

GENDER CLUSTER

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# IMPROVING EU RESPONSES TO GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING

Priority Action Areas for the European Commission

Karen Barnes and Minna Lyytikäinen

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## AUTHOR PROFILES

### **Karen Barnes**

Karen Barnes is Senior Programme Officer on gender issues within the Peacebuilding Issues Programme at International Alert. She has lead responsibility for a multi-year, cross-regional programme around the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325. Her expertise is at both policy and field level with a particular focus on West Africa, and her recent publications include papers on gender-based violence and gender and security sector reform. She is currently completing her PhD in International Relations at the London School of Economics, focusing on gender issues and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. She has previously worked for UNHCR, Human Rights Watch and IISS, and has held various academic research jobs.

### **Minna Lyytikäinen**

Minna Lyytikäinen is Programme Officer with the Peacebuilding Issues Programme at International Alert, where she works on international policy related to gender and peacebuilding. Prior to joining Alert, Minna worked on childhood poverty, social policy and decentralisation with the Young Lives research project at Save the Children UK and the Centre for Economic and Social Studies in Hyderabad, India. She also completed an internship with the Gender, Peace and Security programme at UN-INSTRAW in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She has an MSc in Development Studies from the London School of Economics.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This briefing outlines the key findings of the recent study on *Enhancing the EU Response to Women and Armed Conflict* commissioned by the Slovenian Presidency of the EU, and discusses the recommendations in relation to the European Commission. Although the EU has repeatedly committed itself to the need for the full implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, current EU interventions in conflict-affected contexts lack a clear gender and conflict analysis and women continue to be marginalised from peacebuilding initiatives. Five complementary areas for action are identified in this briefing for the European Commission in its work toward a more effective, coherent and coordinated EU response to gender and peacebuilding: (1) Enabling strategic prioritisation; (2) Developing thematic and context-specific expertise; (3) Consulting with partners; (4) Providing adequate resources; and (5) Integrating monitoring and accountability measures.

Key words: gender, peacebuilding, European Commission

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years the international community has become more responsive to the necessity to incorporate a deeper understanding of the differentiated needs, capacities and interests of men and women in their work in conflict-affected regions and has increasingly recognised the links between gender-sensitive approaches and more legitimate, sustainable and participatory responses in conflict-affected contexts. The EU has repeatedly committed itself to the need for the full implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (SCR 1325), and the European Parliament has adopted its own comprehensive resolution on the *Participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution* (2000/2025(INI)).

Despite this growing awareness and commitment at the policy level, current EU interventions in conflict-affected contexts lack a clear gender and conflict analysis and women continue to be marginalised from peacebuilding initiatives. The recent study on *Enhancing the EU Response to Women and Armed Conflict* commissioned by the Slovenian Presidency of the EU highlighted the EU's central strengths and weaknesses in this area and made recommendations for improving its response to issues related to women and armed conflict.<sup>1</sup> Several of these recommendations were targeted directly at the European Commission and Delegations in conflict-affected countries and will be outlined in this briefing.

## PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

Five complementary areas for action can be identified for the European Commission in its work toward a more effective, coherent and coordinated EU response to gender and peacebuilding:

- Enabling strategic prioritisation
- Developing thematic and context-specific expertise
- Consulting with partners
- Providing adequate resources
- Integrating monitoring and accountability measures

## ENABLING STRATEGIC PRIORITISATION

The Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security encompasses a broad and extensive range of actions, but fails to offer any guidance on how they can or should be prioritised. SCR 1325 should be seen as a tool, as a means rather than an end, for bringing about gender-sensitive peacebuilding and ensuring that women's participation is mainstreamed throughout all aspects of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. There is a substantial amount of operational guidance on SCR 1325-related issues at the EU level including the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) checklist and the joint Commission-Council Concept Note on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR). However, given the reality that there is only limited time and resources, it is often not clear which type of actions should be prioritised or seen as a bare minimum for moving the gender and peacebuilding agenda forward.

Given its role as a key humanitarian and development actor, the European Commission should ensure that it develops a coherent strategy around the implementation of SCR 1325 to enable strategic prioritisation.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Sheriff with K. Barnes (2008). *Enhancing the EU response to women and armed conflict, with particular reference to development policy*, Study for the Slovenian Presidency of the EU. Maastricht and Brussels: European Centre for Development Policy Management.

