



# THE EU AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Gathering Civil Society Input

**Meeting Report**

---

Civil Society Dialogue Network

# Civil Society Dialogue Network

---

## Meeting Report

### **The EU and Gender-Responsive Conflict Analysis: Gathering Civil Society Input**

19 September 2023

The overall objective of the meeting was to gather input on how the EU could enhance the way its conflict analysis processes, and the policies, programming and actions they inform, are conflict-sensitive and responsive to gender equality goals and to advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

The meeting brought together 31 participants, including 16 civil society experts, 13 officials from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission (EC), and 2 officials from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The discussions were held under the Chatham House Rule. There was no attempt to reach a consensus during the meeting or through this report, which presents the key points and recommendations put forward by the civil society participants.

#### **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 cooperation 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.



This document was produced with the financial assistance of the EU. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of EPLO and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU.

© EPLO 2023

Permission is granted for reproduction and use of the materials. Please acknowledge your source when using the materials and notify EPLO.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

---

1. The EU should institutionalise further the need for all of its conflict analysis processes to be gender-responsive, and it should strengthen its leadership support, internal capacities and resources for gender-responsive conflict analysis.
2. The EU should strengthen how gender equality is addressed in, and in response to, the questions asked in its conflict analysis processes.
3. The EU should consult and involve diverse civil society actors (and other partners and stakeholders), particularly women's organisations, on a more systematic basis as part of its conflict analysis processes.
4. The EU should ensure that its conflict analysis processes involve verifying, socialising and adapting the analysis to respond to decision-making needs related to the EU's peace and conflict actions and programming, and ensuring that all relevant EU staff use it.
5. The EU should ensure that participatory conflict analysis processes are carried out in a manner that is conflict-sensitive, trauma-informed and conducive to building trust between the EU and local civil society actors.
6. The EU should strengthen its processes to update conflict analysis on a regular basis, to systematically manage knowledge of conflict analysis and to monitor how accountable to gender-responsiveness the actions and programming conflict analysis serves to inform have been.
7. The EU should strengthen its support to partners' ability to carry out gender-responsive conflict analysis, including through adequate funding, particularly for civil society organisations (especially women's organisations).

## FULL POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---

### 1. The EU should institutionalise further the need for all of its conflict analysis processes to be gender-responsive, and it should strengthen its leadership support, internal capacities and resources for gender-responsive conflict analysis.

- Gender analysis must be integrated into all conflict analysis. An assessment of gender equality should not be approached as an add-on to existing analysis. Gender analysis is a core facet of quality conflict analysis and necessary to capture:
  - what are conflict and violence in a given context, and how they are experienced by different population groups (this may include examining increases in domestic violence and other forms of less-visible gendered violence);
  - what are the different root causes (e.g. social, economic and political exclusion) and drivers of conflict (e.g. the roles that diverse women, men and gender norms may have in fuelling conflict), resilience factors, and opportunities to strengthen inclusion and resolve conflict (e.g. in relation to demobilising male combatants);
  - who are the relevant stakeholders and conflict actors, what are the relationships between and within these groups, and which institutions do they use to maintain power and control decisions;
  - what actions should be avoided to prevent doing harm, as not adopting a gender lens means that interventions will be more likely to reinforce inequalities that may fuel conflict (e.g. by supporting local governance structures that are exclusionary);
  - which interventions will be responsive to the specific needs and priorities of different groups, and will have a sustainable impact in addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict.
- Gender-responsive conflict analysis and / or women-led conflict analysis is too often dismissed by EU staff and partners as irrelevant or not valuable to decision-makers. The EU should deepen its efforts to raise awareness about, and increase support for, gender-responsive conflict analysis within its institutions. This may include:
  - mandating and promoting and mandating trainings on these issues;<sup>1</sup>
  - recognising that staff may not be familiar with gender-related concepts (and/or unwilling to focus on them). To manage this, it can be useful to make the topic accessible by talking about power as code for 'gender dynamics', or how inclusion and understanding gender violence supported effective decision-making in other similar contexts, and how asking questions about the drivers of the conflict and relationships between the key stakeholders, etc., can progressively highlight how gendered these issues are;
  - disseminating summary papers on different thematic issues that explain why adopting a gender lens is essential when analysing and addressing them, and that provide examples of questions to ask to determine the different ways gender dynamics may affect the issues and which types of responses may be helpful;
  - regularly bringing together staff responsible for specific thematic or geographic areas and organising discussions on their areas of focus that involve adopting a gender-responsive lens;
  - sharing good-practice examples of gender-responsive conflict analysis internally (see recommendation 4).
- The EU should strengthen requirements that all conflict analyses be gender-responsive, ensure that staff with expertise on gender and conflict work on all analyses, and increase staff incentives to develop such expertise (including in EU delegations):
  - terms of reference should state systematically that conflict analysis must be gender-responsive;
  - external consultants employed for conflict analysis should have gender expertise.

