



International Alert.

Acting on commitments:
How EU strategies and programming can better prevent violent conflict



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This briefing paper has been prepared by International Alert, Saferworld and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), a platform that includes 20 European NGOs specialising in peacebuilding. The purpose of the briefing paper is to highlight important areas of progress in the EU's work during 2006 and to make specific recommendations on further improvements in the months ahead.

Alert and Saferworld are grateful for the support that Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) gives for their work to strengthen the EU's ability to prevent violent conflict and build peace, of which this paper is one aspect. The contents of the paper, however, are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of our donors.

International Alert.

International Alert is an independent peacebuilding organisation working in over 20 countries and territories around the world. Its dual approach involves working directly with people affected by violent conflict as well as at government, EU and UN levels to shape both policy and practice in building sustainable peace. Its regional work is based in the African Great Lakes, West Africa, the Caucasus, the Andean region of South America, Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Philippines. At both regional and international levels, its thematic work focuses on the role of business, humanitarian aid and development, gender, security and post-conflict reconstruction in the context of building peace.



Saferworld is an independent non-governmental organisation that works to prevent armed violence and create safer communities in which people can lead peaceful and rewarding lives. Saferworld develops and carries out programmes with a range of governments and international, regional, national and local organisations. Saferworld has programmes in Africa, Europe and South Asia and through a combination of research, advocacy and training it works to (i) develop and implement initiatives to tackle the spread of arms and armed violence, (ii) develop integrated security sector reform and access to justice strategies that enhance safety and security for local communities; (iii) ensure that development frameworks and programmes are sensitive to the risks of conflict and enhance prospects for peace-building (iv) build the capacity of governments, law enforcement agencies, sub-regional organisations and civil society to tackle armed violence, and (v) improve the effectiveness of the international system to pursue coherent and integrated approaches to development and security.



EPLO, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, is the platform of European NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks active in the field of peacebuilding in all conflict areas of the world, who share an interest in promoting sustainable peacebuilding policies among decision-makers in the European Union. EPLO works as a membership driven policy organisation that pools together its members' interests on EU policy development, and their implementing experience on the ground. Currently EPLO focuses on 3 themes: civilian capabilities; EU financial frameworks; and conflict sensitivity of relevant EU policies and their implementation (e.g. security, development, gender, justice, trade or environment).

Summary

The European Union's declarations of its commitment to conflict prevention have been welcomed because development and poverty reduction are unsustainable in the face of ongoing or renewed violent conflict.¹ A comprehensive prevention approach and emphasis on tackling root causes of conflict are vital not only for improving the lives and livelihoods of directly affected populations, but also because instability and war can often spill across regions. They can have global ramifications on security and prosperity.

Among the many areas in which work has been advanced in the EU during 2006, important headline initiatives should be noted in the following three areas:

Policy

- Adoption in June of Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (SSR) and the follow-up action to develop a comprehensive EU approach to SSR in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- Communication on Governance: "Governance in the European Consensus on Development" in August and subsequent work to develop Governance Profiles.
- Adoption in November by the Council of a document on gender mainstreaming in crisis management
- Approval in December of a Joint concept for support to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR).

In addition, some advances were made in the vital area of 'conflict' resources, such as in the cooperation between public authorities and the private sector in the Kimberley Process on diamonds. An initial step was also taken in recognising the wider implications of the EU's energy interests on conflict dynamics. A joint EU paper on "*An external policy to serve Europe's energy interests*" stated that policy "must also be consistent with the EU's broader foreign policy objectives such as conflict prevention and resolution, non-proliferation and promoting human rights."

Strategy

- Commission strategy set out in March for the Horn of Africa.
- Discussions on draft Country and Regional Strategy Papers (CSPs & RSPs) and the integration of conflict issues into some of the drafts.

Funding

- Agreement on a new Instrument for Stability including conflict prevention elements and a Peacebuilding Partnership, as well as a small number of positive developments in financial strategy papers under some of the other financial instruments.
- Commitment of almost €3 billion to an incentive *tranche* for good governance under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF).
- Replenishment and future funding to the Africa Peace Facility agreed.

It is crucial that the EU builds on this progress and 2007 will be a critical year for determining and refining effective approaches to peacebuilding.

This paper focuses on three major challenges for the EU in 2007 and beyond:

1. Achieving coherence among the different aspects of EU action. This involves aligning political dialogue, economic incentives and external assistance so as to make them mutually reinforcing.
2. Finalising CSPs, RSPs National Indicative Programming plans and Economic Partnership Agreements which are *conflict sensitive* - minimising negative effects and maximising positive impacts in conflict-prone and affected contexts. After its failure to reaffirm its 2001 conflict prevention commitments through all the new Financial Instruments, the EU needs to ensure that its programming addresses the root causes of violent conflict and lays the foundations for sustainable peace and poverty reduction.
3. Following through on policy commitments already made. Much progress has been made in the field of security, but it remains for the EU to implement action to ensure better outcomes for those who suffer from violence and human rights abuses.

