



EPLO Conflict Prevention Newsletter

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Germany takes over the EU Presidency



For the first time in EU history, an **18-month programme for the three successive presidencies** was elaborated last year to reflect the common political priorities of **Germany, Portugal and Slovenia**. On 20 December 2006, German Minister for Development Heidemarie Wierczorek presented a similar programme on development issues, entitled *Strengthening the European Union's Role as a Global Partner for Development: The 18-Month Programme on Development Policy of the EU Presidencies of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia (January 2007 – June 2008)*.

During the next 18 months, a strong emphasis will be put on the **effectiveness of the EU development policy** according to the programme. Besides committing themselves to achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals and the Monterrey Consensus engagements on development aid, the three chairing countries want the EU to take a leading role in implementing the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*. To that end, the three presidencies pledge to develop operational methods for a more efficient division of labour within the EU institutions as well as to ensure better coherence between EU development efforts and its other policies.

Africa has been granted a special attention in the programme, focusing on the political dialogue with the local partners, including NGOs and other civil society stakeholders.

In terms of thematic interests, the upcoming presidencies will address the issues of **fragile states** and the situation of **women and children in armed conflicts**. During its presidency, Portugal wishes EU to adopt a

more coherent and effective approach towards fragile states, whereas Slovenia plans to integrate the protection of women and children into EU development policy and programmes.

The chairing countries will also examine the possibility of conducting a study on an appropriate EU strategy on crisis prevention and fragile states, with special reference to the situation of women and children and the general issue of poor governance. Furthermore, attention shall be devoted to developing possible further cooperation with the relevant international, regional and local actors in this field.

In line with the current 18-month programme, the German presidency is already supporting a project aiming at enhancing EU cooperation with European NGOs and their partners involved in conflict prevention in fragile states. **Partners in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management: EU and NGO Cooperation** is a cooperation of the German presidency, Crisis Management Initiative, EPLO and the Bertelsmann Stiftung. The goal of the project is to improve implementation and delivery of the EU conflict prevention activities in fragile states through enhanced EU cooperation with NGOs using field-based case studies on security sector reform and transitional justice in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia.

Links:

- [German Presidency Programme](#)
- [18-month Programme](#)
- [18-month Programme on Development policy](#)

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European Commission Work Programme for 2007

The European Commission presented its work programme for 2007, centring around the four main objectives of the Barroso Commission: putting Europe back on the track of prosperity; reinforcing our commitment towards solidarity; strengthening citizens' security and, finally, projecting and promoting these priorities outside our borders with a stronger voice in the world.

The work programme presents how the Commission will meet its strategic objectives in 2007. These objectives were presented in the Annual Policy Strategy for 2007.

On the specific issue of external relations, the work programme identifies two key issues: the negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements and the reinforcement of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The work programme also mentions that "the implementation of the European Security Strategy will be continued, in particular in the area of human security." The Commission will also persist in its stabilization efforts in the Middle East and South Asia, with Africa being strangely absent from the document.

The work programme continues with a list of Strategic Initiatives and of Priority Initiatives. Among the important strategic initiatives for conflict prevention, the work programme lists the Enlargement process, with the adoption of the Strategy Papers, Progress reports and

Partnerships with candidate and potential candidate countries; the Neighbourhood Policy, with proposals for new Action Plans for Ukraine, Moldova and Israel, the review of other Action Plans and the adoption of a specific strategy for the Black Sea Region aiming at contributing to stability and security. EU Energy Policy will also be a priority but here the links with conflict and human rights concerns seem to be completely ignored.

The Commission should present some important Communications in 2007, notably on complementarity, division of labour and scaling up of development aid; EU-Africa relations; and a Communication on Human Rights and Democracy defining the broad orientations which will inspire the promotion of democracy and human rights on the basis of the new financial instrument, EIDHR.

The Commission will also address transregional security threats through the Stability Instrument, which should improve coherence and effectiveness of EU external assistance in areas related to security policy.

