



**Preventing violent conflict:
Opportunities for the Swedish and Belgian
Presidencies of the European Union in 2001**



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The following organisations have endorsed the paper (the organisations marked * support its aims):

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Centre for Conflict Management	Norway
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Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society	Sweden
Swedish Red Cross*	Sweden
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	Sweden

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Preventing violent conflict: Opportunities for the Swedish and Belgian Presidencies of the European Union in 2001

Executive summary

Violent conflict causes massive humanitarian suffering, undermines development, stifles economic growth and prevents the maturation of political institutions. The need for the EU to do more to prevent violent conflict is now well accepted, and the Union has a key role to play. However, political realities mean that the focus of EU action is invariably on crisis management (often military) rather than on longer-term action to prevent conflicts erupting in the first place. The Swedish and Belgian presidencies of the EU offer a vital opportunity to put measures in place to increase the EU's capacity to prevent violent conflicts and promote a culture of prevention. This briefing paper sets out key proposals for action.

1. Development co-operation, trade, investment and international financial institutions

The EU's development and trade policies, and relations with the international financial institutions (IFIs) – the World Bank and the IMF - have often failed to fulfil their potential to promote sustainable development and peace. In the past, EU economic policies have exacerbated tensions in society and increased the risk of violent conflict. For example, unevenly distributed development assistance has increased tensions between groups, protectionist trade policies have hindered the access of developing countries to international markets and created economic shocks, and IFI structural adjustment programmes have forced cuts in spending on social services and fuelled instability. The Swedish and Belgian Presidencies provide an opportunity to ensure that the EU's economic instruments and policies are targeted to help prevent violent conflict.

The paper proposes action in the following areas:

- Targeting development co-operation at root causes of conflict
- Promoting a more equitable trade policy
- Influencing the policies of international financial institutions
- Working with the private sector
- Controlling the diamond trade

2. Foreign and Security Policy

Recent progress in developing the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy has been largely focused on strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence for crisis management. This work is welcome but it needs to be balanced with equal efforts to prevent conflicts and crises arising in the first place. There is a stark contrast between the swift and costly initiatives for building up EU military capabilities and the hesitant and modest efforts at prevention. A shift of focus is urgently needed.

The paper proposes action in the following areas:

- Controlling small arms and light weapons
- Strengthening the rule of law and reforming the security sector
- Supporting demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration
- Regulating mercenaries and private military activity

- Stopping the use of child soldiers

3. Institutional changes to enhance the capacity of the EU and Member states to prevent violent conflict

Enhancing the capacity of the EU and Member states to prevent violent conflict requires significant institutional changes. The Amsterdam treaty introduced some welcome innovations and a major restructuring of the Commission is already underway. However, there is a concern that the Council of Ministers, Commission and national governments are not yet equipped to fulfil their mandates and potential in the area of conflict prevention.

The paper proposes action in the following areas:

- Strengthening the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit
- Enhancing the capacity of country delegations
- Restructuring the Commission
- Developing national infrastructures for conflict prevention and peace-building

4. Working with civil society

Civil society organisations such as NGOs, trade unions, the media, women's and youth's groups and religious organisations have a key role to play in conflict prevention and peace-building. Despite great obstacles, civil society is a powerful force for helping to build peace in fragile war-torn societies. They can also ensure that policies accurately reflect the needs of individuals and communities. The EU and member states are increasingly acknowledging the need and value of working with civil society groups and establishing effective partnerships. This is welcome. However, there are not yet effective mechanisms to enable the EU to dialogue with civil society groups in the North and South, and it is difficult for such organisations to access the necessary financial and technical resources.

The paper proposes action in the following areas:

- Supporting women's groups
- Working with youth and developing a culture of peace and non-violence
- Encouraging independent media
- Supporting civilian peace services

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Introduction

Paper by Saferworld and International Alert for the European Platform on Conflict
Prevention and Transformation

Final version

Preventing violent conflict – Opportunities for the Swedish and Belgian Presidencies of the European Union in 2001

Introduction

Violent conflict causes massive humanitarian suffering, undermines development, stifles economic growth and prevents the maturation of political institutions.

The need for conflict prevention is now well accepted by the EU and it has a key potential role. However, political realities mean that the focus of EU action is invariably on crisis management (often military) rather than on longer-term action to prevent conflicts erupting in the first place. The Swedish and Belgian presidencies of the EU offer a vital opportunity to put measures in place to increase the EU's capacity to prevent violent conflicts and promote a culture of prevention. This briefing paper sets out key proposals for action

Costs of failing to prevent violent conflict

The costs of failing to act to prevent recent wars such as those in Kosovo, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of the Congo and others are stark:

- Humanitarian suffering – In Rwanda alone, an estimated 800,000 people were slaughtered in the 1994 genocide, 1.5 million people were internally displaced and a further 800,000 made refugees.
- Financial costs – The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict has estimated that the costs to the international community of the seven major wars in the 1990s (excluding Kosovo and calculated before the close of the decade) had been \$199 billion. This is in addition to the costs to the countries actually at war.
- Political costs – The inability of the EU to prevent the crises in Bosnia and Kosovo have damaged its credibility, provoked worrying disagreements between Member States and placed strains on the NATO alliance.
- Late action is costly and risky – experience shows that the earlier action is taken, the

higher chance of success. Violent conflicts are very difficult to stop once they are underway, crisis management (especially troop deployment) is more expensive, and the failure rate is higher.

The EU and conflict prevention

The EU has the potential to play a crucial role in preventing violent conflict. It has the world's biggest single market, the largest aid budget, an unparalleled web of historic and cultural ties, and representation at the top tables of diplomacy and economic planning. Used carefully, these economic and political levers could be targeted more effectively to help address the root-causes the tensions that can so often lead to violent conflict. However, this is clearly not happening.