Opinion

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In the coming months, the EU and its Member States officials will complete their discussions on country and regional strategy papers under the 10th European Development Fund and under the financial instruments available to the European Commission that were agreed last year. These strategies, and the programming plans flowing from them, will set the framework for several years of external relations and development assistance. They have the potential to have fundamental impacts, both positive and negative, on the contexts in which they will be applied. It is for this reason that our three organisations, International Alert, Saferworld and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, have come together at this time to produce this briefing paper.

As one aspect of our broader work on peacebuilding, our collective aim with this paper is to help ensure the EU is as effective as possible in laying the foundations for sustainable development in conflict prone and affected contexts. This is because, in no less than 50 countries around the world, people are faced with the serious effects of weak governance, limited administrative capacity, chronic humanitarian crises, persistent social tensions, violence or the legacy of civil war. In these contexts, poverty reduction and basic human security are extremely difficult to achieve and sustain. The fragility and instability of these countries often also have profound implications for the EU's own security.

The EU has long been a major development actor and has achieved significant importance in civilian crisis management over the last decade. It has recognised the risks and effects of conflict and instability on its own goals. On several occasions, it has therefore declared its commitment to improving its role in preventing violent conflict. It has also invested in operationalising this commitment, developing an influential set of tools and capacities in the Community (1st) pillar led by the Commission and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (2nd) pillar led by the Council. Depending on the context, the EU can draw upon political dialogue mechanisms, development assistance instruments and civilian crisis management capabilities to help build sustainable peace.

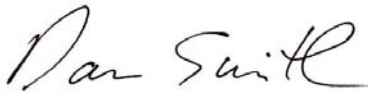
Despite important steps forward in policy and capacities, the EU's practice in unstable contexts remains, however, largely unaffected by what has been learned about conflict and the various other factors causing state and societal fragility. The standard approach to external assistance in these contexts continues to be used even where persistent insecurity and its underlying causes risk rendering it ineffective, or, at worst, counter-productive. The prevailing orthodoxy does not recognise well enough that it is often the inequity in the socio-economic and political system, and people's low expectations of that system, that prevent aid from achieving its goals. Nor does the orthodoxy properly account for or respond to the difficult truth that aid, like diamonds, often becomes a resource worth competing or fighting for. The Commission and the Council must, therefore, do everything possible to 'conflict-sensitise' their engagement. This means deploying all the levers at the EU's disposal to create the conditions necessary for sustainable development, avoiding negative effects and ensuring positive impacts on conflict dynamics.

Much more is involved than just supporting time-bound actions during periods of instability. Both upstream and downstream of the period when tensions explode into widespread violence, building peace is about changing structures, attitudes and behaviours. This can be promoted through activities in the over-lapping and interconnecting spheres of security, governance, the economy and justice. Tackling the gap between powerful elites and ordinary people requires a better balance to be found between strengthening the State, as the predominant partner in the negotiation of aid, and Society, which itself reflects the strengths and problems of the context - regional, national and local.

The European Commission, Council and Member States officials often act as if they are facing non-reconcilable incompatibility between two priorities: the need to keep European electorates safe from threats to their physical, economic and energy security; and the commitment to coherent joint efforts towards eliminating poverty, protecting human rights, and ending violent conflicts. There should in fact be no conflict of interest between the two in any longer term perspective: the security of one part of the world cannot be achieved without the security of the other.

The progress made by the EU in Gothenburg in 2001, setting out a Programme of Action for the Prevention of Violent Conflict, appears to be under threat due to internal tensions within the EU. Failure to agree institutional reforms to improve the coherence of its external action, combined with the refusal to include explicit reference to peace, security and conflict prevention in all but one of the Financial Instruments 2007 to 2013 sends a worrying signal that achievements will not be sustained, and will perhaps even be undone. Member States and Commission officials, driven forward by forthcoming Presidencies, therefore, need to act fast to ensure political decision-making, financial and policy frameworks in which the different EU instruments can add value to rather than compete with each other.

This briefing paper by International Alert, Saferworld and EPLO aims to reignite the engine for more effective conflict prevention by the EU. While welcoming concrete achievements in 2006, it emphasises remaining challenges and makes recommendations on how different EU activities and tools could be more strategic and put to more effective use. Ultimately, all efforts have to be underpinned by collective political will to overcome the false conflict between European security and peace-development-human rights, and by the commitment to design and implement strategies that are necessary to build long term and sustainable peace.