Links:

- [Commission's work programme](#)
- Roadmaps 2007: [Strategic Initiatives](#) - [Priority Initiatives](#)

Congolese Warlord Accused by the ICC

The leader of a Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) militia Thomas Lubanga Dyilo has become the first war crimes suspect to be formally charged at the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Court's public hearing on 29 January announced that evidence presented by prosecutors was sufficient to "establish strong grounds to believe" that Lubanga was responsible for recruiting child soldiers during the civil war in Eastern DRC.

At the time of Lubanga's arrest, the International Center for Transition Justice (ICTJ) issued a statement welcoming the event but saying that there should be more. Other per-

petrators should be arrested, indicted, and transferred to the ICC. Also, efforts should be made to strengthen domestic courts in the DRC to prosecute and hold accountable perpetrators who fall outside of the ICC mandate.

The EU has been supportive of the first ICC trial. Following Lubanga's arrest last March, the Council issued a statement declaring that the arrest constitutes an important achievement in the fight against impunity in the Great Lakes Region and demonstrates that the ICC is now fully operational after its creation in 2002.

For the full ICTJ statement, click [here](#).

Swisspeace Expert Speaks on Afghanistan to the CIVCOM

Frequent insurgencies and terrorist attacks characterise the security situation in Afghanistan even if the violence has somewhat calmed down with the arrival of the cold season. In the absence of rule of law, the local population often supports the Taliban who are considered the better option compared to corrupt government officials.

Meeting this situation by military means alone will not work, according to Susanne Schmeidl, Afghanistan expert at EPLO member [Swisspeace](#). Schmeidl spoke to the Committee for the Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) in the Council on 19 January, as part of an activity within the Role of Civil Society (RoCS) project supported by the German EU-Presidency.

As the fact-finding mission to Afghanistan has recently been completed, Schmeidl's talk coincided with two important decisions taken by

the EU regarding the country. On January 26, the Political and Security Committee authorised the deployment of European police mission to Afghanistan, designed to train local police in areas that have been cleared of Taliban fighters by NATO forces. The same day, the Commission pledged €600 million in reconstruction aid for Afghanistan on top of €3.7 billion pledged by the EU since 2002.

Schmeidl's recommendations for a future EU engagement are, among others: to emphasise the civilian aspect of police training; to help the Afghan police boost its currently very negative image and build trust within the local population; to make use of existing tribal police structures; and to get engaged in remote rural areas. The efforts should be supported by flanking measures through Community instruments, especially for literacy programmes prior to police training.

Joint EU Concept for Support to DDR

The Finnish Presidency Report on ESDP mentioned that the Commission and the Council approved an EU Concept for support to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), jointly developed by the Council Secretariat and the European Commission. International Alert participated in the conceptual elaboration of this common concept with a report presented in a seminar organised by the Presidency last July, the European Commission and the Conflict Prevention Partnership on "the EU and DDR: Supporting Security and Development".

The EU concept states that it will build on "the experiences and lessons learned by the International Community and by the Union itself in supporting DDR processes in different parts of the world, through Community instruments, Member States bilateral programmes and more recently ESDP operations and actions". The

EU has decided to work on the basis of the UN definitions of "disarmament", "demobilisation" and "reintegration". The concept also gives a special attention to gender and children issues.

"The EU intends to use all instruments at its disposal to ensure that its action in support of DDR is efficient and coherent"

Some lessons-learned are clearly identified, including the fact that DDR initiatives should be context-driven and developed together with other measures including confidence-building, SSR, SALW and transitional justice. The concept addresses the difficult question of reintegration and its links with long term development cooperation and economic programmes.

Finally, the EU concept presents key principles for EU support to DDR, including local ownership and the need for a holistic approach that integrates transitional justice, political dialogue, or human rights initiatives.

Download the [EU concept](#) and the [International Alert report](#).

