

2020 GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE USE OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS IN SUPPORT OF EU EXTERNAL ACTION

This joint guidance note sets out the key features of an integrated, joint conflict analysis and explains its added value for EU external action. It presents the broad characteristics of a structured but flexible methodology for conducting a comprehensive EU-led conflict analysis and serves as a resource for all EU staff, in Delegations, missions, operations, country or regional offices and headquarters, who wish to engage in targeted conflict prevention efforts and conflict-sensitive external engagements.

The note introduces the key principles of conflict analysis and updates the *2013 EU guidance note on the use of conflict analysis in support of EU external action*. It is the result of a joint commitment by the EEAS and Commission services to embed conflict-sensitivity and conflict prevention in all relevant policies, strategies, operations and programmes.¹

The note is structured as follows:

- Section 1 sets out the **conflict analysis approach** and its key features;
- Section 2 explores the **added value of conflict analysis** in support of EU external action;
- Section 3 explains the **planning, data collection and reporting** processes;
- Annex 1 contains a **list of resources**; and
- Annex 2 contains a **glossary**.

1. WHAT IS CONFLICT ANALYSIS?

Conflict analysis is a structured analytical process that offers key insights into the risks of violent conflict and conflict dynamics in a particular area, country or region. While the analytical approach remains flexible (so that it can accommodate different timelines and environments), key elements of the analysis generally include²:

- a brief overview of the historical and current conflict environment, describing the type and scope of past or ongoing violent conflict and related risks;
- structural and proximate causes of (potential) violence, and patterns of resilience;
- actors who shape the conflict risks (including parties to the conflict, people affected by it and those with interests and stakes in it);
- potential scenarios for violence;

¹ The joint EEAS-COM services commitment to embed conflict sensitivity and conflict prevention is reflected in the 2016 EU Global Strategy, the New European Consensus on Development (para 98), and the 2019 council conclusions on the Integrated Approach (para 9).

² This note sets out the key elements, broad parameters and main principles of a comprehensive conflict analysis, and its added value for EU external action. The internal *Technical user's guide — conflict analysis screenings* presents a concrete methodology for conducting conflict analysis in a more agile manner. For conflict sensitivity guidance, please also refer to the *EU staff handbook on operating in situations of conflict and fragility – tools and methods* (ref. doc. 17, 2015). Other useful instruments on conflict analysis are featured in the GPPAC 2017 conflict analysis framework, the 2013 USAID conflict assessment framework, the 2006 *SIDA manual for conflict analysis* and the CDA conflict analysis framework.

- mapping of ongoing conflict prevention and stabilisation activities; and recommendations to ensure conflict-sensitive engagement and conflict prevention.

To be effective and provide added value, the analysis needs to be:

- **joint** – a joint approach to conflict analysis requires the active participation of relevant EU actors, such as various sections of the EU Delegation, headquarters representatives from EEAS, DG INTPA, DG NEAR, DG ECHO, the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and other relevant Commission services, and Member States. A joint understanding of risk dynamics will contribute to shared views on the priorities for action, and greater coherence and buy-in;
- **integrated** – the analysis involves a multi-dimensional process, considering relevant economic, political, climate and environmental, social and security dynamics and trends that may escalate or drive violent conflict, in line with the ‘EU integrated approach to conflict and crises’³ and the Joint Resilience Communication of 2017⁴. Conflict analysis also requires an integrated gender perspective (based on gender analysis) and a human rights-based approach;
- **evidence-based** – distinctive features of conflict analysis include its reliance on peace and conflict studies, and its focus on risks that are known to increase the possibility of violent conflict. To complement primary sources, it should involve – to the greatest extent possible – consultations with civil society organisations (CSOs) and organisations representing indigenous peoples and people belonging to minorities;
- **timely** – to avoid over-reliance on crisis management or mainly reactive programming, conflict analysis is ideally initiated at the earliest signs or warning of future violent conflict or tension. It is advised in countries that are in a state of unstable peace, where the risk of violence is substantial but latent. However, it also serves an important purpose in ongoing conflict or post-conflict situations, as it can inform new or ongoing efforts to prevent a violent escalation or the repeat of recent violent conflict, and to ensure conflict-sensitivity and a ‘do no harm’ approach; and
- **iterative** – ongoing violent conflicts require regular analysis, as risks and power dynamics may evolve, including at regional and international levels. Effective conflict analysis should therefore not remain a snapshot of a conflict at a specific time. The analysis should be updated regularly to reflect changing conflict dynamics and risks, and to ensure that the findings can inform policy and diplomacy, strategic planning, development programming and new and ongoing operational engagements. In priority countries, the analysis can evolve on a rolling basis, with regular updates on thematic or geographical risk areas that are in constant flux.

Timely conflict analysis offers an evidence-based foundation for the effective prevention and resolution of violent conflicts and effective peacebuilding. In addition, conflict analysis helps to ensure that integrated EU engagements in fragile countries are conflict-sensitive. Informed, timely and effective conflict prevention reduces the risk of human suffering and further harm. By the same token, failed prevention may cause forced displacement and migration or worse human rights violations, exacerbate discrimination, reverse years of development, increase the need for costly reactive engagements and undermine the credibility of international diplomacy.

