

# Civil Society Building Peace in the European Neighbourhood: towards a new framework for joining forces with the EU

MICROCON Policy Working Paper 10

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March 2010



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SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Correct citation: Mirimanova, N. 2010. *Civil society building peace in the European Neighbourhood: towards a new framework for joining forces with the EU*. MICROCON Policy Working Paper 10, Brighton: MICROCON.

First published in 2010

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ISBN 978 1 85864 921 8

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**Civil Society Building Peace in the European Neighbourhood: towards  
a new framework for joining forces with the EU**

**Natalia Mirimanova<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract:** Within its own borders, the European Union (EU) is certainly a peace project. However, its external security and stability imperative does not make it a peacebuilding project in the neighbourhood and beyond by default. The official EU institutions have political and conceptual limitations that prevent them from meaningfully engaging with and addressing state formation conflicts. This paper addresses the disconnect between the European Union and the civil society operating in the field of peacebuilding at the level of *theories of change* underlying policies, strategies and activities with the aim of transforming and resolving conflicts. Theories of change are elicited from the reflections and experiences of CSOs and from the main documents that concern conflicts and peacebuilding in the European Neighbourhood. It proposes a new framework for the forecast and assessment of the impact of CSOs on peacebuilding, which can be considered by the EU institutions for building strategic partnerships with international and local civil society to enhance conflict transformation in the European Neighbourhood.

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## Introduction

Within its own borders, the European Union (EU) is certainly a peace project. Its internal security agenda requires stability in the neighbourhood immediately abutting it to the south and to the east. These areas have a substantial number of acute protracted conflicts and the risk of the ignition of latent conflicts cannot be neglected there. The EU's external security and stability imperative, however, does not make it a peacebuilding project in the neighbourhood and beyond by default.

The official EU institutions have political and conceptual limitations that prevent them from meaningfully engaging with and addressing state formation conflicts. These include an inability to engage with the unrecognized entities. There are also fundamental tensions between the desire to put pressure on the states that systematically violate individual and collective rights and the need to ally with the same governments to cope with the security threats. A tricky interplay between the *Idealpolitik* in the declarations of intent and the *Realpolitik* in the implementation of foreign and security policy leaves the essential aspects of the conflicts in question largely unaddressed. The lack of in-house expertise on the state of the art in the field of conflict transformation and peacebuilding negatively affects the operation and the image of the EU in the conflict areas. Nevertheless the respective European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plans promise support for conflict resolution, which raises certain expectations.

There is a need for the EU to shift from the generic schemes of the Europeanization of the polities and economies in the Neighbourhood as an implicit road map to peaceful conflict resolution towards fine tuned and explicit peacebuilding strategies. Partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs) that professionalize in the field at all stages and levels of conflict interventions is crucial to make this shift. In the EU documents and declarations involvement of civil society in peacebuilding is regarded as vital. However there is lack of recognition that conflict transformation and peacebuilding by civil society requires a distinct conceptual basis, a specific support structure and a relevant impact assessment that may not be in line with the conventional project-based or activity-based planning and evaluation of the performance of CSOs, and generic and schematic support for civil society.

The present paper addresses the disconnect between the EU and the civil society operating in the field of peacebuilding at the level of *theories of change* underlying

policies, strategies and activities with the aim of transforming and resolving conflicts. Theories of change are elicited from the reflections and experiences of CSOs both internal and external that operate in the conflict settings in the European Neighbourhood. Theories of change in use by the EU are reconstructed from the main documents that concern conflicts and peacebuilding in the European Neighbourhood.

The theories of change identified as being in use by CSOs and the EU are juxtaposed and analyzed against the backdrop of the specific class of state formation conflicts, on the one hand, and institutional capacity of the CSOs to be change agents, on the other, by way of laying groundwork for a new specialized framework for the forecast and assessment of the impact of CSOs on peacebuilding. Conceptually, the framework proposed in this paper builds on the *peace as change* versus *peace as stability* approach and on the notion of *civil society as an institutional basis for peacebuilding*. This framework can be considered by the EU institutions for building strategic partnerships with international and local civil society to enhance conflict transformation in the European Neighbourhood.

### **1. EU support for civil society and peacebuilding: do these universes cross?**

The states and regions east and south of the new European borders are home to state formation conflicts (Wallenstein, 2002) that are characterized by a clash between minorities' aspirations to re-define the international borders and achieve statehood and the existing States' (and majorities') determination to preserve the existing nation-states within their internationally recognized territories. There is no straightforward solution under international law for resolving these conflicts due to the clash between the principles of the inviolability of state borders and of the right for self-determination of people. The conflicts in question have lasted from fifteen to over forty years, are marked by one or several wars and smaller scale violence, isolation of the rival societies from each other, asymmetry in the international recognition of the entities in conflict and degree of the involvement of the external states as primary, secondary or third parties. Given their duration and defining role in the development of the polities and societies in question, these conflicts can be defined as protracted, deeply-rooted conflicts that require substantial political change within the rival polities along with profound changes in the collective self of the societies in conflict for their transformation. Peace processes at the official level have not borne fruit in any case, although the intensity of negotiations, number of breakthroughs and relapses into war, length of stagnation

periods and degree of activity and intrusiveness of the third parties varies across the cases.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed in 2003 as a “soft power” foreign policy approach that in essence means to “get others to want what you want” (Nye 2004: 256). It is important to emphasize that the ENP Action Plans first and foremost are about the EU security that can be ensured through cooperation between the EU and the selected partners in the Neighbourhood. Since the enlargement of the EU beyond its current eastern and southern borders is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future or ever, its security concerns related to the unresolved conflicts and other threats emanating from the Neighbourhood to the east and to the south needed to be addressed in an effective way, but with no “accession carrot”. Commitment to the promotion of conflict resolution is expressed in the general ENP declarations (Commission 2004). A more or less elaborate strategy to be pursued by the EU and by the ENP partners that are conflict parties can be found in the respective Action Plans and other ENP country-specific documents. The European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), which defines the funding and implementation of the ENP, however, does not make reference to support for conflict transformation in the European Neighborhood (European Council and European Parliament 2006).

I argue that the EU does not have real leverage<sup>2</sup> that hypothetically could have influenced state leaderships’ and the societies’ motivation to revisit and adjust their own positions in favour of an illusory solution of questionable sustainability prospects in the absence of the membership “carrot”. The national (or nationalist) agendas seem to have had stronger appeal for the polities and societies caught in the state formation conflict.

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<sup>2</sup> Generally the EU strongly encourages the states that wish to join in to settle frontier disputes, conflicts with neighbours and minority issues. This requirement was implicit in the Copenhagen criteria and explicitly stated in the decisions of the Essen council in 1995. However, after the accession of the Republic of Cyprus and the association and eventual membership prospects delineated for Bosnia, Kosovo and Serbia where the conflicts were resolved by the parties (Bosnia) or the solution was imposed (Kosovo-Serbia), but peace is “negative” and fragile, the EU integration “carrot” can be regarded as an incentive for peacebuilding rather than the award for having achieved lasting peace within and between the aspiring countries. The power of conditionality has been questioned when the strategy to stimulate the resolution of the conflict with the help of the actualized membership has failed in Cyprus and The Republic of Cyprus became a member without having resolved the conflict. The factor of the EU having granted Turkey candidate status has certainly eased the Greece-Turkey tension over Cyprus, but had little impact on the intra-Cyprus process. Eventually EU membership of the Republic of Cyprus may indirectly affect the rapprochement of the two parts of the island predominantly because of economic considerations. However the progress in the Cyprus conflict transformation to date can be attributed to other factors, such as the opening of the border, economic incentives for Northern Cyprus to reach out, favourable constellation of the two current leaderships and others, but not the EU membership prospect.

Institutionalized democracy in the realm of elections and political pluralism, for example, is not an antidote for ethnic outbidding in the societies that have been and still are involved in a nationalist conflict. Neither is democracy incompatible with militarism: a democratic society can opt for a war as a means to pursue national interests or for self-defense. The overall optimism of the liberal peace paradigm that the EU bases its external policies on should not obscure the need to make strategic adjustments in the environment of unfinished statebuilding, frustrated national identities and persisting insecurity.

Civil society organizations along with other non-governmental sectors, like the media, academia, business and religious institutions are critical internal agents of the change-from-within. They are well positioned to creatively blend democratization of the society and polity and peacebuilding to ensure that the two intervention strands do not cancel each other out<sup>3</sup>. Civil society worldwide has accumulated the most *innovative and cutting edge approaches* to conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation and the *know how* in the design and implementation of peacebuilding initiatives and processes. New ideas for peacebuilding strategies, solution options and peace process formats emerge and are tested and rectified in the realm of civil society. Some of these ideas further inform the domestic and international official peacebuilding agenda. Local civil society is best positioned to lead its own society towards the elimination of *cultural violence*. It is a very much needed partner for the EU and other international interveners in the eradication of *structural violence*. It deals with the consequences of *direct violence* by mediating for hostage and prisoners of war release and exchange, anti-war campaigning and non-violent resistance, and by contributing to the prevention and cessation of armed hostilities through creating safe spaces and effective processes for negotiations. CSOs that work on the ground ensure *sustainability* of conflict transformation that is at the heart of peacebuilding. It is the role of the local civil society to *build relationships* between conflict parties at all levels, including at the highest political level.