---

<sup>1</sup> This should include raising awareness about the need for positionality and reflectivity – making sure that EU staff understand their own positions / experiences in relation to gender inequalities (i.e. that it is relevant to all people, not just others), how their gendered experiences affect their decision-making, etc.

- The EU should continue efforts to training and support senior staff in gender-responsive leadership, linked to their active encouragement and engagement with gender-responsive conflict analysis informing programming and actions.
- The EU should ensure that experts on gender equality and conflict hold power within the institutions, including in the European Commission (EC), European External Action Service (EEAS), Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, among diplomatic staff, and in the personnel of EU delegations – both temporary appointees and permanent staff. In EU delegations, gender focal points are often junior-level staff and disconnected from the work of other delegation colleagues (e.g. diplomatic and programming staff). This can challenge local women's rights organisations ability to access decision-makers as they are often directed to engage the gender focal point only, and be detrimental to the EU's ability to use their input.
- The EU should strengthen its monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes to document more comprehensively good and bad practices in carrying out gender-responsive conflict analysis, and to record how taking into account a gender lens has led to positive outcomes for people of different genders and in responding more effectively to conflict dynamics.

## **2. The EU should strengthen how gender equality is addressed in, and in response to, the questions asked in its conflict analysis processes.**

- The questions that should systematically be asked as part of conflict analysis processes should include questions focused on gender issues, including in relation to power distribution, social norms and dynamics of exclusion and inclusion. Responding to questions that are not addressing gender equality directly should still involve mainstreaming and considering gender issues, including with sub-questions / a sequenced approach with follow-up questions on gender issues, to develop further and dig deeper into initial findings.<sup>2</sup>
- Questions should examine the prevalence of, and increases in, different forms of violence at various levels of society, including forms of violence that are often gendered and less visible, such as domestic violence at the household level, and their impact (including in terms of trauma).
- Some (types of) questions should appear in every conflict analysis, however it is important to maintain a degree of flexibility and adapt other questions, and the sequencing of questions, to each context.
- Women, men, girls, boys and LGBTIQ+ people can be victims of conflict, perpetrators of violence, and/or agents for peace. Conflict analysis should always include questions to examine how diverse groups of people are:
  - affected differently by conflict and by the root causes and drivers of conflict, including by dynamics of exclusion, power imbalances, and gendered expectations of behaviour rooted in social norms;
  - contributing differently to the conflict, including by engaging in violence and/or by supporting, enforcing or following certain social norms;
  - pursuing efforts for peace and contributing to addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict.

Analysts should also adopt an intersectional approach and examine how other identity markers and group affiliation interplay with gender (e.g. age, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or lack thereof, urban or rural, (dis)ability, etc.).

- Conflict analysis should always include questions about social norms and roles, and their relations with peace, conflict, inclusion and exclusion. Masculinities are often overlooked in conflict analysis and should be included, particularly how male powerholders may support gender-transformative peace. This should involve examining:

---

<sup>2</sup> This was illustrated, inter alia, with the example of an analysis showing a lack of economic opportunities driving young men to join armed gangs in Tajikistan, with further research connecting this to social norms and expectations around manhood. Participants raised various examples of the importance of considering gender dynamics in relation to root causes and drivers of conflict in relation to security and justice services, land rights and access to land and natural resources, criminality, governance and political participation, livelihood opportunities, etc.