Since 2006, several EU Member States have adopted National Action Plans on SCR 1325 as one way of highlighting key commitments and actions on SCR 1325. The European Commission (EC) could also consider adopting such a plan. Although many regional bodies such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) have policy statements on issues related to women or gender and peacebuilding, none have as yet developed a framework or plan specifically for the implementation of SCR 1325, and this could therefore provide space for the EC to be a leader in this regard. An overall plan that includes an audit or a baseline assessment of the status quo would represent an important exercise in terms of analysing existing and required capacity, resources and expertise. Such an assessment would allow a greater focus on areas that require a more efficient distribution of resources and extra allocations.

## DEVELOPING THEMATIC AND CONTEXT-SPECIFIC EXPERTISE

Building a coherent framework for action with clear priorities is difficult in the current context where EU institutions lack sufficient understanding of the breadth and depth of issues related to gender and peacebuilding. In the absence of an overarching EU document related to gender and peacebuilding, references to SCR 1325 are often made in policy statement terms, but what it would mean to operationalise the resolution in practice is not clearly understood. Mainstreaming gender into all aspects of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction requires a holistic understanding of gender that does not reduce it to 'women's issues'. A coherent and broad conception would link a conflict-sensitive gender analysis to sectoral work in areas such as transitional justice, security sector reform (SSR), DDR, and peace negotiations. Gender issues can be effectively addressed in peacebuilding contexts only when they are seen as part of mainstream security, defence and poverty reduction policy. It is crucial that such peacebuilding priorities are inclusive and engage and benefit women and men equally.

In order to become a positive actor in conflict settings, the European Commission will need to develop a comprehensive approach to gender and conflict issues that includes a clearly articulated gender dimension within sectoral areas of EC development assistance such as justice, governance, health and education. A framework for mainstreaming gender and conflict considerations within these areas of development and peacebuilding should be an explicit part of any national or EC level Action Plan for implementing UN SCR 1325.

## CONSULTING WITH PARTNERS

Experience in Europe and in conflict-affected countries shows that dynamic and committed women's leadership in political institutions and in civil society can help transform action around gender and peacebuilding. Supporting local advocates is essential to ensure sustainable impact and ownership, as active civil society organisations can help make sure that policy processes are responsive to the needs of distinct groups in society and improve the accountability of governmental and international actors. The European Commission could strengthen its own knowledge and understanding by taking explicit action to support and learn from civil society organisations (CSOs) expertise and context-specific knowledge. Women's organisations in particular can be a vital source of knowledge of women's priorities at the local level, and they may also be able to access marginalised sections of the population better. Consultations should also go beyond women's organisations, particularly to engage men and traditional leaders as advocates for change within their communities as well as various government departments at the national level.

It is important that mechanisms for ensuring continued consultation and dialogue between civil society, governments and the EC are institutionalised both in Brussels and at the level of delegations in conflict-affected countries. The guidelines adopted by the UN Peacebuilding Commission for the participation of civil society in its meetings could be an example to follow in this regard.<sup>2</sup> Developing a concrete framework for how the EC consults with CSOs in Europe and in conflict-affected countries would enable the design of activities that meet women's needs and promote the integration of gender perspectives into peacebuilding policy.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (2007). *Provisional guidelines for the participation of civil society in meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission*, submitted by the Chairperson on the basis of informal consultations (PBC/1/OC/12). New York: United Nations Peacebuilding Commission.



## PROVIDING ADEQUATE RESOURCES

Integrating gender issues into peacebuilding efforts requires sustained commitment at the political level and adequate financial and human resources. At present, it is difficult to identify specific resource allocations for gender and peacebuilding interventions within the European Commission and where quantification is possible, resource allocations are relatively small. The allocations of human resources at headquarters and field levels are inadequate to sufficiently integrate a gender perspective into all aspects of peacebuilding. Staff members with competency in both gender and conflict-related issues are few in number, relatively junior, and struggle with competing workloads. While headquarter-managed financial resources and specialist personnel capacity is important, it is at the country level where this lack of resources has the clearest consequences.

In the context of inadequate resource allocations, additional high-level policy statements that do not explicitly identify financial and human resources and implementation capacity are of limited value. Strategic action plans adopted by the EC or Member States should be adequately resourced, both in terms of financial allocations and staffing, including personnel with specific expertise in gender aspects of peacebuilding policy.

