

EU joint reply to the UNODA request related to
UNGA Resolution 68/33 entitled
"Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control"

Executive Summary

As stated by EU High Representative for Common, Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, it is harder to achieve lasting peace and security in any country or any region, when only half of the population is represented at a negotiating table or in talks on post-conflict reconstruction. The EU considers that the participation of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is crucial. The role of women in these areas can be enhanced by promoting gender consciousness and by integrating women in the process.

Following UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security adopted on 31 October 2000, the EU has adopted measures that aim to make Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions gender conscious. EU Member States individually and the EU itself have continued to take action to promote awareness of gender in the field of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, as well as calling attention to the special situation of women in conflict by appointing gender advisors for conflict management missions, by cooperating with the UN on a number of related international initiatives – specifically with UN Women – and by facilitating the role of women in conflict mediation.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), signed on 16 April 2012, focuses on the following (non-exclusive) thematic areas: gender justice, women's leadership and political participation; women's access to economic empowerment and opportunities; combatting sexual and gender based violence; humanitarian aid; women, peace and security; responsiveness of plans and budgets to gender equality; Gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of global issues. In the Joint Work Programme for 2014 implementation of women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control related activities were prioritised.

Financial support under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) adopted on 11 March 2014, foresees that whenever possible the following cross-cutting issues shall be reflected in the programming: the promotion of democracy, good governance and human rights and humanitarian law, including children's rights and the rights of indigenous peoples; non-discrimination, gender equality and women's empowerment; conflict prevention and climate change.

The EU and its Member States provide support to formal and informal mediation efforts worldwide is broad and the EU works towards women's participation in such mediations. This is done, among others, through building capacities by training women in mediating and negotiating skills and by supporting the participation of women in mediation and conflict resolution processes.

Detailed Response

Introduction

As the civilian population has increasingly become the main victim in contemporary armed conflict, women and girls have been particularly affected. Most civilian victims of armed conflicts are statistically female, while women are also for the most part excluded from leadership roles both in processes of conflict decision-making and/or peace-making. It is, therefore, important to adapt disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control, mediation and peace-building efforts to include gender considerations.

Gender perspective in national action plans

Work continued on the EU's comprehensive approach to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security adopted on 8 December 2008. In addition now 16 EU Member States have adopted and implement National Action Plans. The annual EU Member States' seminar on the implementation of resolution 1325, which took place on 27 May 2013, focussed on impunity reduction and support for women's participation in gender-sensitive transitional justice processes. The seminar was addressed by Ms Zainab Hawa Bangura, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The Second Report on the EU-indicators for the Comprehensive Approach to the EU Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 & 1820 on Women, Peace and Security, covering the period from October 2010 to December 2012 was published in January 2014.

Italy's NAP 2014-2016 will focus on "valorising the presence of women in the national Armed Forces and state police, as well as within Peace-support Operations, and reinforcing their role in the decision-making". Specifically, Italy's NAP envisages activities regarding the issue of "Women, Peace, and Security" in particularly conflict-affected geographical areas, such as Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq and Lebanon.

Disarmament, De-mobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

The EU considers that a gender perspective should be included in the aid modalities of donors to DDR activities. The 'EU Concept for support to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration'², which complements the EU strategic policy towards Security Sector Reform, underlined the increased understanding that the DDR process as such should focus on the ex-combatants, which needs to include not only those carrying a weapon, but also non-fighters associated with armed groups, including women and girls.

Gender advisors or focal points in crisis management missions

16 EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions were deployed in 2013. 70 % of these missions, including all military operations, had at least one gender adviser/trainer. Furthermore, by the end of the year, all EU delegations (representations) around the world, as well as CSDP missions and operations had nominated gender and/or human rights focal points. Human rights and gender considerations are being integrated into the planning, implementation and evaluation of EU Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations. New crisis management procedures were adopted in June 2013, stipulating that a gender and human rights analysis should always be carried out during the planning cycle for new missions and operations, and integrated into key planning documents. In July 2013, the human rights advisers and gender advisers of CSDP missions and operations held their annual meeting. The meeting allowed them to discuss challenges and best practices, in particular with regard to mission start-up and drawdown, and particular attention was also given to human rights and gender considerations in predominantly Islamic societies. Seventy percent of civilian missions, and all military operations, included a human rights and/or gender adviser or trainer as part of their staff in 2013.