Achieving Coherence Among the Different Aspects of EU Action

The overarching and continuing problem of incoherence among the EU institutions hinders progress and remains a priority area for action, particularly with respect to competencies in the field of security. Improved coherence will help the EU to more effectively address issues on which it has significant comparative advantage, such as widening and deepening efforts regarding ‘conflict resources’. In 2007, the EU’s external action and influence will continue to be played out in a number of spheres:

- i) policy dialogue, both with partner governments and with other key actors inside and outside the region (such as Russia, China and India). Dialogue covers a number of policy areas ranging from energy and trade to governance and human rights.
- ii) economic incentives, such as closer co-operation, preferential access to EU markets and support for loans and investments. There remain tensions between the goals of the European Consensus on Development, on the one hand, and the expected outcomes of the trade agreements, such as the reciprocal Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) that are currently being negotiated for the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. These are scheduled to enter into force on 1 January 2008.
- iii) development assistance provided through budget lines for technical assistance and aid for humanitarian and development purposes and orientated through the elaboration of Regional and Country Strategy Papers. Support will also be targeted *within* the EU. Two such initiatives will be the establishment of a Conflict Prevention Network that combines the expertise of research institutions, think-tanks, academia and civil society organisations and the establishment of the Peacebuilding Partnership, combining substantive consultation and rapid delivery mechanisms under the Stability Instrument.
- iv) security-, Rule of Law- and public administration-related interventions under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)² and under short-term actions put in place with Community (1st pillar) financing.



Ultimately, effective EU action to prevent the outbreak or recurrence of conflict will depend on how well it uses its all these tools to tackle the needs of each specific context. While Aceh Indonesia is one example of an integrated approach working well,³ the energy security agenda is an example of the EU risking highly negative effects from the incoherence of its policy.⁴ “Conflict-sensitivity”⁵ in all its engagement remains vitally important. This is because external assistance can inadvertently increase tensions and the risk of violent conflict by ignoring its causes and consequences, by undermining accountability, and by reinforcing inequality, exclusion and division.

Peacebuilding in the DRC – Integrating different types of EU action



Reflecting the country's immense needs and its pivotal importance for the development prospects of the whole of central and southern Africa, the EU has made an enormous commitment to support the DRC's development. The Commission, Council and the Member States have invested substantial financial and human resources in the country in recent years. In 2004, the country became the largest recipient of European aid, with net disbursement totalling US\$1.1bn in that year. European assistance has been provided across a wide spectrum of areas to support processes variously referred to as stabilisation, democratisation, rehabilitation, reconstruction and so on. These areas include political dialogue, engagement on trade issues, humanitarian and development assistance and crisis management.

For the 2006 elections process, the EU contributed about 80% of the money needed to cover the cost of the electoral process. European battalions, EUFOR, were sent to support the UN Peacekeeping forces, MONUC, to provide security in that period and its immediate aftermath. EU officials, including the senior Council and Commission representatives, have been heavily engaged in political processes throughout the year.

To provide immediate life-saving relief, ECHO has continued its humanitarian work in the country having been heavily present during the 1998-2003 conflict. Large-scale development support has got underway and is targeting key sectors related to public service delivery including justice, infrastructure, and health. In the security sphere, two ESDP missions are now working in Kinshasa to improve the army and police force. The Council and Commission are laying out a common strategy for their engagement on security sector reforms and justice in the DRC and have made progress in forging a stronger collaborative relationship.⁶

As the recent International Alert report *Peacebuilding in The Great Lakes: Challenges and Opportunities for the EU in the DRC* emphasises, much remains to be done to strengthen efforts to meet long-term whilst continuing to support short-term peace dividends. To sustain improvements in the security sphere, the EU will need to help make concrete deep-rooted advances with reforms in the security and justice sector. In addition, time-bound demobilisation and reintegration must be set into a wider process of national reconciliation and development, particularly the generation of greater and more equitable access to income opportunities (see DDR section below). The EU can also help to better address the regional dimension of insecurity in the east.

Interconnected with security issues are governance and economic (particularly livelihood generation) challenges, which themselves need to be underpinned by political dialogue and a gradual conflict-sensitive approach to trade integration. In a holistic approach to governance, the EU will need to focus efforts on (i) supporting a regular, balanced, and open dialogue between state institutions and civil society, linking the capital with the provinces; (ii) building the capacity of the country's systems of checks and balances, both formal and informal; and (iii) promoting greater transparency and accountability in the way the international community, both donors and private sector, operates in the country.⁷

Given the scale of these and other challenges, the EU will need to sustain the commitment it has so far shown for many years to come. Moreover, the form and allocation of engagement, as much as the level, will determine the quality of the contribution that the EU can make to development and peace.

Conflict-Sensitive Country and Regional Strategy Papers

The Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and Regional Strategy papers (RSPs) due to be agreed in 2007 are an opportunity to ensure that the EU institutions engage more strategically on a range of structural issues, strengthening incentives for change and going beyond loose or ill-defined commitments to conflict prevention and the component elements of peacebuilding, such as governance. The CSPs/RSPs, and programming under them, can improve the focus and effectiveness of European action, integrating 1st and 2nd pillar engagement as well as connecting to that of the Member States.