The development of civil society is stated as a distinct goal within the ENP (European Council and European Parliament 2004). In turn, strengthening of the local civil society

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<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of the present study the contribution of the Tracks between II and IX (Diamond and McDonald 1996) sectors into peacebuilding is regarded as their civil society role and analyzed at the level of their civil society institutional representations (associations, advocacy groups, networks).

is presented as crucially important for the success of the conflict resolution agenda of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)<sup>4</sup>. However there is no theory in the respective EU documents that links the general strengthening of civil society with the enhancement of its peacebuilding capacity except for vague declarations, such as “by virtue of their support for the development of civil society and democracy, NGOs are key actors in long-term conflict prevention”<sup>5</sup>. The fact that conflict prevention has not been an explicit reference in the EU financing instruments<sup>6</sup> until very recently was creating an obstacle to the design and implementation of the targeted support for peacebuilding by civil society. Since the second issue has already been addressed (see Conclusion) I will dwell on the first issue, namely, the vagueness and groundlessness of the framework that links support for civil society with its peacebuilding effect. I will also put forward a proposition that provides a possible explanation for the EU minimalist engagement with civil society in the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding that favours projects of “low risk and low opportunities” (Hoffman 2004) and blocks realization of the professional peacebuilding expertise of CSOs.

The ENP framework of conflict transformation that could be reconstructed from the Action Plans and other ENP documents originates from the *Idealpolitik* paradigm of international relations and international peace. The essence of this paradigm is that a country’s internal policy and institutions define its foreign policy and that the closer the two countries are in their values, political regimes and level of economic development, the smaller the probability of a war between them. The liberal peace paradigm that is a derivative of the broader *Idealpolitik* prescribes that that consolidation of democracy and rule of law in the domestic policy of the country of concern is the best guarantee for this country’s peaceful relations with the external world (Kober, 1990). If treated as a democracy-peace hypothesis rather than the axiom (Walensteen, 2002) the liberal peace paradigm appears as a generic and not well substantiated basis for the design and implementation of policies and programs.

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<sup>4</sup> Commission (2006a)

<sup>5</sup> Commission (2001)

<sup>6</sup> The court case that was brought before the European Court of Justice (ECJ) by the European Commission on the issue of the European Council’s decision to support a clearly violence prevention programme in West Africa in 2005 and was going on till 2008 after the ECJ ruled that conflict prevention can be funded within the development cooperation programmes coincided with the revision of the previous funding instruments to *inter alia* define a niche for funding peacebuilding and affected the final instruments for 2007-2013 period: explicit mentions of peacebuilding or conflict prevention were omitted.



Analysis of the prospects for a political shift from armed conflict to genuine conflict transformation demonstrated that it is not solely the state leadership who can move in either direction at its own will, but a combination of factors, such as preference of the state leadership regarding the conflict, ratio of ‘war’ and ‘peace’ constituencies within the society and sensitivity of the state leadership to public opinion (Mor 1997). A dovish leadership of the state where there are elections and other democratic procedures in place, and where the majority of the population opts for the armed path in the conflict, can do little to bring a negotiated solution closer. A hawkish leadership in this case gets a carte blanche. Civil society’s role in peacebuilding is aimed at the expansion of the “peace constituency” both in quantity and in their influence on the society and the leadership and at the greater sensitivity of the leadership to the opinion of society. It is the civil society that struggles to close the gaps between the society and the leadership and influence them both. In other words, the struggle is to make society more democratic, with open communication channels and devolved decision-making (Fig. 1)

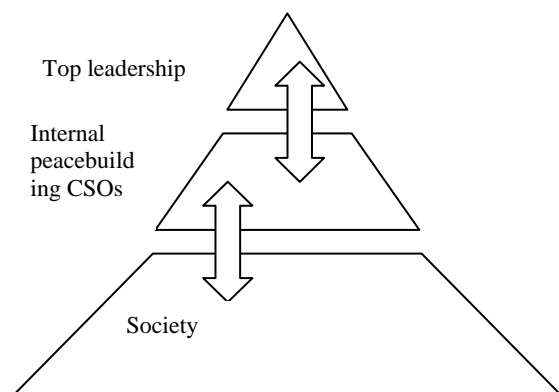


Figure 1. Peacebuilding pyramid. On the basis of Lederach 1997: 39.

The democratic change within a conflict party is of critical importance, but not tantamount to peacebuilding. The interactive aspect of peacebuilding that implies the creation, sustenance and expansion of an interface between the societies in conflict is being overlooked in the democratization agenda. In the absence of this interface, when the civil societies do not have ties across the line of division, peacebuilding becomes watered down, both as concept and as praxis. Where there is no context from which new intellectual and emotional impetuses emanate, new experiences of interacting with the “other” occur or new resources emerge, the task of the transformation of the conflict by

means of “embedding it into a more promising place” (Galtung 2000:4) is impossible, because any “more promising place” is quickly shrinking. At the same time, the internal organization and political culture of the society in conflict determines the prospects for an internal social change necessary for the initiation, implementation and sustenance of peace. Hence at least two Lederach pyramids should be the graphic display of peacebuilding in order to reflect both, vertical and horizontal dimensions (see Fig. 2).

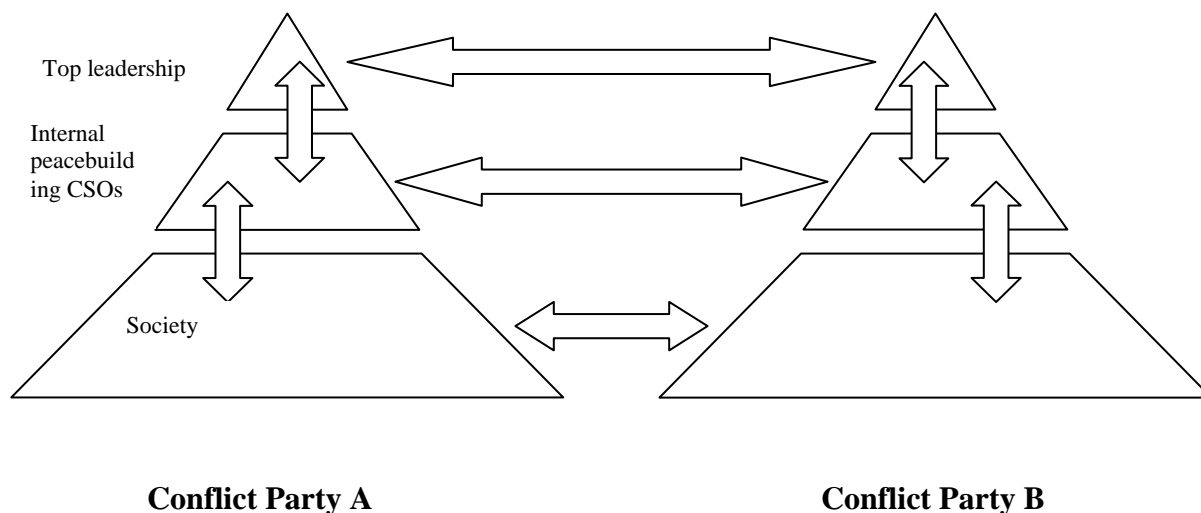


Figure 2. Peacebuilding: vertical and horizontal dimensions. On the basis of Lederach 1997: 39.

One of the gaps in peacebuilding is the interdependence gap that means that the vertical (across the levels of the peacebuilding pyramid) and horizontal (across the division lines between conflict parties) integration is insufficient (Lederach 2001). Peacebuilding initiatives tend to concentrate on the horizontal dimension of conflict transformation, while liberal peace approach taken by the EU aims at the vertical dimension within conflict sides. The combination of the two is necessary. A comprehensive approach to the support of peacebuilding by civil society has a potential to close this gap. In other words, a civil society that is influential and genuine (vertical dimension), on the one hand, and competent in the peacebuilding sector (horizontal dimension), on the other, should be the desired outcome of the EU civil society support programs in the conflict zones.

Peacebuilding is a particular sphere of civil society operation. CSOs that position themselves as peacebuilders have to navigate between the extremes of conformism and

marginalization: they need to preserve trust and respect of their societies and retain influence on their authorities, on the one hand, and promote conflict transformation that implies a degree of deviation from the dominant national discourse on the goal and the means, and critical re-assessment of the own side's wrongdoings and of the legitimacy of the grievances of the opponent side, on the other. Peacebuilding requires of the civil society a nuanced and contingent set of strategies vis-à-vis their own society and leadership because the goal is not only to get rid of the undesired, but construct, preferably in an inclusive manner, new relationships "that in their totalities form new patterns, processes and structures" (Lederach 1997:85). This means that in order to be effective in peacebuilding CSOs ought to put pressure on their governments and engage in consultations and cooperate with them, and lead the societies by example and attune to the societies needs, hopes and fears. Hence the ethos of protest and confrontation and the ethos of conciliation and cooperation vis-à-vis own authorities and society are blended into the peacebuilding strategies of the civil society. This approach is along the lines of the integrated peacebuilding framework and it would put the disassembled pyramid of peacebuilding where the rupture is either between the top- and mid-level (Gramscian critique of the EU support for civil society) or between the mid-and grassroots level of actors (leftist critique) (Tocci, 2008) back together again.

The current EU support for civil society in the conflict settings in the Neighbourhood is not specific to the enhancement of their peacebuilding impact. With the exception of the Israeli and Palestinian CSOs that are direct recipients of the financial and political support for cross-conflict initiatives along with their international partners<sup>7</sup>, the lion's share of EU support for domestic civil society in the other conflict regions in the Neighbourhood goes to the CSOs that work within their own societies insulated from the opponent's side, on issues that have precarious or no relevance for conflict transformation. At times a small portion of funds may be allocated for the cross-conflict initiatives, but they are short-term and small-scale, which hampers the creation of the meaningful essence of an interface. Parallel activities with no cross-conflict component, casual and purely professional contacts or regional programs where only participants from the recognized states participate are important, but not strategic and usually become an imitation of peacebuilding as they do not lead to any social change on the ground.

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<sup>7</sup> Israeli and Palestinian civil societies benefit from the European Union Partnership for Peace (PfP) created for the Mediterranean region.

