

Civil Society Forum South Neighbourhood

Brussels, July 10-12, 2017

Concept note on the thematic group “Security and resilience”

Strengthening Resilience and Promoting Stability is the umbrella theme for this 4th edition of the Civil Society Forum for the Neighbourhood South, which has also set **a specific focus on youth**. Fostering state and societal to the East and to the South of the European Union is one of the top five priorities of the [EU Global Strategy](#). The [2015 Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy \(ENP\)](#) reflects the Strategy's agenda on resilience. Thus taking forward the Global strategy and the Review (see the first [Joint Report on the Implementation of the ENP Review – JOIN\(2017\) 18 final of 18 May 2017](#)) represent a major part of the EU's work on strengthening resilience in the Southern Neighbourhood.

As laid out in the recently released [Joint Communication on a Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action of 7 June](#), strengthening resilience can help secure progress towards national and regional development and security goals in a more complex and contested world. The goal is to move towards a more structural and long-term approach to risks and challenges that can test societies' response.

By resilience we mean to strengthen capacity of states and societies to anticipate and adjust to pressures beyond their immediate control, while maintaining social and political cohesion and without undermining core human rights and democratic principles. When we talk about pressures, we mean both long-term pressures – such as demography, resource scarcity, poor governance, geo-political uncertainties – and shocks or crises such as violent conflict.

Maintaining effective relationships and social trust across society and between citizens and government is a key factor of resilience, and crucial for managing conflict and building peace. The fundamental responsibility and ownership over strengthening resilience lies first and foremost with those states and societies themselves. Civil society is a key source of resilience, and it is essential to protect the civic space that help foster it, to take local agency seriously and to enable conditions that allow NGOs to operate and in an environment that is secure.

In the Arab world, finding the right relationship between a state's security system and the communities it should be serving has become a central, and even overriding consideration in the legitimacy and effectiveness of the state and the ability to sustain reform programmes. Whether it is the rise of violent extremism in many countries, or the response of state authorities and their treatment of citizens, or civil strife, conflict and war, the lack of security, and excessive actions by security forces have come to define much of the region, with significant consequences for it and surrounding regions, including Europe.

The number of issues related to this problem range from: prevention of violent extremism, security sector reform, greater transparency and oversight mechanisms in the security sector, protection of victims and infusing human rights into legal and institutional processes related to security actions, among others. So far, the role of civil society, acting mainly on the subnational level, has taken a far second to that of security forces, their reactions and the consequences thereof.

The contribution that civil society working on the ground can bring in the security sector is sometimes underestimated. This Forum is an opportunity for the civil society to take an active part in the identification and design of adequate solutions. The ability to include an effective role of civil society in the identification and management of the root causes of security challenges, and the reactions to them, may be essential in order to develop state and societal resilience in the longer term. Whether it is in the development of greater community resilience, the inclusion of marginalized communities and gender specificities, or ensuring greater transparency and accountability in the security sector, civil society plays a greater role. Due to their unique access to informal structures they often play an important peacebuilding role within local communities and can at the same time act as intermediaries between the international and local level. Integration of the various sectors of society in plans of action can only make the response more effective. An enhanced dialogue between civil society and the European Union is key to improving the overall response to these issues. This meeting is the beginning of such a dialogue.

Building on resilience approach set out in the Joint Communication, and the dialogues and main recommendations on Preventing Violent Extremism/Countering Violent extremism (PVE/CVE) and security sector reform (SSR) which emerged from the Regional Civil Society Preparatory Seminars which took place in Tunis on 25-27 April 2017, as well as on the recommendations from civil society on their role in conflict prevention from a meeting organised by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) on 31 January 2017, the Thematic Group on Security and Resilience, will look at the role civil society organisations play working on the ground in anticipating risk, identifying strengths and vulnerabilities, and contributing to adaptive strategies aimed at contributing to sustainable stability in the countries, through the prism of SSR, PVE/CVE and conflict prevention. The objective is to have a genuine dialogue on related topics, between representatives from the EU institutions and civil society from the Southern Neighbourhood countries (Northern Africa and Middle East).

The thematic workshop will combine a plenary dialogue session followed by three sub-themes working groups, in order to create a more participative and inclusive environment for discussions and to come up with relevant and concrete recommendations for an enhanced partnership between CSOs and the EU.

A Plenary Dialogue on Security and Resilience (90 min): Strengthening Resilience and Promoting Stability

This plenary session will allow space for dialogue between Civil Society representatives and political leadership, senior management and practitioners from the EU. It will address the EU policies and cooperation in **Strengthening Resilience and Promoting Stability** with national institutions and mechanisms, including the security sector, as well as civil society.