The EU, the United Nations and the G8, have all agreed that much more should be done to reduce the potential for violence and to support mechanisms to ensure lasting peace. The G8 Communiqué Okinawa 2000 called for the promotion of a 'Culture of Prevention'¹. And the EU has agreed a number of important conflict prevention initiatives in recent years².

The Amsterdam Treaty established a Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit (PPEWU) which has the potential to increase the Union's capacity for prevention. It also paved the way for the incorporation of the Western European Union (WEU) into the EU. At the Helsinki summit on 10–11 December 1999, within the context of a revised European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), the European Council agreed the creation of a *Rapid Reaction Force* for military crisis intervention, to operate where NATO is unable or unwilling to.

The resolutions of the Helsinki summit also provided for the improvement and more effective use of the instruments of non-military crisis management. The EU commissioner charged with bringing this about, Christopher Patten, has stated that the EU will have to launch initiatives in a range of sectors: humanitarian aid and rescue services; mine clearance and disarmament; the supply of police personnel; the provision of administrative and legal support for democratisation; monitoring of elections and human rights; and conflict mediation in crisis regions.

Focus on the civilian aspects and long-term conflict prevention

This flurry of recent initiatives is encouraging. In theory, these institutional changes could develop the coherent integrated approach to aid, trade and development policy for which many in the NGO sector have long called. In practice, however, there are already indications

¹ The leaders of the G8 countries stated that "the international community should act urgently and effectively to prevent and resolve armed conflict. Many people have been sacrificed and injured, many economies have been impoverished, and much devastation has been visited upon the environment. In an ever more interdependent world such negative effects spread rapidly. Therefore, a 'Culture of Prevention' should be promoted throughout the global community. All members of the international community should seek to promote the settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations".

² The Council agreed Conclusions on 'Preventive Diplomacy, Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa' in December 1995; a Common Position 'Concerning Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa' and a Resolution on 'Coherence of the EC's Development Cooperation with its Other Policies' in June 1997. The Development Council agreed Conclusions on an 'EU Approach to Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Resolution' in December 1998. The Commission agreed a Communication on "The EU and the Issue of Conflicts in Africa: Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Resolution and Beyond" in March 1996, and a Communication on 'Engagement with ACP countries in Conflict' this year.

of an unbalanced approach.

Political pressures are forcing crisis management to the top of the agenda and the emphasis is on the development of a military rapid reaction force. Some attention has been given to non-military crisis management but here the focus is on the creation of a police rapid reaction force. There is a danger that resources will be focused on the military side of crisis management. The Commission is talking of a draft budget for civilian crisis management of 15 million Euros. This is approximately equal to the amount earmarked for crisis prevention and civilian conflict resolution by the German foreign ministry³.

This focus on crisis management also means that longer-term conflict prevention is in danger of being sidelined. This would be a mistake. There is undoubtedly a need for the EU to develop the capacity to react to crises. But surely equal, if not greater effort is needed to prevent them from occurring in the first place?

Opportunity of the Swedish and Belgian Presidencies

The aim of this document is to highlight practical steps which the EU could take to put the commitments on conflict prevention into practice during the forthcoming Swedish and Belgian Presidencies. The paper proposes several non-military headline goals, for national and EU policy-makers.

Sweden has traditionally played a leading role in conflict prevention and has declared that it will be a priority for its forthcoming Presidency. The government published a comprehensive action plan in 1999 on 'Preventing Violent Conflict'. NGOs are therefore looking to the Swedish Presidency to lead concrete progress at the European level.

Belgium has also developed initiatives for conflict prevention, notably in the field of small arms control. NGOs therefore call upon the Belgian government to pick up the challenge of ensuring EU action to prevent violent conflict when it takes over the EU Presidency in the second half of 2001.

Key issues for the EU to address

This paper outlines issues for the EU to address in four main areas:

- Development co-operation, trade, international financial institutions and the private sector.
- Common Foreign and Security Policy.
- Institutional changes needed to enhance EU and national capacity.
- Working with civil society

1. Development co-operation, trade, investment and international financial institutions

³ Tobias Debiel/Martina Fischer, Crisis Prevention and Civilian Conflict Management by the European Union -Concepts, Capacities and Problems of Coherence. Berghof Report No. 5 (forthcoming, September 2000), Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management).

Inequitable economic development, declining economic performance, macro-economic instability and reductions in human development can all contribute to the risks of violent conflict. Much of sub-Saharan Africa, for example, has seen a decline in macro-economic performance and worsening social indicators over the last 15 years. It is no coincidence that many of these same countries are experiencing ongoing conflict or are suffering in the aftermath of civil war.

Conflict is most likely to manifest itself when social and political structures are unable to cope with macro-economic shocks. Socio-economic decline invariably leads to deepening stratification in society whereby poorer or marginalised groups are further isolated from the political and economic mainstream leading to increased tension and violence. Violence can also occur as economic shocks impact on those with a stake in the economic system and political power. The violence that accompanied and followed the market collapse in Indonesia is a recent example of this phenomenon.

The EU's development and trade policies, and relations with the IFIs (World Bank and IMF), however, have failed to fully recognise these linkages and the key role they can play in promoting sustainable development and peace. In the past, EU economic policies have often exacerbated tensions in society and increased the risk of violent conflict. For example, unevenly distributed development assistance has increased tensions between groups, protectionist trade policies have hindered the access of developing countries to international markets and created economic shocks, and IFI structural adjustment programmes have forced cuts in spending on social services and fuelled instability. The Swedish and Belgian Presidencies provide an opportunity to ensure that the EU's economic instruments and policies are targeted to help prevent violent conflict.

a) Development co-operation

There is a worrying potential move in European development policy away from a focus on conflict. The reform of the European Commission (EC) and the new draft of the European Community's Development Policy appear to signal a move away from the comprehensive policy framework for conflict prevention and peace-building in Africa and beyond⁴, which the EU has developed since 1995.