International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) benefit from the EU funding for bi-lateral (cross-conflict) and multi-lateral and regional initiatives in the Neighbourhood conflict zones from the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) and since 2006 from the Instrument for Stability (IfS), but not from the ENPI. The role of the international CSOs is very important for the implementation of cross-conflict projects, because they act as conveners and mediators where direct cross-conflict activities are impossible to carry out. However, some local CSOs on the opposite sides of the divide do also initiate and implement cross-conflict projects without a third party, even though very few of these initiatives get funded by the EU<sup>8</sup>.

Figure 3 displays the Lederach pyramid model of peacebuilding that reflects the EU support for civil society and for conflict resolution. The EU plays a role in the Track I conflict resolution efforts in some of the conflicts in the Neighborhood<sup>9</sup>. Support for civil society in the unrecognized aspiring states or autonomies and for civil society operating in the recognized states or the states-to-be-recognized by the international community is depicted with the punctuated and solid arrows, respectively, in order to illustrate the imbalance of assistance.

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<sup>8</sup> The examples are Internews-Armenia and Internews-Azerbaijan, Society for Humanitarian Research (Azerbaijan), Independent Television Center (Moldova), Combatants for Peace (Israel and Palestine), Caucasus Business and Development Network. Local chapters of international organizations, such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) and Helsinki Citizens Assembly engage in cross-conflict projects and even physically cross the lines of division.

<sup>9</sup> EU is a Middle East Quartet member, participates in the 5+2 Transnistria-Moldova negotiations as an observer, has EU Special Representatives (EUSR) in the South Caucasus, Georgia and Moldova and sponsors and facilitates Geneva talks.

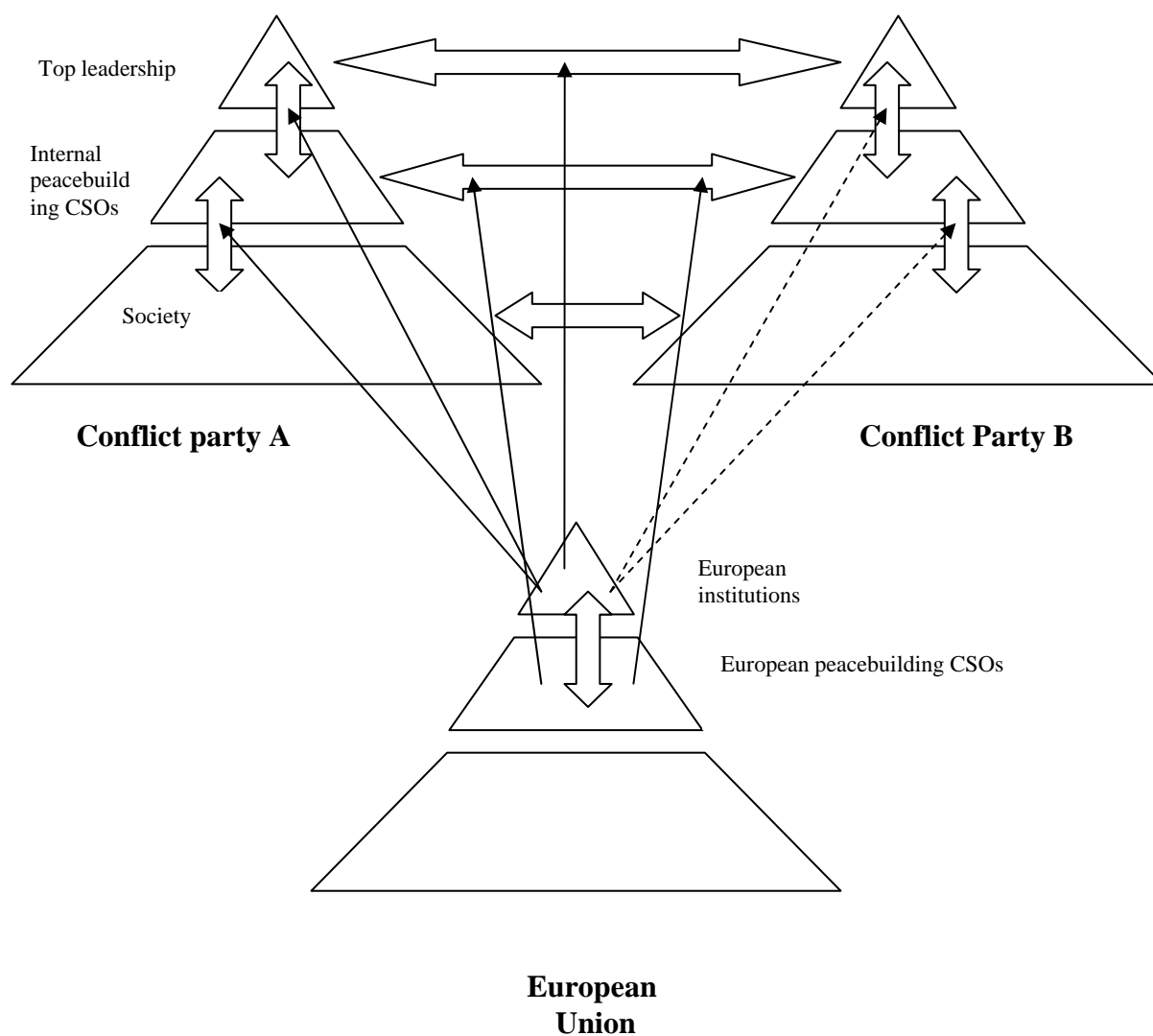


Figure 3. Peacebuilding: EU and European CSOs. On the basis of Lederach 1997: 39<sup>10</sup>.

Two predicaments hamper the EU cooperation with local and European CSOs in the area of peacebuilding. The first is vagueness and lack of soundness of the framework that links support for civil society with the impact on peacebuilding, which was discussed at length earlier. The second is the lack of recognition on behalf of the European institutions of the specialized competence in peacebuilding of a cluster of civil society organizations, just like the spheres of competence of other CSOs that specialize in the humanitarian assistance, education, human rights protection or election monitoring. This leads to the situation when “programmes are initiated and resources allocated for many specific sectoral reasons, but with little thought as to how such choices might be oriented to preventing violent conflicts or buttressing the peaceful

<sup>10</sup> For the purpose of simplicity of presentation the EU institutions are not deconstructed further into the different conflict resolution competencies of the European Commission, European Council and the European Parliament. For the detailed description of the division of roles see (Kamov 2006).

capacities of these societies to navigate the perils of wrenching change” (Lund 2003:164).

The EU financing of peacebuilding civil society projects in the conflict areas is episodic and non-strategic. This may be attributed to the line of argument that civil society does not have political leverage hence cannot influence decision making at the national and international levels where presumably solutions are being coined and the ultimate bargaining, often invisible for the constituencies at home, takes place. Hence the investment into the civil society peacebuilding is unlikely to pay off. “The central impetus for peacebuilding comes from political actors, and above all, from the conflict parties themselves. These actors are often reinforced by strong regional actors such as the European Union in Europe and the Mediterranean, or India in South Asia” (Paffenholz 2009:6). This approach foremost responds to the question on who gets the ‘conflict monopoly’ (Galtung 2000), rather than elucidates the issue of measuring the peacebuilding impact of those who do not get ‘the monopoly’. Civil society actors in peacebuilding are regarded as supplementary and largely apolitical. Besides, this approach extracts civil society from the conflict as if it is not a part and parcel of the ‘conflict parties themselves’.

The diagnosis of the lack of political impact of the civil society peacebuilding projects may be due to the inadequate impact assessment framework. I argue that if an impact of civil society peacebuilding is being sought at the level of social and political change, if ‘positive peace’ is to be achieved through structural and cultural transformation, it cannot be assessed at the level of activities alone. Emphasis on activities or roles that are depositories of routine activities<sup>11</sup> diverts attention from the more fundamental and defining aspects of peacebuilding and creates a situation when “the ultimate goal of a just, sustainable peace is more often assumed to be linked to the project activities rather than directly factored into the project choices and strategies” (Anderson 2004). Peacebuilding is not merely a menu of strategies and activities from which to choose, because it has its ethics and theories. Activities by the peacebuilding cluster of civil society ought to be assessed in light of their *theories of change* that comprise a set of changes at various levels within and around the societies and polities in conflict that are

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<sup>11</sup> Functionalist approach that is based on the roles of civil society in conflict transformation is an example (Paffenholz, 2009)

believed to be needed to resolve the conflict and strategies to achieve the necessary change (Shapiro 2006; Church and Shouldice 2003).

The present paper addresses peacebuilding impact assessment at the level of *theories of change*, which explicitly or implicitly inform policies, strategies and activities that fall into the category of conflict transformation. Theories of change in use by the EU were reconstructed from the main documents that concern conflicts and peacebuilding in the European Neighbourhood. Theories of change in use by civil society actors were elicited from the reflections and experiences of CSOs, both internal and external that operate in the conflict settings in the European Neighbourhood. The elicited theories of change in use by CSOs and the EU are juxtaposed and analysed against the backdrop of the specific class of state formation conflicts, on the one hand, and institutional capacity of the CSOs as change agents, on the other.

The current disconnect between the peacebuilding EU-style and the peacebuilding by civil society, both internal and external to the respected conflicts, is reflected upon in the present paper in light of the two major conceptual rifts: 1) change versus stability in the concept of peace and praxis of peacebuilding and 2) principal versus satellite role allocation for the civil society in peacebuilding. The proposed framework builds on the *peace as change* versus *peace as stability* approach and on the notion of *civil society as an institutional basis for peacebuilding*.

The present paper lays the groundwork for a custom made framework for the forecast and assessment of the impact of CSOs onto peacebuilding in the case of state formation conflicts. The proposed framework can be employed by the EU institutions for building strategic partnerships with international and local civil society to enhance conflict transformation in the European Neighbourhood.