Training modules on human rights, child protection and gender, corresponding to the EU's minimum training standards, were piloted during the year in cooperation with training institutes from EU Member States and civil society groups. These training modules are intended for the use of Member States in the pre-deployment training of all mission and operation personnel. Dedicated training sessions to familiarise EU and Member States' staff with the EU's human rights and gender commitments in the field of CSDP were organised, notably as part of the European Security and Defence College and EEAS training programmes.

In Mali, during the 2013 conflict, the EU funded a civil society initiative aimed at reporting human rights violations committed by all armed groups.

In the first half of 2013, the new conflict early warning system was piloted in the Sahel, before being gradually rolled out to other regions. The tools and methodology developed for the early warning system include many human rights-related indicators, such as respect for the international human rights framework, press freedom and respect for civil and political freedoms.

Gender and mine action

Women, girls, boys and men may be affected in different ways by mines and explosive remnants of war. On the basis of their different roles and responsibilities, they may also have different priorities for survey and clearance of mine-affected areas. The EU therefore calls on all actors engaged in mine action to ensure that all human beings benefit on an equal basis from mine action activities.

EU-UN cooperation on gender issues

EU continues to work closely with UN Women and support initiatives to ensure greater participation of women in peace-building and post-conflict planning and to meaningfully engage in, influence and mobilize for dialogues on security and peace issues nationally and regionally. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was signed on 16 April 2012. It reaffirms the partnership between the EU and UN Women to support gender equality and women's empowerment around the world and aims at ensuring closer collaboration on policies and programmes; sharing information, expertise and analysis in order to effectively advance women's rights.

The MoU focuses on the following (non-exclusive) thematic areas: Gender justice, women's leadership and political participation; Women's access to economic empowerment and opportunities; Combatting sexual and gender based violence; Humanitarian aid; Women, Peace and Security; Responsiveness of plans and budgets to gender equality; Gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of global issues. In the Joint Work Programme for 2014 implementation of women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control related activities were prioritised.

Financial Assistance

On 11 March 2014, the EU adopted the Regulation establishing an Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), succeeding the Instrument for Stability (IfS). In accordance with Article 2(3)(a) of the IcSP Regulation, whenever possible the following cross-cutting issues shall be reflected in the programming: the promotion of democracy, good governance and human rights and humanitarian law, including children's rights and the rights of indigenous peoples; non-discrimination, gender equality and women's empowerment; conflict prevention and climate change. The regulation also specifies that a gender perspective should inform the

actions” and that “Building overall up-stream capacity of relevant stakeholders to work with the EU in a number of cluster-areas in terms of post-conflict and post-disaster recovery (as well as regards pre-conflict mitigation efforts) remains important . Cluster-areas include: Gender-related issues, including Women, Peace and Security; Children and Conflict; Youth and Conflict; Protection, participation and empowerment of local communities, with particular focus on vulnerable and minority groups.”

Human rights and gender aspects continued to be properly integrated in the EU – UN Steering Committee on Crisis Management process. There is a clear understanding on the need to further exchange experiences, best practices and lessons learned in specific areas, identify joint UN-EU training opportunities, further collaboration with respect to training modules in this area. Human rights and gender issues will be properly integrated in the implementation of the EU Plan of Action to enhance EU CSDP support to UN Peacekeeping. The EU-UN steering committee on crisis management discussed gender and human rights, including gender training, at its April 2013 meeting, and in subsequent staff-to-staff talks.

Women in mediation processes

In relation to women's under-representation in mediation processes and peace negotiations, an important dimension of the 1325/1820 agenda, the EU has a clear commitment to promote the representation of women and the availability of adequate resources for dedicated mediation gender expertise from an early stage of the mediation process onwards. The EU supports a gender expert position on the UN Standby Team of Mediation Experts⁴ who will be deployed to the field on a rapid-response basis, will provide specialized analysis and advice on gender and process issues to United Nations and other mediation teams across the globe as needed.

