Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting

The 2015 Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy: Civil Society perspectives on the implementation of the security dimension

Tuesday 31 January 2017

MEETING REPORT

Background

In November 2015, the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) adopted the Joint Communication on the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).[1]

In June 2015, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) held a Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) meeting[2] enabling peacebuilding civil society organisations (CSOs) working in/on the European Neighbourhood to assess the implementation of the ENP since the 2011 review and to provide recommendations for the objectives and scope of a future ENP. These outputs informed the 2015 ENP review process and the resulting Joint Communication.

As a follow up, in January 2017, EPLO was asked to organise a CSDN meeting to focus specifically on the Security Dimension[3] of the Joint Communication and how its implementation could contribute to the EU's support for a more stable European Neighbourhood, based on rule of law and human rights.

The overall objective of this follow up meeting was for the EC and the EEAS to gather (i) civil society analysis of the various aspects of the Joint Communication's Security Dimension, and (ii) recommendations for possible EU and civil society actions to support their implementation. The meeting also aimed at initiating a process with an exploratory discussion around the ENP security dimension, to identify key issues and tentative recommendations. This report will feed into the discussions to be held with CSOs in existing fora at regional and bilateral levels.

The meeting brought together over 60 participants, including representatives of peacebuilding CSOs working in/on the European Neighbourhood, and officials from the EU Institutions.

This report is a summary of the discussions which took place, and the key recommendations made by individual participants during the meeting. The views expressed may not be attributed to any participating individual or institution nor do they necessarily represent the views of all the meeting participants, EPLO and its member organisations, or the co-organisers.

The meeting took place under the Chatham House Rule.

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[1] See: JOIN(2015) 50 final

[2] See: http://eplo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CSDN_Policy-Meeting_ENP_Review2015_Meeting-Report.pdf

[3] The following seven priorities are set out under the Security Dimension of the Joint Communication: Security sector reform (SSR); Tackling terrorism and preventing radicalisation; Disrupting organised crime; Fighting cybercrime; Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Risk Mitigation; Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP); and Crisis management and response.

Overview

In the introduction session, the EC and the EEAS presented the objectives of the meeting and the way in which the outcomes of this exchange with the civil society would inform EU's discussions on partnership priorities and updated association agendas with partner countries.

The EEAS and the EC explained that since the security dimension was taking up an important role in the review of the ENP, it was essential that discussions went beyond issues related to national sovereignty. The EU institutions stressed that the EU would decide jointly with its partner countries on concrete areas for bilateral partnership. These joint partnership priorities would be based on the principle of differentiation and would follow a tailor-made, interest-based approach, ensuring that the core values of good governance, rule of law, human rights and democracy were reflected in political priorities. The EEAS further added that these bilateral partnership priorities would help define priorities for assistance as the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) enters a new cycle of programming.

The EEAS and the EC heralded the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) and the ENP Security Dimension (as an integral part of the ENP review) as instrumental in EU's endeavours to foster a stable Neighbourhood through support for state and societal resilience in partner countries. In this context, the EEAS highlighted a number of other relevant policy developments, including the 2016 Joint Communication on Countering Hybrid Threats and the 2014 EU Maritime Security Strategy.

The EEAS and the EC identified several objectives for the meeting:

- To seek inputs from CSOs in developing **feasible, realistic and pragmatic actions** for the design and implementation of the ENP Security Dimension;
- To receive **context-specific recommendations** as the ENP will be implemented in close coordination with the EU Delegations (EUDs);
- To identify a **comparative added value of the EU as a security actor** that complements existing regional actors (e.g. the United Nations (UN), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)) and the best way in which the EU could work together with these actors to improve multilateral cooperation.
- To identify the **role that CSOs can play** in supporting the EU's political dialogue with partner governments based on the core values of human rights, rule of law, good governance and public accountability.
- To identify **EU and CSO engagement opportunities** for supporting the implementation of activities under the various priorities, with examples of good practices.
- To find ways for the EU to support CSO engagement under the various priorities and to ensure that **EU's engagement under these priorities is conflict-sensitive** and **promotes human rights** and **the rule of law** in an effective manner.