The Foreign Policy Unit of the former DGVIII, for example, which promoted much of this work within the EC, has been dissolved and there seems to be a decreased interest within the EC in conflicts occurring outside Europe and a refocusing of development co-operation towards economic issues. There also seems to be a concerning transfer of responsibilities away from DG Development which needs to be addressed (see section 3, Institutional changes to enhance the capacity of the EU and Member States to prevent violent conflict).

The EU is currently setting new parameters for its development co-operation with developing

⁴ A landmark document in this regard was the conclusions of the European Council of 4 December 1995 on *Preventive Diplomacy, Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa*. In December 1998, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to conflict prevention and widened its mandate beyond Africa in its conclusions on *The Role of Development Co-operation in Strengthening Peace-building, Conflict Prevention and Resolution*. Several EC budget lines now include conflict-relevant areas. The former DGVIII worked together with the Conflict Prevention Network to develop conflict analysis tools for desk officers dealing with conflict countries as well as a draft practical handbook.

countries through such documents as the Cotonou Agreement of 23 June 2000 on ACP-EU relations, the draft European Community's Development Policy of 26 April 2000, and the Commission Communication on co-operation with ACP countries in conflict. These will shape EU development assistance policy to countries in conflict in this decade. As such they raise a number of important issues for conflict prevention:

Give priority to the LDCs

Most violent conflicts are in the developing world, particularly in the poorest countries in Africa. From a conflict prevention perspective, there is reason for concern about the long-term trend in the reduced proportion of EU development aid going to ACP countries. This is at a time when the proportion of assistance directed to the regions in the immediate vicinity of Europe (the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and countries of the Former Soviet Union) is increasing dramatically. While 51.3% of all community aid went to least developed countries (LDCs) in 1986/87, it was only 33.6% in 1996/97. Furthermore, funds from the EC's 2001 draft budget that were originally set aside for LDCs have been reallocated to the reconstruction of Kosovo. Discussions are currently underway over how to fund the aid promised to Serbia. Support to the Balkans is vital but it must not be at the expense of support to the world's poorest countries.

The Communication on EC Development Policy proposes that increased selectivity should be applied in the allocation of resources to countries. Disbursement will relate to results obtained on the basis of impact indicators approved beforehand. This is linked to a move away from a "stop-go" disbursement system towards a continuous one ("more/less"). Increasing the impact of development assistance is welcome but this new model must be carefully developed to ensure that countries in conflict or who do not meet the criteria are not disadvantaged. The Communication says that in fragile situations the EC will develop direct support for the populations concerned by paying particular attention to the most vulnerable groups. This is vital but it is also important that the EC engages with governments who are willing, but unable to meet the criteria.

Focus on conflict

The latest policy documents on development clearly identify trade liberalisation and foreign direct investments as the primary motors for growth in developing countries. However, neoliberal economic policies and economic growth alone are not enough to achieve stability. The need for development assistance to focus on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and 'structural stability' contained in previous Commission papers is largely absent. Without a focus on conflict it will be impossible for the EC to achieve its objective of poverty reduction. Another key issue to be addressed is the need to create a secure and just environment in which development can flourish (see section 2b 'Strengthening the rule of law and reforming the security sector').

Targeting development assistance on promoting integration into the world economy means shifting the focus away from other areas which have the potential to contribute to stability and conflict management. Previous Commission documents have focused on how development assistance can address root causes of conflict but this approach is not fully reflected in the new Communication. The Commission proposes to apply and mainstream a number of cross-cutting principles (e.g. gender equality and the environment) throughout the policy but conflict prevention is not included.

Good governance and civil society

The Development Policy makes a welcome commitment to good governance, human rights, promotion of civil society and a dialogue with a wide range of social actors, including local government and the private sector. These developments provide scope for a more proactive EU role in terms of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. However, it is unclear how these commitments will be put into practice. Greater clarity is needed on the type of support for good governance which the EC will provide, and concrete mechanisms must be established that enable sustained engagement with both southern and northern civil society. Support for democratisation in developing countries is vital. Democracy rooted in civil society is an important system for non-violent conflict prevention and management.

Conflict analysis and impact assessment

The EC needs to strengthen its capacity to strategically plan and monitor its development co-operation, particularly with countries at risk of or affected by violent conflict. For this, it requires analytical tools for conflict analysis and better strategic planning in conflict situations. It is also crucial to develop systems to monitor and learn from current projects in conflict-affected countries. This will require the EU to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders and develop mechanisms for dialogue with civil society. Promising steps towards developing tools for assessing the impact of EU policies were made by the Foreign Policy Unit of the former DGVIII, although little has been done in terms of implementation. One issue to be addressed is the small number of staff in the EC who have responsibility for administering a large budget. To ensure that EU assistance really tackles the root causes of conflict in an effective manner, it is important to recruit more staff with solid practical and regional experience to oversee the implementation of aid programmes.

Improving disbursement

Although the EU is the world's largest donor of development assistance, with an annual budget of approximately 8.6bn Euros, a significant proportion of these funds never reach their destinations due to inefficient disbursement procedures and other political, bureaucratic and financial control problems. A recent report from Commissioner Patten's staff detailed almost 2,000 unfinished projects which had cost a total of 1.2bn Euros and put the average time required by the EU to deliver aid at a staggering four years and two months.