- what is socially expected of women, men, girls and boys and LGBTIQ+ people in relation to livelihoods, decision-making, protecting their family or community, pursuing violence, etc. For example, decisions by men to join armed groups or to engage in violent actions for economic reasons are often connected to gender norms around masculinity, which can also be sustained by women.
  - what happens when different genders do not conform to social norms, including in terms of exclusion and marginalisation, punishments, etc. (even when social norms are similar between communities or societies, responses to deviations from these norms may not be);
  - how conflict is perpetuating, undermining or changing social norms;
  - how social norms may be transformed to strengthen inclusion and contribute to peace.<sup>3</sup>
- Conflict analysis should always include questions to identify opportunities to pursue and support inclusion, gender equality and peace. These should be discussed and refined with the involvement of EU staff who will be using the analysis to inform EU engagements and programming, so as to ensure that the responses and recommendations drafted on the basis of the questions are as actionable as possible (see recommendation 4).
  - Conflict analysis processes, including the design of initial questions and the drafting of recommendations, should be adapted to the needs of each different context. The processes should be more directly informed by existing EU internal learning, evaluation and reporting processes, particularly in terms of integrating lessons learned on contributing to gender equality in the analysed contexts.
  - Analysts should recognise the value of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data should be disaggregated as much as possible to show how conflict affects diverse groups differently. Qualitative data is also essential to examine how conflict is experienced and driven, and how it may be addressed. Different types of qualitative data should be recognised as legitimate, expert input, including stories and lived experiences.

### **3. The EU should consult and involve diverse civil society actors (and other partners and stakeholders), particularly women’s organisations, on a more systematic basis as part of its conflict analysis processes.**

- Civil society actors in the contexts where the EU is engaging or considering engaging have expertise on the (gendered) needs, social norms, institutions, root causes and drivers of conflict, power relations, stakeholders, and initiatives and opportunities for peace – including in conflict-affected areas that the EU and other actors, such as the national government, may not have access to. Making conflict analysis processes participatory increases the quality and relevance of the analysis produced. Women’s rights organisations, in particular, are essential interlocutors in analysing the gendered nature of peace and conflict dynamics.
- The EU should consult and involve a diversity of civil society actors in its conflict analysis processes, recognising that civil society is not a homogeneous group and that actors may have divergent perspectives, experiences and interests (and sometimes be exclusionary themselves).<sup>4</sup>
- Participatory conflict analysis processes can themselves be transformative and contribute directly to the EU’s peacebuilding and conflict prevention objectives, and help bridge the gap between analysis and implementation:
  - they may help build and strengthen relations between the EU and local civil society actors, and increase the support of local populations for EU engagements based on, or adapted on the basis of, analysis local actors contributed to;
  - they may create a space for dialogue within and between community groups, which can help them come

<sup>3</sup> One example raised was that of religious norms and their interpretation or instrumentalisation, which can sometimes reinforce the marginalisation of women, but in relation to which entry points for greater inclusion can also sometimes be identified.

<sup>4</sup> One example that was raised to illustrate this point was the participant’s organisation carried out a conflict analysis in Myanmar following the 2021 coup, and consulting diverse population groups led them to realise that there were widely different experiences of the coup – the extent of which they would have missed otherwise.

up with solutions to their issues that they may implement and that the EU may support;

- they may create a safe space for marginalised actors and groups, e.g. women's rights organisations, youth-led organisations and LGBTQI+ organisations, to express themselves and speak openly, and be listened to by other civil society actors who may not usually engage with these groups.
- The EU should ensure that it does not only discuss 'women's issues' when it consults women's organisations, and conversely that it also discusses gender issues with other civil society actors.
- In addition to enhancing the quality of the analysis, participatory conflict analysis processes also help to map local civil society organisations, their work and expertise, and to build relationships with them. This is helpful to facilitate gathering new and updated information in a faster and less resource intensive way at a later time, particularly if there are sudden shifts in conflict dynamics that require adapting the EU's engagements. This can include being able to consult civil society actors more directly (e.g. by phone or over voice/text messages), than by organising workshops and formal consultations, and knowing where to access the analysis they produce. Building trusted relationships with civil society actors will also encourage them to share new developments and information with EU staff that may not yet have visibility at the national level.