I. Security sector reform with a specific focus on community security

The EC opened this session with an overview of EU's Security Sector Reform (SSR) policies. It stressed that the 2016 Joint Communication on 'Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support SSR' aimed to harmonise and unify various existing policies on SSR, and update the current concept and approaches to it. It explained that the Joint Communication had been endorsed by the EU Member States (MS) through Council Conclusions and complemented by a Joint Staff Working document taking stock of lessons learned from past EU-supported SSR activities in partner countries across the world. The EC also said that it had recently commissioned a thematic evaluation of EU-supported SSR interventions in neighbouring countries.

The EC highlighted the **two-fold objective of EU's SSR interventions** i.e. to ensure effectiveness of (i) security of the state and its citizens, and of (ii) good governance processes

such as democratic oversight, accountability, transparency, openness, sustainability of the security apparatus. It further stated that SSR policy applies not only in conflict and post-conflict settings, but also in countries that are stable. It also applies to EU financial instruments, such as the European Neighbourhood Instruments (ENI) as well as to interventions carried out under the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

The EC explained that some of the priorities set out in the ENP Security Dimension, i.e. tackling terrorism, combating organised crime and cyber security were issues largely linked to SSR. It also outlined the principles of EU engagement with third countries on SSR, stressing EU's commitment to:

- Invest in **security sector assessments** led by national partners;
- Ensure that the projects and programmes supported **complement political and policy dialogue** with partner countries;
- **Integrate good governance, flexibility, monitoring and evaluation, and risk management** in its SSR framework;
- **Mobilise and develop existing EU expertise in SSR**, effectively tapping into the expertise that exists in the CSDP structures, in EU agencies such as the Europol, as well as among international partners like the Interpol, and the EU Member States.

Participants praised the holistic approach of the EU's SSR policy and its focus, *inter alia*, on **community security**. They noted that the EU and other actors needed to be mindful of the potentially negative impact of technical interventions such as 'train and equip' in conflict-affected contexts. Negative effects could include bolstering unaccountable elites, increased capacity of unreformed security actors, and failure to foster dialogue between citizens and authorities on what security actually means to citizens and how it can be delivered accountably.

Several participants highlighted that focusing on **parliamentary oversight in collaboration with national parliaments** could further support the development of SSR strategies and interventions, and open civil society spaces.

- **Defining Community Security**

Participants agreed that a **clearer definition of community security** would be needed for the effective implementation of the Joint Communication on SSR. Such a definition would take into account transnational issues that impact instability, which is context specific, at local and national levels, and recognise the behaviour of security forces as a potential driver of violence.

The objective of community security is to build positive relations between communities and local authorities. Gradual trust-building would enable community members, including youth and women, to be agents of change and respond to their own short and medium-term security concerns. It is therefore important to ensure that people's sense of safety and security is at the heart of SSR interventions. **The EU should ensure that its SSR interventions are integrated, along with conflict sensitivity, in all aspects of programming from design, to implementation, monitoring and evaluation**.

In the knowledge that changing attitudes and creating trust between communities and security providers takes time, participants asked the EU to favour **long-term engagements** with partner countries.

One participant presented an example from Mali where a CSO had developed a dialogue platform bringing together the Malian authorities and the local community. It surveyed 5000 Malians, including security forces, and learned that building trust between community members and the security forces was considered by respondents as the first step in addressing the root causes of conflict. The CSO went on to interview representatives of different military ranks on their views regarding the reasons behind the lack of trust. These records were then cross-checked with

community members. Differences in perceptions between the security forces and community members were discussed in facilitated dialogues. Working with women and youth in the community helped in building trust and bringing key military and community members together for dialogue.

