

Conference on Enhancing Cooperation between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management

Helsinki 27-28 September 2006

17 October 2006

Report

Introduction

The Conference on 'Enhancing Cooperation between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management' was held in Helsinki on 27-28 September. It was organised by two Finnish non-governmental organisations, Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network (KATU) and Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), Brussels-based European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) together with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The conference was an integral part of the project called 'Role of Civil Society in European Civilian Crisis Management' (RoCS) launched by KATU and CMI in the autumn 2004 and joined by EPLO in the spring 2006. The project was conducted in close cooperation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and was a part of the Finnish EU Presidency.

The conference brought together 73 civilian crisis management experts from the European Commission, the General Secretariat of the Council, 21 European Union (EU) member and accession states, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (the list of participants is attached).

The objective of the conference was to discuss the recommendations and their implementation as set out in the report 'Partners Apart: Enhancing Cooperation between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management in the framework of ESDP'. A background report on the cooperation so far and the recommendations had been developed through a range of consultations and workshops and written by Ms. Catriona Gourlay, Project Manager and Marie Curie Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, who acted as project consultant to RoCS project.

Proceedings

The conference was divided into sessions, which examined, *inter alia*, the different forms of cooperation between the EU institutions and civil society, the lessons learnt from building cooperation in Aceh within the context of the EU Aceh Monitoring Mission and the potential for improved cooperation in Kosovo. The recommendations and their further implementation were discussed in more detail in three working groups – 'Cooperation at the Strategic Level', 'Cooperation at the Tactical Level' and 'Cooperation for Capabilities, Training and Development' – and in the plenary session in the morning of the second conference day.

WEDNESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2006

Opening session

Sirpa Pietikäinen
Chairperson, Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network

The conference was opened by Ms. Pietikäinen. She commenced by comparing the phenomenon of the growing number of civil society organisations (CSOs) to the internet, which has been spreading widely and rapidly in Europe; one can even talk about the up-rise of civil society. Still, there is a lack of mechanisms of how to use all the full potential of active people in the CSOs.

Ms. Pietikäinen gave three common nominators to civil society organisations: rainbow-diversity, special expertise and their nature. The issues they deal with range from women to environment, peace and security, human rights, local or regional issues and economic development. The experience and flexibility of NGOs and their ability to link with local population, especially with women and at the grassroots level, should be an incentive for cooperation. Regarding cooperation with NGOs, she said the EU can be criticised for the lack of interaction and understanding, but thought it can be improved in the coming years. She concluded by welcoming the report, which identifies the problems that exist in EU-civil society cooperation, presents how this cooperation can be achieved without undermining the ESDP security and gives some concrete recommendations.

The speech by Ms. Pietikäinen was followed by a short welcome address from Mr. Nicolas Beger, Director of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO).

Erkki Tuomioja
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland

Mr. Tuomioja, representing the Finnish EU Presidency, addressed the conference. In his speech, the Minister noted that the EU is unique in having a wide range of instruments both for short-term and long-term crisis management action. He emphasised the need for more comprehensive approach in crisis management operations not only by combining civilian and military instruments, but also increasing cooperation and the exchange of views with other international organisations as well as non-governmental organisations.

Mr. Tuomioja stated that crisis management cannot be achieved without including the views of the civil society. The European Union acknowledges the importance of civil society in its Action Plan for Civilian Aspects of ESDP that was agreed in 2004. The Action Plan states that “NGO and civil society views in relation to the general orientations of EU civilian crisis management are welcome. NGO experience, expertise and early warning capacity are valued by the EU”. The task at the conference is to look into ways of further deepening the discussion on common interests.

The civil society and non-governmental organisations have been approaching the same issues and problems of crisis management from another point of view. The NGOs and civil society organisations have their natural counterparts in the host country’s civil society. A lot of the work the NGOs are doing takes place in the field and thus provides a valuable input to the overall approach of international organisations and governments. The Aceh Monitoring Mission is a good example in this as well: it was the first EU civilian crisis management operation to include a focal point for civil society.

Mr. Tuomioja concluded by saying that one often hears criticism that multiple actors in conflict prevention and crisis management tend to concentrate only on their own field of expertise and ignore what others are doing. The benefits of cooperation between all actors in the field are clearly visible. Enhancing that cooperation will save time and effort for all actors, and the final beneficiaries are the people affected by conflicts.

Christian Berger**Head of Unit, Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention, DG Relex**

Mr. Berger started his presentation with two questions: “Why a civil society involvement in peacebuilding?” and “Why a role for the European Commission?” The role of the Commission is to enhance capacity for rapid answers to conflicts. But because there is no quick fix to conflicts, complementarity, coherence and a long-term perspective to conflicts are needed. In addition, trade issues, humanitarian assistance and civilian protection have to be taken account. The Commission’s new stability instrument, a budgetary tool, will allow, from 2007 onwards, better responses to crises and link short- and long-term actions.