## **2. Conflict resolution aspects of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)**

Analysis of the Action Plans and other ENP documents is revealing of how the EU strategizes its “soft power” conflict transformation at the level of state elites. Since the Action Plans are negotiated and agreed upon with the respected state leaderships, the extent to which the latter are willing to yield to the EU’s appeal to peacefully resolve their conflicts and link progress in the conflict resolution with prospects for a more beneficial status vis-à-vis the EU can be judged on the basis of the respective texts.

Factors such as the limits of the state leaderships' openness to actively search for mutually acceptable solutions, the EU willingness to invest in the search and in the post-agreement rebuilding of the relationships and not least the preferred solution for the EU, set the context in which the EU's actual and potential support for the peacebuilding civil society in the Neighbourhood can be assessed,

### ***ENP Action Plans and EU conflict interventions: review***

#### *Israeli-Palestinian conflict*

The Action Plans for Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories have the most elaborate description of specific steps that the two sides need to take in order to move towards the resolution of the conflict and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. A high degree of clarity and detail could be attributed to the strategic commitment of the EU to the comprehensive peace in the Middle East and to the particular solution to be pursued. The final political-territorial formula, a two-state solution, is prescribed in both plans. Overall, the EU direct political involvement and versatile and generous support to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process at all levels is extraordinary compared to the other conflicts in the Neighbourhood. EU is a Quartet member. It has also re-deployed the EU Police Mission in the occupied Palestinian Territory (EUPOL COPPS) in June 2007 in the West Bank (Gaza was not reachable). European Union Border Assistance Mission at Rafah (EUBAM Rafah) operated at the crossing point between Gaza and Egypt in the first half of 2007.

Conflict resolution and violence prevention in the region is stated as one of the key goals of the Israel Action Plan. Israel is being called to help the emerging Palestinian state in its democratic reforms, support Palestinian authorities in their anti-terrorist policies and activities, and facilitate reconstruction and rehabilitation in Palestine. With regard to Israel's internal state of democracy the EU has put an emphasis on the situation of the Arab and Bedouin minority concerning land and housing rights, employment and equality as a drawback that needs a permanent solution<sup>12</sup>. The EU funds Israeli civil society organizations that deal with human rights violations in the OPT and minority issues within Israel, notably Arab minority issues. The issues of free movement between the West Bank and Gaza and Israel and settlement expansion are the object of criticism on behalf of the EU. The EU cooperates with Israel on combating

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<sup>12</sup>Commission (2009a)



anti-Semitism and in the field of combating terrorism, but criticizes it for violating its obligations in the sphere of human rights.

The EU and its member states are the biggest donors of the infrastructural projects and development in Palestine. The EU strongly supports statebuilding in Palestine as the cornerstone for peace in the Middle East.: “Only an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state can be a reliable neighbour for Israel”<sup>13</sup>.

The EU is a major donor for joint Israeli-Palestinian projects and initiatives. Palestinian and Israeli civil society organizations benefit from the Partnership for Peace within the Euro-Mediterranean framework. The EU funds public sector institution building, i.e. state building and civil society building in Palestine. This is not to say that the relationships between the Palestinian authorities and civil society meet the standards of developed democracies. Neither is support for institution building symmetric between the West Bank and Gaza. Some commentators say that allocation of a substantially greater financial support as a means to reactivate institution building in Palestine went mostly to the West Bank, which furthered the split between the two Palestinian unities.

The high level of the EU activity and decisiveness with regard to the peace process and the eventual solution can be explained so that “the EU perceives its future role as an institution builder in a Palestinian State as of prime importance and does not desire to lose this foothold, however precarious it may seem at present, especially as they are able to counterbalance the American influence amongst the Palestinians, something which will not happen with respect to Israel” (Newman and Yacobi 2004: 32). The Action Plans for Israel and the Palestinian Authority touch upon political and practical measures on the transformation of the conflict issue (a permanent two-state solution) and on the elimination of structural, cultural and direct violence<sup>14</sup>.

Furthermore, the EU has signed Action Plans with all the major protagonists of the Middle East peace process. However even this relatively elaborate framework is being

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<sup>13</sup> Statebuilding for Peace in the Middle East: An EU Action Strategy: New Momentum in the Peace Process , 23/11/2007, <http://www.delisr.ec.europa.eu/english/specialftr.asp?id=58>

<sup>14</sup>EU-Israel Action Plan, [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action\\_plans/israel\\_enp\\_ap\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/israel_enp_ap_final_en.pdf); EU-Palestinian Authority Action Plan, [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action\\_plans/pa\\_enp\\_ap\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/pa_enp_ap_final_en.pdf)

criticized by the Arab states as lacking conflict resolution power because it does not offer an instrument and is lacking authority to resolve the key issues of greatest controversy – end of the occupation of lands conquered in 1967 and the refugee return (Asseburg 2009).

### *Morocco/Western Sahara*

The EU position on the conflict in Western Sahara is somewhat ambiguous. The first reason for the ambiguity is that the 1975 UN Resolution on the referendum on self-determination of Western Sahara has not been implemented and is unlikely to be implemented in the foreseeable future. The situation persists where the two primary sides of the conflict, namely Morocco and the Polisario Front representing the self-determination movement of Sahrawis are not able to agree on who will vote in the referendum and what voting choices will be presented. The argument concerns the Moroccans who settled in Western Sahara since Morocco had established control over the territory and the Sahrawi refugees who reside in the camps in Algeria. In other words, a solution path had been paved two decades ago, while neither the conflict parties nor the international community managed to put it into action.

Secondly, this conflict has been defined by the UN within the decolonization framework. The fact that the conflict remains unresolved creates a moral burden for ‘old Europe’ that has long parted with its colonial past. Spain is a particularly ardent advocate of the self-determination of Western Sahara, its former colony. There are also several international non-governmental advocacy networks that promote the Western Sahara independence cause. At the same time, the moral imperative of decolonization is not matched with the *Realpolitik* imperative to encourage political warming within Morocco, closely related to the closer association and stronger alliance between the EU and the Kingdom.

Thirdly, the EU finds itself in a difficult position with regard to its commitment to safeguard human rights and the need to partner with the Moroccan state in the areas of primary security concerns for the EU, such as migration, terrorism and energy supply. Besides, Morocco is an important trade partner for the EU<sup>15</sup>. This conflict has been one

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<sup>15</sup> Polisario Front and European pro-Sahrawi organizations are vocal about the controversial reaction to the 2005 EU agreement with Morocco on fisheries in the waters of Western Sahara, of which Sahrawis get little or no share.

of the watched cases of severe violations of human rights of Sahrawis in Western Sahara by the Moroccan state. The official European institutions are criticized by vocal human rights groups and pro-Sahrawi advocates in Europe for the inadmissible appeasement of the Moroccan state that compromises the EU human rights protection agenda. The European Parliament (EP) has exercised its right to freeze financial protocols in the case of severe human rights violations in 1992 on the grounds of human rights abuse in Western Sahara. The delegation of the EP visited Western Sahara to monitor the situation of human rights in 2002 and in January 2009 and visited the refugee camps in Tindouf in 2006<sup>16</sup>. The EP issued several resolutions that criticized the Moroccan authorities for their violations of basic human rights of Sahrawis, expressed willingness to encourage a search for a fair and durable solution and affirmed its support to the UN efforts in this direction. It is noteworthy that the conflict resolution is regarded as a decolonization process in view of the legal yardstick of self-determination of Western Sahara<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, the first Governance Facility allocations were made to Morocco in 2007 as additional support to the partner country that has made most progress in implementing the governance priorities agreed in their Action Plans. Observers also note that in recent years the issue of Western Sahara emerged from the oblivion in the non-state Moroccan media, which is significant progress in itself. Fourth, the fact that the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) was recognized by 49 states creates a difficult dilemma for the EU that generally does not recognize and engage in bi-lateral relations with de facto authorities in the breakaway entities seeking statehood, but cannot ignore the substantial recognition rate of Western Sahara<sup>18</sup>.

The EU presence in the conflict region is of a humanitarian nature. The European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) provides humanitarian assistance to the Sahrawi refugees in the camps in Algeria along with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Program (WFP), the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development and Spanish, Italian and Irish civil society organizations and individuals and families from Spain.

There is no mention of the conflict over Western Sahara in the Morocco Action Plan. However in the Country Strategy Paper it is stated that the resolution of the conflict over Western Sahara is of key importance for regional stability and development. The

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<sup>16</sup> UN Security Council (2009)

<sup>17</sup> European Parliament (2009); European Parliament (2005)

<sup>18</sup> The EU Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner met with the leader of the Polisario Front for the first time in 2009.

UN plan for the settlement is referred to, but no specific measures are proposed to Morocco to break the stalemate. The Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for Algeria mentions that Algeria has a border dispute with Morocco over Western Sahara, and this conflict has blocked Maghreb Arab Union. In sum, the conflict is regarded as an impediment to the effective functioning of the regional networks such as the Arab Maghreb Union and the African Union, of which Morocco is not a member, while the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is.

Negotiations on the main subject stagnate. Second-order issues such as the question of ground transportation for family visits between the Sahrawis in the Territory and in the refugee camps that need a tri-lateral, Polisario-Algeria-Morocco consent have a better chance to succeed. Confidence building does not expand beyond the two categories of the Sahrawis, those in the camps and those in the Territory. There are virtually no cross-conflict initiatives where Moroccans and Sahrawis participate together<sup>19</sup>. On the other side of the divide, the Polisario Front has a record of human rights violations and curtailment of freedoms within the refugee camps in Algeria. Those who question the leadership's line in the conflict are ousted. Hence the lack political party competition or non-aligned civil society groups there<sup>20</sup>. Large Sahrawi CSOs are civil branches of the ruling party.