#### **4. The EU should ensure that its conflict analysis processes involve verifying, socialising and adapting the analysis to respond to decision-making needs related to the EU's peace and conflict actions and programming, and ensuring that all relevant EU staff use it.**

- The EU should strengthen the involvement at all stages of the conflict analysis process of the EU staff, in delegations and in Brussels, who will lead the implementation of the findings and design the actions and programming that the analysis should inform. The analysis should include questions related to the future decisions and actions that EU staff are considering, particularly with regard to promoting gender equality and addressing exclusion.
- The EU should organise, at the start and at the end of a conflict analysis process, sessions with all relevant EU staff to explain and develop shared understandings of the process, why a gender perspective is critical, what are gender norms and roles, dynamics of exclusion and inclusion, power structures, the connections between gender, peace and conflict, etc. The initial session can help to design and carry out conflict analysis processes in ways that are responsive to gender. The second session can help to ensure that findings are validated and adequately used to pursue gender-transformative actions and programming. Without direct involvement in these joint discussions, EU staff that do not focus on gender equality or peacebuilding may not recognise the relevance of these considerations for their work or how to implement recommendations.
  - It is helpful to include civil society organisations (particularly women's organisations) in the second verification session to ensure that findings are valid and recommendations for programming and actions can be implemented (in line with recommendation 5)
- In addition to the two sessions suggested above, when conflict analyses are completed, EU staff who led the process (and possible external experts) should train and socialise relevant EU colleagues on what the analysis should mean for every step of the work that they are doing (e.g. with regard to mitigating risks, developing or reporting on indicators, engaging with actors, identifying programming priorities, carrying out mediation efforts, engaging in political dialogue with high-level officials, etc.). It is not sufficient to share a conflict analysis document to get staff to understand how their work should be informed by the analysis, particularly with regard to pursuing gender-responsive actions and programming.
  - Integrating the analysis into decision-making related to programming and actions requires additional access to gender expertise to provide support and accompaniment for EU staff (particularly in delegations).
- If conflict analysis processes include scenario planning, the scenarios drafted should be explicit about the anticipated gendered impact and the effects on gender equality of the courses of action being considered.

- The recommendations included in conflict analyses should be mapped against specific EU programming and intervention priorities and entry points. The analysis should be concrete in identifying which EU actors should be doing what on the basis of the findings.
- The EU should strengthen its knowledge management and classification processes to ensure that conflict analysis is shared as widely as possible with relevant EU staff across the EC and the EEAS, including locally-engaged staff in the EU delegations. This should include:
  - refraining from restricting internal access to conflict analyses when they do not include sensitive information, and making summary or redacted versions of conflict analyses available more widely;
  - sharing and valuing civil society input that may not constitute a comprehensive conflict analysis but that is relevant and informs the work of EU staff (e.g. the gender focal point in an EU delegation may share with working-level colleagues and with high-level officials the points raised by women’s organisations).

**5. The EU should ensure that participatory conflict analysis processes are carried out in a manner that is conflict-sensitive, trauma-informed and conducive to building trust between the EU and local civil society actors.**

- Before engaging in a participatory conflict analysis process, it is essential to carry out a comprehensive desk review to determine what analysis is already available and what are the existing gaps in information – particularly regarding less visible forms of violence and the gendered aspects of peace and conflict. The EU should pay particular attention to the analysis produced by women’s organisations and other local civil society organisations led by marginalised groups, recognising that some of the relevant content they produce may not be labelled as ‘analysis’. This will help to ensure that consultations are not organised to gather information that is already available. It will also help to determine the optimal format for a participatory process, e.g. whether the EU should organise a joint workshop with civil society actors or engage local experts to gather input bilaterally.
- The EU should review the diverse identities (including gender) and positionality of its research teams and ensure that the people carrying out conflict analysis processes, including EU staff and external consultants, have the capacity to consult diverse population groups and analyse sensitive gender-related questions:
  - The EU should work with local experts, with gender expertise, to support desk reviews and to (help) carry out consultations and workshops with civil society actors as part of the conflict analysis process. Local experts have a more nuanced understanding of local dynamics and are well-positioned (a) to design the process and advise which questions to discuss, at what time, with which groups present, and how, and (b) to facilitate discussions in which participants will feel safe and able to speak openly. The colonial history of some EU member states, language barriers and the perception of European staff as ‘outsiders’, may make it more difficult for EU staff to facilitate open discussions with local stakeholders.
  - At the same time, it is also important to be sensitive to the dynamics that may exist between different population groups in the context and that may make it similarly difficult for local experts to facilitate discussions with all groups. As a result, the involvement of EU staff from outside the context, or other context or thematic experts, may sometimes be necessary. When they facilitate discussions, European staff should avoid ‘othering’ local civil society actors and thematic issues; this may require acknowledging parallels with dynamics that also exist in European countries (including in terms of violence and exclusion).
  - It is useful to ensure that there is a diversity of profiles represented within the conflict analysis teams, so that they may facilitate discussions with, and tap into the knowledge of, different groups. This should include guaranteeing that women facilitate discussions with women experts.



