Approach becoming dominated by a focus on shorter-term crisis management rather than longer-term development approach, thus crowding out the space to think about and address the structural drivers that have created the conflicts in the first place. It is therefore critical to frame the Comprehensive Approach as a broad approach that encompasses longer-term development objectives.

The efforts being made to improve the flexibility of development assistance were welcomed as a positive step towards enhancing the conflict prevention potential of development activities within a Comprehensive Approach. However, concerns were raised that the limits on the number of focal sectors and a move towards greater concentration and predictability of efforts can undermine or run counter to this objective. At the same time, the push to demonstrate the results of development assistance risks dis-incentivising support for prevention of conflict since this is an area where it is harder to demonstrate results. For development cooperation to be an effective conflict prevention tool within a Comprehensive Approach there is a need for greater room for manoeuvre on focal sectors and greater incentives for preventative action. Development cooperation needs to be more focused on conflict related sectors (e.g. governance) and the assistance provided across all sectors should be implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner.

### **The role of CSDP and MS engagement within a Comprehensive Approach**

It was understood that MS have concerns that a Comprehensive Approach may dilute, or lead to a lack of progress in, the CSDP. However, as highlighted earlier, discussants felt, that the EU's normative commitments cannot be met without the integration of short-term CSDP with longer-term engagement. For this to happen Member States need to decisively support CSDP within a Comprehensive Approach which is already the case for a number of EU Member States.

Even where CSDP missions may be successful in their own terms (e.g. training missions in Somalia) if they are not part of a broader approach they will not contribute to, or may even undermine, the overall objectives of EU engagement in a particular context. Specific (and related) concerns were raised that a disproportionate focus on relationship building with the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS within the framework of CSDP may undermine the potential for EU support to a broader range of relevant institutions relevant to conflict management (e.g. focused on the protection of civilians) and disregard the EU's principles.

It was noted that a Comprehensive Approach would bring benefits to CSDP missions. Emphasising these may help to diminish the Member States' concerns and enhance their willingness to engage. For example, following the norms and approaches set out in EU policy would enhance their quality (particularly in terms of their relationship with local populations) and a Comprehensive Approach would help mitigate against missions becoming bogged down by facilitating more effective transition strategies.

Some participants considered that a Comprehensive Approach may be seriously undermined if MS pursue parallel policies, especially if it comes at the detriment of the respective MS support to collective EU action, e.g. through seconding national experts; however, others felt that bilateral initiatives do not necessarily undermine CSDP missions and expectations in relation to MS engagement should remain focused on what is realistic.

<b>Recommendations</b>
------------------------

To address the tensions between differing objectives, approaches and perspectives within a Comprehensive Approach the EU should:

- Ensure that public communications do not impact negatively on perceptions of humanitarian actors as neutral e.g. by explicitly linking humanitarian action to political or security objectives.
- Consider, on a case by case basis, the potential risks of a Comprehensive Approach to principled humanitarian action in order to inform the extent to which humanitarian actors should be integrated.
- Ensure that there is sufficient room for manoeuvre on the choice of focal sectors and incentives for the inclusion of preventative action within development programming.
- Emphasise the benefits that a Comprehensive Approach can bring to CSDP missions (for example by facilitating exit strategies) in order to build support amongst EU Member States.

#### **4.4 From Rhetoric to reality, overcoming barriers and operationalising a comprehensive approach**

##### **Using joint analysis as a starting point**

The importance of joint analysis amongst the different actors as a starting point for a Comprehensive Approach was a recurrent theme throughout the discussions. Common Analysis can help to foster agreement amongst different EU actors around the overall theory of change (ToC) in relation to a particular crisis or conflict and support common ownership and buy in of the ensuing strategy. It can also help to identify the added value and contributions that different institutions, actors and instruments can bring. It was noted that there is increasing evidence to support the ToC contained in documents such as the World Bank's World Development Report on Conflict and Security (2011) and New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (2011) that can be drawn upon in this process. The EEAS has made progress towards developing a framework for conflict analysis. The priority is now to move towards 'second generation issues', considering who should be part of the process and what type of information needs to be included whilst recognising that there is often a trade off between the breadth of participation and depth of analysis.

Participants suggested that joint analysis should be undertaken in Brussels and at a country level with the different institutions involved, regularly reviewed and fed into the development of common strategies. It was noted that consultations within the framework of EIDHR can provide a vehicle for integrating the perspectives of civil society and other actors and it is particularly important to seek the views of those living beyond the capital in order to foster locally informed responses. This analysis should also encompass the perspectives of international actors beyond the EU, since the buy in of increasingly influential emerging donors towards a Comprehensive Approach may impact on its effectiveness.

It was noted that moving from analysis to strategy development and decision making requires strong facilitation and how the EEAS approaches and resources this process will be critical.

##### **The value of common strategies including regional strategies.**

A number of participants highlighted the importance of common strategies in supporting a Comprehensive Approach, particularly regional strategies. However, these need to be transformative rather than simply a rhetorical repackaging of existing approaches. The case of intervention in Chad (focused on the crisis in Darfur) was raised as an example of where the absence of a regional analysis, approach and strategy undermined the potential for EU engagement to address the wider conflict issues. As with the development of analysis it is particularly important that the views of civil society are also reflected in the development of the strategy in order to ensure the Comprehensive Approach supports locally driven approaches.