## INTEGRATING MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Real progress in integrating gender into peacebuilding policy is less a question of 'new ideas' and operational guidance, and more a question of genuine attention, prioritisation and demonstrable political will at all levels. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms must be a priority area for showing improvements in the response of the EC. Currently, the lack of accountability measures and comprehensive indicators to measure impact means that EC's response to gender and conflict issues is ad hoc and somewhat inadequate. It is precisely because EC officials feel overwhelmed with competing workloads and priorities that accountability and indicators for progress on integrating gender perspectives into peacebuilding policy are crucial. Without clear incentives and adequate institutional structures, gender issues will not be prioritised, especially in complex conflict settings.

Monitoring and accountability mechanisms and requirements should be integrated into any national or EC level Action Plans for the implementation of UN SCR 1325, but it is equally important that gender issues are also incorporated into existing monitoring and reporting processes. Development of gender and conflict indicators (as suggested by the forthcoming French EU presidency) could be a starting point for establishing a monitoring mechanism for gender and conflict issues at the EC level. One of the most effective methods to improve accountability in this area is the development of Action Plans for the implementation of SCR 1325, which is what a number of EU Member States have done. It is however important that these plans, whether at the national or potentially at the EC level, include detailed activities with clear lines of responsibility, baseline status, indicators and a timeline.<sup>3</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving the gender sensitivity of the EU response in conflict-affected regions and building a more coherent and targeted approach to gender and conflict issues requires action by all EU institutions and Member States as well as improved coherence and coordination between different institutions. The EU is in a good position to build on progress made at the national level in Member States to become a leader among regional bodies on gender and peacebuilding. The European Commission has an important role to play in improving EU response in this area both at headquarters and in delegations, and may want to consider the following recommendations to take the agenda forward.

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<sup>3</sup> See the *Austrian National Action Plan* for a good practical example of an action plan that includes detailed activities with clear lines of responsibility, baseline status, indicators and a timeline. The Austrian NAP can be accessed at <http://www.bmeia.gv.at/index.php?id=64673&L=1>



## MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

At Headquarters, the European Commission should do the following:

- Develop an EC-wide plan of action on responding to gender and armed conflict. A plan of action in this area should include a baseline assessment of the EC's work in this field, clear indicators, benchmarks and timelines for monitoring progress as well as detailed financial and human resource allocations. The plan should coordinate existing action on violence against women and other work in the field of gender and armed conflict.
- Ensure that adequate human resources are allocated to responding to gender and armed conflict. In particular, this should include the recruitment of a senior gender expert to work full-time on gender and armed conflict issues within the Directorate-General for the External Relations (DG RELEX), thereby providing the necessary skills and authority to advance the agenda within the EC. Disaggregated financial data on resource allocations for gender and conflict response should be made more accessible and an EC-wide assessment of financial resources, human resources and expertise should be undertaken to form a basis for forthcoming EC action within this field.
- Create an effective internal working group on gender and armed conflict between the different DGs to ensure coordinated collective action on the issues and ownership and responsibility among different DGs over this agenda. This working group could assess upcoming Annual Action Programmes for Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), Instrument for Stability (IfS), the Action Plan of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and also the regional programming of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) to ensure appropriate gender and conflict analysis and make sure this content is connected to financial resources. This group could also be charged with some responsibilities linked to reporting and monitoring on progress in this regard.
- Integrate gender perspectives into EC thematic work on issues such as SSR and DDR and ensure gender and conflict analysis is integrated into European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) humanitarian work. This can be done by ensuring that staff members with adequate expertise are recruited at senior levels, relevant training is provided to all staff, and reporting requirements are revised so as to give the right incentives to consider gender issues in all aspects of the EC's work in conflict contexts.
- Incorporate gender issues into existing accountability, monitoring and reporting mechanisms and develop clear indicators on the implementation of SCR 1325. This could be done by supporting and following up on the work initiated by the forthcoming French presidency on developing comprehensive indicators on gender and armed conflict.