Guidelines circulated by the European Commission's interservice Quality Support Group (iQSG) in May 2001 aimed to establish a Common Framework for Country Strategy Papers.⁸ During this process, the iQSG guidance states that "conflict prevention and crisis management require systematic attention". The iQSG Fiche on Conflict Prevention goes further stating that the iQSG must ensure that "that EC external assistance and policies are contributing towards tackling the root causes of the conflicts and that EC assistance does not have unintended negative impact on the conflict dynamic".⁹ The Commission has also developed a check-list of root causes of conflict.

With the launch of www.conflictsensitivity.org in April 2007, a new tool exists to help make humanitarian, development and business operations more conflict sensitive.

The August 2006 Communication on *Governance in the European Consensus on Development* is a welcome demonstration of the importance attached to governance, which is crucial aspect of conflict prevention/peacebuilding. An interesting new initiative is an incentive tranche of 3 billion that has been introduced into the 10th EDF. Access to these funds will depend on the outcome of a dialogue between the Commission and the partner country on the ambition, pertinence and credibility of its commitments to reform. It is crucial that

the European Commission engages in a constructive and genuine dialogue with partner countries, taking into account the positions of all involved stakeholders and particularly paying attention to the voice of civil society organisations. The basis of this dialogue will be a Governance Profile.¹⁰ The Governance Profile will assess the country situation as well as identify the main difficulties and facilitate the identification of areas for cooperation.

Some of the CSP drafts currently being reviewed and finalised do include a section on conflict risks, and the attention to governance is welcome. However, the iQSG guidelines are still used in only a few cases (such as for Somalia) rather than being systematically applied in all contexts. In-depth field research and consultations conducted by NGOs in several conflict contexts have further strengthened the argument that these issues have to be addressed in order to improve the quality of European (and wider international) assistance.¹¹ This means speeding up progress towards the systematic *conflict-sensitisation* of the overall approach, the programmes and the projects. On governance too, there remains a long road to travel before the EU can claim to have closed the "implementation gap" between policy commitments on paper and actual changes in practice at country level.

Improving the impact of CSPs/RSPs and programming in building sustainable peace.

There are a number of steps that can be taken to better address conflict issues within strategies and programming design and implementation. These have, for example, been emphasised by Saferworld in its work on conflict sensitising the EC CSPs for Kenya and Uganda¹² and the EU collective strategy for Somalia. Key recommendations include:

- at the drafting stage, evaluate the impact of past CSPs on conflict dynamics and use lessons learned from this evaluation to inform future strategies.
- give comprehensive and inclusive conflict assessments an equal priority to other forms of analysis in designing future strategies and programmes.
- build the capacity of staff to implement conflict sensitive programming through specialised guidance.¹³
- continue to monitor and evaluate programmes' impact on peace and security, incorporating lessons into future programmes.

Funding for peacebuilding

2006 has been an important year in terms of finalising the funding sources for EU external policy. In 2007, the European Union will enter a new financial period that will last for seven years. After a long debate this year about the amount of money at EU's disposal and how to spend the money, a new financial framework has been agreed. Among the main Community instruments for external actions from 2007 onwards, there are both geographic instruments (which include thematic programmes¹⁴) and horizontal instruments. In terms of conflict prevention, the most significant are outlined below. Due to institutional tensions, any reference to conflict prevention has been deleted from the long-term instruments and is now only mentioned in the short-term Instrument for Stability. The new financial instruments supplement the €23.97 billion envelope agreed for the 10th European Development Fund for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries for the 2008-2013 period.

- i) *Instrument for Stability*: Building on the experience of the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM),¹⁵ the Instrument for Stability is intended to provide the European Commission with the ability to intervene quickly in situations of erupting conflict or crisis. Rationalising a number of previous instruments,¹⁶ it will allow for rapid funding decision for actions with duration of up to two years. The instrument also sets mechanisms to ensure the actions funded link with longer term initiatives. Provision for a Peacebuilding Partnership is intended to enable substantive discussion and mutually reinforcing work between non-governmental experts and EU officials.
- ii) *European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)*; This thematic instrument will replace the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. Within this simplified framework, the instrument will provide funding particularly for civil society in third countries to promote stable democratic societies respecting human rights. One of the specificities of this instrument is that project funding does not require the host government's consent. This is important when supporting civil society in countries where democracy is superficial and/or genuine participation limited.
- iii) *Development Co-operation Instrument*: The newly established Development Cooperation Instrument follows the same trend of consolidation of the previous funding mechanisms. The new instrument will provide funding both at geographic levels, divided into five specific regions, and in listed thematic areas.
- iv) *European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)*: This new instrument aims at providing funding for assistance under the European Neighbourhood Policy. It replaces MEDA and TACIS as well as funding for this region under other instruments such as EIDHR. The ENPI will support cooperation with countries on the EU's external borders. The ENPI will focus on supporting the implementation of the ENP Action Plans. It will also promote regulatory convergence and economic support, as well as sustainable development and fight against poverty.
- v) *Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)*: The IPA is the new financial instrument for all pre-accession funding by the European Commission. The IPA is bringing together various instruments such as Phare, CARDS, ISPA, SAPARD or the Turkey pre-accession instrument under one single mechanism. Funding provided by this instrument will focus on five components: transition assistance and institution building; cross-border cooperation; regional development; human resources development; and rural development.