- **Designing and implementing SSR interventions focussing on community security**

Several participants agreed that **context analysis** should be the starting point in designing and implementing an SSR intervention focussing on community security. This analysis should be done **in a conflict-sensitive manner**, tapping into existing work on resilience undertaken by CSOs and international organisations such as the UN. Instead of building resilience, the **focus should be on working with existing local capacities to strengthen resilience**.

The discussion also addressed the way in which CSOs could contribute to ensuring the **accountability of national and local authorities towards community members**.

One participant gave an example from South Sudan where an organisation working against small arms proliferation supported dialogue between community members and local authorities. This dialogue resulted in a document testifying the commitment of the local community and the authorities against small arms access. This initiative paved the way for the adoption of national legislation against small arms and light weapons. The dialogue continues in the country. In this context, participants recommended the EU to make sure that its interventions combine both state/national-level institutional and community security approaches in order to integrate inputs from conflict-affected communities, and to ensure accountability towards these communities.

Another example came from a CSO that worked along the border between Tunisia, Algeria and Libya to set up dialogue forums in governorates across the border consisting of local CSOs and government representatives from the three countries. The forums sought to identify and address drivers of insecurity at local level, to inform the development of national-level advocacy strategies for each of the three countries. These dialogues were complemented by cross-border research that identified other issues such as corruption and the community's need for livelihood support.

CSOs recommend the EU to scale-up such initiatives by coordinating the setting up of **community security structures inclusive of key stakeholders such as local authorities, security forces, community members and local CSOs**, based on rigorous mapping of drivers and actors within communities. Participants further suggested that the **EU should invest in research that systematically looks at what works and what doesn't in SSR interventions**.

In challenging contexts such as the Mediterranean region, where there is a clear trend towards shrinking spaces for the civil society, the **EU needs to support mainstreaming civil society and community involvement in SSR interventions** so that communities can engage with authorities and with security providers alike.

On Capacity Building in support of Security and Development (CBSD), participants stressed the need for in-depth discussions on what kind of gap this initiative is filling and how CSOs' inputs could inform the design of future CBSD initiatives.

- **Information sharing**

Participants agreed on the need for increased opportunities for CSOs to provide their inputs on SSR interventions to the EU, especially in challenging contexts where CSOs don't have access to EU representatives. Some suggested that the **EUDs could gather information from CSOs working in conflict-affected areas and share it upwards to the EU institutions' headquarters.** In countries where EUDs are not present, CSOs should be given the possibility to submit their inputs directly to the EU Institutions' headquarters. Another way to share information would be by commissioning third parties to organise expert meetings to provide input on the effectiveness of SSR interventions.

II. Conflict prevention, crisis management and response, including Common Security and Defence Policy

A. Conflict prevention

The EEAS opened this session with an overview of EU' policies and instruments for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and stabilisation, and their role in the implementation of the priorities set out in the ENP Security Dimension. It said that the EUGS and the Communications on 'Next steps for a sustainable European future' and 'A new European Consensus on Development' reflected a common view on conflict prevention in line with the EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Crisis and Conflicts.

The EEAS reflected on the key role of the ENP in fostering political dialogue and programmatic support to address a number of issues in the European Neighbourhood. It highlighted the joint analyses conducted internally within the EU institutions, bringing together EU MS, CSOs, and international partners such as the UN. These analyses include, for example, joint workshops to understand conflict trends, dynamics and underlying drivers, and to assess whether EU programming is conflict-sensitive. These analyses also feed into early warning processes.

Finally, the EEAS stressed that it remained open to exploring ways to further engage with CSOs to gain insights from conflict-affected contexts, and capitalise on lessons learned from CSO projects and partnerships to do programming in a more conflict-sensitive manner.

- **Ownership in conflict prevention**

One of the key issues that many participants raised was the importance of **ownership in conflict prevention**. Ownership strengthens the agency of different actors in the community and enables them to build resilience against conflict and violence. It is thus important to **define ownership and mutual ownership between the EU and its partner countries** in relation to resilience, sustainability, and political processes and contexts.