European Commission Delegations should do the following:

- In partnership with other actors, lead on supporting consultation mechanisms at the national and local levels that enable women's groups and CSOs to access and provide input to various policy processes.
- Recruit a gender and conflict expert in every delegation in conflict-affected countries and ensure they have an adequate mandate and resources, so that delegations can facilitate the provision of specific and targeted expertise to the government on issues related to gender and armed conflict where necessary.
- Support and help to build the capacity of CSOs to address gender and conflict issues and engage and advocate effectively with key decision-makers. This support should include core funding for local organisations and capacity building both in management as well as advocacy in conflict settings.
- Support governments in conflict countries in developing their own National Action Plans for implementing SCR 1325 and provide governments with the funding to implement the Action Plans.
- Participate in and provide input to national level working groups and task forces related to issues relevant to gender and peacebuilding, and ensure that the work of such bodies is as representative and transparent as possible.

## REFERENCES

This briefing paper is based on the following reports and events.

- A. Sheriff with K. Barnes (2008). *Enhancing the EU response to women and armed conflict, with particular reference to development policy*. Study for the Slovenian Presidency of the EU, Maastricht and Brussels: European Centre for Development Policy Management.
- K. Barnes (forthcoming). 'Status of implementation in the European realm – Overview and considerations of the status of the plan of action', in *Roadmap to 1325: A critical perspective on implementation in the EU's common foreign and security policy*, a forthcoming publication of the Gunda-Werner Institute of Feminism and Gender Democracy, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Berlin.
- European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (2008). 'Acting together for sustainable peace: National Action Plans for UNSCR 1325', EPLO roundtable in European Parliament, 4 March 2008, Brussels: EPLO.

## ANNEX: MAPPING EC IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325<sup>4</sup>

The following table is an example of the type of mapping that could be conducted as a basis of an EC Action Plan for the Implementation of SCR 1325 or other efforts to increase the coherence and strategic prioritisation of the EU approach to gender issues in peacebuilding policy. The table presented here is not meant to be a comprehensive assessment, but rather to highlight some aspects of the work of the EC to date and directions for future actions. As such it does not include all efforts of the EC in implementing SCR 1325, but rather lists some good practices. It is meant for discussion and could present a template for a more in-depth mapping in the future.

SCR 1325-related issue	Examples of what the EC has done	Examples of what the EC could do
<b>Institutional aspects of incorporating gender issues in peacebuilding policy</b>		
<b>Language/reference to SCR 1325</b>	SCR 1325 is mentioned in the 2007 communication on 'Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation' (p. 3):  'In conflict situations women have a critical role and should be fully incorporated into the peacebuilding efforts, in conformity with UN Security Council Resolution 1325'.	Ensure that SCR 1325 is incorporated into policy statements on conflict and peacebuilding issues.  Include analysis of gender and peacebuilding issues in Country Strategy Papers.  Support the development of National Action Plans on the implementation of SCR 1325 in third countries.
<b>Training</b>	Training workshop on gender and peacebuilding is being developed for the EC.	Ensure that all EC staff working on thematic issues related to conflict and peacebuilding receive gender training on appointment and as part of regular skills development.
<b>Resource allocation</b>	All EC financial instruments include a reference to gender equality and women's rights and some specific mentions of gender and conflict issues.	Earmark funding for gender and peacebuilding issues, similar to what is being done in the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) on children and conflict resolution.  Assess the human resource capacity within the EC (including the delegations) to respond to gender and armed conflict issues and make this data more accessible. ➤

<sup>4</sup> The table mainly draws examples from A. Sheriff with K. Barnes (2008), op cit.

SCR 1325-related issue	Examples of what the EC has done	Examples of what the EC could do
		Ensure that adequate human resources are allocated to responding to gender and armed conflict, including the recruitment of a full-time senior gender and conflict expert for DG RELEX.
<b>Monitoring and reporting</b>	The DCI supports the development and dissemination of data and indicators disaggregated by sex, as well as gender equality data and indicators.	<p>Initiate in-depth research on local and international responses to gender and conflict issues. Incorporate gender issues into existing accountability, monitoring and reporting mechanisms.</p> <p>Develop clear indicators on the implementation of 1325 and make sure any Action Plans to implement SCR 1325 include clear monitoring mechanisms.</p> <p>Undertake an audit of EC programming finances, to assess how much is going to women-specific projects or gender projects.</p>