#### *Azerbaijan/Nagorny Karabakh/Armenia conflict*

The EU has Action Plans with Armenia and Azerbaijan, but not with Nagorny Karabakh. The two Action Plans have different wordings that say much about the two parties' approach to the conflict. In the Action Plan for Azerbaijan<sup>21</sup> there is a clause related to the resolution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict about the intensification of the EU dialogue with the *states* concerned, while the analogous clause in the Armenia Action Plan<sup>22</sup> is formulated as a dialogue with the *parties* concerned. This reflects

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<sup>19</sup> A EU-funded project by the Talk Together, a British CSO that was supposed to bring together youth from Morocco proper, from Western Sahara and from the camps in Algeria for a dialogue and joint educational and recreational activities was put on hold, because all the expected participants were stopped at their airports of departure. Western Sahrawi participants reported they were detained, tortured and intimidated<sup>19</sup>. This is not the first time that Sahrawis and Moroccans are prevented by the Moroccan government from travel to events in Europe<sup>19</sup>. Likewise travel of Moroccans and Sahrawis within Morocco is under surveillance, although no formal restrictions apply in most cases.

<sup>20</sup> Human Rights Watch (2008)

<sup>21</sup> EU/Azerbaijan Action Plan. Available

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action\\_plans/azerbaijan\\_enp\\_ap\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/azerbaijan_enp_ap_final_en.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> EU /Armenia Action Plan. Available

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action\\_plans/armenia\\_enp\\_ap\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/armenia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf)

reluctance of Azerbaijan to engage with Nagorny Karabakh as an independent conflict party and Armenia's insistence on its involvement in the official peace process as such. The EU states support of the OSCE Minsk group efforts, but the foundations of this support are described differently in the two Action Plans. The Armenia Action Plan mentions the principle of self-determination of peoples as one of the international norms and principles as the basis for a search for a solution. In the Azerbaijan Action Plan the basis for the resolution is the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and OSCE documents that endorse territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and does not refer to the principle of the right for self-determination. It is important to note that in the Azerbaijan Action Plan peaceful resolution of Nagorny Karabakh conflict is priority number one, while in the Armenia Action Plan it is priority number seven, which reflects a clear asymmetry in the degree of urgency to resolve the conflict as felt by the two parties.

In the Country Strategy Paper for Armenia it is merely mentioned that peaceful resolution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict is a priority for the Armenian government despite the current difficulties in the peace negotiations with Azerbaijan<sup>23</sup>. In the Country Strategy Paper for Azerbaijan, cooperation with the EU on the peaceful settlement of Nagorny Karabakh conflict is described in detail. EU would support a post-settlement consolidation of peace financially and otherwise through the assistance to the return of the Azerbaijani IDPs and refugees to the former conflict areas, their reconstruction and rehabilitation, de-mining and the overall elimination of excessive weapons<sup>24</sup>.

In the area of civil society involvement in peacebuilding, regional youth peace summer camps were mentioned as the progress made in the direction towards a more secure and peaceful South Caucasus. Helsinki Citizens' Assembly was given credit in the Country Progress Reports for having organized regional youth peace force for both, Armenia and Azerbaijan<sup>25</sup>.

Both documents have identical wording in the description of the progress in the top-level meetings that has been achieved in the meetings at the end of the 2008 when first

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<sup>23</sup> Armenia Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi\\_csp\\_armenia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi_csp_armenia_en.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Azerbaijan Country Strategy Paper, 2007-2013. Available [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi\\_csp\\_azerbaijan\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi_csp_azerbaijan_en.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Commission (2009b); Commission (2009c)

joint declarations were signed since 1994. However, there is no mention of the Azerbaijan position vis-à-vis the Turkish Caucasian platform for stability and cooperation initiative and warming of the Armenian-Turkish relations, while in the Armenia country report it is stated that Armenia endorsed the initiative. This difference is indicative of the two countries' aspirations and fears in terms of the regional dynamic around the Nagorny Karabakh conflict: Armenia-Turkey rapprochement is being perceived as a threat in Azerbaijan and the mention of this in the Country Progress Report would have been too contradictory and sensitive.

### *Georgia/Abkhazia conflict*

The Georgian-Abkhaz conflict is defined in the Action Plan for Georgia as a conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, and the solution is prescribed to be sought within the internationally recognized borders of Georgia. The EU also expresses willingness to take responsibility to include the issue of territorial integrity of Georgia and the conflict settlement into the agenda of the EU-Russia political dialogue meetings<sup>26</sup>. Stagnation in the quest for the resolution of the conflicts is attributed to the unfortunate international and regional context that undermines Georgia's peace plan.

Georgian government has been objecting any international assistance to Abkhazia, including civil society development. After the August 2008 war the Deputy Minister of Reintegration disseminated a memorandum among foreign donors that strictly prohibited any interaction with the regime in Abkhazia. Despite this the EU and other donors have been present in Abkhazia. The framework that was acceptable for the Georgian government was one of assistance to people affected by conflict. The geography of external aid was defined as the "inside" of the conflict area and the adjacent region<sup>27</sup>, or the conflict zone that included Abkhazia, particularly the Gal(-i) district, and Western Georgia.

Since the late 1990s the EU was supporting projects aimed at the rehabilitation of the livelihoods and infrastructure in the districts on both sides of the Ingur(-i) river. The first EU funding of the civil society and infrastructure rehabilitation projects in

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<sup>26</sup> EU/Georgia Action Plan. Available [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action\\_plans/georgia\\_enp\\_ap\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/georgia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf); Georgia Country Strategy Paper, 2007-2013. Available [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi\\_csp\\_georgia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi_csp_georgia_en.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.delgeo.ec.europa.eu/en/programmes/rehabilitation1.html>

Abkhazia came in 2005<sup>28</sup>. The European Commission (EC) has been clearly distancing itself from the political side of conflict resolution. Instead its funding was channeled into support for livelihoods of the conflict-affected areas, economic rehabilitation and general democratization and human rights protection in the two societies as confidence building measures.

The implementation of the rehabilitation projects was the responsibility of UNOMIG and UNDP in Abkhazia. The EC supported IDP rehabilitation projects in Georgia proper. Within the Decentralized Cooperation programme and EIDHR frameworks the EU has been supporting civil society in Abkhazia, including support for human rights NGOs, dialogue with local authorities, development of free media and improvement of the judiciary.

The number of funded Georgian NGOs as implementers of the socio-rehabilitation projects is visibly greater compared to the Abkhaz ones. In fact, almost all the rehabilitation funding went to the UNDP, UNOMIG and EBRD and not to any local Abkhaz NGO. This could be partly explained by the sensitivity of the issue of an Abkhaz NGO doing rehabilitation work in the Gali district and partly to the lack of the domestic expertise. Besides, the de facto status was a challenge for the direct EU-Abkhaz CSO funding. Same is true for the democratization projects in Abkhazia. The recipients of most of the funding were the Danish Refugee Council, World Vision and ICRC.

The majority of the EU-funded projects are for rehabilitation, relief and development. They are of crucial importance in their own right, but have a very thin if any conflict transformation component and do not involve both sides of the conflict. More specifically, the funded rehabilitation, democratization and human rights projects were taking place either in Abkhazia or in Georgia proper and there were no joint cross-conflict projects. The exception is the Inguri Hydropower Plant reconstruction and rehabilitation project that is the most vivid albeit the sole example of the cooperation between the two sides that has never been interrupted. Explicitly cross-conflict projects were run by the international peacebuilding NGOs, Conciliation Resources, International Alert and Berghof Center that received funding under the RRM and later IfS.

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.delgeo.ec.europa.eu/en/programmes/rehabilitation.html>

Apart from the ENP the EU has other conflict resolution modalities vis-à-vis the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the crisis in Georgia was appointed shortly after the August 2008 war and shortly after the EU Monitoring Mission was deployed. The EU, represented by the EUSR, EC and diplomats from the member states, co-facilitates the post-war Geneva talks between Russia and Georgia where Abkhazia and South Ossetia are also represented. Besides, there is the office of the EUSR for the South Caucasus that deals with all three conflicts in the region. The constructive dialogue of the EUSR and international peacebuilding CSOs with the Ministry of Reintegration<sup>29</sup> has facilitated the adoption by the Ministry of the strategy for engagement without recognition. The public and political discussion has just started and it is not clear yet whether the strategy will be endorsed. However this was a substantial step forward. The most notable trait of this new development is that the internal civil society dialogue with the Georgian government, primarily the Ministry of the Reintegration, has clearly created an impetus for change. This is an example of synergy between the EU, European peacebuilding civil society and Georgian civil society in the search for new avenues for the revival of the peace process.

#### *Moldova/Transnistria*

The EU has turned its attention to the Moldova-Transnistria conflict after the big accession bang in 2004. In light of Moldova's EU aspirations that are less fanciful than in other cases, largely due to its geographic position, this conflict has been attracting increasing interest after the accession of Romania, a stakeholder in the conflict. The EUSR to Moldova was appointed in 2005 with a clearly stated task to strengthen EU contribution to the resolution of the conflict. Besides, the EUBAM that was set up in response to the joint Moldovan-Ukrainian request to assist with the customs procedures at the border between Ukraine and Transnistria began its operation in 2005. Notably, both sides of the conflict (Moldova and Transnistria), the Ukraine and the EU came to cooperate with each other. The EU also has consultative status within the 5+2 negotiations format.

In the Country Strategy Paper the resolution of the Transnistria conflict is said to be the priority for the Moldovan government. The 'to do' list is elaborate and specific<sup>30</sup>, which

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<sup>29</sup> The EC is co-funding the Georgian State Ministry of Reintegration.

