Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace

Consultation on 2015 programming

Friday 17 October 2014 (13.30-16.45)

Scotland House Conference Centre
Rond-Point Robert Schuman / Robert Schumanplein 6, 1040 Brussels

MINUTES

The final agenda of the meeting is available to download from the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) page of the EPLO website.

The following background documents were sent to participants in advance of the meeting:

- Proposals for actions to be included in 2015 Annual Action Programme (Article 4)
- Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace Strategy Paper 2014-2020 and Multiannual indicative Programme 2014-2017
- Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace 2014 Annual Action Programme (Article 4)
- Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace 2014 Annual Action Programme (Article 5)

1. Welcome

EPLO welcomed the participants and highlighted the fact that this was the first consultation on Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) programming since the adoption of the new IcSP Regulation in March 2014.[1]

EPLO also reminded participants that the consultation was taking place at a particularly difficult time for the EU due to the crisis regarding the overall EU budget.

The European Commission (EC) welcomed participants and invited those civil society participants who are unfamiliar with the IcSP to feel free to ask any of the officials present for clarifications.

2. Session 1: Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace 2015 programming

The EC presented elements of the draft 2015 Annual Action Programme (AAP) – Conflict prevention, peace-building and crisis preparedness component (Article 4).

Participants raised the following issues:

1. Regarding the potential 2015 priority 'Reintegration of child soldiers', given that this might also be a priority under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in 2015, have the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and the Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid (DG DEVCO) discussed coordination issues?
2. Regarding activities in which the EC foresees multiple partners (e.g. the UN and civil society organisations (CSOs) under the 2014 action 'Gender and Transitional Justice'), this type of joint approach should be considered in future actions.

---

[1] See Regulation No 230/2014 of 11 March 2014 establishing and Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

3. There is a shrinking space for CSOs, including women's organisations, in several regions. How can the EU address it? Is the EC planning to support peacebuilding CSOs in the Western Balkans?
4. Regarding the potential 2015 priority 'Social media and conflict', why is there a specific focus on this particular sector of the media?
5. Regarding the potential 2015 priority 'Youth and peace, including inter-confessional dialogue', is the EC planning to focus exclusively on young people in inter-confessional dialogue or might the action be broader?
6. Regarding the potential 2015 priority 'Youth and peace, including inter-confessional dialogue', the scope of the action should be broadened to include support for working with youth in Africa. An important area for working with youth is on preventing electoral violence.
7. There are a number of upcoming opportunities for exploring complementarity with the potential 2015 priorities 'Social media and conflict' and 'Youth and peace, including inter-confessional dialogue': (1) the NGO Forum which will take place in December 2014 in Brussels and which will have a focus on freedom of expression; and (2) the planned targeted 2015 EIDHR action 'Supporting democracy – A pro-media and access to information programme'. There are also several exchanges of experiences and good practices on youth and violence between the EU and other regions, notably Latin America.
8. The EC is planning to support a broad range of actions. Has there been any reflection on keeping transaction costs for CSOs down?
9. If the negotiations on the 2015 EU budget result in a financial allocation for Article 4 which is less than the indicative budget of € 25 million, does the EC plan to reduce the number of actions in the 2015 AAP or to reduce the amount of funding which is available for each action?
10. Regarding the potential 2015 priority 'Continued support to civil society's capacities on early warning and conflict analysis', what is the specific objective of this action?
11. Would the de-escalation of conflicts through dialogue be covered under the potential 2015 priority 'Continued support to civil society's capacities on early warning and conflict analysis'?

In response the EC said:

1. FPI will discuss the issue of child soldiers with DG DEVCO and the European External Action Service (EEAS) as part of the up-stream coordination it is obliged to do in programming. The proposal for the inclusion of this particular priority came from EU Member States (MS) in the context of discussions in the IcSP Committee on the adoption of the 2014 AAP.
2. The active participation of civil society is foreseen in the proposed priority '2nd phase of cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS) in the fields of crisis preparedness and crisis response' and the EC takes on board the need to provide openings for dialogue with civil society in other actions. It should also be noted that engaging with civil society in the Arab region forms part of the LAS' medium-term strategy and this emphasis will inform much of its future work.
3. The EU is aware of the shrinking space for civil society, particularly for women's organisations. It can try to address it by increasing its support to CSOs and by pursuing political dialogue with its partner countries.
4. Work on social media is new to the EC and contributions from civil society on how to go about it would be useful and appreciated.
   The focus on social media under the 2015 AAP for Article 4 does not exclude the possibility of the EC focusing on other sectors of the media under other IcSP components (e.g. the EC is launching a € 5 million, three-year Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE) project in Pakistan, which will include a focus on media.
5. The EC would like to expand its support for inter-confessional dialogue to other groups in addition to youth. One of the thoughts behind this potential priority is to make a link between the conflict prevention and peace work of the IcSP, and the international window of the EU Youth Cooperation Programme, which focuses on developing youth civic participation.
6. References to Latin America and the Arab region were given only as examples. No decisions about specific priorities or countries in which actions should be implemented have been taken yet.
7. CSO participants are encouraged to relay the information to their partner organisations that youth will probably be a priority in 2015 and beyond.
8. It is up to the individual CSOs which may be interested in responding to calls for proposals to undertake this analysis and related "in-house" calculations. The EC is not aware of any CSOs which have not been in a position to assume the responsibilities into which they enter on the award of a contract.

9. In the 2014 AAP, the EC wanted to minimise the impact on CSOs of the 20% cut which it was forced to make, by trying to ring-fence the actions in which they were included, and by applying cuts proportionately to the other actions. If circumstances prove to be similar in 2015, it is highly probable that a similar approach may be adopted.
10. The idea behind the potential call for proposals on early warning in 2015 would be similar to that underlying the global call for proposals launched in 2012, in particular Lot 1.
11. De-escalation of conflicts through dialogue could be encompassed in the call for proposals.

The EC presented initial ideas for the 2015 AAP – Global and trans-regional threats component (Article 5).

Participants raised the following issues:
1. Is the EC planning to include any actions on tackling human trafficking in the 2015 AAP?
2. Several CSOs might be interested in contributing to a possible training seminar on countering violent extremism (CVE).
3. Is the EC planning to include any actions on tackling the outbreak of the Ebola virus in the 2015 AAP?
4. Is the EC planning to include any actions on supporting the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in the 2015 AAP?
5. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is currently co-implementing an IcSP project on climate change and security in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and is currently developing a continuation project which will also cover Southeast Europe. Does the EC see any possibility for co-operation with the CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence?
6. Will the EC combine the focus on youth (potential 2015 priority under Article 4) and the focus on drug trafficking (Cocaine Route Programme under Article 5) in the implementation of the EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean?
7. International Alert has been working with other peacebuilding CSOs on applying peacebuilding approaches to CVE. To what extent have the terms of reference for the EC's actions on CVE included monitoring on the degree to which they include conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm approaches?
8. Could the issue of Europeans travelling to Syria and Iraq to join the ongoing conflicts there be addressed under Article 5?

In response the EC said:
1. Tackling human trafficking can be covered under the 'Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and judicial and civil authorities involved in the fight against terrorism, organised crime and all forms of illicit trafficking' subcomponent of Article 5 but no actions are planned in the 2015 AAP. However, the EC has recently signed a contract for a project on tackling human trafficking from the 2013 AAP.
   Since tackling human trafficking can also be covered under the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic programme under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), it is difficult to find actions which are not already being supported.
2. N/A
3. The EC has distributed mobile laboratories in a number of West African countries. It is discussing internally how to address pandemics and long-term actions may be possible under Article 5 in 2016 for implementation in 2017. Support for short-term actions may be possible under Article 3 (Assistance in response to situations of crisis or emerging crisis to prevent conflicts).
4. An action on small arms and light weapons (SALW) is foreseen in 2015: further development of the arms tracking system that the EC has been supporting for a number of years through INTERPOL.
   Regarding the ATT specifically, there is an ongoing action with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) but no additional actions are foreseen at this stage.
5. There are currently no links between the CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence and the actions on climate change.
6. There are linkages but, in terms of actions, in-country calls for proposals (e.g. in El Salvador or Nicaragua) might be focused on local organised crime and its impact in those countries whereas the Cocaine Route Programme is trying to support government and agency co-operation to prevent the trafficking of cocaine from Latin America via West Africa to Europe.
7. Monitoring is foreseen in the Counter Terrorism Monitoring, Reporting and Support Mechanism (CT MORSE). The EC and the EEAS are currently developing a set of guidelines on ensuring the

application of basic human rights principles in all IcSP and other actions. There was a specific request to have a set of guidelines applying to all articles developed within one year of the adoption of the IcSP Regulation.