Whilst many projects never reach the implementation stage, others which rely on funding to be provided in tranches are curtailed due to poor disbursement methods, with a risk that this may lead to heightened tensions in conflict-prone areas and increased levels of poverty in recipient communities. Currently, EU funding priorities in developing countries are agreed with national governments, who are then responsible for overseeing distribution. There are no mechanisms to allow civil society groups and other bodies working in the field more direct access to EU funds, nor to file complaints if the resources allocated to projects in their area do not arrive.

Recommendations

The EU should:

- Increase the proportion of development assistance it provides to LDCs, especially those threatened by violent conflict.
- Explicitly state that conflict prevention and structural stability are key objectives of EC

development policy. They should be mainstreamed into programme objectives and into approaches to development in politically fragile situations

- Focus assistance at helping governments to meet agreed impact indicators and support vulnerable communities.
- Implement conflict impact assessment frameworks and work towards mainstreaming these as part of all planning and evaluation processes in all countries threatened by violent conflict. Independent evaluations of the impact of EU projects should also be commissioned.
- Develop concrete mechanisms to engage with civil society, particularly in the South in order to get their input into development policy and programmes.
- Increase its capacity for the efficient and timely delivery of development assistance by shifting resources out of unwieldy bureaucratic procedures to allow more money to be spent on the implementation of projects.
- Allocate significant special budget-lines for conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities.

b) Trade policy

Conflicts have been triggered by economic shocks, as well as long-term impoverishment linked to a country's unequal integration into the global economy. In many cases, these triggers have been linked to falling commodity prices and revenues from agricultural or mineral exports. Ongoing conflicts, on the other hand, are frequently fuelled or sustained by regional and global war economies based on trade in illegal goods. The EU should promote equitable trade arrangements and to regulate this illicit trade.

Although the Cotonou Agreement has been finalised, the Regional Economic Partnership Agreements have still to be worked out. It is vital that these grant ACP countries better access to European markets. The EU is still upholding protectionist measures, effectively barring developing countries from exporting industrial and agricultural products to the EU. Commissioner Lamy has just put forward important proposals to grant the world's poorest countries duty-free access to Union markets. However, there is reported opposition from some Member States.

The consequences of trade liberalisation in conflict regions need to be carefully addressed. Neo-liberal economic policies can lead to social exclusion, economic instability, increased inequalities and reduced opportunities. Moreover, there is a danger that opening up borders and creating free trade areas could make it easier for the illicit trade which is fuelling many conflicts to flourish. The EU needs to match its push towards liberalisation with efforts to help tackle the illicit trade in arms, precious stones, minerals and hard woods.

Recommendations

The EU should:

- Support the Commission's proposals to grant duty-free market access to LDCs.
- Press for more equal trade relations on a global level and create an "enabling environment" for the economic development of the poorest countries. This includes lobbying the WTO for trade agreements favourable to southern countries and pushing for increased democracy and transparency within the organisation. Poverty eradication should be established as an objective of the WTO.
- Assist developing countries to tackle illicit trade by increasing the capacity of law enforcement agencies to police their borders and enforce controls. The liberalisation of economies in conflict areas should only happen if such parallel steps are taken to ensure that the illicit trade will not flourish.

c) Relations with International Financial Institutions

While there is an imperative for developing countries to reform their economies and integrate into the global economy, the policies that they have often been encouraged to pursue by the IFIs (World Bank and IMF), have often contributed to greater instability and consequently the risk of violence. In particular IMF hostility towards post-conflict grants (including the EU's) due to their inflationary effect can severely hamper reconstruction efforts. There has been some reorientation of IFI policies towards poverty reduction, but much more needs to be done. With the establishment of the Post Conflict Unit, and encouragement from its Development Committee, the World Bank has increased its post-conflict work and has funded some useful projects in this area. But there is still a lot more that can be done to integrate conflict prevention objectives into IFI programmes. The EU's experience and analysis could play an instrumental role in this regard

In countries emerging from conflict, IFIs can play an important role in ensuring that financial assistance is geared towards rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration that will form the foundation of building sustainable peace. The EU must play a lead role in promoting the reform of the IFIs so that their assistance focuses on preventing the re-emergence of conflict.

The EU and its Member States have frequently engaged in development programmes under bilateral funding arrangements with IFIs. Although this arrangement has the potential to ensure co-ordinated efforts among donors, it can also transfer policy and implementation responsibility to IFIs and thus reduce EU control and accountability.

Recommendations

The EU should:

- Ensure that IFI poverty reduction policies do not just aim to meet urgent social-economic needs, but also address the underlying causes of structural inequality that exacerbate the potential for violent conflict.
- Ensure that co-financing agreements prioritise the inclusion of civil society in the formation of conflict prevention and good governance policies and projects.

- Encourage IFIs to shift their policies away from short-term goals towards long-term commitments aimed at preventing violent conflict and building good governance
- Ensure that when co-financing arrangements are undertaken with IFIs that responsibility for policy, management and implementation are not handed over unless clearly accountable structures and complaints procedures are in place.
- Ensure the IMF removes its “deficit before grants” policy for post-conflict countries.

d) Working with the private sector

The changing nature of conflict and the rapid globalisation of the world’s economy over the last decade have combined to make the private sector an important actor in many conflict-threatened or afflicted societies. But as the perceived power and influence of the private sector has grown, so has its potential to contribute to sustainable development and the prevention and resolution of violent conflict. There has always been a strong moral argument for appropriate action, particularly in the well-documented cases in which company operations have created or exacerbated conflict. However, there is now also a compelling argument that contributing to conflict prevention is in fact a business interest which goes beyond presentational concerns. Conflict has a damaging impact on the core operations and bottom line financial considerations of the private sector. From Azerbaijan to Zimbabwe, the potential and reality of violent conflict is becoming an unavoidable business issue.