³ See glossary entry (Annex 2).

⁴ *A strategic approach to resilience in the EU's external action*, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council (JOIN/2017/021 final).

This note updates the *2013 EU guidance note on the use of conflict analysis in support of EU external action* so as to reflect updates in the relevant literature and the policy commitments under the 2016 EU global strategy, the new European consensus on development (2017) and the 2017 Joint Communication on Resilience⁵.

2. WHY DOES THE EU UNDERTAKE CONFLICT ANALYSIS?

The EU undertakes joint conflict analysis in order to:

- shape conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts;
- ensure effective and conflict-sensitive engagement in countries at risk of violent conflict⁶;
- strengthen coherence and coordination in line with the ‘integrated approach to conflict and crises’; and
- inform analytical processes, EU foreign policy and programming decisions relating to countries at risk of violence or ongoing violent conflict.

2.1 Conflict analysis to shape conflict prevention and resolution efforts

An integrated approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding requires an accurate understanding of conflict dynamics and risks. Conflict analysis offers greater insight into the structural drivers at all levels and all stakeholders in the conflict, and should be complemented and informed by a gender analysis and an understanding of the impacts of climate change. It also helps to identify and prioritise actions specifically aimed at conflict prevention, considering all relevant EU policies, instruments and tools.

The analysis can propose general measures, such as capacity building, or suggest various specific measures, such as:

- **political** – e.g. mediation, support for constitutional and political reforms, electoral observation and assistance through development programmes, justice sector reform and transitional justice mechanisms;
- **security-related** – e.g. civilian or military common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions, police training, support for security sector reform processes, cyber defence, de-mining, and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR);
- **social** – e.g. promotion of social cohesion, youth inclusion, gender equality, human rights and equitable access to key services; addressing inequalities and discrimination; reintegration of ex-combatants, child soldiers, etc.;

⁵ In January 2018, the Council invited the ‘High Representative and the Commission to ensure that joint conflict analyses are systematically carried out and updated for countries that are at risk of or facing conflict or instability and where the EU has a significant engagement’. This note is relevant to the implementation of the EU integrated approach to external conflicts and crisis (as provided for in the EU ‘global strategy’ adopted in 2016) and the new European consensus on development. It is part of the EU’s efforts to support the implementation of the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda, in particular sustainable development goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. It is also in line with the European consensus on humanitarian assistance, the strategic approach to resilience in EU’s external action (2017 Joint Resilience Communication), the EU Council Conclusions on Climate Diplomacy, the EU strategic framework on human rights and democracy, the EU strategic approach to women, peace and security and the EU policy framework in support of transitional justice.

⁶ The (forthcoming) 2020 joint staff working document, EU conflict early warning system: objectives, process and guidance for implementation states that ‘violent conflict refers to those conflicts resulting in violence occurring within, between and across state boundaries and including violence targeting particular groups, such as mass atrocities. Situations “at risk of conflict” are understood as situations where the actions of any of the conflict parties threaten or hold out the prospect of threatening: the security of a population or particular groups, and/or the fulfilment of core state functions, and/or the international order’.

- **climate/environmental** – e.g. climate change adaptation; mainstreaming climate expertise in field engagements, disaster preparedness and risk reduction measures; land management and sustainable urbanisation; improved water management; sustainable and conflict-sensitive energy production, and
- **economic** – e.g. conditional incentives; restrictions on illicit financial networks, creation of livelihoods and sound public finance management.

Conflict analysis can help to realign ongoing programmes or recommend EU synergies for the implementation of specific policies, in line with the ‘integrated approach to conflicts and crises’, the climate-security nexus, and the ‘humanitarian – development – peace’ (H-D-P) nexus.

2.2 Conflict analysis to ensure effective and conflict-sensitive engagement

Conflict analysis is relevant not only for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, but also to ensure that any EU external engagement and intervention is conflict-sensitive. Interventions in any sector, from trade to education, energy to food and nutrition security, infrastructure to human rights, can inadvertently do harm by fuelling tensions and divisions. Well-intended but ill-considered engagements may reinforce human rights abuses, shrink spaces for civil society and deepen inequalities, for example by undermining gender equality (or even triggering gender-based violence). Other unintended consequences may include reinforcing or fuelling ethnic divisions, causing greater vulnerability to climate impacts, and exacerbating unequal access to power, services or natural resources, including land. Conflict analysis should improve conflict-sensitivity and gender-responsiveness by limiting any adverse impact on women, children, persons with disabilities, young people, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable or marginalised communities.

The implementation of recommendations following a conflict analysis helps to reduce the risk of negative impacts and ensure the conflict-sensitivity of ongoing or future action. Conflict analysis is thus a key tool in ensuring that an intervention logic and related theory of change is conflict-sensitive. At times, the need for thorough analysis has to be weighed against an urgent need to act. Conflict analysis takes time and crisis management efforts in particular may often have to start early, in parallel with an ongoing analytical process.