However, due to challenges in implementing conflict prevention programming in volatile political processes, and other factors such as economic hardship, it is important to understand how ownership is integrated. Conflict analysis can be done to identify different constituents in communities that go beyond the 'victims and spoilers' narrative. In this way, conflict drivers and, eventually, programming targets can be identified.

- **Conflict prevention programming and practices**

Participants highlighted **the importance of the EU connecting with different CSOs, in particular with youth and women's groups, in devising conflict-sensitive programming**. CSOs can help identify key champions within local, national and regional governments who can support political dialogue. Some participants stressed the importance of **making multi-year funding available for CSOs working on conflict resolution and prevention related issues**. This is particularly important as many local organisations need long-term funding to ensure effective programming.

Participants highlighted that CSOs should not only be consulted by EU Institutions to provide inputs in conflict prevention analyses but also seen as partners in these processes, given their context-specific experience. Other actors to engage in conducting rigorous conflict analysis are the academic institutions.

Finally, participants agreed that the **EU should make conflict prevention programming context-centric and adopt a 'do no harm' approach to it**.

B. Crisis management and response, including Community Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

The EEAS outlined the five ongoing CSDP missions in the ENP countries i.e., the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) to Ukraine, the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) to Georgia, the EU Police Mission (EUPOL COPPS) for the Palestinian Territories, as well as the two EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) in Rafah and in Libya, respectively.

The mandate of these CSDP missions includes support to host countries to help reform their civil security sector and law enforcement, *inter alia,* through advice, trainings, mentoring to Ministries of Law, Interior and Justice with focus on criminal justice as well as border management. The missions integrate issues related to human rights, gender and anti-corruption practices.

- **CSO engagement**

The EEAS stated that engagement with CSOs was very important in helping implement CSDP mandates, increase transparency and citizens' participation and ensure greater public trust in law enforcement agencies, which in turn could boost the overall effectiveness of law enforcement work. More specifically, the EEAS highlighted three areas of collaboration between CSOs and CSDP missions in the European Neighbourhood countries:

1. **Getting local CSOs' insight into the local situation** for a better understanding of the dynamics, challenges and weaknesses in conflict-affected contexts.
2. **Engaging with local CSOs to support mission coordination and cooperation with local authorities**. For example, in Ukraine, at the local level, the CSDP missions made sure that the local CSOs were involved in CSDP committees with police and local authorities. This collaboration facilitated the acceptance of the Law of Peaceful Assemblies by the Ukrainian authorities.
3. **Developing a long-term engagement plan on the inclusion of CSOs in security sector oversight mechanisms** such as reform of community policing strategies, and fair trails, especially at the local level.

One participant suggested that positive examples, like the above-mentioned one from Ukraine, should be shared with other Neighbourhood countries. In countries where it is challenging to initiate effective dialogue with governments and authorities, such examples can help pave the way forward. The participant stressed the importance of engaging with local CSOs that have the local knowledge needed to inform effective crisis management and response interventions.

For example, in Jordan, in the Zaatari Refugee Camp where the military and the state security apparatus could not respond to the violence, and were sometimes themselves involved in escalating the tensions, a local organisation worked with local community leaders to do analysis of and address the root causes of conflict and violence. This initiative led to a significant decline in the number of rape cases. This model has been taken up by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international organisations to replicate community-led initiatives in other contexts.

It is therefore important to **identify and share examples of positive CSO contributions to local and diplomatic processes**, not only for monitoring and evaluation, but also for learning purposes.

Another participant added that monitoring and evaluation of CSDP missions could be challenging and suggested that one possible way to overcome this would be by **developing a pilot framework for EU engagement with CSOs on context-specific monitoring and evaluation**.