Following Through on Policy Commitments

As highlighted in this briefing, the EU has made some important advances in 2006 on increasing knowledge and awareness of the policies and practice required to prevent conflict and build peace. It is crucial now that these commitments are turned into practical action on the ground.

The example of security

Headline progress has been made particularly in the field of security in order to better address the complex and interconnected factors (governance, economic development, reconciliation and justice) that jeopardise the establishment and provision of security for the population. In conflict-prone and affected contexts, there are a number of inter-related and overlapping threats to security often framed by donors as including:

- i) The lack of a professional, accountable and transparent security and justice sector.
- ii) The presence of large numbers of (ex) combatants with access to weapons and often lacking in skills and with few or no economic opportunities.
- iii) The uncontrolled proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW).

In all three respects, the EU has recently engaged in policy initiatives and faces the challenges of implementation in 2007 and beyond. In this process, these threats will often need to be addressed as part of an integrated approach. It is vital that security and development actors pay particular attention to the links between community security needs, changes to the size, composition and governance of the security services and the issue of ex-combatants and their associates. Strategies for security sector reform (SSR), DDR, and action on small arms, need, therefore, to be linked together. This is important so as to make the range of efforts mutually reinforcing, addressing both governance and operational issues. They must also be focused on actual outcomes for the people and communities affected.

Security sector reform (SSR):

Where a country's security sector is failing to provide a secure environment for people to enjoy rights and exploit opportunities, this impacts very negatively on development prospects for its people. Poor conditions of service, networks of patronage, and the absence of a strong social contract between citizens and authorities have often led to the abuse of public office for private gain and politicized practices among security actors, including the armed forces, the police, the judiciary as well as bodies responsible for oversight and democratic accountability.¹⁷ These issues are particularly pronounced when it comes to countries experiencing conflict or other forms of fragility.

The experience in Kosovo



Kosovo illustrates both the need for, and the challenges of, security sector reform. It is also the focus of increasing EU attention. Negotiations, led by former President of Finland Martti Ahtisaari to determine the final status of the territory are ongoing, with the UN Special Envoy outlining a 'compromise' plan in early February 2007.

One of the most important aspects of the international community's attempts at democratic state-building in Kosovo in recent years has been the development and control of the security sector, recognising that the creation of these institutions will be essential to Kosovo's future. However, this has faced a number of challenges which have been highlighted by Saferworld's work in the entity in recent years.¹⁸

Ownership and trust are essential to effective security sector development and function. Yet control of security and justice services, such as the police, prison services and the Kosovo Protection Corps, have remained largely in the hands of international staff until very recently. A recent survey found that there are large levels of distrust of some of those institutions, particularly amongst Serbs.¹⁹ An Internal Security Sector Review was conducted in the run-up to and during the final status talks. As Saferworld and the Kosovan organisation, the Forum for Civic Initiatives (FIQ), argued in their response to the ISSR's report, the public consultations for this review were ambitious but still limited in their scope – again raising questions of ownership.²⁰

In 2007, with the announcement of final status, the EU's role will increase further and it is essential that it is taking firm steps to build trusted and effective security institutions, as well as tackling the long-term sources of tension in the territory, such as unemployment. This will require coherence in EU action in the territory. The German presidency has already stated that it will focus on the support to final status negotiations on Kosovo and the implementation of a solution if elaborated, including by having the EU lead the largest civilian mission ever deployed within the framework of the ESDP, with a priority to justice and police. In so doing, the EU should build on lessons learned from existing community safety projects in Kosovo²¹ and elsewhere that have centred on involving the population fully in identifying their own security priorities.²²

Through numerous policy statements, the EU has indicated SSR as a priority for its security, governance and development policies. SSR is also a field that cuts across EC and Council competencies and both institutions have recently developed SSR concepts, setting priorities for first and second pillars activities in this field.

In June 2006, the EU adopted a policy framework but this is still based on two concepts: one for Community actions and one for European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Disappointing though this is, the emphasis is now being placed on ensuring that coherence becomes a reality in the implementation of SSR programmes. The Austrian Presidency began this process by looking at the implementation of SSR activities in the Western Balkans. Collaboration between the two pillars continues to improve in the DRC (see above) and the intended Decision on RRM action in the field of SSR support and other integrated work planned in Guinea Bissau, Togo and Central African Republic are further moves in the right direction. Much, however, remains to be done.