According to Mr. Berger, there are two levels where civil society could be involved: in partner countries and at the EU level. Involving civil society in the partner countries is important for democracy and dialogue, but one has to keep in mind the weakness of civil society in many of these countries. Civil society is also important for the proper functioning and legitimisation of governments and in creating social acceptance. At the EU level, the EU needs more information from the field and analysis on the conflict situation, if it wants to be effective in its programmes and missions. Mr. Berger also mentioned that civil society can help in implementing and evaluating missions as well as in monitoring and training. The involvement of NGOs has nevertheless to follow some basic rules such as the requirement for relevant expertise and the respect for confidentiality. There are also some constraints for such cooperation; namely financial and administrative problems, the lack of European chain of command, and the choice of using EU-based NGOs instead of using field-based organisations.

Mr. Berger mentioned that EC-civil society cooperation already takes place within, for instance, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, Rapid Reaction Mechanism (in Aceh) and Kimberley Process.

To conclude, Mr. Berger elaborated ideas on how to proceed with future cooperation. These are: launching of a peacebuilding partnership; discussing the issues with the European Parliament; setting up a network to get more information on conflict prevention; framework partnerships; and employment of experts.

Bruno Hanses**Head of Section 3 – Operations, DGE IX, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union**

Mr. Hanses started by saying that seeking “ways how to effectively enhance cooperation between civil society and EU civilian crisis management is important for both sides, as civil society and NGOs are often in on the frontlines of conflict and crisis situations”. Before examining how civil society could engage in cooperation with the Council and contribute to different phases of the cycle of a civilian crisis management mission, Mr. Hanses gave a detailed summary on the progress the EU has made in the field of civilian crisis management and examined

According to Mr. Hanses, civil society can have a role in contributing to the EU’s civilian crisis management. In the planning phase of a mission, civil society can provide early warning and situational knowledge. During the operational phase, a mission seeks to build contacts and cooperation with civil society actors, which are relevant to mission’s mandate. Finally, at the end of a mission, while civil society may have no formal role in the lessons learnt process, the views expressed by, for instance, NGOs and advocacy groups, may contribute to the overall assessment of a mission’s success or failure.

However, there are some restrictions to the cooperation. First, the Council is a law-making and political decision-making body, and it does not have financial resources to allow financing civil society activities. Secondly, the “single chain of command” structure – direct link between the mission on the ground and the Council – does not leave much space for formal cooperation between civil society and ESDP civilian crisis management.

Guido de Graaf Bierbrauwer**Head of Programmes, International Secretariat, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict**

Mr. de Graaf Bierbrauwer presented the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) created in 2003, with an objective to create a fundamental shift from reaction to prevention. This can be achieved by raising awareness; enhancing cooperation between the United Nations (UN), regional organisations, governments and civil society; strengthening local, regional and international networking; generating knowledge and lessons learnt; and mobilising civil society early response actions.

There are great differences in UN-civil society interactions; in very few cases, true, strategic partnership exists, and in some cases cooperation is only ad hoc or project-based. Civil society organisations are seldom included in analysis and planning processes; they are often seen as partners in implementation. Modalities for cooperation are not well developed. Therefore, there is a need for better understanding of the potential role that the civil society can have in promoting peace and security. There is also a need for a “code of conduct”, which would clarify different actors’ roles.

Some of these deficits have been acknowledged and addressed by various high-level panels and summits such as the Millennium + 5 Summit in September 2005, which decided on the establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. In its resolution establishing the Peacebuilding Commission, the UN General Assembly “recognised the important contribution of civil society and non-governmental organisations” and encouraged the Commission to consult them.

EU cooperation with civil society in the framework of civilian ESDP**Catriona Gourlay****RoCs Project Consultant, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research**

Ms. Gourlay, presented the findings of the RoCs project, based on her research and a process of consultation with project partners and their member organisations. The report ‘Partners Apart: Enhancing Cooperation between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management in the framework of ESDP’ is a compilation of best practices and lessons learnt followed by recommendations on how to further improve cooperation between civil society and EU civilian crisis management both at the strategic and field level as well as in training and recruitment.

Ms. Gourlay presented the recommendations in the context of the ESDP crisis management mission cycle, indicating how cooperation could be improved during all phases, from early warning through planning and implementation to lessons learnt.

Recommendations for enhancing cooperation in early warning and planning, at the strategic Brussels-based level included:

- Establishing an EU-NGO peacebuilding advisory group to promote routine informal dialogue;
- Establishing civilian liaison officers within the Council Secretariat to promote EU awareness of external civilian actors and their work; and
- Providing for the inclusion of non-state experts in EU fact-finding and pre-planning missions.