#### Thematic aspects of incorporating gender issues in peacebuilding policy

<b>DDR</b>	<p>Gender issues are mainstreamed in the EU Concept for Support to DDR (joint Commission/Council, Dec 2006)<sup>5</sup>.</p> <p>The Instrument for Stability (IfS) makes special reference to the special needs of women in rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of armed conflict.</p>	<p>Ensure that the EU Concept for Support to DDR is implemented and the extent to which gender perspectives are taken into account is monitored and evaluated.</p> <p>The joint Concept on DDR could be used as a model for gender mainstreaming in other areas.</p>
<b>Peace negotiations</b>		<p>Use diplomatic initiatives to ensure that women are included in high-level peace negotiations, and that a gender perspective is included in peace accords.</p> <p>Provide financial and technical resources for grassroots public diplomacy initiatives, including those led by women.</p>
<b>Justice and SSR</b>		<p>Learning from the EU Concept for Support to DDR, explore ways to incorporate gender perspectives into policy documents on security sector and justice reform. The issues that should be considered include the following:</p> <p>The employment of women in security sector institutions.</p> <p>Gender analysis of justice and SSR policy.</p> <p>Specific measures to address sexual and gender-based violence by the police and justice sector institutions.</p> <p>Training for security sector personnel on gender issues.</p>

5 The document can be found at [http://www.eplo.org/documents/EU\\_Joint\\_concept\\_DDR.pdf](http://www.eplo.org/documents/EU_Joint_concept_DDR.pdf)

SCR 1325-related issue	Examples of what the EC has done	Examples of what the EC could do
<b>Governance, elections and political participation</b>	<p>EIDHR considers women as a 'mainstreaming target', which requires the promotion of equal participation of men and women in social, economic and political life, and support for equality of opportunity.</p> <p>The DCI talks of promoting gender equality in governance and political and social representation and other actions to empower women.</p> <p>Example from Nigeria: EC encouraged women's participation in politics during 2007 elections through EIDHR.<sup>6</sup></p>	<p>Develop EU guidelines on women and conflict, to ensure that more gender projects can be funded through the EIDHR.</p> <p>Enable funding locally to invest in small-scale civil society initiatives that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This should include core support for organisations as well as support for networking amongst women's organisations based in the South and between those in the North and in the South.</p>
<b>Humanitarian assistance; refugees and IDPs</b>	<p>Gender issues are mentioned in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, both special needs and support of women's participation in responses (Dec 2007).<sup>7</sup></p> <p>Example of EU-funded projects: Support to IOM on response to sexual violence and forced prostitution of Iraqi refugees in Syria.</p>	<p>Incorporate a gender analysis into humanitarian needs assessment.</p> <p>Assign a full-time staff member to work on gender issues within ECHO.</p> <p>Consider the security and health needs of refugee and IDP women.</p>
<b>Conflict prevention</b>		<p>Facilitate coherent EU action on the ground, similar to that of the EU Human Rights and Gender Advisor group formed in Afghanistan, 2004 or the Gender Donor Cooperation Group, also in Afghanistan, 2005.</p>
<b>Sexual and gender-based violence</b>	<p>The Brussels Call to Action to Address Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond (June 2006, EC together with the Government of Belgium and UNFPA).<sup>8</sup></p> <p>EIDHR and DCI refer to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocols, 'including measures to combat female genital mutilation, forced marriages, crimes of honour, trafficking, and any other form of violence against women'.</p> <p>EC supports initiatives, including diplomatic interventions.</p> <p>Gender issues are mentioned in the IfS.</p>	<p>Scale-up initiatives already taking place, promote coherence among EU institutions and Member States, and ensure local ownership.</p>
<b>Human rights</b>	<p>Guidelines and Implementation Strategy on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) is available.</p> <p>EIDHR considers women as a 'mainstreaming target' (also see section above on Governance, elections and political participation).</p>	<p>Develop guidelines for women's human rights policy. Women's human rights are mentioned repeatedly but there are no guidelines and no implementation strategy.</p>

6 Quaker Council for European Affairs (forthcoming). *Mainstreaming conflict prevention – A study of EU action in ACP countries. Case Study Nigeria*. Brussels: QCEA.

7 Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission (2008/C 25/01). Document can be found at [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/whatsnew/consensus\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/whatsnew/consensus_en.htm)

8 The call for action came at the International Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond, 21-23 June 2006, Brussels, Palais d'Egmont. The document can be found at [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)







## INITIATIVE FOR PEACEBUILDING

c/o International Alert

205 Rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels Tel: +32 (0) 2 239 2111 Fax: +32 (0) 2 230 3705

lmontanaro-jankovski@international-alert.org www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu



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