Participants stressed the importance of **systematising CSOs' inputs on entry and exit points for CSDP missions**. This could be done inter alia by engaging with CSOs, which often have a

better understanding of the local dynamics, from mission planning and inception, all the way through to monitoring and evaluation. The UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) toolkit for strengthening partnerships with CSOs was highlighted as a potential model to guide engagement with civil society. Some participants based in the Eastern Neighbourhood suggested two ways for the EU to engage with CSOs, i.e.:

1. By consulting CSOs in identifying regional, national and local approaches for assessing CSDP missions.
2. By devising a conflict and resilience analysis index that could be used to inform CSDP missions.

- **Gender and CSDP**

Participants raised questions on the issue of **gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention and crisis management programming**. The EEAS responded that it was looking at ways to integrate gender more broadly into conflict analysis.

Several participants agreed that **gender inclusion in internal assessment of CSDP missions** would help make the mission more effective. A representative of the European Parliament added that the institution would be releasing a new report on women in CSDP missions shortly.

- **Multi-stakeholder approach, accountability and conflict-sensitivity**

Some CSO representatives suggested the **EU to ensure that the design of programming entailed a coherent and dynamic approach to monitoring and evaluation of crisis management and response**, and assessed accountability towards local population and donors. This is particularly important as many CSOs are developing new methods of formulating theories of change and assumptions.

Participants raised questions on the role that CSDP missions play in conflict prevention. In response, the EEAS said that CSDP missions could be seen as conflict prevention tool, although the diversity of roles that CSDP could play in prevention had yet to be fully explored. One way in which CSDP is currently contributing to conflict prevention is through **training for law enforcement agencies**. The EEAS further stressed that it welcomed receiving civil society input on developing links between CSDP and conflict prevention.

Finally, participants recommended that **CSDP missions be context-sensitive and engage with relevant stakeholders**, including with political leaders and local authorities.

III. Tackling terrorism and violent extremism

The EEAS opened the session with an overview of EU's policies and programming on tackling terrorism and violent extremism (VE). It stated that the EUGS provided the overarching framework and principles for EU engagement and partnership with third countries. More specifically, EU's action against terrorism and VE in recent years has taken shape with the 2005 EU Countering Terrorism (CT) Strategy that incorporates four pillars of intervention: prevent, protect, pursue and respond. The CT strategy has led to a number of policy updates and revisions, culminating with the 2014 Revised EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism.

While CT-related EU policies have focused primarily on the EU internal dimension, the recent attacks in Paris (2015) and Brussels (2016) led to an acknowledgement of the importance of addressing the external dimension of EU's CT/CVE policies. A shift towards the external

dimension was confirmed by the February 2015 Council Conclusions on counter-terrorism, which call on the EU MS and the EU institutions to enhance international cooperation on CT and Preventing VE (PVE), with emphasis on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The EU is currently conducting high-level, targeted security and CT dialogues with Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

- **Defining violent extremism**

The EEAS specified that the EU institutions define P/CVE as a broad range of non-coercive and preventive activities such as youth and women capacity development initiatives, and community safety and protection programmes. All these activities are united by the objective of tackling drivers of VE specific to certain locations and targeting individuals at risk of being drawn into violence. Drivers of VE include structural motivators, personal incentives and enabling factors such as religion, charismatic leaders, internet propaganda etc. that can determine individuals to join radical groups.

Several participants reinforced the point that **VE doesn't operate in a vacuum, being in fact the reflection of a much deeper problem**.

Based on research conducted in Tunisia, Syria and Libya, one CSO found that ideology was only a secondary factor in influencing someone's decision to join an extremists group. While ideology provided a framework for individuals to join extremist groups, the driving factors were related to deeper structural issues such as economic marginalisation, and a sense of belonging. Thus, the importance of interventions designed to identify and address root causes of VE.

Root causes are linked to push factors such as displacement, human rights violations, economic and political marginalisation, and rigid rule of law in some countries.

One participant gave the example of a young person in Tunisia who, if caught smoking marijuana, would go to prison for five years and upon release would not be able to find employment. Economic hardship and social exclusion could potentially push this young person to join a radical group. The participant recommended that programming aimed at addressing root causes of VE be developed on a pilot basis and then scaled up based on lessons learned.