New EU policy towards Central Asia

At a meeting with MEPs on 23 January, German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier presented the EU's new "Central Asia Initiative".

Unlike Germany, the Union as a whole has not developed a strategy towards the region so far. However, now Javier Solana's office, the European Commission and the German foreign ministry are all drafting separate proposals for a new EU policy towards Central Asia. The current Presidency wants the EU to get engaged in the stabilisation of Central Asia, not least because of the Union's energy interests in the region which is rich in oil and gas.

The relations are however not supposed to go so far as to offer the countries a partnership in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The development of an EU strategy for Central Asia should take into consideration the human rights situation, the repression of opposition members under the region's authoritarian regimes, and regional disputes.

EU Supporting the AU Mission to Somalia but Criticising the US Air Strikes

In view of the renewed conflict between the Ethiopian-backed transitional government and the Islamists, the international community is determined to strive for the rapid deployment of peace-keeping forces to Somalia. Following the closed-door talks in Nairobi with Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf 5 January 2007, the International Somalia Contact Group issued joint communiqué calling for immediate dispatch of peacekeepers to stabilise the country.

Both the US and the EU indicated in the meeting their willingness to finance the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), authorised by the UN Security Council to protect the Somali interim government — with Washington donating \$16 million and the European Commission €15 million — but according to the conclusions adopted at the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) on January 22, the financial support of the EU will be made conditional upon the opening of genuine political dialogue in Somalia. "The situation is far from becoming stabilised", and the deployment of this kind of force will not resolve the Somali crisis alone, the Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel commented on the GAERC conclusions.

The GAERC expressed concern about the reconciliation process and the humanitarian situation in Somalia and called on all parties to end violence. The EU Foreign ministers also urged Somalia's government to hold talks with other factions, including moderate parts of the Islamist movement, to achieve long-term stability and peace.

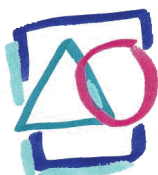
Whereas the EU and the US seem to cooperate in financing the peace mission, their opinions differ on the air strikes that the US carried out on suspected al-Qaeda targets in Southern Somalia. Italy and Sweden from the Somalia Contact Group condemned the American attacks, which according to the Commissioner Michel provoked "fears for civilians" and "military escalation in Southern Somalia". Also the Commission spokesman Amadeu Altafaj Tardio said that the US air strikes would not contribute to bringing about long-term peace.

EU support to Lebanon

An international conference on Lebanon was held in Paris on 25 January in order to gather money for Lebanon reconstruction after the war. The European Commission announced a €500 million package for political reforms and economic reconstruction. This emergency aid will cover the period until 2010.

Regarding longer term cooperation, on 19 January, the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan for Lebanon was adopted. It focuses on the stabilisation and development of Lebanon, taking into account the regional dimension. Conflict prevention as well as human rights, democratisation or security sector reform occupy an important place in the [Action Plan](#).

German NGOs Working for Proactive and Local Peace Initiatives



Peaceful conflict resolution is a cross-cutting topic. It covers several fields of action varying from mediation and humanitarian relief efforts to more preventive measures, such as human rights advocacy and economic development. Given the multitude of approaches and actors in the field, coordination and information sharing is essential to achieve lasting results.

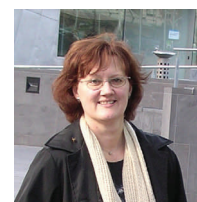
This was in the minds of several German NGOs in 1998, when they decided to set up an open network bringing together the country's civil society organisations active in conflict resolution. Today the German **Platform for Peaceful Conflict Management** (Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung) connects more than 130 individuals and nearly 60 organisations, institutions and groups working for peace and development.

Initially, the Platform focused on improving the exchange of information, conducting lobby work and facilitating the cooperation between its members. Over time, the scope of its activities has widened. Today it also functions as a clearing house for the expertise inquiries, supports its associates in their project development and helps its members in international networking.

