



EPLO Conflict Prevention Newsletter

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Towards a final settlement of Kosovo's status?

After several delays, UN special envoy Martti Ahtisaari finally presented his [plan for the future status of Kosovo](#) on 2 February. It foresees an internationally supervised self-rule for Kosovo and the trappings of statehood, including a constitution, a new security force, flag and anthem, and membership in international organisations. Kosovo's government would be overseen by a new European Union-led mission which would take over from the UN administration in place since 1999. While many Albanians think that Ahtisaari's proposal grants too many concessions to the Serb minority, Serbia rejects any plan for the breakaway province that jeopardises the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia.

The final round of talks on the UN blueprint between Belgrade and Prishtina has just got underway in Vienna but it is unlikely to bring the parties any closer together. The future of the province is thus in the hands of the Security Council which must approve Ahtisaari's plan. There is a small risk that Serbia's ally Russia will use its veto power, but it is assumed that Putin will accept a trade-off on the province in return for other concessions.

Finding a solution to the current situation is urgent, which recent violent demonstrates. The illegal UÇK (Kosovo Liberation Army) claimed responsibility for a bombing of UN vehicles, committed as retaliation for a harsh police response to a pro-independence protest on 10 February which had resulted in two killed demonstrators.

The EU supports Ahtisaari's plan for Kosovo. "The EU is prepared to vigorously support the implementation of a solution on Kosovo's status and the development of a functioning state", German Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, said at a meeting of EU foreign ministers on 12 February. The EU will become the driving force within the future international presence in the province. One component of it is that the head of the international civilian presence will also be EU Special Representative. In addition to this, the EU is currently preparing its largest civilian

ESDP mission ever, to be deployed to Kosovo. The operation will focus on the justice sector and on the police. In parallel, assistance under the future Pre-Accession Instrument (IPA) will focus on capacity building within the local authorities.

A recent [European Parliament \(EP\) report](#), drafted by Dutch MEP Joost Lagendijk from the Group of the Greens, has evoked mixed reactions. The report says that the EP "supports the view that Kosovo should be granted independence and that its sovereignty should, over a period of time, be limited by an international presence". Many EU decision-makers are opposed to the Union going further than Martti Ahtisaari proposal, which does not mention the word independence. Lagendijk agreed to rephrase its report to ensure EP approval.



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Jerome Mellon works in Kosovo as the Project Co-ordinator of the South Eastern Europe Team for EPLO member **Saferworld**. He comments on Ahtisaari's proposal, especially on the security-related components of it:

"The most positive outcome of Ahtisaari's proposal is that it ends the uncertainty over Kosovo's future status that has been troubling Kosovo for eight years. But in doing so, it also creates new challenges and uncertainties.

Ahtisaari's proposal calls for significant changes within Kosovo's security sector. Among them is the controversial recommendation to disband, within a year, the Kosovo Protection Corps (TKM), a civilian emergency organisation formed out of the disarmed UÇK fighters

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in 1999. The TMK benefits from the unconditional support of virtually all Kosovo Albanians, and disbanding it will require much tact, generous compensation for the retirees, and a carefully planned demobilisation and reintegration programme.

Equally controversial is the recommendation to establish the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), a lightly equipped defence force comprising no more than 2,500 active members and 800 reserve members. The staffing of this new organisation, the representation of all Kosovo ethnic groups in its ranks, and the question of whether TMK members should automatically be transferred to the KSF, the issue of small arms and other defence equipment procurement, and the effect the KSF could have on regional and interethnic relations are all issues which the new EU-led International Civilian Office should not underestimate.

Ahtisaari's proposal also recommends the establishment of an intelligence service tasked with monitoring threats to Kosovo's internal security, and excluding any foreign intelligence role. While such an important tool will aid informed decision-making, there is a risk that

Kosovars will misinterpret its role and activities, given their experience of intelligence services under previous regimes. As well as conducting public information campaigns, local and international stakeholders must address several issues in establishing an intelligence service: what to do with various unofficial and politically-affiliated intelligence organisations already operating in Kosovo; whom to recruit and how to vet staff; transparency of priority-setting and financing; genuine parliamentary and public oversight; and capacity-building of intelligence service staff, parliamentarians, government officials and civil society actors. Here again, patience and prudence will be required.