Participants largely agreed that **understanding root causes of VE required rigorous conflict analysis done at the local level by local organisations that have access to and trust from the local population**.

A CSO that had conducted a large scale quantitative survey and qualitative interviews with 800 young people in Tunisia found that young people felt politically marginalised, especially after having played a key role in Tunisia's political shift of 2011.

- **The holistic approach: fostering long-term, context-specific, multi-sector P/CVE interventions**

Participants pointed to the need for **long-term, context-specific P/CVE interventions**. Blueprint approaches of P/CVE interventions need to be used with caution as, for example, a young Tunisian is different from a young Belgian. In this context, participants stressed that the **focus should be on removing the drivers, and not the enablers of VE** as there will always be new enablers (e.g. corruption, lack of governance, etc.) that will appear over time. The focus should be on 'what' rather than on 'who' the problem is to avoid potentially harming, stigmatising or further marginalising different segments of the population.

One participant gave an example of how integrating peacebuilding approaches into education programming in Syria had been effective so far in building resilience among youth, preventing many young people from joining extremist groups. The CSO who initiated this peace education initiative is currently exploring ways to further co-opt organisations that provide livelihood support. Thus, the importance of a holistic approach to P/CVE that brings different sectors such as development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding together to tackle VE.

Another participant pointed out that **the role of CSOs in raising awareness of the importance of applying a peacebuilding and development lens to P/CVE** would be crucial in these platforms. This awareness-raising exercise would need to be based on evidence on 'what works', hence the importance of investment in locally-led research.

- **P/CVE programming**

Some participants expressed concern that, the acknowledgement of the importance of long-term P/CVE programming, it is often challenged by the demand of rapid response projects that yield results. One participant suggested that **CSOs could help raise awareness of the negative impact of short-term programming on the population**.

Participants concurred that as the P/CVE field is new, it is important to **design flexible programming that constantly tests, learns and adapts**. Programming that addresses multiple drivers of VE is essential to make interventions successful. Monitoring, evaluation and learning tools can be put in place to understand what works and why. This is also vital for risk management so that the programming is effective and doesn't harm the population. In this light, **flexible funding needs to be available to adapt to experiential programming**.

Several participants suggested that **P/CVE programming should include protection of human rights in its design and implementation**. One participant also stressed the importance of talking into account the role that masculinity can play in VE.

Finally, some participants stressed the importance **of devising funding mechanisms that adapt to the challenges of funding local civil society organisations coming from countries that are witnessing a high level of VE**. For example, banks refuse to provide a guarantee for transfer of funds to organisations coming from VE-prone countries.

The EEAS added that the EU had increased funding for external P/CVE-specific projects by 143% from 2015 to 2016 with about €116 million earmarked for such initiatives in 2016.

- **Inclusive dialogue and information sharing**

One participant added that **creating dialogue platforms to share lessons learned** and experiences from the local, national, regional and international level (e.g. G7+) would help in further developing concrete programming for P/CVE. These dialogue platforms should be inclusive of the relevant stakeholders such as local authorities, security forces, and CSOs.

Several participants raised the issue of the **quality of information** in some contexts and the way in which this could also be an enabler for VE. The discussions also touched upon the importance of understanding what kind of information is collected and for what purpose.

One participant gave the example of a CSO working in Tunisia to collect information on community perceptions of security forces and of security at large in their communities. This information was then checked against data on community security collected by local authorities to assess the gaps between community perceptions and the reality on the ground.

Finally, some participants stressed that media could further contribute to the stigmatisation of an area or a community. It is thus, important to **coach journalists on conflict-sensitive reporting**.

- **Addressing internal-external links**

Another issue that participants raised was how to **link the internal and the external dimensions of VE**.