Recommendations for implementing SSR programmes

To ensure effective implementation joint SSR strategy, the EU must now:

- Promote broad understanding of SSR as including all elements of security and justice – including policing, judiciary and private security providers.
- Devote considerable effort to ensuring that institutions - particularly field offices and EC delegations - are aware of the SSR strategy and the need to act upon it.
- Take steps to ensure there is the capacity to implement it amongst staff, by providing further guidelines and training.
- Ensure interventions are based on partnership and ownership, political dialogue, and on thorough assessments of the local context; and include non-state actors in consultations.
- Devote sufficient resources – human and financial - to promote security and justice sector reform; and find innovative ways - including the use of external expertise – to access sufficient human resources for SSR programmes.
- Ensure coherence between EU institutions by ensuring all relevant actors - including development actors – are engaged and working together across relevant institutions in Brussels and in the field, and ensuring the sharing of best practice.

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration:

Amongst the greatest challenges in countries emerging from years of violent conflict are the presence of large numbers of ex-combatants and the ongoing violence perpetrated by members of still-active rebel groups. At the same time, millions of ordinary people within communities continue to suffer many of the extreme hardships that have resulted from their experience of the conflict and resulting violence.

Ex-combatants, as well as the many others associated with them (such as wives, porters, cooks and sex slaves), are likely to have known no other way of life than war and violence. They have a potent ability to ‘spoil’ the peace process as well as obstruct progress towards security and development. It is, therefore, largely accepted that they need special attention through disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) - one of the ‘template’ activities funded by the international community in such ‘post-conflict’ contexts as DRC, Aceh and Liberia. DDR is often approached as a military and technical activity which, although producing important and visible short term results, tends to lead to significant difficulties in the long term, often failing to address the longer-term challenge of genuine reintegration and reconciliation in host communities.

The EU is in a unique position to pursue DDR in a holistic and coherent manner, given its position as a major political, economic and social actor with an extensive range of tools at its disposal. Recognising these strengths, the Finnish Presidency of the EU led an initiative in 2006 to strengthen the EU’s contribution to DDR.²³ This process drew on the collaboration with International Alert and resulted in the adoption in December by the Council and the Commission of an EU concept on supporting DDR.²⁴

The finalisation of the concept shows that considerable headway is now being made in establishing a common understanding on DDR as well as measures for strengthening the Union’s future work in this area. The concept takes up the key point that was emphasised by International Alert in its report for the EU “*DDR: Supporting Security and Development: The EU’s added value*” and is a focus of the ‘reintegration of ex-combatants’ course provided by the Peaceworkers project of International Alert and Transition International. This point is that DDR needs to be seen not just as a time-bound exercise, which requires a range of guiding principles and expertise on planning and implementation, but also as a long-term and holistic process to ensure sustainable reintegration and reconciliation in communities. The end goal of this process is to help ex-combatants move away from the roles and positions that defined them during the conflict to identifying themselves (and being identified by others) as members of families and communities with corresponding responsibilities and opportunities.

Key recommendations for implementing DDR

DDR programmes, as well as wider security and development initiatives that drive and sustain reintegration, need to be sensitive to the challenges and specific needs of ex-combatants and communities. This requires

- (i) local ownership, and thus not only strong engagement from the governing elite but also a bottom-up, community-focused approach. Dialogue with, and assistance to, the communities are as important as initiatives which target only returning combatants and the displaced.
- (ii) tailored solutions according to the different needs of men, women, boys and girls.
- (iii) the managing of the expectations of ex-combatants and communities through clear channels of communication between implementers and communities.
- (iv) recognition of integral links between DDR and SSR and the need for the two to be considered in conjunction with each other.
- (v) particular attention to the importance of increased and equitable access to economic opportunities. As the principal concern of local people and ex-combatants alike, jobs and income generation are a top priority.

For the EU, implementation, as always, remains the key challenge. Effective approaches to the challenges posed by ex-combatants require the EU to optimise its use of competences and funding instruments. The determinants of success in its role will be:

- (i) its presence, resources and credibility on the ground as well as the political will (in Brussels and the host country) to back this kind of engagement.
- (ii) increased coordination and coherence between the pillars of the EU and other organisations, notably the UN and the World Bank, to ensure that DDR is addressed as a long-term and multi-actor process. More joint mission assessments would help.
- (iii) maximum attention given to the integration of security-, development-, governance-, justice- and reconciliation-related activities in order to drive and sustain reintegration processes. This means drawing on the resources and strategies under the geographic and thematic instruments and not just the Instrument for Stability.
- (iv) greater in-house expertise through training and awareness raising, not just amongst DDR policy and programming staff, but also for development planners and implementers who need to deal with the issue of returnees (ex-combatants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)) in their work.

Small arms and light weapons:

The use of small arms and light weapons (SALW) contributes to thousands of deaths every week, hinders development and undermines human rights. The lack of effective regulation and control of SALW can inhibit the establishment of a secure and stable environment, particularly on the local level, and dilutes the rule of law. Unregulated circulation and misuse of SALW not only fuels and prolongs conflicts but also facilitates criminal activity, banditry and domestic violence and complicates the work of an often already overstretched police force.