Box 1: What is conflict-sensitivity?

- Live up to the ‘do no harm’ principle in all contexts by understanding and acting to avoid negative impacts of interventions on ongoing conflict or conflict risks;
- Understand the complexities, minimise risks and maximise opportunities of EU engagement in a given context.

Interventions that are not conflict-sensitive may:

- ✗ do harm, e.g. by causing, aggravating, prolonging and fuelling tensions, or aggravating inequalities and divisions;
- ✗ be ineffective and costlier;
- ✗ put people’s lives at risk, including those of target beneficiaries or Delegation staff;
- ✗ damage the EU’s reputation locally and globally; and
- ✗ increase fragility in key areas (social, political, security, environmental, economic).

Conflict-sensitivity is not the same as peacebuilding. Peacebuilding includes a wide range of approaches with a common aim: to *address* structural causes of conflict and, ultimately, *change* the conflict dynamics and mitigate conflict risks. All programmes, in all contexts, regardless of sector, programme type or objective (and including peacebuilding engagements) should be conflict-sensitive. Conflict analysis leads to deeper insight into conflict risks and/or root causes, allowing for improved planning, review and adaptation of EU action. It helps to assess whether ongoing or planned action may risk fuelling underlying tensions, create new conflict dynamics or inadvertently do harm.

2.3 Conflict analysis to strengthen coherence and coordination

The EU usually has a lot of information on any country or region in which it is engaged. This information may not always be organised or accessible to all relevant EU actors. A joint and integrated conflict analysis may help to strengthen informal mechanisms for information exchange and foster a common understanding, among all the relevant EU actors and Member States, of the conflict risks and potential solutions. A joint, shared vision is a prerequisite for coordinated conflict prevention and a conflict-sensitive approach. In line with the ‘EU integrated approach to external conflicts and crises’, conflict analysis can also help strengthen cooperation with key international partners and CSOs. At the same time, it should always consider the views and perceptions of local institutional actors and civil society stakeholders directly or disproportionately affected by conflict and fragility, e.g. women, children, minorities, young people, indigenous peoples and people with disabilities.

2.4 Conflict analysis to inform related analytical processes, EU foreign policy or programming

The value of EU-led conflict analysis lies in its flexibility and ability to inform parallel analytical exercises, policy processes and programme design, implementation and monitoring. Among other things, it represents a logical follow-up to EU conflict early warning priorities⁷, offering a deeper dive into the conflict dynamics of a country deemed at risk. It may usefully inform different phases of peacebuilding, mediation and reconciliation support, development programming, political strategies and frameworks, CSDP planning and strategic review processes. It lays the foundation for the integration of conflict-sensitivity into the H-D-P nexus and may serve as a basis for resilience analysis. It also serves as a basis for political dialogue, diplomacy and joint programming (especially in fragile countries) and can be useful input for EU human rights and democracy country strategies, civil society roadmaps, support for human rights defenders, transitional justice processes and the implementation of the EU policy framework on women, peace and security. The analytical process can help EU Delegations as input for their reporting and risk assessments, as the basis for planning and coordination exercises, in crisis situations or by strengthening knowledge and institutional memory where staff turnover is usually high.

Box 2: Should my Delegation/Service conduct or participate in an EU conflict analysis?

- ✓ Is there a significant or emerging risk of violent conflict in the country?
- ✓ Does the EU have a significant (ongoing or planned) interest or engagement in the country (e.g. through political instruments, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance or CSDP)?
- ✓ Is an up-to-date conflict analysis available?
- ✓ Could the Delegation benefit from additional expertise and capacity to do more on conflict prevention and conflict-sensitivity?
- ✓ Could EU action aggravate tensions, divisions or violence?

3. EU CONFLICT ANALYSIS: KEY STEPS

Depending on the objectives of the conflict analysis, the form it takes will vary in terms of duration and methodology. While the analytical process remains flexible and can be adapted to the available timeframe, certain standard phases can generally be identified (see Box 4):

- planning;
- data collection, analysis and recommendations; and
- reporting.

⁷ Conflict analysis should not be confused with the methodology used in the EWS. This EU internal methodology involves assessing relevant structural risk levels based on the Global Conflict Risk Index indicators. A conflict analysis will collect more detailed information on a situation already determined to be at risk, by taking a deep dive into local conflict dynamics or conflict risks. As stated in the (forthcoming) 2020 joint staff working document, ‘The EWS is an evidence-based risk management tool that identifies, prioritises and assesses situations at risk of violent conflict in non-EU countries, focusing on structural risk factors with a time horizon of up to four years.’

Ideally, one should complete the entire process, but it is possible to cover the most relevant sections only in response to urgent requests. A separate document (in 2021) will set out the concrete methodology of a comprehensive EU conflict analysis in further detail. The internal *Technical User's Guide – Conflict Analysis Screenings* offers a concrete methodology for conducting conflict analysis in a more agile manner, in line with the broad principles presented in this Guidance Note.