One participant gave an example of an organisation which tried to address the links between the internal-external dimensions of VE through preventive diplomacy, by holding closed door meetings with extremist groups from the Middle East, Europe, and some parts of Africa. In Europe, for example, where extremist groups often recruit young people, the CSO launched a 'peace starts at home' initiative which rapidly gained credibility within the community.

IV. Disrupting organised crime and fostering cyber security

- **Cyber security**

The EEAS outlined the external dimension of EU's cyber security policy, explaining its main frameworks of collaboration with the Council of Europe on cybercrime, in line with the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, to train police and law enforcement actors in partner countries on preventing and tackling cybercrime.

Asked about how the EU itself was protected against cyber-attacks, the EEAS explained that a permanent Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-EU) for the EU institutions, agencies and bodies had been set up in September 2012. The EU Directive concerning measures for a high common level of security of network and information systems across the Union, adopted in June 2016, foresees further measures for the protection of EU Member States against cyber-attacks.

- **Organised crime**

The EEAS presented the 'Policy Cycle', i.e. an operational tool used by the EU institutions, EUROPOL, EU MS' and partner countries' law enforcement authorities to strengthen cooperation on the fight against organised crime.

Some participants recommended that **organised crime interventions be conflict-sensitive, and conflict, peacebuilding and development programming be crime-sensitised**. This is very important in contexts where organised crime has a negative impact on peace processes.

One participant presented an example from Mali where a CSO conducted research to identify and analyse factors that could potentially lead to the failure of the peace process, should the issue of organised crime not be properly addressed.

Another participant stressed the importance of civil society in strengthening analysis of organised crime for border security. He presented the example of a CSO working along the border between Tunisia and Libya who found that the local population was concerned about the impact of the border security measures that had recently been put in place to control people attempting to get to Europe, on the livelihood of the community. These measures have led, inter alia, to an increase in corruption and illicit trade in the border area.

The communities living along trade routes are heavily marginalised. In this light, participants stressed the importance of **devising responses that are sensitive to these communities'**

needs. Some suggested that the EU should engage with civil society through support for the creation of **border security dialogue forums** and strengthen these structures where they are already in place. One participant advised against conflating organised crime and terrorism, particularly when it comes to trade and trade routes.

In contexts where the judiciary and security providers are weak, **CSOs could play an important role in working with the media to protect against disinformation and manipulation by authorities**.

One participant asked about EU's cooperation with the Eastern Neighbourhood on addressing organised crime. The EEAS responded that it was important to understand the phenomenon in different contexts and to work on regional cooperation within the Eastern partnership.

Some other recommendations made to the EU institutions included the need to **ensure a clear complementarity and coordination of different actors dealing with organised crime** such as Interpol, Europol, and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) through joint analysis and assessments of different context and sharing information.

V. Concluding remarks

In the concluding remarks, the EEAS explained that **Partnership Priorities in the framework of the ENP** had been concluded with **Lebanon** and **Jordan** at the end of 2016, and that discussions on such joint bilateral documents were advanced with **Algeria** and **Egypt**, and had been initiated with **Armenia**, **Azerbaijan** and **Belarus**. Similar discussions are envisaged to be launched with other neighbourhood partners in the course of 2017. The EEAS also explained that regarding certain neighbourhood countries with whom discussing partnership priorities was not yet possible, the EU should be able to address security cooperation with them in the framework of specific **political/security dialogues**.

The EEAS added that the EU was planning to launch a **risk survey in the European Neighbourhood to identify key vulnerabilities to hybrid threats** and propose capacity-building measures to strengthen partner countries' resilience. It also informed participants that **a neighbourhood-wide report (Joint Communication) on the implementation of the ENP review would be adopted in spring 2017**.

Finally, The EEAS thanked CSOs for their contribution to the meeting and said that their inputs were essential in shaping policy and programming priorities for the European Neighbourhood.

EPLO thanked participants for their contribution to the meeting and informed them that a meeting report summarising the discussions would be made available shortly.

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.

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