WOSCAP

ENHANCING EU PEACEBUILDING CAPABILITIES
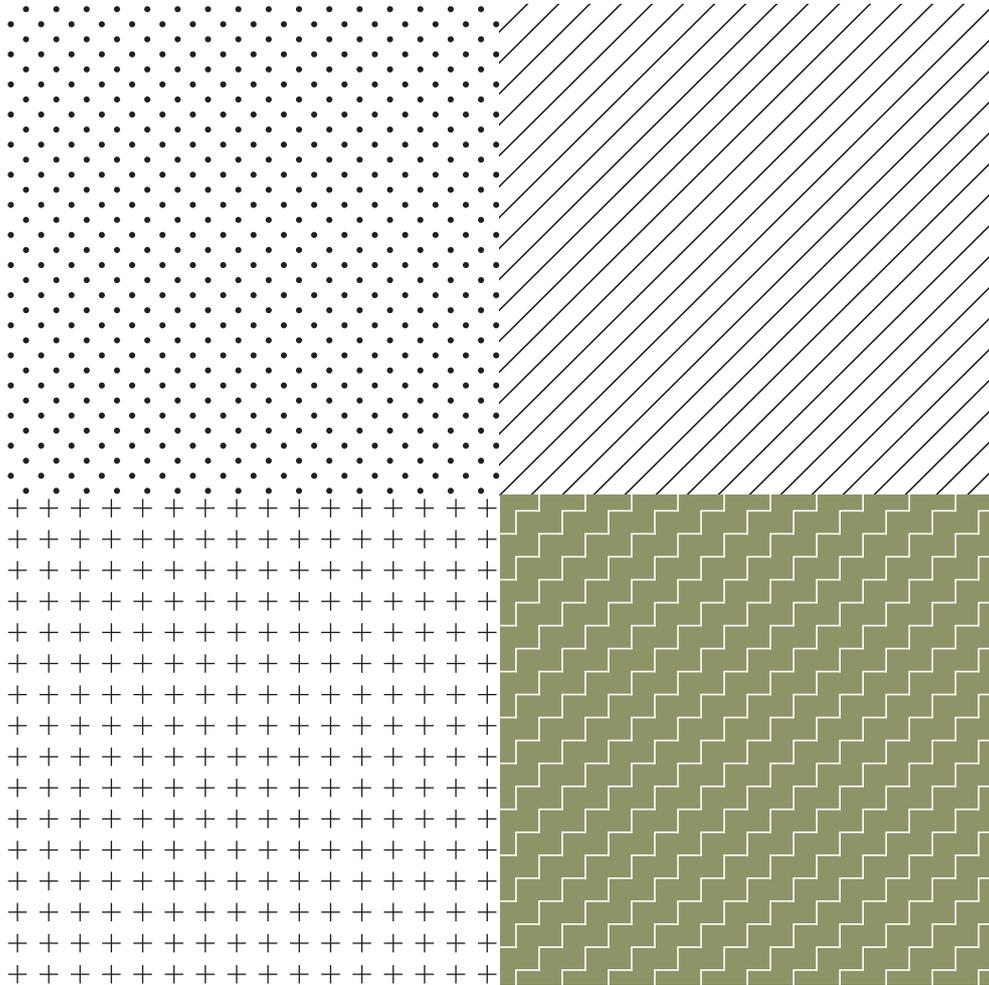
EU Policy Briefing on Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Dr. Linda Benraïs, Alexandre Quinet

ESSEC IRENÉ - Institute for Research and Education on Negotiation

Colophon

EU POLICY BRIEFING ON WHOLE OF SOCIETY CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING

Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

This policy briefing was produced as part of the project "Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding", which aims to enhance the EU's peacebuilding and conflict prevention capabilities. It provides an initial orientation and contextualisation of current EU policy and programming on civilian peacebuilding and conflict prevention, in relation to several cross-cutting themes and clusters that the project focuses on.