<sup>30</sup> Commission (2009d)



is an indication of the serious intentions of the EU with regard to the steady progression towards the resolution of this conflict. However the EU is still in search of its proper role in the Moldova-Transnistria peace process. This is clear from its cautious support for civil society on the two banks. No specialized peacebuilding cross-conflict projects have been supported by the EU so far<sup>31</sup>. Parallel projects in the area of ecology, health and rehabilitation of disabled children with a manifestly apolitical agenda receive funding from the EU Delegation in Moldova through UNDP. It is important to note that unlike in other conflict regions in the Eastern Neighbourhood where people do not have access to the opposite side of the conflict, in the Moldova-Transnistria case civil society representatives can participate in meetings and events on the other side. Although selective restrictions, intimidation and travel bans take place, more often by the Transnistrian authorities, but the softness of the separation line is a major asset with regard to conflict resolution. Besides, the EU does not seem to have strict limitations on the engagement and funding of Transnistrian CSOs. More often this assistance is being channeled through Moldovan CSOs, which is reluctantly and selectively accepted by Transnistrian authorities. This facilitates cross-divide activities, although Transnistrian authorities are very cautious with regard to whom to let in. Recently the EUSR for Moldova was declared persona non grata in Transnistria. However his Chisinau staff continue their communication and visits across the divide. There are plans to intensify the cross-conflict rapprochement by expanding EU funding for the development of the Chamber of Commerce in Transnistria,

Assistance to civil society from the EU so far has not expanded beyond the social services sphere, capacity development for NGOs and creation of resource centers<sup>32</sup>. Moldovan Think Tanks attempt to inform the negotiations agenda and propose a strategy for the transformation of the conflict, however some of the efforts in this direction hardly serve the purpose of the closure of the gap between the two societies and polities<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Global Conflict Prevention Pool (UK) has funded an IMPACT project directed by the PATRIR, which brought together researchers from the two banks of the river to compile a book that embodied joint analysis of the consequences of the stagnant peace process.

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.delmda.ec.europa.eu/eu\\_and\\_moldova/pdf/project\\_civil\\_society\\_en.pdf](http://www.delmda.ec.europa.eu/eu_and_moldova/pdf/project_civil_society_en.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> The 3"D" (Democratization, Demilitarization and Decriminalization of Transnistria) proposal by the Institute for Public Policy made it to the top political agenda, but was rejected by Transnistria and by the moderates within the Moldovan civil society. Their line of argument was that democratization of Moldova itself should be the place to start.

### *Deficiencies of the ENP Action Plans and EU conflict interventions*

The first deficiency of the Action Plans and their implementation is that not all conflict parties are recognized and treated as such<sup>34</sup> and only one is a partner and the target of the EU “soft policy”. This situation counters the declarative commitment to peacebuilding in the conflict areas in the Neighbourhood by means of “promoting similar reforms on both sides of the boundary lines”<sup>35</sup>. The chances that the strategy of bringing the states and one state-to-be in the European Neighbourhood closer to the European standards of politics and economy contributes to peace are random, since the major condition of holistic integrated peacebuilding is not observed. The condition for peace within this framework is increased interdependence of the former opponent societies and polities (Lederach 1997). Bringing one conflict party closer to the standards of the EU widens the gap between the ‘favoured’ and ‘not favoured’ conflict parties rather than closes it, at least insofar as the ‘not favoured’ party’s prospects of making itself a separate unit within the EU interest orbit are negligible.

Only in the case of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict both entities have the ENP Action Plan. Here the strategy is adequate to the conflict format, especially given that Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt, important actors in the conflict and in the Middle East Peace Process also have their ENP Action Plans. In all other cases at least one of the primary conflict parties is not a signatory to any agreement with the EU. The situation when the authorities in the non-recognized entities are neglected or directly stigmatized as illegal hence not eligible for the EU good governance, rule of law and democratization program support may and often does lead to the marginalization of the few CSOs that do get EU attention and funding within the society and persecution by the authorities on the premise of their sellout or conspiracy. These CSOs are vulnerable and do not have access to international protection mechanisms and institutions.

Where the EU or other donors support the development of civil society organizations only on one side of the conflict, CSOs on the other, unattended side, find themselves in a much more difficult situation as change agents vis-à-vis their authorities compared to their recognized colleagues. This leads to the dominance of pro-authority organizations

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<sup>34</sup> For example, the EU presence in Abkhazia was acceptable for the Georgian government as an assistance to people affected by conflict in the conflict zone that includes Abkhazia, predominantly Gal(-i) district and Western Georgia that are referred to as the “inside” of the conflict area and the adjacent region. Explicitly cross-conflict projects were run by the international peacebuilding NGOs, Conciliation Resources, International Alert and Berghof Center that received funding under the RRM and later IfS (<http://www.delgeo.ec.europa.eu/en/programmes/rehabilitation1.html>).

<sup>35</sup> Commission (2007)

that are unlikely to raise alternative opinions or challenge the political authority<sup>36</sup>, which is a necessary condition for the rapprochement between the opposing sides. Besides, solidarity between civil societies on the opposite sides of the conflict is hampered, which impairs resolution of the second-order cross-cutting issues that enhance overall human security in the conflict context.

The second deficiency is the lack of conceptual clarity and of financial and political commitment on behalf of the EU, which is an obstacle for raising its profile as a peacebuilding agent. This transpires in the generic wording of the conflict resolution related paragraphs in the Action Plans or even omission of the mentions of the conflict and inconsistency in the references to the international legal standards for the resolution of state formation conflicts across the Action Plans<sup>37</sup>. The overall tendency to delegate the peacebuilding responsibility to other actors, such as the UN and OSCE is also an indicator of the EU's diffidence vis-à-vis protracted conflicts. Action Plans for Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory is a notable exception. The EU has also recently intensified its participation in the Transnistria conflict resolution after over a decade of virtual neglect of the conflict.

The third deficiency is that the differentiation in the policies of the EU towards different states seems to derive from the variations in the relationships between the EU and the particular state leaderships in the Neighbourhood, which are shaped not least by EU self-interest, rather than from the rigorous conflict analysis on the ground. The success or failure of a "soft power" approach is determined not only by the persuasiveness of the attractive alternative to the *status quo*, but also by the legitimacy of the actor that takes this approach. The latter is particularly important in the context of protracted conflicts in the European Neighbourhood where the *Idealpolitik* foundation of the EU interventions is shaken by the EU oscillating between the role of an honest broker, an idealist human rights advocate, a bystander and a classic realist driven by the *Realpolitik* of a trade and energy, counter-terrorism agenda, the opportunity to raise the EU profile

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<sup>36</sup> This is the case with the National Union of Women, National Union of Youth and National Union of Workers created by the Polisario Front in the refugee camps in Algeria. The Polisario Front has a record of human rights violations and curtailment of diversity of views on the core and linked conflict issues (Human Rights Watch 2008).

<sup>37</sup> A clear preference for the two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is expressed in the two respective Action Plans, a reference to the principle of self-determination of people is made in Armenia Action plan, but not in the Azerbaijan Action plan, while in the Action plans for Moldova and Georgia the principle of territorial integrity is stated as the basis for the resolution of the Transnistria and Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts, respectively.

vis-à-vis the USA as a peace broker or state builder, such as in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Newman and Yacobi 2004: 32) and power contests. Besides, an EU that appears to be more demanding and commanding towards some partners but not others may reduce its credibility further (Smith 2005).

At the same time the ENP and other documents of relevance for peacebuilding in the Neighborhood do have components that have a more robust link with the enhancement of peacebuilding and eventual resolution of the conflicts compared to the generic promotion of domestic democratic reforms as a way to peace. They concern alternative formats for the interaction of the representatives of the rival parties and institutionalization of the cross-conflict cooperation, which may soften the issue of disputed borders. However these proposals require a sound theory of change at the foundation with regard to their effect on peacebuilding prospects and ought to stem from an actual analysis of reality rather than wishful thinking. Otherwise they may remain on paper like the South Caucasus Parliament or bring actors from the opposing sides together in specialized settings or for a specific non-conflict related task<sup>38</sup>, but not alter relationships between conflict parties or create new frameworks for conflict transformation. This happens either because one of the parties does not participate<sup>39</sup> in an initiative or because regional formats are imposed from the outside on the stakeholders who have little or no incentive to go regional, or yet because the encounters and joint activities between the sides are designed and/or facilitated with a clear conflict transformation strategy in mind.

The vagueness of the EU framework of operation vis-à-vis external conflicts matches the generality of conflict analysis by the European institutions in question: the check-list of root causes of conflicts includes poverty, inequality, oppression, poor governance and human rights violations that are the lowest common denominator of causes and aggravating factors pertinent to various types of conflicts ranging from civil wars to

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<sup>38</sup> Both Armenian and Azerbaijani participation in the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus and in a programme on integrated border management in the Southern Caucasus is praised in the respective Country Progress Reports (Commission 2009c; Commission 2009d)

<sup>39</sup> Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorny Karabakh do not participate in the EU-supported regional initiatives in the South Caucasus. A notable exception with regard to the involvement of the unrecognized entities into regional initiatives was the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) that was set up in response to the joint Moldovan-Ukrainian request to assist with the customs procedures at the border between Ukraine and Transnistria. It started its operation in 2005. Both, Moldova and Transnistria, as well as Ukraine and the EU were cooperating with each other on the border management issues (Commission 2009e)

resource wars and to class and nationalist conflicts<sup>40</sup>. Although useful as a list of indicators for an initial brief early warning analysis across a big number of cases, this list falls short of providing a solid conflict analysis basis for crafting strategies for either the EU intervention into a particular conflict situation or for mandating and funding other interveners. The proposed checklist is composed in a static mode and depicts a snapshot of the conflict. Although regular revision of the situation with this checklist is prescribed, a set of successive snapshots does not suffice for the analysis of the conflict as a dynamic system and the key question on why the situation has or has not changed remains unanswered.