While Ahtisaari's proposal provides a basis for discussions, there is little time for public consultation and debate before the UN Security Council debates and adopts a new resolution on Kosovo. Nevertheless, civil society will play an essential role in preparing for and monitoring the implementation of the new Kosovo status."

Saferworld will soon publish Intelligence in Kosovo: Looking Ahead, presenting recommendations on the establishment of the new Kosovo intelligence service.

Romanian views on EU conflict prevention

Romania worked in 2006 in preparation to develop its international development cooperation strategy which will now become an active part of the EU effort. In parallel and in support of this, Romanian organisations have now founded a national platform of development NGOs (FOND). Romanian engagement for peacebuilding has been translated in May 2006 with the Black Sea Regional Forum on Dialogue and Cooperation. A central focus of this forum was on addressing frozen conflicts, primarily in Moldova-Transnistria, the Caucasus, and South Eastern Europe. The integration of Romania in the EU will be extremely valuable for EU peacebuilding and crisis management policies, particularly in the Black Sea Region, one of the regions covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy, and in the Western Balkans.

Romanian NGOs, through the national platform FOND, are now lobbying the government to commit to supporting peacebuilding and development work. In April 2005, the EN.CPS (European Network for Civil Peace Services) organised a conference on "East-West Cooperation of European NGOs on Civilian Conflict Resolution". The conference was held in Romania at the Peace Action Training and

Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR), an active EN.CPS member implementing the peacebuilding engagement in Moldova-Transnistria, with support from the German government. A particularly important focus now is also peace and development education to help reach out to the peoples of Romania and Bulgaria as new member states so that they will fully know about and understand what is involved in development work and the relevance, importance and implications for these countries to engage internationally.

By joining the European Union, Bulgaria and Romania also have to comply with EU standards and best practices in the arms transfer sector, notably the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. A recent [Saferworld report](#) concludes that both countries have passed laws and regulations in that sense but there remain a certain number of concerns. It also argues in favour of an active role of Bulgaria and Romania to encourage and facilitate the improvement of transfer control systems in the wider European neighbourhood.

This article has been written in cooperation with Kai Frithjof Jacobsen and Andra Tanase at PATRIR.

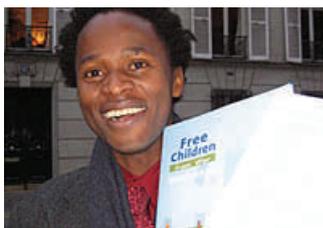
"Let us Free the Children of War" pleads the Paris Conference

"We commit ourselves to spare no effort to end the unlawful recruitment and use of children by armed forces" declares the [Paris Commitments](#), the document that the international conference *Let us Free the Children of War* called for the adoption in Paris, on February 5 and 6. Co-hosted by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the French Foreign Ministry, the event brought together representatives from 58 states, international organisations and NGOs to sign up to the new framework of action, drafted last year by the UNICEF, following an extensive review process of the [Cape Town Principles](#).

Annelies Claessens, representative of the Search for Common Ground Europe Office was impressed by the number of states that pledged their support to the Paris Commitment and Principles. "Among the countries that signed the 'Paris Commitments', there were a number of African states with high numbers of child soldiers", Ms. Claessens said, regretting only that the document carries moral rather than judicial weight.

The conference succeeded also in extending the topic from child soldiers to the more general

theme of children affected by armed conflict, for minors are often used not only as fighters, but also as messengers, spies, porters or to provide sexual services. "The states present at the conference recognised that DDR programmes should also include these children and not only those carrying weapons. They also noted that especially girls need special attention", Ms. Claessens said. Until now, girls have been often left out of the DDR programmes while they are often forced to play multiple roles in the conflict: sex slave, mother and combatant at the same time.



Former child soldier Ishmael Beah holds up the Paris Commitments at the end of the historic 'Free Children from War' conference in Paris.
© UNICEF/2007/Rudden

The EU adopted its own guidelines on children and armed conflict in 2003 and supplemented them last year by an implementation strategy. The current holder of the EU Presidency, Germany, has promised to undertake every effort to ensure that this strategy is put into practice as quickly as possible. Moreover, the up-coming Slovenian Presidency has pledged to focus on the further development of this policy by integrating the protection of women and children in armed conflicts into the EU development policy.