1. **Facilitator (John Bell)** introduces speakers and presents the methodology of the session
2. **Keynote address by Pedro Serrano**, EEAS Deputy Secretary General for CSDP and crisis response
3. **Presentation of key recommendations on three priorities (SSR, PVE/CVE and conflict prevention) by CSOs from the region: Samia Zayani** (Tunisia), member of the South Advisory Group (SAG) and member of Water Dynamic and CAFA to present on SSR and CVE/PVE and **John Bell** will present on conflict prevention on behalf of EPLO.
4. **Response from EU interlocutors to the recommendations:**
 - **Pedro Serrano**, Deputy Secretary General for CSDP and Crisis Response at the European External Action Service (EEAS)
 - **Michael Miller**, DG NEAR B1 Head of Unit (Middle East)
5. **Exchange of views**
Moderation: John Bell
Rapporteurs: **Anas Talalqa** (Jordan), researcher and journalist, and lead delegate at Generations For Peace and **Othmane Aissam Benaissa** (Algeria), activist and founder of young Arab voices in Algeria.

3 sub-themes working groups: (90 min each)

Based on Tunis Civil Society recommendations, three priority topics and sessions were identified to open the dialogue:

Workshop 1: Security Sector Reform (SSR) and the space for Civil Society to operate in SSR

The workshop will focus on getting greater understanding by CSOs of the security dimension in ENP, and of their role in SSR

Priority recommendation(s) from the preparatory seminar in Tunis: 1) CS and the State need to work in closer partnership. The EU can assist in removing blockages for CS operations and in building capacities further 2) Need to reinforce EU code of conduct on arms export, and other policies, in order to create a better context to pursue P/CVE, and for CSOs to operate overall.

Objectives of the workshop:

1) **Improve EU/CSO Linkages:** Understand better ENP policy, and EU instruments that CSOs can connect to and work with regarding SSR. Greater discussion on improving mechanisms of accountability of States in the region. (20 min debate)

2) **Understanding Role and Improving Capacities of CSOs:** What is CSOs role regarding SSR? Watchdog? Partner? Observer? Moderator? What works best? How can CSO capacities be raised in order to deal effectively with State/security forces and institutions? (20 min debate)

3) **Build Greater trust between CSOs and State regarding SSR:** SSR issue in region is quite new, and therefore governments of the region are not receptive to in-depth reform. What is the best way to deal with this perception when dealing with SSR and policing, including at community level? Discuss ways to build trust and consensus with CSOs and thereby reinforce capacities of security sectors. (20 min debate)

Civil Society speaker: Fadi Al Qadi, Human Rights, Civil Society, Advocacy and Media Expert, Jordan

Moderator/facilitator: John Bell, thematic expert.

Rapporteurs: Anas Talalqa (Jordan), researcher and journalist, and lead delegate at Generations For Peace and Othmane Aissam Benaissa (Algeria), activist and founder of young Arab voices in Algeria.

EU speaker:

Institution	Name	Function
Short introduction (5-10 min)		
DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations - NEAR	Anna Reece	Policy Officer and Member of the (CoTE) Centre for thematic expertise on Security (Unit NEAR.B2 Regional Programmes Neighbourhood South)
Contributors:		
Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI)	Sébastien Babaud	Programme Manager IcSP (The EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace)
Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI)	Giovanni Squadrito	Team Leader IcSP (The EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace)

Workshop 2: The role of Civil Society in PVE/CVE.

The workshop will explore the most effective role of CSOs in the conceptualisation and implementation of P/CVE policies, including in addressing the human rights dimension.

Priority recommendation(s) from the preparatory seminar in Tunis: 1) The need for an effective national/regional methodological research framework to better understand root causes of violent extremism, as well as improved networks of action between CS and the State

regarding P/CVE policies, including augmented partnership on national plans of action. 2) Need for long-term, context-specific P/CVE actions/programming with a 'do no harm approach'.

Objectives of the Workshop:

1) Greater understanding of working with youth: In order to develop resilience, a focus on youth and PVE/CVE remains essential. How is this best done through education, developing 'societal values', including through all forms of media? Will the creation of a platform for positive narratives and success stories, to learn from difficult cases, increase connectivity between CSOs, understand better the impact of initiatives, and develop dialogue between EU and the Southern Neighbourhood help?

2) Deepen understanding of role of gender: How can gender issues be integrated into PVE/CVE and how can they have the most effect in increasing community resilience? This will include and examination of the linkage between PVE and preventing violence against women (VAW).