Recommendations for enhancing interaction in the field, during the mission implementation and evaluation phases included:

- The development of operational guidelines, which clarify modalities for routine information exchange, building on established forums for civil society cooperation where possible;
- Establishing civilian liaison officer positions with liaison, reporting and outreach functions;
- Providing for the development of public awareness campaigns, including elements to be delivered through civil society partners; and
- Providing for increased consultation with partners and local stakeholders in the preparation of mission evaluations.

Often, the rationale for cooperation lies in the first-hand field knowledge CSOs possess. Cooperation can, for instance, benefit the preparation of EU-fact finding and pre-planning missions as CSOs can help identify suitable civil society actors for teams to meet with. Systemic and strategic-level dialogue between the EU and civil society can also enable bottom-up operational cooperation and contribute to comprehensive planning. During the implementation of a mission, cooperation with local actors can improve visibility and sustainability of the EU mission. NGOs can also provide a valuable role in surveying local opinion and in providing independent assessments of the impact of EU action.

Non-state actors also play an important role in training and enhanced cooperation can increase the generic ESDP training capacity of the EU. Likewise, cooperation in the area of recruitment can help expand national pools with suitable and qualified candidates from non-governmental sectors. Recommendations in relation to training and recruitment included:

- Ensuring that EU training addresses issues of cooperation with other civilian actors;
- Including non-governmental trainers in rapidly-deployable training teams for pre-deployment and in-mission training; and
- Expanding the use of directly contracted personnel for specialist positions, including those that require local knowledge.

Civilian Crisis Management and the Role of Civil Society: Learning from the past – the Case of Aceh Monitoring Mission

The session was facilitated by Mr. Nicolas Beger, Director of European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO).

Bruno Hanses

Head of Section 3 – Operations, DGE IX, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union

Mr. Hanses started with a historic overview of the Aceh case, starting with the armed conflict in 1976 until the Helsinki negotiations in 2005. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in Helsinki in August 2005, after which the EU Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) was deployed. The mission has had a number of tasks including demobilisation, relocation and reintegration of active GAM; assistance in the process of legislative change and human rights monitoring.

According to Mr. Hanses, NGOs were almost non-existent until the tsunami catastrophe in December 2004 in South-East Asia, which brought many NGOs to the area. Even though the MoU does not make any reference to the cooperation between the AMM and civil society, the head of mission has had a very proactive position vis-à-vis the NGOs, especially in reintegration and human rights. The mission has also organised periodic and formal meetings such as the Commission on Security Arrangements. Currently, the AMM is being downsized and working with the exit strategy to transfer work to local CSOs.

To conclude, Mr. Hanses noted that the Acehnese CSOs have been very useful. However, there have been more expectations within the CSO community towards what the AMM has been able to achieve. Therefore, more local ownership would be needed.

Pauliina Arola

Executive Director, Crisis Management Initiative

Ms. Arola commenced by giving general examples civil society actors can have in brokering peace and a short overview of the process that led to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Indonesia and GAM and to the deployment of AMM. She noted that in order to assess the role and success of the local civil society in the context of the AMM it is essential to know, for instance, how the local NGOs and civil society actors participated in the mission's activities and what strategies were utilised to benefit from the professionalism of local NGOs. According to Ms. Arola, the Acehnese local civil

society has played a pivotal role in building peace and justice in Aceh. Even if many NGOs have faced difficulties during the conflict, a new generation of civil society actors has developed; e.g. women's and human rights organisations.

The work of the AMM has been perceived as a success in the eyes of Acehnese people. The presence of the AMM has been considered as important for the lasting peace process in the area. The local NGOs have also viewed AMM as an important and impartial actor. However, there are some worries as to CSOs' and cooperation with the AMM. How are the short-term and long-term goals of the AMM defined? What are the linkages between the two? What is the AMM's exit strategy?

Ms. Arola noted that the cooperation between the Acehnese CSOs and the AMM started well; the AMM organised meetings with local actors to discuss the mandate of the AMM. However, the contacts in different areas of the mandate (incl. human rights monitoring and reintegration) have taken place on an ad hoc basis. New efforts have been done to revive the contacts in a more structured manner before the end of the AMM's mandate, and there have been indications that cooperation could take place in the context of building an exit strategy.

On the basis of the experience gained from AMM, Ms. Arola presented three recommendations:

- Every ESDP mission should prepare a Civil Society Strategy and appoint focal point officers to liaise with local civilian actors.
- It is necessary to identify both short- and long-term goals even in short-term missions.
- The preparation of exit strategies for missions should start as early as possible, in which work the cooperation with local CSOs is essential.