NEWS IN BRIEF

North Korea's First Steps to Nuclear Disarmament

Although the chances for a major breakthrough appeared slim when the six-nation talks on the North Korea's nuclear programme resumed last year, the negotiations led to a deal on 13 February. Under the agreement, Pyongyang promised to shut down its main nuclear reactor in return for fuel aid.

The unexpected agreement caps more than a decade of sustained international efforts to dismantle Pyongyang's nuclear weapons infrastructure. Nevertheless, the Belgian research centre on peace and security GRIP remains cautious in its

recent analysis of the agreement. [The GRIP report](#) recalls that the deal does not foresee total nuclear disarmament of North Korea, but only a halt to the country's nuclear programme.

The analysis notes, however, that this gradual approach of the negotiations implies an interesting change in the US policy towards "rogue states". Even though the neoconservatives in Washington insisted on adopting tough measures against North Korea, the Bush administration opted for gradual and more pragmatic means of persuasion this time.

EU formal Approval for Police Mission to Afghanistan

The EU Foreign Ministers approved the deployment of an ESDP police mission to Afghanistan in their Council meeting on 12 February. The Council states that the future mission, which should provide for the deployment of 160 police officers, will address issues of police reform at central, regional and provincial level. In addition, it should

comprise an "element to assist coordination of contributions, both equipment and rehabilitation of police infrastructure". Council conclusions reaffirm the EU's strong long-term commitment to Afghanistan and underline the importance of strengthened coordination taking place in Kabul.

Some British Troops Withdrawn from Iraq

British troops serving in Iraq will be cut down by 1,600 within the next few months, Prime Minister Tony Blair announced last week, adding that further draw-downs of UK personnel would be possible depending on the conditions on the ground.

The proposed cut in numbers of British troops comes surprisingly at the same time as the US decision to increase military personnel in and around Baghdad. Political analysts say that Blair wants to extricate his troops from a war that has proven deeply unpopular among Britons before he'll leave the post, but British leaders have explained this contrast by stressing that their mission in predominantly Shiite Southern Iraq is less fraught than the sectarian strife facing American and Iraqi forces in Baghdad.

EC Deplores Repressive Measures in Guinea

Following three days of violent protests, President Lansana Conté declared a martial law in Guinea on 12 February, announcing on state radio and television that he had ordered the army to "*take all appropriate measures*" to restore order.

General strike and a series of anti-government demonstrations have been the biggest challenge yet to the rule of Conté; dozens of people have been killed in demonstrations across Guinea in the past month. In a press release published on 14 February, the European Commission expresses its extreme concern about the political situation in Guinea. Commissioner Louis Michel deplores the refusal by Guinean authorities to heed the many calls for moderation and dialogue and condemns the loss of human life as well as lack of respect for human rights.

The African Peace Facility to support AU Mission to Somalia

In its resolution 1744, the UN Security Council decided on 20 February to authorise the African Union to establish a mission in Somalia for six months. Stressing the need for broad-based and representative institutions in Somalia, the Council authorised the mission to resort to all necessary means to provide protection to the country's transitional government.

Preceding the UN resolution, the Council of the EU had already welcomed the efforts made to create the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in its meeting on 12 February. The Council conclusions stress the EU's willingness to contribute to the funding of the mission via the African Peace Facility "as soon as the necessary requirements have been met", referring particularly to the adoption of the UN resolution.

New Video Advocacy Institute

WITNESS is pleased to announce a call for applications to participate in its inaugural **Video Advocacy Institute (VAI)**.

The Video Advocacy Institute, a new initiative and the first of its kind, is an innovative program that will train human rights defenders to successfully integrate video advocacy into their social change campaigns. The VAI will be held in association with Concordia University's Communication Studies Program and Documentary Centre.

When: July 15 – July 27, 2007

Where: Montreal, Canada

Application Deadline: March 25, 2007

For more information & the application form [click here](#)

Trainings

Peaceworkers UK is organising training modules on various issues in the fields of conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding. The upcoming courses are:

1. Introduction to working in conflict: This short introductory course provides an insight into the field of civilian 'conflict work'. It is an entry-level course intended for those who wish to learn more about the field and how they can become involved. [More info](#)

31 March & 1 April, London. Deadline for applications: **9 March**

2. Working for Peace in the Midst of Conflict: Is it for me? Simulation weekend for participants to experience simulated incidents from working in the field of conflict. This weekend is for people with no prior experience, who wish to find out what skills and competencies they possess for working in conflict. [More info](#)

27-29 April, UK. Deadline for applications: **30 March**

A Safer World with Fewer Arms



It was in 1989 that the British-based NGO Saferworld was founded to identify, develop and publicise more effective approaches to tackling and preventing armed violence. "Saferworld started by being an organisation working on small arms and transfer control", recalls Virginie Giarmana, the organisation's EU Advocacy and Policy Coordinator. In the course of the years, however, the

scope of the work broadened, and today Saferworld's activities also encompass the issues of conflict prevention, conflict-sensitive development and security and justice sector reforms.