Activities under the German Presidency:

During the German EU Presidency, the Platform's member organizations will organize various conferences and workshops related to their activities. In addition, Ms. Ute Hegener, Board Member of the Platform, hopes the German Presidency will give the Platform an opportunity to get in touch with Portuguese and Slovenian civil society actors and to improve networking on a broader European level.

The EU's cooperation with NGOs is also on her mind. Ms. Hegener is eager to see the trio presidency to start the implementation of the Presidency Note 15574/06 recommendations on the cooperation between the EU and civil society actors in the framework of crisis management and conflict prevention. Especially the prevention of violence and armed conflicts is in the Platform's focus. "We stress the need for more proactive prevention and early response", says Ms. Hegener. "If we want to achieve a shift from reaction to prevention we need more political will to fulfil our responsibility to prevent." This applies also to the interaction between the EU and civil society organisations. "Today, NGOs are accepted partners in development cooperation on the EU level, but unfortunately not regarded as 'natural born' partners in the prevention of violence."



Ute Hegener

Focus in Local Communities:

Besides preventive action, the German Platform stresses the need of a better inclusion of non-European actors in peacemaking. Therefore, the Platform will hold its annual conference this year on the role and function of civil society in civilian crisis management, and in order to give voice to the local communities, the Platform has invited partners from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe to report on their own projects and the challenges they face.

"Today's multi-dynamic conflicts need multi-level approaches", Ms. Hegener points out. "We need concepts for more conflict and cultural sensitive analysis." The German Platform is therefore stressing the need for dialogues between and with local communities on different levels in war torn societies. "NGOs have a vital on-the-ground knowledge and play a crucial role in war-to-peace transition." This is why Ms. Hegener finds it important to engage local organisations as equal partners on the EU and project level with so called "Third Parties" from the Western World.

Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung

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Publications

The **European Commission** has published its work programme for 2007. You can find it [here](#).

EN.CPS would like to draw your attention to the publication "[Daring to Build Peace... Ways of Overcoming Violence - Seven Years of the Civil Peace Service](#)". It is the English translation of a report published by the German CPS consortium whose organisations implement the German CPS programme financed through the development ministry (BMZ). Besides forewords by the minister Heidemarie Wieczorek Zeul and the highest representatives of the Christian churches in Germany, the publication includes a presentation and assessment of the CPS programme as well as presentations of exemplary CPS projects. One of these shows the **Kosovo field project work of forumZFD**, founding organisation and active partner within EN.CPS.

Saferworld and partners the **Balkan Youth Union, Center for Security Studies, CIVIL** and the **Forum for Civic Initiative**, have developed an approach to community safety working in four locations in South Eastern Europe. The approach addresses a wide range of day-to-day concerns while also being applicable to a post-conflict setting. These Community Safety Plans allow members of a community to work together to identify, discuss and develop solutions to their problems, which leads to an improvement in the immediate security situation on the ground and also helps the community to resist pressures that lead towards violent conflict. The report is based on four case studies : Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. The report is available [here](#).



The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office — EPLO

EPLO is the platform of European NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks active in the field of peacebuilding, who share an interest in promoting sustainable peacebuilding policies among decision-makers in the European Union.

EPLO aims to influence the EU so it promotes and implements measures that lead to sustainable peace between states and within states and peoples, and that transform and resolve conflicts non-violently. EPLO wants the EU to recognise the crucial connection between peacebuilding, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development world wide and the crucial role NGOs have to play in sustainable EU efforts for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and crisis management.

EPLO advances the interests of its members through common policy positions and consequently advocating for those common positions. EPLO disseminates information and promotes understanding of EU policies of concern to its Members. The Office builds also solidarity and cooperation amongst its members and with other relevant NGO networks. Finally, EPLO raises awareness about the contribution the EU should make to peacebuilding and the need to hold the EU accountable to its own political commitments of helping secure peace within and outside its borders.

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