3.1 Planning

STEP 1: Analysis request

A conflict analysis is generally triggered by an informal request from a Delegation, a geographical service or any other part of the EU ('the initiator') to EEAS ISP.2, INTPA G.5 or NEAR B.2, and FPI. The request may be made in response to a policy regulation or legal requirement, but not necessarily.

STEP 2: Internal scoping

ISP.2 will propose internal consultation with the other key EU services with horizontal conflict expertise (INTPA G.5, FPI.2, etc.), the 'initiator', geographical and other relevant thematic services, the relevant Delegation(s), Commission services and other EU entities⁸, in order to:

- agree on the scope and purpose⁹ of the analysis;
- identify financial resources and expertise;
- identify expertise (e.g. on gender, conflict-sensitivity, disaster risk reduction and climate change);
- address specific learning and training needs; and
- ensure buy-in for implementation, monitoring and follow-up.

The EU service or actor (often the Delegation) initiating a conflict analysis maintains total ownership throughout. The key EU services with horizontal conflict and thematic expertise advise country experts from the Delegations and geographical services on the proposed methodology and oversee compliance with quality standards¹⁰.

STEP 3: Terms of reference

On the basis of the internal discussions, the participating services will jointly draft terms of reference (ToRs) reflecting their agreed position on the scope, purpose, objectives and timeline of the conflict analysis, and on the methodological approach. The planning phase concludes with:

- the production of the ToRs;
- the mobilisation of financial resources;
- the selection of external experts; and
- an assessment of the timeframe and human resource needs.

⁸ ECHO Field Offices and HQ, CSDP Mission, EU Special Representatives, human rights divisions and other thematic units/divisions in the EEAS and in Commission services where relevant and appropriate.

⁹ Early decisions have to be made about report authorship and consultation, review and validation processes.

¹⁰ A wide range of thematic units/divisions in the EEAS and in Commission services can contribute to the understanding of fragility and violence from different perspectives and knowledge of the synergies and coherence between EU policy frameworks and key UN Security Council Resolutions (e.g. on women, peace and security, and youth, peace and security). They also hold and/or have access to expertise on security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), transitional justice mediation, resilience, gender issues, human rights, climate change, and the regional dimensions of conflict, etc.

3.2 Data collection, analysis and recommendations

Conflict analyses should follow a structured approach (see Box 3) that produces informed and conflict-sensitive recommendations for the EU's engagement in a given area (at regional, national or local level). This does not preclude a degree of flexibility, since the methodology and approach should be tailored to:

- ✓ the scope and objectives of the conflict analysis;
- ✓ the specific decision-making processes, programmes and priorities targeted;
- ✓ the needs and priorities of those most likely to own and implement the recommendations; and
- ✓ the available analytical resources.

The methodology will also depend on the timeframe, degree of urgency and circumstances under which the conflict analysis takes place.

Using a framework helps to build an understanding of the knowledge gaps. A structured framework raises questions that, once answered, help to disentangle conflict dynamics and risks, and classify and prioritise the collected information. The analysis typically considers structural risk factors, as well as drivers of peace, the various actors shaping the conflict dynamics, and the relationships among them (see Box 3).

The literature shows that certain security conditions, governance or regime characteristics, and economic, environmental (including climatic) and social factors are associated with a heightened risk of violence. We

should not think of these risk factors in causal terms. A nascent democracy with a history of violence and high levels of horizontal inequality will not inevitably experience future violence. However, the country would merit special attention and benefit from conflict prevention.

The possible impact of climate change as a threat multiplier and the compound risks of natural and man-made hazards merit close attention. The analysis should also systematically include a **gender perspective**, by:

- recognising the disproportionate risk of violence that women may face;
- avoiding the treatment of gender groups as homogenous; and
- acknowledging the role of women in mitigating risks or as parties in conflicts.

The analysis should consider how gender inequality, gender norms and stereotypes, violations against children, economic exclusion and human rights violations in general produce, exacerbate or contribute to structural

Box 3: Key components of an EU conflict analysis

1. **Conflict dynamics** – a brief overview of the historical and current conflict environment, highlighting the main contested areas, the scope and nature of ongoing violence (e.g. insurgency, extremism, post-election violence) and its overall impact (e.g. migration, humanitarian toll, economic consequences, human rights abuses, etc.). Particular attention should be paid to gender dynamics;
2. **Causes/drivers of conflict**, including structural causes that are resistant to immediate change, triggers that may tip a high-risk situation over the threshold of violence, and patterns of resilience or local capacities for peace that allow stable high-risk areas (or bright spots) to withstand the risk of violence;
3. **Stakeholder mapping**, including parties to the conflict, people affected and those with interests and stakes in the conflict;
4. **Possible future scenarios**, including worst and best cases in terms of conflict scope or impact (indicating the likelihood of each scenario);
5. **Ongoing engagements**, including a mapping of past and present prevention, peacebuilding and stabilisation activities by the EU, other international organisations, civil society or national and local authorities; and
6. **Actionable recommendations** for the EU to follow alone or in partnership, including short- and long-term initiatives.

causes of conflict, and how gender roles are affected by conflicts and violence. It should consider how gender intersects with other social factors such as race, age and ethnicity. It should be conducted with an integrated gender perspective and based on solid gender analysis, in line with commitments to the EU gender action plans, the EU strategic approach to women, peace and security, and the ‘leave no one behind’ principle under the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda.