The EU recognises that SALW proliferation has profoundly negative impacts on both security and development, and as a result has continually confirmed its commitment to tackling SALW issues. This was illustrated by the adoption of the EU Strategy to Combat the Illicit Accumulation and Trafficking of SALW and their Ammunition (EU SALW Strategy) in December 2005. Furthermore in June 2006, the EU reiterated its commitment to tackling the proliferation and misuse of SALW in a statement given at the UN Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Activities to prevent the proliferation and misuse of SALW have been supported through the Community and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) budgets.²⁵ A wide range of legal bases have also been used to support SALW programmes including CFSP joint actions, the 8th and 9th EDF funds, EIDHR, the RRM and the CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation) regional programme. However, tensions between the Commission and the Council over who can engage in this ‘hard’ security sphere deteriorated to such a point that a European Court of Justice case began between the two pillars in February 2005. The inclusion of small arms-related projects into the Instrument for Stability, the Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument have been opposed by several Member states and by the Council’s Legal Service, thus hampering the Union’s capacities to engage more actively in tackling challenges related to SALW proliferation and misuse.

Obstacles created by legal discrepancies in the EU decision-making process are therefore temporarily preventing it from fully implementing the EU SALW Strategy. It is to be hoped that the ongoing legal stalemate on SALW will be resolved through compromise in the framework of upcoming revived constitutional debates and that measures to research, assist, support and accompany the implementation of activities to combat the proliferation and misuse of small arms will be mainstreamed across the EU's pillars for the 2007-2013 period and beyond.

Leadership from the 2007 Presidencies

Effective EU engagement in the process of building peace requires collective and coherent action across the EU's institutions and its Member States. Civil society in Europe and affected countries will also need to be involved, both as advocates and as watchdogs for higher quality activities. A particular challenge falls to the countries holding succeeding Presidencies of the Union in 2007. They need to build on and reinforce initiatives already underway as well as to widen and deepen that work. The Presidency is in a position to provide the impetus for this endeavour to lay the foundations for peaceful and sustainable development.

Although Germany has not made conflict prevention an explicit priority, its current tenure of the Presidency of the EU at the same time as the G8 provides an opportunity to advance the peacebuilding agenda, particularly with regard to the energy agenda and the global processes impacting on conflict resource exploitation. In addition, the German commitment to resolving some of the most burning institutional questions will, it is hoped, pave the way for the implementation of a coherent external policy currently hindered by constitutional failure and the aftermath of the institutional battle over the financial instruments. A more explicit focus by Portugal on Fragile States would give further visibility and momentum to the spectrum of challenges faced. By focussing on the structural causes of conflict and fragility and by adapting its engagement to the specifics of the context, the EU will optimise its impact. It will help protect, promote and spread the prosperity and values on which its success has been founded.