3) Develop Mechanisms for Moving Forward: What are the ways to foster best practice exchange? Can there be more cooperation between North and South CSOs? How can the process of developing a national methodological research framework begin?

Civil Society speaker: Rebecca Crozier, International Alert.

Moderator/facilitator: John Bell, thematic expert.

Rapporteurs: Anas Talalqa (Jordan), researcher and journalist, and lead delegate at Generations For Peace and Othmane Aissam Benaissa (Algeria), activist and founder of young Arab voices in Algeria.

EU speakers – short introduction (5-10 min), and contributors:

Institution	Name	Function
Short introduction (5-10 min)		
DG International Cooperation and Development - DEVCO	Maria Castaldi	Programme Manager-Countering Violent Extremism (Unit DEVCO B5 Security, Nuclear Safety)
European External Action Service (EEAS)	Marcos Granados Gomez	Desk officer (EEAS/SECPOL.2 Counter-Terrorism)
Contributors:		
European External Action Service (EEAS)	Diego Marani	Cultural policy coordinator (EEAS/GLOBAL.2)
European External Action Service (EEAS)	Joel Schuyer	Policy officer (EEAS/SECPOL.2 Counter-Terrorism)
DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations - NEAR	Sophie Dagand	Centre of Thematic Expertise (CoTE) on Crisis Reaction and Security Sector Reform (Unit NEAR.B2 Regional

		Programmes Neighbourhood South)
DG Education and Culture - EAC	Walter Zampieri	Head of Unit D1 (Cultural Policy)
DG Education and Culture - EAC	Carmela Cutugno	Unit EAC D1 (Cultural Policy)
DG Education and Culture - EAC	tbc	Unit working on education/Erasmus

Workshop 3: Partnering with Civil Society in conflict prevention:

This workshop will explore the nexus between EU conflict analysis/conflict prevention programming and CSOs' actions and input.

Priority recommendation(s) from the EPLO Meeting of January 2017: 1) Need to define ownership in conflict prevention between the EU and its partner countries in relation to resilience, sustainability, and political processes and contexts and have it integrated in conflict prevention programming 2) Importance for the EU to connect with various CSOs, in particular with youth and women's groups, in devising conflict-sensitive programming.

Objectives of the workshop:

1) Discuss how to improve the role of CSOs in EU conflict analysis: CSOs to develop a better understanding of joint analyses conducted internally within the EU institutions. What are the ways for the EU to further engage with CSOs to gain insights from conflict-affected contexts, and capitalise on lessons learned from CSO projects to do programming in a more conflict-sensitive manner? CSOs can be seen as partners in these processes, given their context-specific experience and locally-embedded access to informal channels and networks.

2) Understand better the role CSOs can play in developing improved early warning: The CSOs role can be both in the conflict analysis dimension (as above) as well as on the ground through their activities and knowledge of context and communities. How can this best be done effectively and more regularly? Is a framework of work required? What are the keys to developing early warning systems?

3) Improved connections between EU and CSOs in developing conflict-sensitive programming: How can CSOs input feed more effectively into EU programming? CSOs, in particular with youth and women's groups, can help identify key champions within local, national and regional governments who can support political dialogue. Some participants stressed the importance of making multi-year funding available for CSOs working on conflict resolution and prevention related issues.

Civil Society speakers: Sonya Reines-Djivanides, Executive Director of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) and Samia Zayani (Tunisia), member of the South Advisory Group (SAG) and member of Water Dynamic and CAFA.

Moderators/facilitators: John Bell, thematic expert.

Rapporteurs: **Anas Talalqa** (Jordan), researcher and journalist, and lead delegate at Generations For Peace and **Othmane Aissam Benaissa** (Algeria), activist and founder of young Arab voices in Algeria.

EU speakers – short introduction, and contributors:

Institution	Name	Function
Short introduction (5-10 min)		
European External Action Service (EEAS)	Tim Heath	Peace & Conflict Adviser (EEAS/PRISM Prevention of Conflict, Rule of Law/Security Sector Reform, Integrated Approach, Stabilisation and Mediation)
European External Action Service (EEAS)	Bianca Suessenbach	Adviser (EEAS.SG.2 Division: Strategic Planning)
Contributors		
DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations - NEAR	Stéphane Halgand	Coordinator of the Centre of Thematic Expertise (CoTE) on Crisis Reaction and Security Sector Reform (Unit NEAR.B2 Regional Programmes Neighbourhood South)
Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI)	Sébastien Babaud	Programme Manager IcSP (The EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace)
DG International Cooperation and Development - DEVCO	Elisabeth Pape	Deputy Head of Unit DEVCO.B2 (Resilience, fragility)