In the stakeholder mapping, for example, it is essential to consider the role of non-state armed groups, traditional elders, influential business leaders and diaspora groups. In reflecting on future conflict scenarios, different types of violence should be considered, including the likelihood of violent protests, election-related violence, war crimes and violent extremism. The analysis should consider conflict risks at different levels and should unpack local, as well as national and regional dynamics.

Ideally, the conflict analysis should be carried out with a high degree of participation from all sections of the Delegation and Member State representatives in the country. Input from local authorities, NGOs and other international and regional actors¹¹ is encouraged where feasible and conflict-sensitive, through direct participation in workshops or separate consultations. A lack of civic space and security constraints may complicate consultations with local actors, particularly CSOs.

Finally, the conduct of a conflict analysis itself needs to remain conflict-sensitive. The analytical process may require significant levels of discretion. Conflict-sensitivity is required when collecting information from the local population on conflict-related dynamics and as part of participatory analysis. Data collection should uphold high ethical standards and shield participants from harm. It is not advisable to involve local authorities in data collection or the analytical process, as their conduct and role will be part of the assessment¹². However, it is often helpful to gain their buy-in, as they have access to critical primary resources.

STEP 1: Data collection

The analysis typically starts with desk research, through a literature review, by a consultant, of relevant studies, reports and assessments (internal and external). The review will cover existing conflict analyses and other related but distinct types of analysis, including risk analyses, political economy analyses, climate vulnerability analyses, human rights analyses and gender analyses. Relevant data will be selected on the basis of the key components of EU conflict analysis (see Box 3). The review will cover available EU conflict prevention reports, resilience analyses and Delegation reports, evaluations and risk management frameworks. It is helpful to map relevant EU engagements in the country or region, so as to be able to tailor recommendations and avoid duplication. The views and perceptions of the institutional actors and civil society actors and communities (indigenous or ethno/religious, women’s groups) directly affected by conflict and fragility should also be considered. The desk review will form the baseline for identifying key gaps in the available information.

The result of this phase is a **preliminary report** outlining key findings and conclusions, and focusing on specific sectors as defined in the ToRs. The report may identify key gaps in available resources. The desk research should therefore look beyond official (government) resources and existing survey data to include data from consultations at grassroots level. Consultations with CSOs (e.g. through the civil society dialogue networks) and organisations representing vulnerable communities should be included to the greatest extent

¹¹ e.g. UN agencies, the World Bank, regional bodies, national and local authorities, religious leaders and CSOs (including those representing women, youth and children), marginalised groups, indigenous peoples, minorities and human rights defenders.

¹² There are exceptions, such as the recovery and peacebuilding assessments (RPBAs), which rely on the central involvement of national authorities to analyse drivers of conflict and identify programming needs.

possible. Additional data collection may include in-depth key informant interviews, direct observation/field missions or surveys.

STEP 2: Conflict analysis workshops/exercises

To ensure the joint and shared nature of the conflict analysis, one or more workshops may take place in-country, usually hosted by the Delegation with the support of an inter-service mission. These involve exercises to consider the initial findings and recommendations of the desk review and to reach a joint analysis by relevant EU institutions and Member States, with draft recommendations. The proposed structure of workshops will be described in technical users' guides (see footnote 1).

STEP 3: Member State involvement

Member States that are locally present should be involved, where possible, in the joint analysis and in-country workshop(s).

STEP 4: Recommendations

Conflict analysis is not an end in itself. Rather, it should translate into recommendations and priorities for conflict-sensitive engagement, drawing on a joint analysis of causes and considering ongoing efforts as well as existing strategies and mandates. The recommendations do not replace or infringe on formal planning and programming, but serve as input for future or ongoing planning exercises. If followed, they help to improve the conflict-sensitivity of programmes and risk management approaches, and offer an opportunity to monitor the impact of a conflict analysis. Recommendations may propose new priorities for policy dialogue, development or humanitarian programming¹³, conflict-sensitive programme indicators, use of mediation, follow-ups to sanctions or monitoring of trade preferences and standards, etc. They may encourage steps to re-design ongoing interventions and improve coordination, or suggest ways to strengthen the conflict-sensitivity of EU engagement in the field. They should cover periodic updates of the analysis and regular progress reports. A monitoring and implementation process should also be agreed upon, clarifying key responsibilities and anticipated outcomes as actions are implemented, through a theory of change.