Endnotes

- 1 These commitments appear, for example, in the 2001 *Communication on conflict prevention* (COM(2001) 211 final), the 2001 *Council Common Position on conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa* (2001/374/CFSP), the 2005 Joint Development Statement *The European Consensus on Development*, and articles 8 and 11 of the Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000 and revised in February 2005.
- 2 Since the first ESDP mission (the EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina) launched in 2003, the EU is now engaged in Africa with the EUPOL Kinshasa and EUSEC DR Congo, in the Middle East with a border mission in Rafah, a police mission in the Palestinian Territories and a rule of law mission in Iraq (EUJUST LEX). Since December 2005, the EU is also engaged in a Border Assistance Mission in Moldova and Ukraine. The EU completed the border mission it had in South Caucasus and a rule of law in Georgia (EUJUST THEMIS) as well as the monitoring mission in Aceh (AMM). In 2006, the Council also decided to establish a planning team that is now in Kosovo in view of a possible mission and, in January 2007, the Political and Security Committee (PSC) gave its approval for the launch of a police and rule of law mission in Afghanistan.
- 3 The Aceh monitoring mission has involved the ESDP mission working closely with the European Commission delegation in Indonesia, in particular on reintegration and human rights issues.
- 4 Despite the recognition in the June 2006 joint paper "An external policy to serve Europe's energy interests" that this policy "must also be consistent with the EU's broader foreign policy objectives such as conflict prevention and resolution, non-proliferation and promoting human rights", the ensuing concept paper from the Commission does not mention conflict at all (COM 2006 590 Final from 12-10-2006). The incoherence undermines conflict prevention efforts, for example, in the South Caucasus and Central Asia
- 5 A *conflict-sensitive* approach involves scrutinising the potential positive and negative impacts of their work on the conflict context and vice-versa. Based on this understanding, agencies should then take steps to ensure that at a minimum they do no harm and, ideally, they have a positive impact on the contexts in which they work. See www.conflictsensitivity.org
- 6 A Single Comprehensive review on the DRC has been jointly drafted by the Council Secretariat and the Commission services, calling for EU engagement in DRC in the short, medium and long term (doc. 7138/1/06 COR 1 *Examen Global et Unifié de l'action extérieure de l'UE en RDC*). This was noted by the Political and Security Committee in April 2006. At the PSC's request, the two pillars are now jointly elaborating a comprehensive EU strategic approach to security sector reform in the country.
- 7 A DRC Governance Compact is currently being developed and will be finalised now that a new DRC Government is being put in place. It remains to be seen whether the Compact will be based on a strengthened partnership between the DRC – both authorities and stakeholders – and donors. The Compact's objectives of achieving 'mutual accountability' and 'transparency' between the donor community and the elected DRC government on all governance questions, including SSR, are critical to peacebuilding progress in the country.
- 8 Set up in 2000, the iQSG brings together a small group of officials selected for their skills and experience by the Group of RELEX Commissioners. Once selected, these officials are independent DGs. The iQSG has also at its disposal a secretariat that is located in DG DEV. See the *Guidelines for implementation of the Common Framework for Country Strategy Papers*, 4 May 2001 D(2001)
- 9 IQSG Programming Fiche on Conflict Prevention, http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/cfsp/cpcm/cp/doc/cp_guide.pdf
- 10 See http://www.europe-cares.org/africa/governance_en.html
- 11 Saferworld's field research was conducted in the Horn of Africa, and included consultations with EC delegations, and advocacy in Brussels on CSPs and RSPs. See *Improving the impact of CSPs and programming on peace and stability. Lessons learned, best practice and recommendations from the Horn of Africa*, April 2006, p. 1. See also International Alert's reports on the Great Lakes and the South Caucasus under the EU-funded Conflict Prevention Partnership.
- 12 See the EPLO policy paper on conflict sensitivity in EU CSPs, available at <http://www.eplo.org>, as well as Saferworld's advocacy on conflict-sensitive development in Uganda: http://www.saferworld.org.uk/en/csd_uganda.html.
- 13 The Resource Pack on Conflict Sensitivity is one example of ground-breaking work being conducted by the NGO sector on conflict sensitising development activities. It is available at <http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/>
- 14 The thematic programmes that have been agreed are (i) Non-state actors and local authorities in development, (ii) food security, (iii) environment and sustainable management of natural resources, including energy, (iv) "investing in people", (v) migration and asylum, and (vi) cooperation with industrialised countries.
- 15 For a full list of activities funded by the RRM: see http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/cfsp/cpcm/rrm/date.htm#2005
- 16 So far, crisis response could involve a wide range of instruments such as the Rapid Reaction Mechanism, the Human Rights Regulation, the Mine Action Regulation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, or Humanitarian Aid.
- 17 See the policy guidance agreed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee *Security System Reform and Governance* available at www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/ssr, as well as the forthcoming *Implementation Framework* on SSR.
- 18 Saferworld works in Kosovo in partnership with the Kosovan organisation, Forum for Civic Initiatives (FIQ). Key activities have included facilitating community working groups on security issues which allow residents, police and local authorities to agree a 'Safer Community Plan'; the publication of a survey of small arms in Kosovo; and commenting on Kosovo's Internal Security Sector Review.
- 19 Forum for Civic Initiatives and Saferworld: *Small arms and light weapons survey of Kosovo*. September 2006.
- 20 Forum for Civic Initiatives and Saferworld: *The Internal Security Sector Review: the future of Kosovo's security sector?* 31 January 2007
- 21 In partnership with a Kosovan organisation, the Forum for Civic Initiatives (FIQ), Saferworld recently undertook a 19-month project focusing on community safety. As a result of the process, a Community Improvement Council was established, which then identified the key safety and security issues facing the village. The villagers then identified methods of addressing these concerns: including the introduction of regular police patrols; the construction of a pedestrian sidewalk along the main road to reduce the incidence of traffic accidents; a refuse collection system in order to eliminate the dangers to public health of stray dogs in the village. Additional benefits of these plans has been an improvement in relations between the police and the community, and the municipal authorities and community. The Council recently began discussions on an action plan designed to address problems associated with small arms.
- 22 See Balkan Youth Union, Centre for Security Studies, CIVIL, Forum for Civic Initiatives, Saferworld: *Creating safer communities: Lessons from South Eastern Europe*. December 2006.
- 23 DDR has been also highlighted as an important issue in 'post-conflict' peacebuilding in the Union's development policy statement, "The European consensus on development", in the European security strategy and in the EU strategy for Africa. The Finnish initiative in 2006 drew on a seminar prepared by International Alert involving of 75 experts from 21 different countries (including participants from Aceh, Burundi and Liberia) held in Brussels on July 13 2006. Alert's work was made possible through its participation in the EU-funded Conflict Prevention Partnership and benefited from additional support from Sida and the Finnish government.
- 24 The EU Concept for support to DDR was approved by the European Commission on 14 December 2006 and by the Council of the European Union on 11 December 2006. It is available on http://www.eplo.org/documents/EU_Joint_concept_DDR.pdf
- 25 For an overview of EU actions on SALW in 2006, see the First and Second Progress Reports on the implementation of the EU Strategy to Combat Illicit Accumulation and Trafficking of SALW and their Ammunition, documents 10538/06 (14 June 2006) and 16683/06 (12 December 2006).

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