- The EU should ensure that the consultations it organises with civil society actors are safe spaces in which diverse participants are able to speak openly and honestly without risking negative consequences for their access, well-being and safety:
  - This should include organising women-only sessions as part of broader consultations. Otherwise, it may be difficult for women to speak openly about some of the issues they are facing (including gendered violence and exclusion), as this can provide space to speak more easily about the gendered aspects of the drivers and root causes of conflict, and the roles that women may play in addressing them.
  - It is necessary to ensure that civil society actors, particularly women and LGBTIQ+ participants, do not face reprisals from armed groups, the national government or other actors for participating in EU consultations. In some cases, this may require limiting the public visibility of the consultation and/or organising it outside of the context, over the phone, or online. It should be noted that the safety of participants in online exchanges can also be at risk and should be protected accordingly. In this regard, engaging with diasporas may also be helpful as they may be less at risk than people living in the context. The safety of the external experts and researchers that the EU works with should also be ensured.
  - Facilitators should anticipate that conflicting views and positions may be represented among the civil society actors taking part in a consultation. It is useful to prepare responses to participants who may push back against the transformative changes that some other participants may advocate for, particularly with regard to resistance against improving gender equality and inclusion.<sup>5</sup> There can be value in letting this resistance be aired in safe, facilitated discussions, however this should be done in a way that is sensitive to and protective of other participants, particularly those from marginalised groups.
  - Facilitation staff should communicate clear safeguarding guidance so all participants can share input, raise issues, share concerns and report negative incidents bilaterally outside of group sessions.
  - Civil society actors who receive or wish to receive funding from the EU may not feel comfortable raising in consultations what the EU is doing wrong or what has not worked in their own efforts. The EU should ensure that such input and feedback is welcome, and that civil society actors who give this information are not at risk of losing access to EU funding. This may involve holding sessions without EU staff present and anonymising the contributions received.
- As discussing conflict issues and violence can be connected to trauma experienced by participants and has the potential to lead to re-traumatisation, the EU staff involved in consultations should be trained in trauma-informed facilitation and in research ethics. Teams should include at least one expert in trauma healing and mental health and psychosocial support. Participants and facilitators can both be affected by the sharing of traumatising experiences by participants, and holding preparatory and regular feedback sessions may help identify and prepare for what may be raised in the discussions.
- The EU should ensure that the language used in exchanges and consultations with civil society actors is sensitive to local dynamics, corresponds to the language used by the actors themselves and is adapted to the diverse groups participating in the process.
  - Pre-set frameworks and technical language used by EU staff may not match or be helpful to understand people's experiences, or be conducive to people sharing their experiences and perspectives.
  - It may not be possible or productive to use terms such as 'conflict analysis', 'peace', 'gender', 'LGBTIQ+', 'intersectional', etc., in some contexts, as they may be understood differently or as there may be pushback against using them or against the concepts themselves.<sup>6</sup> It may be helpful to use alternative terms like 'context analysis', 'power' and 'social cohesion', to refer to the different experiences of 'men', 'women', 'boys' and 'girls', etc. The tools used should involve intersectional analysis, but do not need to be labelled

<sup>5</sup> It was flagged that when such resistance is expressed, it is often by men aged 35-50 years.

<sup>6</sup> This was illustrated, *inter alia*, with the example of a conflict analysis process in an African country where LGBT participants did not want the term 'LGBT' to be used due to anti-LGBT laws being developed in a neighbouring country. They wanted their identity to be recognised, but without the use of the LGBT label. Another example raised was the conservative backlash against 'gender ideology' making the use of the term 'gender' difficult in some contexts.

as such during consultations to avoid backlash. However, the produced (internal) analysis should be clear about what this is and about the relevance of the above-mentioned terms to the context.

