First CSO Consultation of the EU Task Force on Women, Peace and Security

Brussels, 29 March 2010, 15.30 – 17.30

Report prepared by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)

On 29 March 2010 the EU informal Task Force on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) held its first direct consultation meeting with civil society organisations working on WPS issues. The session, facilitated by EPLO and attended by numerous members of the Task Force and representatives of Brussels-based civil society organisations, focused on EU implementation of UNSCR 1325 and on future consultation with civil society, Brussels-based and beyond.

More precisely, the objectives of the meeting were:

- To familiarise Brussels-based civil society organisations working on women, peace and security with the mandate and members of the EU Task Force on WPS, and to update the organisations on current EU efforts to further implementation of SCR 1325 and related WPS commitments;
- To inform the Task Force about civil society expertise available in Brussels, and to raise awareness about CSO concerns about the EU framework for implementation of WPS commitments; and
- To set in motion regular, structured TF consultation with civil society, Brussels-based and beyond.

Following a brief introduction to the EU and WPS, this report outlines the key outcomes of the discussion on future regular consultation with civil society. It aims to trigger further debate with civil society organisations, including those based in EU Member States and conflict-affected countries, about future interaction between the EU Task Force on WPS and civil society.

The EU and WPS

At EU-level there are two 1325-focused documents:

- *The Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security* (hereafter referred to as the Comprehensive Approach or CA); and
- *Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as reinforced by UNSCR 1820 in the context of European Security and Defence Policy*.

The Comprehensive Approach, adopted in December 2008, outlines a common EU approach to implementation of SCR 1325 and 1820, complementing what exists at national level in terms of national action plans and strategies. The CA includes common definitions (e.g. of gender and gender mainstreaming) and principles (such as the need for
a holistic approach) and provides a basic overview of existing EU policy and practice on WPS. The CA also includes a series of specific measures to move forward, some to be performed by the EU as a whole, others by particular actors (e.g. the Commission or Member States).

These measures are divided into different categories:

- Political support for SCR 1325 and 1820 (e.g. ‘The EU will promote the implementation of the WPS resolutions through its political and human rights dialogues with partner countries’);

- Training on WPS issues (e.g. the Commission commits to organising regular HQ-based training on WPS);

- Exchange of information and best practices (e.g. the CA establishes a WPS TF in Brussels and calls for a yearly open exchange among EU Member States on national implementation of Resolution SCR 1325);

- Action at country and regional level (including for example a commitment to ensure that EU financial instruments with a conflict prevention, crisis management or post-conflict component will incorporate a gender dimension in their programming and implementation);

- Integration of WPS considerations in sector activity – covering security (DDR, SSR); governance and civil society; economic security; health; education; and humanitarian aid;

- Cooperation with the UN and other international actors; and

- Monitoring and evaluation (e.g. the TF will further develop indicators for progress regarding the protection and empowerment of women in conflict settings and in post-conflict situations).

The Comprehensive Approach is complemented by an operational document on implementing SCR 1325 and 1820 in the context of European Security and Defence Policy (post-Lisbon known as Common Security and Defence Policy, CSDP). This document was also adopted in December 2008. Although the CA addresses several issues related to CSDP (e.g. training), this document specifically aims to ensure gender mainstreaming and implementation of 1325 and 1820 throughout all phases of missions/operations.

The CSDP document is a revised version of an earlier operational paper on implementation of 1325 in the context of ESDP, merged with the check list on gender mainstreaming and implementation of 1325 in the planning and conduct of ESDP operations. It includes measures to increase women’s representation at all decision making levels and to further implementation of 1325 more generally, in advance planning, operational planning, force generation, etc.
WPS Task Force and Civil Society

The Comprehensive Approach calls for the establishment of a Women, Peace and Security Task Force (TF), including ‘staff working on both gender equality and security issues across the relevant Council Secretariat and Commission services’ and being ‘open to EU Member State participation’ (invitations to meetings are usually send to the permanent representations in Brussels and known WPS contact points within the Ministries). The TF is aimed at increasing ‘inter-institutional coordination’ and furthering ‘a coherent approach to gender-related issues’. The Task Force is to meet frequently with relevant senior officials and to consult on a regular basis with civil society organisations.

The Task Force has now met several times; meetings taking place approximately every 3-4 months. Part of the TF meeting on 29 March 2010 served as a first direct consultation session with civil society.

First Consultation

One of the main issues on the agenda for the 29 March was a discussion on how to organise future regular consultation with civil society.

Participants to the discussion made the following points:

- The TF welcomes information on upcoming opportunities that the EU can use.
- CSOs would appreciate it if the TF shares the agenda and outcome reports of its meetings and other related events (e.g. meeting gender advisers, trainings, etc.).
- Every second meeting of the TF can be opened up to civil society participation.
- The TF would like to benefit from CSO partners’ visits to Brussels.
- Dates for TF meetings should be announced well in advance so that partners from third countries can schedule visits to Brussels around these dates and civil society in general can get properly mobilised.
- There should be regular contact between delegations and CSOs ‘on the ground’.
- Regular updates via e-mail in between TF meetings would be welcomed as well.
- The EU website on SCR 1325 should be inclusive.