With many of the world’s leading multinational corporations headquartered in the EU, the EU has a strong interest in harnessing the potential of the private sector to contribute to sustainable development and conflict prevention. Partnerships with the private sector and civil society are increasingly being seen as a way that international concerns can be tackled more effectively as indicated by the recent launch of the Global Compact by the UN. The EU is well placed to exert a positive influence over the multinational companies based within its member states.

Recommendations

The EU should:

- Endorse and support the UN Global Compact and include a commitment in EU policy documents to engage the private sector as a partner in furthering EU development and conflict prevention objectives and make such a commitment explicit in an EU Declaration;
- Consult and work with the private sector on issues which address the root causes of conflict, including: institution-building, equitable distribution of resources, anti-corruption measures, poverty eradication, human rights promotion and protection, security sector reform.
- Implement the recommendation of the European Parliament to create a legally binding framework for regulating European transnational corporations (TNCs) operating in developing countries.

e) Controlling the diamond trade

The illegal trade in diamonds and other precious stones is a key factor fuelling a number of ongoing conflicts. Rebel forces in Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) use diamonds to finance their war efforts by exchanging the gemstones for arms and military support.

International outcry has meant that efforts to curb the illegal trade of “conflict diamonds” have gained momentum recently. The issue has been debated at the UN Security Council and the G8 summit. And the diamond industry has taken action to deny “conflict diamonds” access to world markets. These are positive steps. However, there is a limit to how effective industry self-regulation will be and more needs to be done by the EU and its member states.

European companies and citizens are major miners, traders and consumers of diamonds and EU countries have a responsibility and a moral imperative to help curb the illegal sale of diamonds from conflict zones. Precious stones are a source of wealth. It is therefore urgent to develop relevant mechanisms to control this trade in order to allow the African continent to benefit from this industry.

Recommendations :

EU Member States should:

- Introduce national legislation that specifies a rough diamond’s original country of extraction at every point of export and import.
 - Support international efforts towards the creation of an internationally binding treaty or convention that would establish a Global Certification System for rough diamonds.
 - Establish a credible and effective monitoring system for the identification, certification and independent control of diamonds.
 - Apply sanctions against countries, companies and individuals discovered to be breaking UN sanctions - traders should lose their registration, be barred from any involvement in the diamond industry and prosecuted.
 - Declare dealing in undeclared rough diamonds illegal.
 - Support the ‘Kimberley process’ launched by the government of South Africa to stop the import of all uncertified rough diamonds and to establish clear standards in the diamond trade industry.
- Support the efforts to pursue this process through the 55th session of the UN General Assembly.

2. Foreign and Security Policy

Recent progress in developing the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy has been largely focused on strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence for crisis management. This work is welcome but it needs to be balanced with equal efforts to prevent conflicts and crises arising in the first place. There is a stark contrast between the swift and costly initiatives for building up EU military capabilities and the hesitant and modest efforts to prevent conflicts and crises arising in the first place. A major shift of resources into the civilian prevention field is urgently needed.

On the military crisis management level, an Interim Military Body and an Interim Political and Security Committee have been established to help the EU develop the capacity to respond to the full range of Petersberg tasks. A Capability Commitment Conference is also being planned.

A non-military crisis management capability is being developed. A study on concrete targets was published at the Feira European Council which identifies four priority areas: police; strengthening the rule of law; strengthening civilian administration; and civil protection. Member States aim to be able to provide up to 5000 police officers for international missions by 2003.

It is important that conflict prevention issues do not get sidelined with this focus on crisis management. The notion of human security, which emphasises non-military aspects of security, is gaining greater credence in international affairs and should be at the heart of EU policy in this regard. There is a wide range of issues for the EU to address:

a) Controlling small arms and light weapons

The proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons are exacerbating conflict, fuelling crime, undermining development and creating instability in many regions of the world. Tackling the small arms issue requires comprehensive action in a number of areas: strengthening legal controls on possession and transfer, combating illicit trafficking, reducing the number of weapons in circulation, and addressing the wider justice and development issues which drive the demand for arms. International attention to the problems caused by the proliferation and mis-use of small arms has heightened in recent years. The UN will be holding an international conference on the Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects in 2001

The EU has a particular responsibility to address the issue as many of its member states are major arms exporters and transit countries. The EU also has the potential to play a key role in working with affected countries to help reduce the demand for arms as it is a major donor of development assistance. And a number of policy initiatives have been agreed which pave the way for comprehensive EU action in this area.

Recommendations

EU member states should:

- Strengthen the EU Code of Conduct on arms transfers by making it mandatory for each member state to publish a detailed annual report of their arms transfers and to introduce prior parliamentary scrutiny of arms exports.
- Work with the EU Associate countries to help them a) implement the Code of Conduct by exchanging information on destinations of concern and notifications of all arms export licences which have been denied; and b) tackle illicit trafficking by supporting action to manage stockpiles, destroy surplus weapons and strengthen end-use controls.
- Agree strict common controls on arms brokering and shipping agents which require that all agents are registered and have to apply for a licence for each individual transaction from their national government.
- Implement the Joint Action on the EU's contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons. Financial and technical assistance should be prioritised to Western, Eastern and Southern Africa to help implement the ECOWAS moratorium, the Southern Africa Regional action Programme and the Nairobi Declaration.
- Push for the adoption of a comprehensive action programme at the UN 2001 conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Such a programme should include measures to control the licit as well as the illicit trade and should set clear deadlines and resources to ensure its implementation.

b) Strengthening the rule of law and reforming the security sector

Countries with unprofessional and unaccountable or abusive security forces, weak justice systems and inappropriate levels of military expenditure are particularly susceptible to violent conflict. There is increasing recognition amongst the donor community that tackling these issues and reforming security institutions is vital for conflict prevention and sustainable development. Whilst in the past targeting development assistance to the security sector was thought to be counter productive, it is now increasingly seen as a key development objective. To ensure that assistance does not simply support abusive forces, ensuring respect for human rights should be a key element of SSR programmes. The OECD has recently published a policy paper on the issue entitled 'Security Sector Reform and Development Co-operation: A Conceptual Framework for Enhancing Policy Coherence.'