- It is important for EU staff involved in analysis to pay close attention to how gender-related words and concepts are interpreted and translated when civil society actors use other languages, or even when they speak the same language as the EU staff, to avoid misunderstandings on both sides.
- The way gender- and social norms are discussed should be sensitive to people's different experiences and sensibilities, and conducive to gathering input that does not only focus on 'women's issues'.
  - It may be helpful to discuss how different population groups are affected differently by conflict by focusing initially on identities that may be less sensitive in that context (e.g. age and whether people live in urban or rural areas). This process may identify entry points to discuss other, more sensitive identities (e.g. gender and ethnicity).
  - Asking people what it means to be a woman and man in a given context can often result in idealised responses about what gender norms 'should' be. When seeking to understand how women and men differently experience conflict, it may be helpful to ask about their lives in general and to find entry points on the basis of the way they speak about their daily lives, or to ask diverse groups about how they experience and view recent events – without adding 'as women' or 'as men'.
  - It can be challenging to expand discussions on gender dynamics beyond 'women's issues' (e.g. sexual and domestic violence, women's leadership and economic opportunities or women's health). EU teams should prepare talking points and context-specific examples to draw out gendered issues in other thematic issues (e.g. disarmament, security sector and legal reform or economic development) during consultations.
- The EU should ensure that adequate time and resources are allocated to participatory conflict analysis processes. Civil society actors who are consulted should have enough time to prepare their input ahead of the consultation, and they should be given the space and time during the discussions to make their contributions in a way that allows them to be considered in a meaningful manner.<sup>7</sup>
- Participatory processes should include space for discussions and methodologies outside of formal, pre-arranged sessions. In some cases, formal discussions on gender issues will lead to participants sharing the type of input that they expect the EU to be interested in, and it is over coffee breaks, or in informal discussions, that people raise important gender dynamics that were not mentioned earlier. Similarly, workshops involving artistic creation may open ways for participants to express themselves and to raise gender issues that they would not have otherwise. EU staff should ensure that input collected in informal ways is still adequately documented, integrated in conflict analysis and shared with relevant colleagues.
- Digital tools should be expanded to support more diverse participation in conflict analysis processes. There are many new tools available to support conflict actors and stakeholders to engage safely (particularly non-elites, women and LGBTIQ+ people), and these should be appropriately funded and prioritised, in line with other digital safeguarding measures, to increase inclusion in the process.
- The EU should ensure that participatory processes are not extractive, and that it is transparent with civil society actors before, during and after consultations about the conflict analysis process and what it feeds into.
  - The EU should ensure that it does not consult civil society organisations as a tick-the-box exercise or in a tokenistic manner. Civil society participation should be meaningful – influencing the content of conflict analyses and in ensuring that analyses inform the EU's engagement in the context.
  - The EU should be transparent about what consultations will feed into, where the information will go, and what may be the expected outcomes. The EU needs to avoid raising expectations it is not able to meet and allow civil society actors to make an informed decision on whether to contribute or not.

---

<sup>7</sup> It was raised that civil society consultations often involve bringing together dozens of participants who have limited time to contribute and who exchange with working-level staff, whilst exchanges with other stakeholders (e.g. industry leaders) involve a limited number of stakeholders engaging with high-level officials.

- Civil society organisations, particularly women’s rights organisations, are often underfunded and stretched thin, and participating in consultation processes requires time and resources. The EU should ensure that civil society actors benefit from contributing input to the conflict analysis process. This may include:
  - sharing the conflict analysis with them after it is produced whenever possible – in some contexts, the content of the analysis itself may be too sensitive to be circulated, however it may still be possible to share a summary paper or to discuss some of the findings orally with participants;
  - compensating civil society actors for their time and participation, in a conflict-sensitive manner;
  - following up with civil society actors to inform them about changes in how the EU is engaging in the context, particularly with regard to interventions that the analysis may have informed;
  - ensuring that civil society participants are able to engage easily with the EU delegation in the future, if they have questions or wish to raise concerns and priorities.