Box 4: Overview of the conflict analysis process

1. Planning and design

STEP 1: Request by a Delegation, a geographic service, an EUSR, or any other part of the EU

STEP 2: Internal Scoping

STEP 3: ToR Drafting

2. Data collection, analysis and recommendations

STEP 1: Data collection

STEP 2: Conflict analysis workshops/exercises

STEP 3: Member state involvement

STEP 4: Recommendations

3. Reporting, feedback, and follow-up

ISP.2, in close collaboration with INTPA G.5 or NEAR B.2, FPI and DG ECHO finalises the conflict analysis report.

¹³ Conflict-sensitivity for humanitarian action is important for helping humanitarian actors achieve their primary and core objectives (i.e. maximising humanitarian impact, meeting humanitarian needs). While in many contexts humanitarian aid may have a positive 'incidental' impact on conflict dynamics, contributing to peace should not be an explicit objective. A principled, pragmatic and integrated EU approach is applied.

3.3 Reporting, feedback and follow-up

Those consulted and involved in the analysis should be informed about the main conclusions reached (as appropriate and depending on sensitivity) and be given a final opportunity to validate the findings or provide feedback. The conflict analysis process may help generate broader buy-in for the implementation of the recommendations.

ANNEX 1: KEY POLICY DOCUMENTS, RESOURCES AND TRAINING

EU global strategy (2016)

https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/eu-global-strategy_en

(New) European consensus on development (2017)

https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/european-consensus-on-development-final-20170626_en.pdf

Council Conclusions on *EU integrated approach to external conflicts and crises* (2018)

<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5413-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

Joint Communication on Resilience (2017)

https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/join_2017_21_f1_communication_from_commission_to_inst_en_v7_p1_916039.pdf

Joint Staff Working Document, EU conflict Early Warning System: Objectives, Process, and Guidance for Implementation, 2020 [forthcoming]

EU strategic approach on women, peace and security

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37412/st15086-en18.pdf>

EU operational guidelines on the preparation and implementation of EU-financed actions specific to countering terrorism and violent extremism in third countries

<http://ct-morse.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/EU-CT-CVE-guidelines.pdf>

INTPA conflict-sensitivity online training

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/ilp/pages/coursedescription.jsf?courseId=11281270&catalogId=301711>

INTPA ‘Context for development: conflict-sensitivity and fragility’ module (face-to-face-training, EU LEARN)

***Guidance note on the use of conflict analysis in support of EU external action* (2013)**

<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-fragility/minisite/support-and-guidance/guidance-note-use-conflict-analysis-support-eu-external-action>

EU staff handbook on operating in situations of conflict and fragility

<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-fragility/document/operating-situations-conflict-and-fragility-eu-staff-handbook>

Gender and conflict analysis toolkit — Saferworld

<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1076-gender-analysis-of-conflict>

Gender and conflict analysis toolkit — Conciliation Resources

<http://www.c-r.org/resource/gender-and-conflict-analysis-toolkit-peacebuilders>

CDA ‘do no harm’ resources

<https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publications/conflict-sensitivity-do-no-harm/>

CDA conflict analysis framework

<https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/conflict-analysis-framework-field-guidelines-and-procedures/>

World Bank climate change knowledge portal

<https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/>

ANNEX 2: GLOSSARY

1. Conflict

‘Any situation in which two or more “parties” (however defined or structured) perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals’¹⁴.

Conflict is an inevitable part of human interaction and is often channelled constructively, e.g. through an election process. In some cases, it results in violence within, between or across state boundaries. ‘Violent conflict’ usually refers to political violence and can take many forms, ranging from low-intensity or sporadic violence to mass atrocities and genocide. Situations ‘at risk of violent conflict’ threaten the security of a population or particular groups, the fulfilment of core state functions, and/or the international order¹⁵.

2. Conflict analysis

Conflict analysis is a structured analytical process that offers key insights into the risks of violent conflict and conflict dynamics in a specific area, country or region. While the analytical approach remains flexible, in order to accommodate different timelines and environments, key elements of the analysis generally include:

- a background and history of the conflict;
- structural and proximate causes of conflict, patterns of resilience and peace capacities;
- relevant stakeholders involved in and affected by the conflict;
- possible scenarios;
- mapping of ongoing conflict prevention and stabilisation activities; and
- recommendations to ensure conflict-sensitive engagement and conflict prevention¹⁶.

Conflict analysis can usefully inform decision-making at different levels (e.g. strategies, political dialogue, policies, development and humanitarian programming, specific projects, indicators, etc.).

3. Conflict prevention

Conflict prevention most commonly refers to any ‘upstream’ action to prevent the initial eruption of violent conflict in a situation of unstable peace (also known as primary prevention). In some situations, it also refers to action deliberately taken to prevent a possible escalation or spillover of ongoing violent conflict, and effective stabilisation and peacebuilding support to prevent a repeat of violence.

A wide variety of actions can contribute to a conflict prevention strategy, e.g. mediation, confidence-building measures, human rights promotion, capacity-building, etc. However, to qualify as conflict prevention, these must explicitly include the prevention of large-scale violent conflict among their goals. Article 21(2) of the Treaty on the European Union provides that ‘The Union shall define and pursue common policies and actions, and shall work for a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations, in order to [...] preserve peace, [and] prevent conflicts [...]’.