The EU's priorities and involvement in the case study countries of Georgia, Ukraine, Mali and Yemen will be covered in separate studies of the project. More information at www.woscap.eu

Introduction

The European Union (EU) is currently running 17 external missions and operations under its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (EEAS, 2015a). This external activity is based on the principles of the United Nations (UN) Charter (EU, 2012, Treaty of the European Union-Article 21), and on the subsidiarity principle[1], and can be explained by the fact that the EU, as an example of peace and stability, is an important regional and global actor of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In this context, the WOSCAP project aims to enhance the capabilities of the EU to implement conflict prevention and peacebuilding actions through sustainable, comprehensive and innovative civilian means.

This EU policy briefing aims to provide a concise and clear analysis of current EU policies and programmes dealing with civilian peacebuilding and conflict prevention in order to give a picture of the institutional realities and the internal political challenges which confront the EU in its ambition to develop and deploy effective capabilities in that matter. This policy briefing will therefore analyse the political context, and policy-setting and implementation as well as changes occurring among EU institutions and Member States. The analysis focuses on the evolution, generated by the Comprehensive Approach, of concepts linked with conflict prevention and peacebuilding inside the EU, and is intended to generate reflection about the future of these activities.

The European Commission (EC) defines the concept of conflict prevention as measures "undertaken over the short term to reduce manifest tensions and/or to prevent the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict" (EP, 2001, p.2). On the other hand, "peacebuilding is a long-term process involving activities which aim to reduce tensions and to end or prevent violence. Peacebuilding takes place before, during and after armed conflict and supports the conditions, attitudes and behaviour which lead to peaceful development. Activities include, inter alia, early warning, mediation, crisis management, development co-operation, human rights initiatives, and security policies when undertaken in a conflict sensitive way" (EPLO, n.d). These two concepts are the cornerstone of the EU's external action.

A "policy" refers to a defined programme of action - including official statements, funding priorities, system of laws and regulatory measures - concerning a characteristic topic promulgated by one or several public or governmental authorities.[2] As far as the structure of a policy is concerned, from official declarations to concrete budget implementation, it is important to bear in mind the policy cycle in order to understand the chronological building of a policy: policy objectives are translated into output, implementation and outcome (Metais, Thepaut, and Keukelaire, 2013). This paper will mainly focus on current EU policy objectives

---

[1] This principle has not been explicitly mentioned in the UN Charter, but is expressed especially in Article 52 of Chapter VIII, which states that the UN should not intervene when a domestic agency or organisation is able to act. The subsidiarity principle was enshrined in EU law by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, and was incorporated in the Treaty of the EU as a fundamental principle under the Lisbon Treaty (2009).

[2] According to classical definitions provided by Thoenig (1987) and Kilpatrick (n.d)

(statements, declarations and intentions) and policy outputs (instruments and budgets, programming) within the fields of civilian peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

This analysis is mainly focused on official texts (communications, conclusions, regulations, factsheets) produced by the different EU institutions.[3] This methodology is used to provide a broad picture of the institutional realities and internal political changes of the EU regarding its ambition to develop and deploy effective civilian peacebuilding capabilities.

Even though external operations of the EU and peacebuilding activities are mainly regulated by the UN Charter and the EU fundamental treaties, the elaboration of the Comprehensive Approach in the 1990s set a milestone in the development of current EU external policy on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The first concrete measures in this field were decided in 2001 during the Gothenburg European Council and the terms and policies have continued developing since then.

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding are the result of an historical and political emergence of norms articulated within the concept of the Comprehensive Approach and implemented by specific institutions and programmes (1.). In practice, this normative endeavour has been applied to improving co-operation and synergies in EU action (2.). Despite these efforts, a review of practice shows the need to identify and highlight connections and overlaps in EU actions in order to improve EU efficiency (3.).

---

[3] The main institutions concerned are the Council of the EU, the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the External European Action Service.