There is much that the EU could do to incorporate security sector reform (SSR) objectives into development programmes. However, there is still a reluctance in some EU governments and the EU Commission to use development assistance to support SSR projects that urgently needs to be rectified. Attention should also be given as to whether the recently announced police and military rapid reaction forces could play a role in security sector reform in the countries they are deployed to.

Recommendations :

EU member states should:

- Agree a Development Council resolution stating that it is appropriate for money from the EC development budget to be used for SSR. This resolution should also include a comprehensive definition of the security sector which includes military and paramilitary forces, intelligence services, police forces (together with border guards and customs services), judicial and penal systems, and civil structures responsible for the management and oversight of the above.
- Work within the World Bank and the OECD to revise their development assistance guidelines to include support for reforming the security sector.
- Examine how the recently announced EU military and police rapid reaction forces could play a role in SSR in their operations. For example, they could provide human rights and democracy training for local police and military forces and support projects to build police-community and civil-military relations.
- Provide assistance to developing countries to help better manage military expenditure and encourage increased openness in defence and security budgets.
- Support civil society organisations to help define security needs, monitor the conduct of security forces and hold them accountable

c) Supporting demilitarisation, demobilisation and reintegration

Effective demilitarisation demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programmes are an essential element of security sector reform and peacebuilding. In post-conflict situations the need to demobilise former combatants and reintegrate them into society is particularly acute. If soldiers are not properly disarmed and reintegrated into society they can be a trigger for further conflict. It is particularly important that demobilisation and reintegration initiatives are implemented promptly, backed by adequate resources, and include the destruction of surplus weapons and ammunition.

A number of EU-funded demobilisation and reintegration programmes have been undertaken, but these have often been carried out predominantly for financial reasons, (to reduce government expenditure on the military) or to quickly reduce the size of armies after the signing of a peace agreement. The focus is too often just on reducing the number of soldiers and not on their disarmament and reintegration into society. There has been little attempt to build the programmes into the wider social, economic and political environment in which they are carried out. For example, in Djibouti, an EC-funded demobilisation programme started in 1994, however, there has been no support for reintegration until recently. Even now, the new World Bank-funded reintegration programme is only initially targeting 25% of those demobilised. This is in an environment of high unemployment.

Recommendations

EU member states should:

- Ensure that DDR programmes are adequately funded and that funds are quickly released to enable the speedy demobilisation and reintegration of combatants.

- Ensure that sufficient emphasis is given to reintegration and that DDR programmes are rooted within broader long-term social and economic development programmes.
- Place DDR programmes within a wider context of the reform of security forces, especially their democratic oversight.
- Include a comprehensive disarmament element within any demobilisation and reintegration programme which ensures the initiation of a process to collect and destroy all weapons.

d) Regulating mercenaries and private military activity

EU countries have been a traditional source of mercenaries which continue to fight in many ongoing conflicts despite international laws prohibiting their use. Many private security and military companies are based in EU Member States and supply a range of security and military-related services to governments, corporations and humanitarian agencies in regions of conflict. There are legitimate uses of these companies, but also concerns because the unregulated nature of their activities means that their actions can seriously undermine prospects for achieving sustainable peace and economic development.

The EU partners have always made it clear that they unequivocally condemn mercenary activity. Italy and Germany are, however, the only European countries that have ratified and signed the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries. Few EU countries have appropriate domestic laws relating to mercenaries, let alone regulations to control the activities of the private security and military companies operating out of their territory. The British government is to launch a policy consultation document on the issue in November 2000. It is important that other EU Member States do likewise and begin to discuss the problem in appropriate EU fora.

Recommendations

EU member states should:

- Ratify the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries and support the review of international legislation pertaining to mercenaries currently taking place in the UN.
- Introduce or strengthen national legislation relating to mercenary activity and the export of military and security services, and take steps to harmonise common standards across the EU.
- Adopt an EU Common Position on mercenaries and the restrained and responsible use of private security and military companies.

e) Stopping the use of child soldiers

It is estimated that there are over 300,000 children under the age of 18 currently fighting in conflicts around the world. Hundreds of thousands more have been recruited, either in governmental armed forces or opposition armed groups. Although most child soldiers are between 15 and 18 years of age, many are recruited from the age of 10 upwards, and the use

of even younger children has been recorded. Preventing the use of child soldiers should be a key priority for EU policy to address conflicts.

Recommendations:

EU Member States should:

- Sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child increasing the minimum age for participation in the armed forces to 18 years.
- Ensure that special provisions are made in DDR programmes for the demobilisation and reintegration of child soldiers.
- Support locally-based, culturally-sensitive programmes for former child combatants which address trauma and brutalisation, including programmes which pay special attention to the needs of girl soldiers.
- Ratify the International Criminal Court statute that makes it a war crime to conscript, enlist or actively use in hostilities children under 15. Member States should also urge partner countries to sign and ratify the statute.