The still-prevalent conflict analysis mode where there are conflict causes and symptoms defined in a static way and spread apart on a temporal dimension is helpful as the initial mapping of the new and complex conflict situations, but may be misleading in the design of conflict interventions. After decades of separation and no common institutions the two (or more) peoples' relationships, some of the core conflict issues, the attitudes towards war as a means to resolve conflict, peacebuilding capacity and other characteristics of the conflict system are very different from the initial constellation of the above characteristics. The objective to eradicate root structural causes needs to be tempered. The structures and culture that had given rise to the violent conflict in the first place most likely are not in place anymore. Instead new structures and culture have emerged where the symptoms may have become the causes in their own right and 'cultural' violence in terms of popular attitudes may have turned 'structural' had the legislation been passed to anchor the evolved 'culture'. Besides, the conflict parties get mired in the action-counter-action routine that may create a new conflict reality that supersedes the original constellation of the conflict and creates new causes of more immediate concern for the parties. In a complex conflict system that has undergone significant changes throughout the course of the conflict a more promising place to initiate conflict transformation may be emphasising solutions rather than problems and acknowledging multiple peaceful futures (Ropers 2008).

Emergence of theories and praxis of participatory peacebuilding and multi-track diplomacy, expansion of the notion of violence (direct, cultural and structural), and introduction of justice and reconciliation variables into the peacebuilding equation

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<sup>40</sup> European Commission Check-list for Root Causes of Conflict, 2001, [http://ec.europa/external\\_relations/cfsp/cpcm/cp/list.htm](http://ec.europa/external_relations/cfsp/cpcm/cp/list.htm)

shaped the contemporary peacebuilding discourse. These theories provide necessary depth and versatility compared to the liberal peace paradigm for building peace in the conflicts that unfold between the state and a non-state entity and between non-state entities, which constitute the majority of the protracted violent conflicts since the end of the Cold War. A systemic approach to conflicts has introduced another important dimension to peacebuilding, namely the “learning” capacity of a conflict system that means it is constantly changing due to external and internal perturbations and is always susceptible to change (Ropers 2008). All the progressive conflict resolution rhetoric can be found in the conceptual EU documents (Pérez 2004), but at the programmatic level and in the politics vis-à-vis protracted conflicts the classic development and security agendas do not seem to be enriched and amended with approaches and strategies that ensure conflict sensitivity at a minimum and preferably a specialized peacebuilding agenda.

### **3. Theories of change in use by peacebuilding CSOs in the five state formation conflicts in the European Neighbourhood**

Theories of change allow for the evaluation of peacebuilding interventions (ex post facto), but as well for the forecast of the impact (ex ante). This section provides examples of theories of change that drive the peacebuilding operations of CSOs in the conflict areas in the European Neighbourhood. Some of them are specific to state formation conflicts, while others are more universal. This is neither an evaluation of the accuracy and relevance of the discovered theories for the respective conflict contexts (although most of them have a solid ground theory basis or have given rise to new ground theories) nor an evaluation of the performance of the CSOs. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate diversity and robustness of theories of change in peacebuilding that should be incorporated into the generic democracy-peace paradigm or regional and cross-cutting issues initiatives that form the theory of change in the EU approach to peacebuilding.

#### **3.1 Theories of change in use by the peacebuilding CSOs in the European Neighbourhood**

##### **Introduction of new formats of interaction between the conflict sides broadens the space for the search for political-territorial solutions**

There are CSOs that work in the supra-state (regional), multi-lateral and cross-conflict bi-lateral sub-state (local-to-local) formats. Versatility of the formats of engagement of

conflict parties is important to tackle the asymmetry issue pertinent to state formation conflicts and diversity of conflict analyses and solution proposals amongst single conflict parties. This way non-recognized aspiring states (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria) and states-to-be (Palestine) can participate in the broader regional projects on a par with the states, for example. Internal dialogue that provides avenues for the expression of the variety of views on the conflict, like the one that was initiated by the civil society in Georgia after the August 2008 war, is another example of a format that serves the purpose of breaking the monopoly of the authorities on building the strategy in the conflict. *Caucasus Business and Development Network* is an example of the 3+3+1 format of economic entities that includes three states and three unrecognized republics in the South Caucasus and Turkey. This network turns the concept of an integrated South Caucasus economic space into reality through specific projects and brands (Caucasus Cheese, Caucasus Tea, Caucasus Wine) and advocacy for the legalization of economic activities across the conflict frontiers. It also supports economic projects at the local level, especially in the borderlands in order to accentuate that survival needs at the periphery may run counter to the rigid position of the center that cuts off traditional and most economically sound business routes and production chains. These projects also widen the accessible interface between the conflict sides. In the sphere of collective psychology this project serves the purpose of the creation and maintenance of supra-national identities as a promising mechanism for peaceful co-existence between rival national projects that claim exclusive rights to define sovereignty of a particular ethno-territorial entity. Civil society and other non-state socially prominent actors thus acquire particular importance as producers and promoters of inclusive diverse identities, transnational, supra-state, sub-state and beyond the state identities.

*Mediator*, a Transnistrian organization, promotes a format where borders are softened while each conflict party preserves its sovereignty. The format implies a mediating and a cross-roads position of Transnistria between Russia and the European Union. This position acquires particular importance with regard to the proposals for new security architecture at the interface of Europe and Russia. The format where the non-recognized Transnistria can establish relations with the EU is reflected upon in light of EU competence in the political and economic regional arrangements that allow for the expression and implementation of national identities and self-determination beyond the state framework.

**Modeling dialogue on the basis of mutual recognition and reciprocity restores the broader society's trust in the possibility of a dialogue with the opponent side**

When people from the opposing sides cannot meet in person to hold a dialogue or a discussion within the borders of the conflict system due to the minimal or non-existent interface, media come to the rescue. *Bitterlemons.org* is an Internet platform for Israeli and Palestinian academics, politicians, civil society figures, and individual intellectuals and activists of all political affiliations and beliefs to juxtapose ideas, arguments and analyses. A pallet of views from both sides of the conflict thus appears on the site and equality in the expression of views is modeled.

The *Dialogue Through Film* project that is run jointly by the London-based Conciliation Resources and Internews-Armenia, Internews-Azerbaijan and Stepanakert Press Club creates a special form of dialogue by means of watching and discussing short 'human stories' documentaries by young Azeris and Karabakhi Armenians as a method of exchanging their ideas and emotions with regard of the war and post-war life in their societies.

Internews-Armenia and Internews-Azerbaijan implemented a model of the television-mediated dialogue that was broadcast to the two national audiences. Twenty four weekly *Front Line* dialogue series where government officials and oppositional politicians, civil society activists, intellectuals, former soccer star teammates, artists and other interlocutors debated the causes and the substance of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, shared memories of the common life space, and exchanged their hopes and nostalgias were watched by 50% of the populations of Armenia and Azerbaijan, an overwhelming majority of whom regarded this as a sign of hope for the re-opening of the political dialogue. These data indirectly support the theory of change at the root of this peacebuilding initiative.

**Reconstruction of the communication space where there is isolation and lack of interface models a common public sphere that prepares the societies for co-existence**

Institute for War and Peace Reporting in Armenia and Azerbaijan sponsors a daily newspaper insert with articles by Armenian and Azeri journalists about various aspects of the life of their societies. The *Alternative Start* initiative by intellectuals and activist



across the South Caucasus made the Internet discussion platform accessible for people in different parts of the South Caucasus to participate in, share their ideas, reflections and emotions, and call for solidarity. This initiative combats nationalism and isolation not merely with essays on politics, conflicts, human rights and other pressing issues that every registered partner can submit and comment on, but by means of public awareness, advocacy campaigns and assistance to the victims persecuted on political grounds.

The *Ethnoforum* initiative by the Center for Independent Television was carried out as debates and dialogue between public officials, journalists and NGOs from the two banks of Nistru river broadcast live on the Moldovan Public Television that people on both sides can watch. Greatly appreciated by the audience, this program was acknowledged by the EU as a successful socially important undertaking.

These two theories of change address the issue of the creation, sustenance and expansion of the interface between the parties that grow more and more parochial and entrenched in their positions, which is the case in all the state formation conflicts in the Neighborhood.

**Combating discrimination of the ‘enemy kin’ within own societies increases tolerance and adherence to the universal humanistic standards**

Mossawa Center promotes the equality of Palestinian citizens of Israel as well as of other minority clusters of the Israeli society believing that there is no peace without equality. Nagev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development promotes co-existence between Arabs and Jews through the empowerment of the Arab Bedouin communities. Tolerance is being fostered by means of the creation of exemplar equality spaces such as mixed classrooms.

The Society for Humanitarian Research, an Azerbaijani CSO safeguards human rights of Armenians in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani and Armenian activists from the Helsinki Citizens Assembly were jointly facilitated hostages and prisoners of war protection and exchange irrespective of their nationality.

These peacebuilding strategies tackle the problem of the discrimination, injustice and human rights violations of the minority that found itself on the ‘wrong side’ of the state formation conflict.

**Those from conflict-affected communities whose immediate needs were attended in a peacebuilding project or program are likely to join ‘peace constituency’**

Georgian branch of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly assists ethnic Georgian refugees/IDPs who have been evicted from Abkhazia and South Ossetia to have opportunities for political expression and civic organization for conflict victims, who are usually socially and politically marginalized or manipulated by militants in gaining equality within the Georgian society to participate in the peace process and benefit from a negotiated solution. This is believed to be a foundation for their constructive involvement in conflict transformation.

Union of Women-Entrepreneurs in Abkhazia was established after the war when men were banned from crossing the Russian border, the only exit for trade, and women shouldered a burden of providing for the families. They assisted women with start-up loans and grants, business skills training and otherwise. This work made the organization trusted and respected. Later they started helping Georgian women in the border Gal(-i) region, the most disadvantaged and physically and socially unprotected community of the ‘enemy’ kin, start and run small enterprises. Their Abkhaz and Georgian clients later became a ‘peace constituency’ in the cross-conflict business initiatives of the Caucasus Business Development Network as they immediately experienced dividends of transparent and unrestricted economic relations with the neighbours across the conflict divide.