Preventive Action

The work on arms has directed Saferworld to emphasise proactive conflict prevention rather than reactive measures to hold back existing hostilities. "If you are working on arms, then you certainly end up working in conflict and post-conflict situations", Ms. Giarmana explains, "but over the years, we also had to look at pre-conflict situations to better understand the links between security and arms traffic. If people fear conflict, they feel insecure and start buying arms. And this of course, creates even more sense of insecurity..."

Besides working with the UN and UK bodies, Saferworld has a long standing track record of working on the EU's conflict prevention and arms transfer controls policies. For a number of years, the organisation published its "presidency reports" with International Alert, putting forward proposals to each EU presidency on how to promote conflict prevention. In addition, Saferworld was involved in the development of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers and continue to promote its elaboration.

Success in Somalia

Saferworld is not all about arms, however. It is also active in the wider issues of security and development. Besides implementing practical projects with local partners in Africa, Europe and South Asia, Saferworld publishes research reports, holds seminars and works with media to help raise public awareness and stimulate political will. It also builds capacity of governments and civil society organisations to carry out their activities related to conflict prevention.



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One of the recent successful Saferworld activities is the Somalia Dialogue project strengthening the capacity of non-state actors to contribute to peace. "We helped them to organise themselves in a forum which was able to express its positions in front of the central government, donors and municipal and local authorities", Ms. Giarmana describes the project, which was well received in a country that has been ravaged by civil war since 1991.

In the near future, Saferworld is planning to further extend its activities by working on issues such as climate change or the role of China in Africa. A key priority for 2007, however, is to build on the years of work that Saferworld has done on the international arms trade treaty by pushing for progress in the ongoing negotiations.

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Publications

Mapping of private diplomacy actors, the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) has compiled a survey to consider the features, methods, field activities and capabilities of private diplomacy actors.

On the basis of a common meeting in June 2006 with other private diplomacy actors (the Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, The Carter Center, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Community of Sant'Egidio, The Olof Palme International Center and Toledo International Centre for Peace) CMI compiled a survey to consider features, methods, field activities, and capabilities of the participating organisations. The Private Diplomacy Survey is one of the first of its kind, comparing and discussing the nature of private diplomacy. The report was written during autumn 2006 and made public in 2007.

[Download the report \(pdf\)](#)

New Horn of Africa Bulletin, the Life and Peace Institute is re-starting the Horn of Africa Bulletin in March. The newsletter is distributed digitally free of charge but can also be subscribed to in a mail version. The monthly newsletter will offer analyses, news, information and links to useful resources. Countries covered are primarily: Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. Sign up for HAB now by [e-mail](#).

Saferworld, Addressing the role of private security companies within security sector reform programmes, January 2007. [Download the report](#).

Isabel Moreno and Mariano Aguirre, [La refundación del Estado en Bolivia](#), FRIDE, January 2007 (only in Spanish).



The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office – EPLO

EPLO is the platform of European NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks active in the field of peacebuilding, who share an interest in promoting sustainable peacebuilding policies among decision-makers in the European Union.

EPLO aims to influence the EU so it promotes and implements measures that lead to sustainable peace between states and within states and peoples, and that transform and resolve conflicts non-violently. EPLO wants the EU to recognise the crucial connection between peacebuilding, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development world wide and the crucial role NGOs have to play in sustainable EU efforts for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and crisis management.

EPLO advances the interests of its members through common policy positions and consequently advocating for those common positions. EPLO disseminates information and promotes understanding of EU policies of concern to its Members. The Office builds also solidarity and cooperation amongst its members and with other relevant NGO networks. Finally, EPLO raises awareness about the contribution the EU should make to peacebuilding and the need to hold the EU accountable to its own political commitments of helping secure peace within and outside its borders.

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