3. Institutional changes to enhance the capacity of the EU and Member States to prevent violent conflict

a) Strengthening the PPEWU

The Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit, provided for in the Amsterdam Treaty and established within the Secretariat General of the Council, is charged with improving the EU's early warning and analysis capacity by monitoring potential conflict situations and drawing the attention of member state governments to rising tensions at an early stage.

However, there are signs that the unit is not fulfilling its mandate. Of the 20 staff currently employed by the PPEWU, 11 are engaged on the Balkans, with only one member of staff assigned to the world's most conflict-prone region, Africa. There is a danger that the unit will only focus on the 'strategic' regions of Russia, Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Mediterranean, with Africa, the Caucasus and other volatile regions neglected. Furthermore, political imperatives within the EU could lead the Unit to focus primarily on military crisis management response mechanisms, restricting its capacity to respond to, and prevent conflict in the long-term.

Since its inception in October 1999, the Unit has suffered from a severe lack of funding from EU member states, and is only provided with financial support on a yearly basis, restricting its ability to plan an effective long-term strategy.

Recommendations

EU member states should:

- Task the PPEWU to concentrate on developing non-military mechanisms for conflict prevention and response, and to ensure that the current resource emphasis on military response is shifted to prioritise conflict prevention.
- Shift the PPEWU's resources into non-military policies and programmes in conflict-prone regions outside of Europe, in particular the high risk areas of sub-Saharan Africa. A priority should be to develop common strategies for West Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa.
- Provide funding to the Unit on a sufficiently long-term basis to enable it to plan and implement effective conflict prevention strategies.

b) Enhancing the capacity of country delegations

Country delegations are able to exercise a large degree of judgement over the form and content of EC-funded programmes and have the potential to impact positively on the risks of violent conflict. However, the EU has not prioritised the enhancement of delegation capacity or the employment of country delegation staff with experience and expertise in conflict prevention. Partly as a result, projects have often failed to take account of the priorities of local populations, increasing the risks of violent conflict emerging between them. It has also restricted the EU's ability to assess the impact that previous development programmes have had on conflict and to feed the results into the formation of new projects.

The small size and limited capacities of many country delegations also means that they have a tendency to support large-scale infrastructure projects as the funds are easier to disburse. This mitigates against EC support for smaller community-focused projects which could help prevent conflict.

In conflict-prone regions, it is essential that the work of country delegations is co-ordinated in order to maximise the potential for conflict prevention at national and regional levels. The EU has appointed a number of regional advisers to help with co-ordination but this relies upon receiving sufficiently detailed and timely information from the country delegations to enable the effective monitoring of conflict risks, which they have neither the resources nor the expertise to do. Furthermore, it is unclear how regional analysis feeds into the EC in Brussels to inform programming. There is no focal point within the Commission to perform this role.

A further problem is that there is also no mechanism which allows non-EU citizens to make complaints directly to Brussels regarding the activities of EC projects or delegations. The EU Ombudsmen are only able to receive official complaints from citizens of the EU. This makes it more difficult for EU policy to be informed by the views of people living in the countries where the policy is actually implemented.

Recommendations

The European Commission should:

- Enhance the size and capacity of country delegations to enable conflict prevention and peace-building practices to be carried out in line with policy.

- Introduce training for delegation staff in mainstreaming conflict prevention into EU policies and programmes.
- Expand the remit of regional advisers to allow the development of shared regional analyses, including significant input from all stakeholder groups.
- Establish clear channels for review and complaint to which non-EU state and non-state actors have direct access. This would assist in assessing the impact of EU-funded programmes on the risks of conflict, allowing criticisms to be fed into the development of new policies and projects.

c) Restructuring the Commission

The restructuring of Commission's Directorate Generals (DGs) and the strengthened co-ordinating role of the Commissioner responsible for External Relations have the potential to improve the EU's ability to develop better integrated and coherent conflict prevention policies. However, there is a concerning shift of responsibilities away from DG Development and a worrying lack of clarity over mandates, roles and responsibilities.

Since restructuring, foreign policy and political analysis in support of conflict prevention previously undertaken within a central unit in the EC's DG VIII, have been assigned to country desks within DG Development and DG RELEX. This is leading to a concerning lack of coherence. The extent to which RELEX is able to positively affect the prioritising of conflict prevention initiatives in development projects is clearly limited. This is especially true in Africa because RELEX has few African specialists.

There is a danger that these changes mean that the EC will lose the potential to link development assistance to conflict prevention. The lack of political analysis in development programming means that there is a risk that development aid will become a tool for neo-liberal economic growth and the focus on conflict prevention will be lost.

There is also talk of establishing a new body, Europe Aid which will be responsible for the implementation of all EU external programmes. EU delegations would then liaise directly with this new body, with DG Development retaining responsibility for overall programming.

DG Development's capacity is decreasing as some of its core functions are transferred. For example, the number of advisers in the Human and Social Development Unit will be almost halved. There is a concern that this trend could lead to the end of a post for Commissioner for Development which is separate from those dealing with political and trade policies. If that does happen, there would be no distinct institutional capacity within the Commission to formulate development policy.

Recommendations

The European Commission should:

- Clarify the different roles and responsibilities of the different DGs within the Commission with regard to conflict prevention.