## **Creating institutions fit for purpose**

Being comprehensive is about a new way of working within and amongst institutions and actors. Addressing institutional barriers (highlighted earlier in the discussion) requires a change management approach that addresses the skills and incentives of the different actors involved and is driven by strong leadership. It was considered that a Political Economy Analysis (PEA) of the different institutions involved would help to reveal the incentive structures and factors that drive actors as well as the barriers to more integrated ways of working.

It was noted that the new EU Delegations have a particularly important role in supporting a Comprehensive Approach and coordinating the different actors and instruments (see Box 2). It is therefore important that they are consulted and that their role sufficiently emphasised in the drafting of the Communication. However, it should not be assumed that the Lisbon Treaty has automatically enhanced the space of interaction amongst MS. A study of the perspectives of MS described by one participant suggests that some consider the formation of the EEAS to have in fact narrowed the space for interaction. This is due to the absence of opportunities for structured periodic updates created by the rotating presidencies.

### **Box 2 Supporting others to take a Comprehensive Approach– experiences in Lebanon**

Combining support from different EU external instruments – the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the Instrument for Stability (IfS) - has enabled the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) to be more effective in its work to encourage action to address the legacy of the past in Lebanon. Support from EIDHR allowed the organisation to work directly with victims groups whilst support under the IfS provided an opportunity for follow up work with more formal institutions and the government. Working in close contact with the EU Delegation has provided some political cover for the work. Utilising different instruments has meant that the EU has been able to support a 'process' rather than simply a project - significantly enhancing the sustainability of the action.

## **Practical approaches to engaging and integrating different actors (including the Member States)**

- **The role of the European Union Special Representative (EUSR).**

Different opinions were expressed on the extent to which the role of the EUSR supports a comprehensive approach. In some cases the role has not been particularly effective. For example in Libya the overlapping mandates between the EUSR and other EU officials may have led to competition. 'Double hatting' of the role EUSR and the Head of Delegation was considered as an effective approach to overcome these difficulties and to enhance the consistency across different actors and instruments. Some discussants expressed a note of caution however, since it can be challenging for one person to have multiple roles, particularly when they have to defend different and sometime competing interests. Drawing on the experiences of the United Nations (UN) Special Representatives may be helpful in considering the cost/ benefits of the approach.

- **Joint programming within a Comprehensive Approach**

The new development cooperation programming instructions emphasise the role of EU Delegations, in particular the Head of Delegation, in coordinating development programming with and amongst EU Member States. This approach is being piloted in a number of countries, such as Sudan. It was suggested that lessons from this experience could be built upon in order to inform approaches for better coordination and integration of different actors and instruments within a Comprehensive Approach.

- **Delegating decision making to the country level**

A theme emerging during the discussions was the importance of delegating decision making to the country i.e. EU delegation level in order to ensure that decisions are driven by local realities rather than the political preferences of decision makers in Brussels and MS capitals. Examples were provided of contexts where agreement at the country level amongst different actors had been superseded by counter-productive higher level decisions undermining the effectiveness of action and potential for a comprehensive approach.

- **Engaging the MS**

Participants emphasised that the MS could and should be using the EU more often as a vehicle for collective action. Different ideas for enhancing the engagement of MS in a Comprehensive Approach were presented. Some considered it worth initially focusing a Comprehensive Approach on the EU institutions and instruments before working towards greater MS involvement. Others saw involving MS in assessment teams as a good opportunity to consolidate their engagement an early stage.

It was noted that are various dis-incentives for MS to working through the EU, even though it would increase Europe's overall effectiveness. Understanding and addressing the incentive structures surrounding MS activity in relation to the EU would create a better understanding how the MS can be engaged more effectively.

### **Recommendations**

**In order to overcome the barriers and better operationalise a comprehensive approach the EU should:**

- Undertake joint conflict analysis involving the different EU actors to inform common strategies and foster agreement on the overall Theory of Change (ToC).
- Draw on emerging evidence on ToC in relation to conflict, security, peacebuilding and development when developing common strategies (for example contained within the World Development Report 2011).
- Ensure conflict analysis is informed by local perspectives (including those of people beyond the capital) in order to inform responses which reflect local needs and realities.
- Adopt a change management approach to encourage integrated working between and amongst institutions and actors. This could be informed by a PEA of the incentive structures and barriers to integrated working.
- Ensure that EU Delegations are adequately consulted, and their role sufficiently emphasised, in the drafting of the forthcoming Communication.
- Ensure that decisions relating to EU actions are informed by insights from the delegation level.
- Draw on the experiences and lessons from the utilisation of UN Special Representatives when considering the benefits and risks of a 'double-hatted' EUSR/ Head of Delegation role.
- Build on the experience and lessons of EU Delegations in coordinating development programming in order to consider their role in coordinating and integrating different actors and instruments within a Comprehensive Approach.
- Seek to better understand the incentives (and dis-incentives) for EU Member States to work through EU structures in order to consider how Member States could be engaged more effectively within a Comprehensive Approach.

**EU Member States should:**

- Decisively support the inclusion of CSDP missions in an integrated approach and ensure that they are adequately supported.