Civilian Crisis Management and the Role of Civil Society: Preparing for the future – Potential for Cooperation in Kosovo

The session was facilitated by Ms. Anne Palm, Secretary General of Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network (KATU).

Casper Klynge Head of European Union Planning Team for Kosovo

Mr. Klynge started with a detailed review of the mandate of the EU Planning Team for Kosovo (EUPT), which was followed by reflections on the cooperation between the EUPT and NGOs.

The situation in Kosovo is complex, and the future ESDP mission will be the most demanding the EU has so far experienced. The EUPT is mandated to plan a smooth transition from the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to locals; to provide technical advice for the EU to contribute support; and to maintain the dialogue with the UNMIK with regard to its downsizing and transferral of competencies to local institutions. The basic assumption is that Kosovo authorities will take institutional charge.

However, international presence is needed. According to the latest recommendations the EUPT has submitted to the EU Council, the future ESDP mission will include the following components: police (69,2%), justice (12,7%), correctional services (6,4%), customs (1,6%), and horizontal issues (11,4%). The ESDP operation should focus on areas where executive powers or monitoring and mentoring are required in order to maintain stability and security.

The EUPT has adopted a bottom-up approach, identifying priority areas where a possible ESDP mission might be needed, as well as proposing specific strategies for each area. In order to generate this, the EUPT has created partnership at all levels (government, community, international actors) and used an open, transparent and direct methodology.

According to Mr. Klynge, there is a need for cooperation with civil society in Kosovo. At the moment, there are about 2 500 NGOs registered in Kosovo, but only 150 of them are active. The development of civil society is critical in fostering the accountability of the government. So far, the cooperation between the

EUPT and civil society has been conducted on ad hoc basis. The EUPT has a contact point for NGOs as well as on human rights and gender issues.

To conclude, Mr. Klynge suggested the following recommendations on how to improve cooperation with civil society actors in the field: retain informal relationships; “operationalise input”; NGO coordination; timing of input; training; feedback mechanisms; regular meetings; updating people about necessary issues (e.g. judiciary system); and follow-up initiatives on post-ESDP situation.

Jérôme Mellon

Project Co-ordinator, SEE, Kosovo, Saferworld

Mr. Mellon gave an in-depth analysis of the weaknesses and potential of the civil society in Kosovo. In the past years, the civil society has been engaged in several projects of which Mr. Mellon gave two examples.

The first example was that of ISSR-process (Internal Security Sector Review), in which different civil society representatives were asked about their fears and hopes in relation to Kosovo’s future security sector. Ethnic community representatives also participated in the Steering Committee, which was responsible for the security sector review. The other example was from the village of Germova, where Saferworld and a local partner-NGO Forum of Civil Initiative asked local representatives to identify their safety problems and define plans to address them.

Despite positive developments, Mr. Mellon pointed out that there are several problems that NGOs face.

- Duality of the governance system in Kosovo. UNMIK is accountable only for the UN Secretary General. Therefore, NGO sector has had difficulties in influencing decisions.
- Ethnic tensions. Tensions have continued since 1999 and especially after March 2004. Multiethnic cooperation initiatives rarely work, and parallel Serbian structures in different sectors (e.g. health, justice, and police) create more difficulties.
- Inexperience of Kosovo’s governance structure. Well-established channels between NGOs and the government do not exist, and where they exist, they depend on personal relationships.
- Many NGOs do not have a clearly-defined purpose and mission. There is a lack of legitimacy and real links to the society. Many NGOs depend on donors for funding and organisational direction. Also problems such as corruption, misuse of funds and nepotism exist widely.
- Human resource management. Many NGOs are unable to develop expertise without qualified staff. Due to the lack of institutional memory many NGOs become dependent on key figures.
- Relationship between NGOs and public. NGOs have failed to create links to the people. Often, the public views NGOs as an industry in a conflict context.
- Fragmentation of civil society. Many NGOs do not network together, and often there is a lack of understanding of a common purpose. However, informal relations exist.

According to Mr. Mellon, there is an acute need for the civil society to become a part of the Kosovo reform process. Therefore, there are several issues to be addressed.

- Funding. There is a need for long-term funding commitments, which would allow developing long-term programmes and creating expertise. However, before any provision of support, an assessment of NGO capacity should be undertaken.
- Building capacity and encouraging legitimacy. Instead of training programmes, which has not often been based on true needs, on-job consultancy or support in an acute problem would be more effective.
- Specific recommendation on strategic approach to community safety. Such projects would be needed in multi- and mono-ethnic communities. They would increase the NGOs’ capacity in implementing activities as well as provide useful feed into the micro-level police cooperation.

THURSDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2006

Reports from the working groups

The following reports are from the working group sessions, in which the conference participants gathered on Wednesday afternoon to discuss the recommendations of the 'Partners Apart' report.

The session was facilitated by Mr. Rob Watson, Director for Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management of the Crisis Management Initiative.

Working Group 1 – Cooperation at the Strategic Level

Moderator: Martina Weitsch, Joint Representative, Quaker Council for European Affairs

Reporter: Philippe Bartholme, Policy Officer, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office

The working group had an open, frank and lively discussion on the recommendations at the strategic level. There was had a good balance of representatives from Member States, Council Secretariat and NGOs.

The working group started with a brainstorming on the issue, to clarify what was meant by "strategic partnership" and how to achieve this. As a reminder, the three main recommendations discussed were following:

- Establish an EU-NGO peacebuilding advisory group;
- Establish civilian liaison officers within the Council Secretariat;
- Provide for the inclusion of external experts in fact-finding or pre-planning missions.

On the first proposal to establish an EU-NGO peacebuilding advisory group some participants stated that while they accepted the principle of cooperating with NGOs, the nature of this partnership is very problematic. For NGOs, there is a need to formalise a minimum cooperation to ensure it is effective and contributes to bottom-up operational cooperation. For the EU, the cooperation has to remain as informal as possible to respect EU's internal rules, confidentiality issues and NGO independence. One of the main challenges in implementing an advisory group is to ensure the representativeness of the structure. There is a real need for identifying the relevant people and organisations. A mapping exercise might be useful for this purpose, but it would also require means and willingness from the EU. The informal dialogue NGOs have maintained with the EU Presidencies since the Irish Presidency will continue and was recognised as an important step. It was suggested that we should move from seminars on "do we have to work together?" to more practical events on "how do we concretely work together in specific regions or issues?"

The idea of the second recommendation to establish civilian liaison officers was accepted, but it was noted that for the moment the Council Secretariat does not have the means to implement such an idea. Some participants also noted that having such focal points in the Council Secretariat should not hamper efforts to communicate at the operational level.

Most participants agreed that the last proposal to include external experts in fact-finding or pre-planning missions would be useful. Regarding the expansion of the civilian response teams, it was considered too early to think about it since the teams are not yet operational. Here also, the need to identify the right people will be crucial.

In general, regarding cooperation at the strategic level, both NGOs and EU/MS representatives agreed on the principles, but still have to work on the implementation part. Some participants suggested that it might be interesting to organize a test-case exercise to see how this would practically work.

Working Group 2 – Cooperation at the Tactical Level

Moderator: Alessandro Rossi, European Coordinator, Nonviolent Peaceforce

Reporter: Riikka Isomäki, Special Assistant, Crisis Management Initiative

The working group focused on field level and tackled especially the following issues:

- Role of civil society. It was commonly agreed that a crisis management mission requires support from civil society. Civil society needs to be involved in all stages. Especially in the planning stage, its role in identifying local capabilities is crucial.
- Cooperation between different stakeholders. Different stakeholders have different strategies, and often, the problematic within inter-agency relations is not the lack of cooperation, but the lack of time and clear division of roles. For cooperation to be coherent and effective, it is vital to identify and map key actors. This mapping should be qualitative and quantitative. For instance, the future ESDP mission in Kosovo should be supportive to the existing OSCE mission and other international organisations. The OSCE has valuable contacts with NGOs and knowledge on local civil society. The added value of international NGOs is to raise awareness among local NGOs and civil society.
- Role of media. The role of media was mainly discussed within the Kosovo context. Media's engagement especially in the planning stage of a mission is important. Its role in transmitting messages and helping local civil society to understand the purposes and the content of a mission is crucial. In the planning stage, it is important to pay attention to how to communicate with local civil society and what channels to use. Effective communication between a mission and local civil society was seen vital in creating and maintaining local ownership.
- Information exchange. It was agreed that local NGOs as well as the civilian parts of local government (e.g. political parties) should have contacts with an ESDP operation.
- Flexibility of ESDP missions. Participants saw that the institutional division of labour inside the EU is a challenge to the flexibility of ESDP missions. ESDP missions should be culturally and contextually sensitive. This sensitivity includes: agreement between all actors about the content of the mandate and about the basis of inter-agency cooperation; involvement of civil society, both international NGOs and local actors, at an early stage; feedback mechanisms to improve the inter-institutional cooperation within the EU; and situational awareness in mandates.

On the basis of the discussion, the working group agreed on the need for elaborating the following issues:

- Exchange of information between different actors in the field and between headquarters;
- Consultations with local civil society organisations and getting feedback from them;
- Understanding the influence and the role of media in forming public awareness and creating trust in local civil society;
- Better modalities in working with civil society at all levels of planning and action;
- Flexibility of ESDP missions comes from involving cultural and contextual sensitivity at all levels: early warning, planning, feedback and follow-up.

