



Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) Policy Meeting:

From Combatants to State-builders – Armed Groups in Participatory Peace Processes

A half-day Civil Society Dialogue Network policy meeting took place on Friday 10 February 2012 in Brussels, Belgium, entitled 'From Combatants to State-builders – Armed Groups in Participatory Peace Processes'. The aim of this meeting was to present civil society's analysis on how to best support war-to-peace transitions, in particular looking at discussing the following questions: (1) What are lessons learnt regarding how to engage with armed groups, in particular for the EU? (2) What are advantages of a participatory and holistic approach to peacebuilding support? (3) What capacity does the EU have to support political and security negotiations and how should it be adapted in the light of new evidence?

The focus of the first session was on security transition processes. It was moderated by Catherine Woollard, (European Peacebuilding Liaison Office), and included presentations from Véronique Dudouet (Berghof Foundation), Agus Wandu, (Aceh Institute); Florian Qehaja (Kosovar Centre for Security Studies) and Susanne Gentz (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue). Key points were made around the management of security transition processes, including arms management in connection with security sector reform, reintegration of former combatants and transitional justice as well as around state building support. Civil society analysis on the EU's involvement in Aceh and Kosovo as well as research data on the timing, sequencing and ownership of war-to-peace transitions in South Africa, Colombia, El Salvador, Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Burundi, Southern Sudan, Nepal and Aceh provided the evidence for informed discussions.

The focus of the second session, moderated by Hans J. Giessmann (Berghof Foundation), was on discussing lessons learnt for EU support to ongoing and future peace processes. Practitioners and experts provided their analysis of the EU's involvement and of success factors in supporting transition processes. Among those, Pieter Feith (ex-EUSR Kosovo/ International Civilian Representative), Guy Banim (EEAS - Division for Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation), David Newton (Conciliation Resources), Roxana Cristescu (Crisis Management Initiative) and Peter Hedling & Markku Lampinen (EEAS – Crisis Management Planning Department) provided inputs next to other participants. The discussions focused on how best the EU could contribute to sustainable transitions, touching upon issues such as coherence, local ownership, cooperation with other actors, coordination, approaches to engage with armed groups as well as arms management. On top of this, lessons learnt from CSDP missions were discussed, highlighting for instance the importance of clear mission objectives and of the host government's commitment to (finance) SSR.

The meeting brought together approximately 50 participants including representatives of civil society organisations and officials from EU institutions.

A full report, including detailed recommendations, will be published soon on eplo.org.

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project funded by the European Commission aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and EU policymakers. The CSDN contributes to strengthening international and regional capacity for conflict prevention and post-conflict co-operation (for more information please see: www.eplo.org). The CSDN is managed by EPLO, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, in cooperation with the EEAS and the EC.