- Maintain a strong DG Development, with its own commissioner, which has primary responsibility for the EU's relations with developing countries.
- Establish a mechanism to ensure that political analysis is included in development programming to allow the mainstreaming of conflict prevention during all stages of the project management cycle.

d) National infrastructures for conflict prevention and peace-building

As the Common Foreign and Security Policy is inter-governmental, it is important for national governments to build up an adequate infrastructure for conflict prevention and peace building. All Member States have an equally important role to play in conflict prevention and peace building. Many EU governments have a long tradition of bilateral contacts with countries vulnerable for conflicts, by for example a common history, by trade agreements or long term development projects. Several countries recognise conflict prevention as an integral part of their foreign policy and are exploring ways to implement conflict prevention strategies into their foreign, development, security and economic policies. In most of the presented policies, the role of civil society is recognised, and the need for co-operation and co-ordination is emphasised. However, the mechanisms to ensure that this happens do not exist. An infrastructure for conflict prevention and peace building is needed to establish an coherent policy and co-ordinated across a range of government department and priority issues towards emerging crises.

Recommendations:

EU Member States should establish national infrastructures for conflict prevention which contain the following elements:

- Early warning-early action focal points for organisations that receive early signals of growing tensions in a region to report to. A desk that collects and analyses this information, develops policy options and passes these onto a network of policy makers, civil servants, and relevant people and organisations would be useful to help translate early warning into early action.
- Networks and forums which bring together civil servants, non-governmental organisations, academics and research institutes. Regular seminars could be held to develop the network and discuss strategies towards particular countries, regions or issues of concern .
- Greater capacity in the field of conflict prevention and peace-building – member states should introduce programmes at universities on conflict prevention and resolution, mediation and training. Expert pools and databases of practitioners and research experts should be developed.

4. Working with civil society

Civil society organisations such as NGOs, trade unions, the media, womens' and youth's groups and religious organisations have a key role to play in conflict prevention and

peacebuilding. Despite often greater obstacles, civil society is a powerful force for helping to build peace in fragile war-torn societies. They can also ensure that policies accurately reflect the needs of individuals and communities. The EU and member states are increasingly acknowledging the need and value of working with civil society groups and establishing effective partnerships. This is welcome, however, there are not yet effective mechanisms to enable the EU to dialogue with civil society groups in the North and South, and it is difficult for such organisations to access the necessary financial and technical resources.

a) Support for women's groups

Women are often the main victims of conflict. They suffer human rights abuses such as rape, forced pregnancy and abortion and they are often the highest percentage of refugees and internally displaced people. They are however more often than not excluded from decision-making process during the peace negotiations and in the reconstruction of society. Yet women have a key role to play in conflict prevention and peacebuilding as evidenced by the activities, against all odds, of many women and women's organisations.

The UN has begun to recognise the need to integrate a gender perspective into peace and security policies as evident in the Beijing Platform for Action and the more recent Beijing +5 outcomes document. The EU, too, has made mention of gender concerns in various resolutions on development and conflict prevention. This has however not led to concrete proposals nor explicit inclusion of gender in practical initiatives.

Recommendations

EU Member States should:

- Support the adoption of the forthcoming EU Parliament resolution on Women, Peacebuilding and Security Issues.
- Ensure that women are equal participants as decision-makers in all phases and at all levels of conflict prevention, resolution, peacekeeping, peace-making, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery;
- Develop gender impact assessments for post-conflict recovery programmes and ensure that civil society, especially women's groups are consulted and included in their design, implementation and evaluation;
- Support the development and implementation of a comprehensive research programme on women's roles, needs and contributions in post-conflict reconstruction processes;
- Create an innovative European Institute for Women Leadership in conflict management and peacebuilding.

b) Support for youth and developing a culture of peace and non-violence

The majority of the world's population is below 25 years of age. Youth are increasingly getting caught up in conflict – both as protagonists and victims. However, in many parts of the world, they have also taken on a proactive role for change. If EU conflict prevention

strategies are to be effective therefore they must target youth. A key part of this is encouraging the development of a culture of peace and non-violence. The UN has declared an 'International decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World' from 2001-2010. The Swedish and Belgian Presidencies, therefore, provide an opportunity to help put this into practice:

Recommendations:

The EU and Member States should:

- Develop national, EU and international programmes to strengthen the capacity of youth to participate in peace-building in conflict areas.
- Develop curricula and programmes ensuring that the practice of peace and non-violence is taught in schools and in other educational institutions.

c) Support for independent media

The media have a critical role to play in conflict. In Rwanda, for example, 'hate' radio stations disseminated anti-Tutsi propaganda and were a factor in creating the climate for genocide. However, in other parts of the world, the media plays an important role in bringing communities together, providing independent information, creating a critical public, and acting as an institution of control against arbitrary or repressive state measures. The media can be a powerful force for change and a guardian of democracy.

Recommendations:

The EU and member states should:

- Develop programmes of support for independent, democratic and decentralised media.

d) Supporting civilian peace services

Networks and coalitions for violence prevention and peace-building are developing in many countries which include a variety of development, peace, human rights and environment organisations. These organisations perform a number of key roles: for example, accompanying people or groups in danger, election monitoring, confidence-building, mediation, negotiation, education, and democracy and human rights training.

It is important that EU support for civilian peace services helps build, rather than takes support away from, local capacities for peace in Southern countries.

Recommendations:

The EU and member states should:

- Support the development of civilian peace services.
- Undertake studies of how they can best make use of civilian peace services.

- Implement existing educational programmes for the training of national and international peace workers for service in conflict areas.
- Establish a European regional resource comprising 10,000 men and women who can be drawn upon to work in conflict areas.

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The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation is an open network of European and international NGOs involved in the prevention and/or resolution of violent conflicts in the international arena. Its mission is to facilitate networking, to encourage co-operation and facilitate the exchange of information as well as to develop advocacy and lobbying activities among participating organisations. The European Centre for Conflict Prevention acts as the secretariat of the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation.

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