Working Group 3 – Cooperation for Capabilities – Training and Recruitment

Moderator: Antti Häikiö, National Coordinator, Civilian Crisis Management, Training, Research and Evaluation, Ministry of the Interior, Finland

Reporter: Minna Kukkonen, Project Assistant, Crisis Management Initiative and Markus Peltola, Graduate Student, University of Jyväskylä

The working group addressed the issue of EU-civil society cooperation in training and recruitment for civilian ESDP operations. The starting point for the discussion was that there are several concerns:

- Difficulties in recruiting suitable and qualified personnel.
- How to choose the right people for training and missions? How to best use the existing reserves? How to ensure quality of candidates? How to reach the best candidates (NGO/civil servants)?
- Link between training and recruitment. In practice, no training is often required for ESDP missions.

- Quality of training and recruitment.
- No common training and recruitment system exists. There are differences in institutional settings, administrative practices and legislation at the member state level.
- Lack of resources and political will. In general, there is a lack of political will to participate in and develop civilian crisis management. On one hand, political will at the top level is not matched with resources at lower levels of state institutions.

The working group positively welcomed the findings and the recommendations of the report. It was noted that some of the recommendations of the report are already operational in some member states, whilst others have difficulties in operationalising them due to, for instance, legal or financial constraints. It was also acknowledged that there is no common model for training and recruitment in Europe, and that there are also remarkable differences between institutional division of labour, legislation, administrative procedures and political will in member states.

It was therefore agreed within the working group that before challenges of the EU-civil society relationship (and training and recruitment in general as well) can be dealt with, the differences between member states' training and recruitment policies and procedures need to be identified.

As a conclusion, the working group stated that:

- Training and recruitment should be better linked. Proper training and competency should be prerequisite for recruitment for field missions. There should also be an institutional link between training and recruitment.
- Training should not be directed only to civil servants, but also to civil society representatives.
- Recruitment should be based on the competence of candidates, not on the source of recruitment (not only civil servants should be recruited for field missions).
- “Quality assurance system” should be created to cover the whole training-mission-training cycle: pre-mission training, in-mission performance of field personnel and impact of missions.

Debate on the recommendations

The session was facilitated by Mr. Mika-Markus Leinonen, the Finnish CIVCOM Chair.

The following recommendations (based on Catriona Gourlay's survey) were introduced to the conference and largely discussed both in the working groups (on Wednesday) as well in the plenary. There was a great understanding of the recommendations; however some other opinions were also expressed.

Recommendations

Strategic level: improving cooperation with Brussels-based decision makers and planners

- Establish an EU-NGO peace-building advisory group tasked with:
 - promoting practical modalities of communication with regard to situation assessment, including the identification of contact points in relevant NGOs and the Council Secretariat;
 - conducting joint qualitative mapping of relevant NGO actors and their activities in common thematic and geographical areas of operation; and
 - establishing working groups to promote dialogue in relation to a particular ESDP thematic or geographic areas.
- Establish civilian liaison officers within the Council Secretariat tasked with:
 - receiving and forwarding relevant information;
 - responding to questions and briefing external actors on ESDP information needs;
 - mapping NGO actors and activities in ESDP priority areas and relevant geographic regions;
 - identifying civil society individuals/groups that fact-finding and planning teams could meet with; and
 - liaising (in cooperation with field headquarters and the EC) with civil society actors and international organisations to identify which organisations might provide complementary roles in relation to mission outreach and follow-up.

- Provide for the inclusion of external experts in fact-finding or pre-planning missions by:
 - adopting interim procedures, whereby external experts with local knowledge or specialist expertise can be included as consultants in fact-finding or pre-planning missions at short notice, as was done in the preparation of the AMM;
 - developing the CRT concept to allow for individuals from the pool to be included in fact-finding and pre-planning teams; and
 - expanding the CRT pool to include external experts with regional/local and relevant thematic expertise.