4. ‘Do no harm’ and conflict-sensitivity

The ‘do no harm’ principle is at the core of conflict-sensitivity and represents a minimum obligation for any action or intervention to avoid (or minimise) harm. It builds on the understanding that, whenever an intervention of any sort enters a context, it becomes part of the context by interacting with the context itself¹⁷. The concept was first elaborated by Mary B. Anderson in 1999.

Conflict-sensitivity is based on the assumption that any significant intervention in a fragile or conflict-affected context, whether driven by development, humanitarian action, energy- or climate-related policies, etc., may have an impact on conflict dynamics. A conflict-sensitive approach requires awareness of the local peace and conflict dynamics, i.e. the type of information that a conflict analysis can provide. Conflict-sensitivity helps to

¹⁴ Mitchell, Chris (1981).

¹⁵ *EU conflict early warning system: objectives, process and guidance for implementation* (ref. 11648/17).

¹⁶ IcSP, *Outcome indicators for the IcSP* (30 May 2016).

¹⁷ M. Anderson, *Do no harm: aid can support peace — or war* (Lynne Rienner, London, 1999, p. 1).

avoid negative impacts on peace and conflict dynamics, in line with the ‘do no harm’ principle, and to reduce the risk of violence where possible.

5. EU conflict early warning system (EWS)

The EWS is a robust, evidence-based risk-management tool that identifies, assesses and helps prioritise situations at risk of violent conflict in non-EU countries, focusing on structural factors and with a time horizon of 4 years. It also identifies conflict prevention and peace-building opportunities. It promotes a shared assessment of conflict risks and prompts timely, relevant and coherent responses to prevent the emergence, re-emergence or escalation of violence by developing options for new responses or fine-tuning existing action. Countries prioritised under the EWS or for which the Global Conflict Risk Index identifies a substantial risk of conflict could become strong candidates for subsequent more in-depth conflict analysis.

6. Fragility

The OECD fragility framework¹⁸ builds on five dimensions of fragility and measures each through the accumulation and combination of risks and capacity. The dimensions can briefly be defined as:

- **economic** – vulnerability to risks stemming from weaknesses in economic foundations and human capital, including macroeconomic shocks, unequal growth and high youth unemployment;
- **environmental** – vulnerability to environmental, climatic and health risks that affect people’s lives and livelihoods; these include exposure to natural hazards, pollution and disease epidemics;
- **political** – vulnerability to risks inherent in political processes, events or decisions; a lack of political inclusiveness (including of elites); transparency, corruption and society’s ability to accommodate change and avoid oppression;
- **security** – vulnerability of overall security to violence and crime, including political and social violence; and
- **societal** – vulnerability to risks affecting societal cohesion that stem from vertical and horizontal inequalities, including inequality among culturally defined or constructed groups and social cleavages.

7. Gender and conflict analysis

Gender analysis is a tool for understanding the social and power dynamics between women, men, girls and boys in a given context, and identifying gender inequality. It can detect different needs and opportunities, and inequalities that present distinct risks of violence. Statistics broken down by gender help to highlight gender discrepancies and inequalities. However, gender analysis should also include qualitative analysis of laws, norms and social attitudes. Gender considerations should influence the methodology and approach of the conflict analysis process, e.g. in the selection of interviewees, as regards the different roles of women in conflict and peace, specific types of violence, protection needs and the role of women in peacebuilding and recovery¹⁹.

8. Humanitarian – development – peace (H-D-P) nexus

The H-D-P nexus refers to more systematic and up-front coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actors at headquarters and on the ground, among EU institutions, Member States and other relevant actors, in full compliance with their respective mandates, roles and sensitivities. It is not only relevant in countries where there is active fighting or peace agreements but can also serve conflict prevention. Considering the broad definition of peace and the strong conflict-sensitivity component, it can be a useful way of working in all kinds of country contexts in order to achieve better results and act in a more preventive manner.

¹⁸ OECD’s annual ‘states of fragility’ reports look at trends and financial resource flows in fragile and conflict-affected countries and economies; www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/listofstateoffragilityreports.htm

¹⁹ EU strategic approach on women, peace and security (2018); <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37412/st15086-en18.pdf>

9. 'Integrated approach'

The 'integrated approach to external conflicts and crises'²⁰ aims to foster human security by drawing on all relevant EU policies and instruments in the fields of diplomacy, security, defence, financial, trade, development cooperation and humanitarian aid (*multi-dimensional*). It respects and reaffirms the various mandates, roles, aims and legal frameworks of the stakeholders involved. It is applied at local, national, regional and global levels as needed (*multi-level*) and throughout all phases of the conflict (*multi-phase*), through prevention, crisis response, stabilisation and longer-term peacebuilding, in order to contribute to sustainable peace. It is an approach that brings together Member States, relevant EU institutions and other international and regional partners, as well as CSOs (*multilateral*).