**6. The EU should strengthen its processes to update conflict analysis on a regular basis, to systematically manage knowledge of conflict analysis and to monitor how accountable to gender-responsiveness the actions and programming conflict analysis serves to inform have been.**

- Conflict analysis should be a continuous process or updated regularly and not a one-off exercise or report. Contexts, needs and opportunities for peace and inclusion regularly evolve and will require the EU to adapt its engagements accordingly. The EU should:
  - establish and strengthen feedback loops and continued exchanges with civil society actors, particularly women’s organisations to monitor whether the EU needs to further strengthen gender analysis to inform its programming and actions;
  - develop further targeted, light-touch analysis that may allow for time-sensitive updates to existing analysis;
  - systematise existing conflict analyses processes to monitor, evaluate and report on gender equality and women, peace and security in the context, and on the impact of the EU’s engagements on these issues;
  - use these processes to update existing conflict analysis to deepen how responsive to gender the analysis, and the actions and programming it serves to inform, are.
- The EU should develop its tools to carry out follow-up, targeted analysis to examine further gender aspects of issues identified in the initial conflict analysis. In line with the previous point, the EU should use this follow-up analysis to strengthen the gender analysis of the issues under review, especially if gender was initially overlooked or not a significant focus.<sup>8</sup>
  - This analysis might need to further explore gender perspectives in national, sub-national or sector-specific thematic issues (e.g. infrastructure, extractive industries or constitutional reform).
- Knowledge management of conflict analysis remains challenging with regular staff changeovers and rapidly-changing political environments both in the EU and within contexts. In line with suggestions on how the EU should share and distribute the outcomes of analysis processes (see recommendation 5), the analysis should be stored in an accessible location and provided regularly to EU staff to inform new deployments and decision-making meetings.
- The EU should use participatory monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure the conflict analysis is effective and that the EU is accountable to its commitments on gender-responsive programming and actions.
  - Civil society groups who engaged in conflict analysis processes could also be contracted to provide regular monitoring input to the EU, as to whether the conflict analysis is effective and the programming and actions the analysis serves to inform are as anticipated, responding to gender dynamics in the context.

<sup>8</sup> This was illustrated with the example of a conflict analysis carried out by a civil society organisation in Mali, where the issue of communities’ trust in security services (or lack thereof) was identified as a significant challenge. Follow-up conflict analysis focused on the gendered nature of the trust in security services then yielded important insights to help design activities to respond to the issue.

**7. The EU should strengthen its support to partners' ability to carry out gender-responsive conflict analysis, including through adequate funding, particularly for civil society organisations (especially women's organisations).**

- When the EU partners with other international actors (such as the UN) and with civil society actors as part of its engagements in contexts, it should:
  - involve them in its conflict analysis processes whenever possible, and share with them (in line with recommendation 5) what it can from the analysis so that this may inform their programming and actions;
  - contribute, including through funding, to their own gender-responsive conflict analysis processes, and to their ability to disseminate analysis of the context and its gender dynamics (e.g. through reports and briefings);
  - identify and provide financial support to other local civil society actors who may be able to analyse and document peace, conflict and gender equality in context-specific ways, including local universities and research centres.

This support provided to other actors' ability to analyse the context will, *inter alia*, be helpful in generating information and reports, and in developing local expertise, that may feed into the EU's own conflict analysis processes moving forward.

- The EU should ensure that the funding it provides civil society organisations for gender-responsive conflict analysis is adapted to their needs and capacities.
  - As project cycles often remain quite short, the EU should allow for time to be allocated by civil society actors, (a) at the start of projects to carry out conflict analysis, and/or (b) at the end of project cycles to update or carry out conflict analysis so that it may be ready for the next cycle.
  - Providing long-term, multi-year funding makes a significant difference in helping civil society actors to develop capacities for gender-responsive conflict analysis, and to continue to use and update the analysis throughout project implementation, in a more sustainable manner than is usually the case when projects are implemented over several short, renewed project cycles.
  - The EU should strengthen its support to women's organisations, who are often chronically underfunded, despite carrying out work that is crucial to the EU's objectives of achieving gender-transformational change, and being particularly well-placed to providing essential input as part of EU conflict analysis processes.
  - The EU should support the ability of civil society organisations to employ gender experts on a standing basis (outside of project funding). Civil society organisations, including international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), are often not able to fund such positions themselves, yet donors frequently expect them to allocate their own core funding for this expertise.