Field level: improving capacities and modalities for cooperation on the ground

- Develop a concept for cooperation with civil society and operational guidelines that would include, but not be limited to, the following points.
- Establish modalities for routine information exchange with relevant civilian agencies and civil society groups whereby:
 - these would link with established fora for civil society/NGO cooperation where possible; and
 - provision would be made for the establishment of Civilian Liaison Centres—attached to ESDP mission headquarters, offices of the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) or EC delegations—where no established fora for NGO/civil agency dialogue exist.
- Establish civilian liaison officer positions. Applicants would need to have relevant field experience, project management experience, language skills and local knowledge of international community partners, NGOs and local civil society actors. Where normal recruitment procedures fail to attract suitable candidates, provisions should be made for the head of mission/EUSR to directly recruit these officers as external consultants. The tasks of civilian liaison officers would include:
 - external liaison functions (with relevant international organisations, international NGOs, and all local stakeholders);
 - internal liaison functions (with EC delegations and services, including for the purposes of identifying possible complementary or follow-on EC actions);
 - reporting functions including: routine reporting to the head of mission of information that is relevant for mission safety, outreach and the conduct of operational partnerships; routine reporting on the activities of relevant international organisations, NGOs and civil society actors also for use in EU civil society mapping exercises (if any); and final reporting and input into lessons learning—including feedback from international agencies and NGO actors on the implementation of the mission and an initial evaluation of the mission’s Civilian Liaison and Outreach functions; and
 - outreach functions including: representing the mission in fora for inter-agency and NGO/civil society information exchange; and developing and managing, in cooperation with mission leadership and the Council Secretariat, the mission public awareness campaign (see below).
- Provide for the development of public awareness campaigns. These would include, but not be limited to, the following elements:
 - regular bilateral meetings between mission leadership or the EUSR and senior civil society representatives to build trust and help communicate mission objectives;
 - cooperation with the local press and broadcast media in line with mission communication strategies; and
 - developing outreach projects with civil society partners, which might include seed funding for seminars, road shows, radio soap operas, poster campaigns, comic strips, etc., where implementing partners might include academic institutions, private companies (TV and radio), NGOs and civil society groups with complementary interests and relevant expertise.

Mission evaluation/lessons learning

- Expand the mission evaluation process so as to draw on feedback from partners, local stakeholders and local populations by:

- systematically consulting international organisations, international NGOs and local stakeholders in the preparation of mission evaluations (see civilian liaison officer reporting functions);
- providing for missions to commission (through communications or outreach budget lines) surveys of public opinion;
- devoting specific attention in ESDP mission evaluations to the modalities and effectiveness of cooperation, at headquarters and in the field, with external actors, including international NGOs and local civil society; and
- supporting and cooperating with independent evaluations of the coherence and impact EU actions.

Training

- Ensure that EU-level training addresses issues of cooperation with civilian actors in their foundation and pre-deployment training modules and as part of in-mission training, whereby relevant external actors, including NGOs, are invited to brief mission staff on their activities and the local context.
- Establish a database of trainers, drawing on all relevant national and independent organisations with relevant training expertise, for potential use by member states and/or EU bodies for generic, pre-deployment and in-mission training.
- Identify a pool of pre-selected trainers with the assistance of European training institutes. These trainers would comprise a subset of the above-mentioned database and could be mobilised at short notice in fly-away teams to provide pre-deployment or in-mission training.
- Encourage member states to develop mechanisms that link participation in EU-level training with deployment in ESDP missions.

Recruitment

- Develop recruitment outreach, whereby a wider range of contact points in relevant national training institutes, specialist NGOs and recruitment agencies are sent calls for contributions with relevant national contact point information.
- Develop back-up arrangements for identifying suitable experts should normal procedures fail to do so, including through linkage with independent roster managers and specialist NGOs.
- Expand the use of directly contracted personnel to include specialist consultants who could be recruited directly by the head of mission on an ad hoc basis in response to specialist and urgent operational needs.
- Encourage member states to establish or develop rosters for deployment in ESDP missions that include experts from the private and/or NGO sector as well as civil servants.

The Finnish EU Presidency has noted both the recommendations and the discussion and is committed to take the issue forward in appropriate fora.

The debate on the way for implementation

Nicolas Beger

Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office

Mr. Beger started by stating that there is a universal understanding that creating sustainable peace cannot be done without inclusion of civil society; both international and local civil society.

Mr. Beger stated that the EU had all the mandate and good worded high level documents it needed to move ahead on the clearly recognised added value of cooperation with expert NGOs. What is now needed is to find out how to operationalise ways of enhanced cooperation between civil society and EU civilian crisis management beyond the many instances where this works already well on specific theme or country.

Principally it seems as if agreement was achieved that:

- There is clear added value in linking necessary expertise in full few of the different roles but for the same goal of peacebuilding.
- There should be regular informal exchange of information and an exploration of how to operationalise consultation and input.
- We need some more qualitative mapping and to develop modalities so that expertise is the sole guiding principle. This is also true for effective delivery in relation to training and recruitment; we need to link mission impact assessment to recruitment and training.

Two questions arose during the conference:

- The question of “what do NGOs want?” There is a simple answer to this: the same as the EU and the member states – a more sustainable peace, real impact on the ground and less violence. This sounds obvious, but it is important in relation to why we push for more added value principles to be implemented. There is no sustainable peace without getting into a modification of attitude and creating conflict resilient societies. The technical detail of the “people to people issue” is an integral part in this process and cannot be fulfilled by governmental actors alone.
- The question of “why we are ‘hackling’ over concepts that are in practice in a large number of EU member states already?” There is a need to identify the existing interaction and integration between civil society and EU civilian crisis management instruments as well as the practices that exist on national level.