8. The objective of the IcSP is to address issues of insecurity which prevent the possibility of development co-operation with third countries. The EC is using IcSP Article 5 to address the issue of foreign terrorist fighters through ongoing CVE actions and it will try to address it through the foreseen project on 'Counter Terrorism in the Middle East / North Africa region'.

3. Session 2: Developments in the management and oversight of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace 2014-2020

The EC gave a presentation on [developments in the management of IcSP grants 2014-2020](#).

Participants raised the following issues:
1. Please provide more information about the management and implementation of exceptional assistance measures under Article 3. How can CSOs submit proposals?
2. Regarding simplified cost options, are beneficiaries required to keep records of expenses for further auditing even though costs are agreed before the signing of the contract?
3. Regarding expenditure verification reports, how detailed does the breakdown of expenditure need to be in the years for which no audited report is required?
4. Is the EC planning to publish the list of EUMS agencies that have undergone the pillar assessment for indirect management?
5. Please provide more information about the mid-term review (MTR) of the IcSP Regulation and the possibility of CSO engagement in it.
6. Is the work on developing a results framework part of the ongoing work that the EC is undertaking in this area or is it something different?
7. Please provide more information about the impact indicators and performance indicators.
8. If funds which have been allocated to Article 3 are unspent can they be reallocated to Article 4 or Article 5?

In response the EC said:
1. Ideas for Article 3 actions come from EU delegations (EUDs), the EEAS and the EU's partners in third countries. They are discussed at headquarters by FPI together with DG DEVCO, the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO), and the EEAS. They are then presented to the Executive Secretary-General of the EEAS, and the Political and Security Committee (PSC) is informed. A decision is taken following an inter-service consultation.
   The publication of calls for proposals under Article 3 is not mandatory. CSOs can present proposals to EUDs.
2. An auditor cannot ask the beneficiary to provide supporting documents.
3. The auditor's report should cover both years (i.e. the year of the report and the year in which no report was submitted. The breakdown of expenditure should be an extract of the beneficiary's accounting system in which costs are shown line-by-line.
4. DG DEVCO and ECHO are undertaking renewed pillar assessments of UN agencies (to be finalised by the end of 2014). They have decided not to redo any pillar assessments of EUMS agencies for the time being so the old list, which is on the DG DEVCO website, is still valid.
5. No information about the MTR other than what is set out in the Common Implementing Regulation[2] is currently available. Details will be discussed in 2015 and it is likely to be an extremely political process akin to the process on the establishment of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020.
6. The results framework is the one that DG DEVCO is developing and which covers all of the financing instruments it manages.
7. Only one of the indicators which have been developed for the overall results framework is relevant for the IcSP. FPI is therefore also working on defining a reasonable monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and specific indicators for the IcSP.

---
[2] See [Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action](#)

8. According to the IcSP Regulation, at least 70 % of IcSP funds need to be allocated to Article 3 and 9% to Article 4.

Since the European Parliament (EP) speaker was unable to participate in the session, EPLO introduced the theme of the EP's oversight of the IcSP 2014-2020.

Participants raised the following issues:

- During the IcSP strategic dialogue, the EP raised concerns about the human rights implications of certain actions, including those on CVE; the amount of funding which was being channelled via UN agencies, and the inclusion of actions on addressing the trafficking of falsified medicines.
- A Working Group on Conflict, Security and Development existed throughout most of the previous legislature (2010-2014). However, the amount of time that it was able to spend scrutinising IcSP actions was limited by the lengthy trialogue negotiations on the IcSP Regulation.
- Discussions are ongoing about the establishment of a new EP working group focusing on all of the financing instruments which fall under the remit of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET).
- It is possible that one member of the EP (MEP) will be designated as the lead on the IcSP but they will not perform the same role as the standing rapporteurs did in the previous legislature.

4. Closing remarks

EPLO thanked the speakers, moderators and participants, and invited them to send any additional comments and suggestions on the draft AAP 2015 for Article 4 to FPI by Friday 24 October 2014.

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 for Stability). It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), a civil society network, in co-operation with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The second phase of the CSDN will last from 2014 to 2016. For more information, please visit the EPLO website.