The Council Conclusions on the integrated approach call for a more systematic use of joint conflict analyses and conflict-sensitive ways of working in fragile contexts. This guidance note therefore encourages a joint and integrated approach to conflict analysis, allowing for a multi-dimensional process, and contributing to shared views on priorities for action, and increased coherence and buy-in on the required conflict-prevention priorities.

10. Peace

'Negative peace' refers to the absence of violence, but profound injustice, grievances and other risks of conflict may still remain.

The absence of violence is a pre-requisite for 'positive peace', which refers to a situation in which all groups in a society enjoy equal opportunities and access to opportunities, livelihood and decision-making. 'Positive peace' implies the existence of effective social and institutional mechanisms and structures that allow groups and individuals to manage differences non-violently²¹.

11. Peacebuilding

Originally, 'peacebuilding' referred primarily to post-conflict recovery efforts to promote reconciliation and reconstruction. Gradually, its meaning expanded to encompass a broad range of activities designed to address root causes and drivers of conflict and promote sustainable peace across the various phases of the conflict cycle.

Peacebuilding involves creating capacity in society to manage disputes peacefully and reduce vulnerability to triggers that may spark violence. Peacebuilding activities often aim to support peace processes, e.g. through support for the implementation of peace agreements, electoral reforms, the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants and child soldiers, security sector reforms, transitional justice, and reparation and reconciliation measures. The new European consensus on development considers peacebuilding as essential for sustainable development; therefore, peacebuilding activities should take place at all levels and in all phases of the conflict cycle.

12. Phases of conflict / conflict cycle

'Conflict is not a static, unchanging state of affairs, but rather, a dynamic and non-linear process'²².

Conflict analysts often use a conflict curve as a visual tool for planning prevention engagements. The curve serves as an ideal-type representation of the evolution of a conflict, with opportunities to de-escalate the conflict any stage. It identifies the standard phases of a violent conflict (stable peace, unstable peace, crisis, war, post-conflict) without implying any linearity and recognising that the level of intensity can rise or fall at any moment. Phases of conflict do not necessarily follow a sequential/cyclical pattern and can sometimes overlap. Therefore, the passage from one phase to

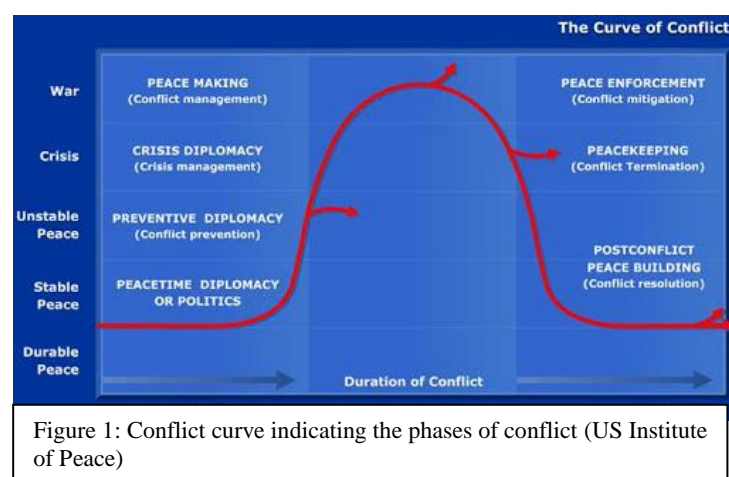


Figure 1: Conflict curve indicating the phases of conflict (US Institute of Peace)

²⁰ Council Conclusions on the integrated approach (January 2018).

²¹ 'Violence, peace and peace research', Johan Galtung (*Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No 3 (1969), pp. 167-191).

²² OECD, *Helping preventing violent conflict*, DAC Guidelines (OECD Publishers, Paris, 2001).

another is not necessarily the result of a single event or factor at the exact moment of transition.

13. Resilience

The 2012 Commission Communication on *The EU approach to resilience: learning from food security crises*²³ defined resilience as ‘the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, adapt and quickly recover from stresses and shocks’. The EU ‘global strategy’ developed this, referring to resilience as ‘a broad concept encompassing all individuals and the whole of society’, which features ‘democracy, trust in institutions and sustainable development, and the capacity to reform’.

The 2017 Joint Resilience Communication expanded the definition to denote a broader resilience in the state and society at large that involves increased adaptability and transformative capacities, and made explicit the link between resilience and conflict prevention:

‘A resilience approach to the prevention of violent conflict aims at improving interventions, through better understanding of the factors that lead to violent conflict and identifying the endogenous capacities within a society that can allow some communities to resist a drift towards violence. It can give traction to initiatives for peace, and support to local conflict-resolution mechanisms, particularly in countries where the state may have an ambiguous role as both a source of political authority and as a source of violence or coercion’.

Support for resilience at all levels is an integral part of the new European consensus on development and contributes to the implementation of the H-D-P nexus.

²³ COM(2012) 586 final.