Talking about the future way of implementation, Mr Berger outlined the idea of the RoCS II project with the German Foreign Ministry, which is based on the current RoCS project and its detailed report. RoCS II will advance the issues further through a new case study based analysis of the interaction between civil society and EU civilian crisis management focused on fragile states and on the crucial themes of security sector reform and transitional justice. It will be important to look more closely beyond ESDP toward the cooperation during the whole conflict cycle.

Margret Uebber

Deputy Head of the Conflict Prevention Department, the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany

Ms. Uebber informed about the priorities of the upcoming German EU Presidency in civilian crisis management. The German Presidency will continue preparing the RoCS project. According to Ms. Uebber the debates in Helsinki conference have indeed provided with an excellent basis for further preparations. The fact that the German government has decided to follow up on the issue of the EU and civil society in conflict prevention and crisis management clearly demonstrates the importance which the German Federal government attaches to such cooperation and the conviction that effective conflict prevention – a term which we understand as a comprehensive one including the entire cycle of prevention, crisis management and post-conflict peacebuilding – requires coherent and coordinated action of all state and non state actors, nationally and internationally.

Furthermore Ms. Uebber stated that this continuity will also be demonstrated by the implementing partners in the project: the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) and the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), which have been involved in developing and implementing the Finnish Presidency’s project will provide the same contribution to our activities. This continuity will be a particular asset to the work, and help to make sure that the results of the Finnish project will be included and built upon. The third partner in the project is the Bertelsmann Foundation.

As for the project itself, it aims at further developing interaction between the EU and civil society. To this end, there is an intention on the one hand to broaden and on the other hand to concretise the focus in three directions:

- Under the Finnish presidency, the main focus has been at civil society interaction with ESDP instruments. The new project will widen this scope and consider the full range of EU civilian crisis management instruments, including those of the European Community.

- Secondly, the new project intends to look at the entire conflict cycle from crisis prevention to crisis management and post conflict peace building. The project will also take a look at the connection and coherence between shorter term crisis management and longer-term conflict prevention.
- Thirdly and finally, the specific focus of the project will lie on the situation of working within fragile states and focus on two important key sectors that have to be dealt with if the causes of fragility are to be sustainably addressed: security sector reform and transitional justice. In doing so, a strong emphasis will be put on the field level cooperation between EU state and non-governmental actors, keeping at the same time in mind that such cooperation needs to be matched by a similar level of cooperation in Brussels.

Ms. Uebber concluded her speech by telling that two case studies will be prepared, focusing on fragile states and looking at the added value of cooperation between EU and civil society in such context. The terms of reference for these case studies will be developed from a general background concept paper on cooperation between European state and non-state actors in fragile states. The two case studies will then provide the basis for deliberations at an expert seminar in Brussels on the issue of EU-civil society cooperation in fragile states and a following policy seminar to discuss possibilities of how to potentially implement recommendations made by the experts at the EU policy level.

The results of both seminars will be fed into the third and biggest event: a conference in Berlin. The current plan is to organise this conference on 27 and 28 June 2007, presumably in the premises of the Federal Foreign Office. Based on the case studies, the findings of the two seminars and the discussions at the Berlin conference, a final report will be produced in identifying gaps and containing recommendations how to develop a structured dialogue between civil society and EU actors in fragile states.

The expected outcome is increased awareness about the EU's conflict prevention and crisis management instruments, and about the added value of cooperation with civil society organisations.

Closing Session

Anu Laamanen

Head of the Civilian Crisis Management Unit, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland

Ms Laamanen stated that the discussions in the conference have demonstrated that although the EU already has significant experiences of fruitful cooperation with the civil society there can always be room for improvement.

The European Union is in practice already actively interacting with the civil society and taking in many ways advantage of their expertise even though there is no formalised mechanism for it. Informal ways of exchanging information must not be undervalued and they can function effectively. One particularly challenging area to explore is situational assessment where the input from NGO's can have an important role in overall awareness raising. There are certainly also many other areas where cooperation with civil society on the ground could be improved.

Ms. Laamanen thanked all the participants for very constructive and useful exchange of views. According to her the work of the RoCS -process will certainly provide valuable elements for the future reflections in the EU on the role of the civil society in the civilian crisis management. The wide range of ideas presented here to enhance cooperation between the civil society and EU's civilian crisis management certainly merit a thorough examination in the EU. In order to make an important step forward in the EU's civilian crisis management we need to translate the best of our reflections into practice.