The EU Mediation Support Team in 2012 concluded that it was difficult to find a region in which the EU had not in some form been involved in mediation efforts (either in lead or providing political, financial or technical support).

Findings from the Kvinna till Kvinna study 'Equal Power – Lasting Peace: obstacles for women's participation in peace processes, funded under the EU Instrument for Stability state "obstacles to women's participation were not only found at the national level". According to the study there is also a striking absence of women in peace negotiations initiated by various international actors. Many women expressed gratitude for the support they had received from international actors during the conflict – not least economically – and for raising the issue of sexual and gender-based violence. However, by the time formal peace accords were taking place, hardly any women were invited to the table.

The following provides some examples of efforts in the context of projects by the EU and its Member States projects to promote women's involvement in formal and informal peace processes as mediators and negotiators:

- The EU Special Representative in Afghanistan has offered training to 16 members of the High Peace Council, including 10 women. In addition to this support there is on-going work to identify further needs of the Council, in particular its female members, with which the EU could offer assistance. EU projects in Afghanistan also are working towards integrating women into peace building processes. These aim to mobilise around 425 women, including 300 victims and survivors of war, to mobilise towards reconciliation and justice. A further project will support Afghan NGOs working on women's rights to develop capacity and engage in monitoring, reporting and advocacy in peace building.

- In Cote d'Ivoire, the EU has given €1,000,000 for informal work on peace negotiations, including the awareness campaigns by women's organisations supporting the role of women in the peace process and in reconciliation. The network of "women in West Africa Peace and Security: Action" also received help from the EU delegation to promote dialogue and exchange.
- In Guatemala, the EU supported a project which trained 386 indigenous women in mediation and negotiation skills, resulting in the resolution of 100 land tenure conflicts. 4181 women participated in this process.
- The Guinea Bissau, the EU delegation has recently started its support for women mediators in local conflicts through the Peace Building programme. Finland supports a women's dialogue project in Guinea Bissau aimed at women's participation in information negotiations.
- In Kyrgyzstan, the EU has supported the training of 384 women in mediation skills, 46% of the total number of people trained. This training focuses on conflict and risk analysis to enable them to act as mediators at community level.
- Female mediators are supported by the EU in Nepal.
- The EU Delegation in Madagascar reports that, while the 'Roadmap to Exit Crisis in Madagascar' of September 2011 was signed by the vast majority of Malagasy political actors, of 10 signatories, only one was a woman. The EU is supporting the mediation activities of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and calls upon SADC and the African Union to include female members in their mediations teams.
- In the Maldives, the EU supports a local conflict mediation project through the UN, in which 23 out of 37 trainees (62%) are women.
- The EU supports a project aiming to foster dialogue and peace among local communities around the border areas of Sudan and South Sudan. Women were specifically represented in the process. The resulting peace conferences took place in South Sudan, where 37 participants out of 249 across 6 peace conferences supported by the Instrument for Stability were women (15%). It is worth pointing out that women were present at all but one of these conferences.
- In South Sudan 4 female mediators of 57 (7%) representing civil society groups took part in two Instrument for Stability(IfS) projects. In another IfS project on conflict transformation facilitation, 9 out of 44 participants (20%) were women.
- The UK reports that they supported activities in Sudan, where Sudan/south Sudan formal negotiations (facilitated by the African Union) included four women in the talks, and a female Chief Mediator.

Another action to foster mediation capacity was designed together with UNDP-BCPR and launched in December 2011. This project (€ 1,000,000), lasting one and a half years, will develop national capacity for conflict prevention and resolution in a series of countries. It will provide the basis for the establishment of sustainable national mechanisms, fora and capacities for internal mediation and conflict management. These national “infrastructures for peace” that are being supported through this project will involve women, respond to their needs and promote their participation in peace processes.

¹ 15671/1/08 REV 1

² 15782/3/08 REV 3, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/hr/news272.pdf

³ Approved by the European Commission on 14 December 2006 and by the Council of the European Union on 11 December 2006

⁴ A body comprised of one-year assignments working as on-call advisers to peace envoys around the world.