**Calling public attention to the wrongdoings and mistakes of own side disaggregates the conflict parties, reduces the sense of own righteousness and/or of exclusive victimhood and fosters critical thinking**

The Society for Humanitarian Research and Helsinki Citizens Assembly in Azerbaijan call the authorities to include Nagorny Karabakh as a partner in negotiations. They also confront nationalist and militant discourse in the political arena.

The Helsinki Citizens Assembly in Nagorny Karabakh acknowledged their own army’s crime against Azerbaijani civilians and publicly apologized before Azerbaijani people.

B'Telem, an Israeli-Palestinian NGO with headquarters in Israel sensitizes Israeli public to the suffering and human rights abuses of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza due to the policies and actions on the ground of the Israeli leadership and the army.

**Positioning oneself and acting as a ‘third side’ demonstrates that people have a choice in the nationalist conflict**

Leading by the example of acting as a ‘third side’ (Ury 2000) yet being ‘ascribed’ to their party in the conflict manifested in the ability to look at the conflict from a wider perspective, standing by the groups on the ‘enemy’ side in the specific situations of human rights and freedom abuse, and acting out of solidarity with colleagues on the other side characterizes mature peacebuilding CSOs. Serving as messengers between the authorities of Nagorny Karabakh conflict parties the leaders of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly and of the Society for Humanitarian Research demonstrated that not only they can listen to the other side’s story themselves, but promote communication between the leaderships.

Joint Committee for Democratization and Conciliation (JCDC) leaders from Moldova regularly did shuttle diplomacy between the authorities and people of Moldova and Transnistria. Their non-nationalist attitude and openness to the search of political-territorial solutions within the entire spectrum of options, including self-determination for Transnistria, gained the JCDC respect and opened doors on both sides of the conflict.

**Fostering cross-cutting professional, generational, gender, social, political and other identities disaggregates the parties and opens new avenues for building links between them**

The Peres Center carries out professional exchange and collaboration programs for Israelis and Palestinians, and large scale on-going mixed sports courses for the youth of the socially disadvantaged families on both sides. Caucasus Business and Development Network nurtures professional and social solidarity between SMEs. Designed with the purpose of creating a previously absent interface or expanding and anchoring it between the societies, these initiatives are a mindful alternative to casual encounters (Abu-Nimer 1999) or cross-conflict initiatives that are not designed to change attitudes or create new joint institutions.

**Human rights protection of the disadvantaged in asymmetric conflicts promotes equalization of the parties in the peace process and sets the standard for the negotiated solution**

The link between unconditional and universal respect for individual human rights and peace needs to be turned from an axiom to the hypothesis. This appears to be an effective theory of change for conflict prevention – indeed, societies where individual and collective rights are safeguarded and respected by all seem to be immune to grave societal conflicts. In the case when an asymmetric conflict where a more powerful side systematically oppresses a weaker side as is the case in the Israel-Palestine and Morocco-Western Sahara conflict, which creates incentives on the weaker side to restore balance by violence, human rights CSOs attempt to non-violently restore symmetry that is an imperative for the progression towards a negotiated solution and stable peace. Empowering the weak and confronting the powerful is regarded as a necessary step in the transformation of asymmetric conflicts (Lederach, 1995). It is only after the restoration of balance that genuine peace initiatives make take root. This is a theory of change in use by the Al-Haq in Palestine and Sahrawi and foreign human rights activists that advocate on behalf of the Sahrawi minority. Primacy of human rights is being promoted as a cornerstone of a negotiated solution.

**Non-violence as a conscious choice and anti-war movement as an alternative to militant rhetoric and violent behavior change the ratio between ‘war’ and ‘peace’ constituencies in favor of the latter**

The most notable are ex-combatants’ organizations and movements in the conflict zones. Combatants for Peace, a Palestinian-Israeli CSO, sets an example of protecting people without arms when accompanying Palestinian farmers to their agricultural lands amidst Jewish settlements and Israeli army outposts or by jointly creating safe playgrounds for children. Anti-violence protests and campaigns by Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations were taking place across different phases of the conflict.

**3.2 Civil society capacity of peacebuilding CSOs in the implementation of their theories of change**

Theories of change ought to be applied in the societal and political realms in order to ensure change in the policies and politics, otherwise programmatically successful projects that do not add up their outcomes into peacebuilding advocacy “may generate a false consciousness of peaceful relations when the underlying processes are much more malign” (Clements 2004:3). CSOs that engage in peacebuilding in order to generate

social change ought to be political themselves or ally with and support specialized advocacy and activist groups.

Political role of peacebuilding civil society is two-fold:

1. Civil society ensures the nexus between individual and societal transformation, between personal and political change
2. Civil society assumes the role of moderate political parties where the latter are absent and where politics is radicalized

The following civil society strategies were identified as being adopted by the CSOs surveyed.

**Building and safeguarding organization's credibility and legitimacy at home, across the conflict divide and internationally**

Peacebuilding activities by professional organizations that *deliver high quality professional products* (films, newspapers, legislation drafts, jobs, humanitarian, legal and financial assistance (including loans and grants for no-profits and SMEs) are better perceived by the public and authorities compared to the initiatives that do not deliver any products for which there is a demand in the society. More importantly, peacebuilding CSOs gain their credibility and popularity exactly because of their products, some of which may be related to peacebuilding, but often not.

*Independence of the authorities and principled position* on other social and political issues within the society also solidifies a peacebuilding CSO's legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the society. For example, the leader of the Stepanakert Press-Club raised the issue of non-transparent allocation of governmental funds to the public organizations in Nagorny Karabakh, started a campaign and as a result the authorities were forced to introduce the tender procedure.

**Working in meaningful partnerships** is a pre-requisite for the accumulation of positive change and steady progression towards peace (Garcia, 2006). Coalition building within the civil society of the conflict sides, regionally and internationally is often seen as a strategy for achieving visible impact. Many of the surveyed CSOs were initiators of peacebuilding coalitions. Alliances and genuine partnerships with international NGOs provide additional strength and protection for carrying their peacebuilding initiatives to the political level.

Coalition building skills are very important for these coalitions to live and be effective. Discrepancy in the level of credibility, competence, acceptance by one or several sides of the conflict, organizational integrity and other factors ought to be carefully weighed before launching a coalition that are to produce political and societal effect. Some get institutionalized, while some others dissolve after having completed their task. The institutionalized ones usually have a stronger case to get officially recognized internal and international governmental structures as partners or as a force to be taken seriously in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

**Political advocacy and lobbying** was a strategy in use by all the surveyed CSOs. Participation in the legislative committees and various consultative bodies at the national and international level, involvement of parliamentarians and officials into the activities, direct campaigns, including pressure campaigns are in the armoury of the peacebuilding CSOs.

#### **Taking political posts, parliament, government – subsequently or parallel to the CSO position**

There is no consensus regarding the participation in formal politics. Some think that this is a positive step to leverage social and political change efforts by civil society, while some others think that acceptance by a civil society leader of a political or administrative post looks like cooptation and would undermine credibility of peacebuilding CSOs. Whether these moves would promote peacebuilding depends on the political context, maturity of civil society and personal integrity of the person in question.

**Educating donors** is a strategy that is usually implemented in partnerships between international and within-the-conflict CSOs. Shifting a balance of power of expertise and decision making towards a more consultative and egalitarian funding strategy is an important direction of the CSOs from within-the-conflict and their outside civil society colleagues.

#### **Creating own funding structures**

Inaccessibility of the EU funds for local and grassroots CSOs and community groups whose role in peacebuilding is indispensable is regarded as an injustice. Hence independent funds are being created to serve the local level of peacebuilding. People's

Peace Fund established by the Israeli and Palestinian peace activists is an example of the internally-driven and inward orientated support system.

#### **4. Professional cooperation between the EU and civil society: towards a new framework for the CSO peacebuilding impact assessment**

As mentioned above, there is a disconnect between the EU support for peacebuilding and direct interventions and peacebuilding by civil society on the *peace as change* versus *peace as stability* approach and on the notion of *civil society as an institutional basis for peacebuilding*. These two are the bases of the integrated peacebuilding framework. EU institutions have difficulties with the incorporation of these building blocks into their programmes and funding structure not least because of the bureaucratisation and of the vagueness of the *Idealpolitik* as a theory of change and limitations of, and inconsistency in, the application of the *Realpolitik* to force one or several conflict parties to soften their positions.

##### **4.1 Peace as stability versus peace as change**

Conflict resolution as it is regarded through the conceptual lens of the EU official institutions, is a finite process, of which a peace agreement is the climax because it marks the beginning of stable times as the ultimate desired state of affairs. A peace process then is a unidirectional movement that eradicates conflict, while conflict is viewed as a series of crises or one on-going crisis. Hence the EU conflict resolution strategy is predominantly a crisis response. With the creation of the IfS that replaced the RRM the situation has begun to change. Crisis preparedness aspect of the IfS received greater funding and timeframe of the project was expanded to 18 months that is still too short if weighted against the famous stance of the “two-hundred-year present” as a metaphor for the timeframe needed to repair damage done by a short war. Clearly the solution lies somewhere in between the two extremes of the parachuting crisis response and the Sisyphus option.

Within the frame of reference where crisis and chaos is the only alternative to stability, the latter is naturally regarded as a precious commodity in the modern world. However stability is not tantamount to peace, because stability may mean the reproduction of the inward oppressive political regimes, persistent poverty and lack of economic and human development or disparities in the development in the interest of the dominant group, all of which are either sources or aggravating factors to protracted social conflicts.

Within the integrated peacebuilding framework (Lederach, 1997) and the systemic conflict transformation approach (Ropers, 2008), on the contrary, peacebuilding is a process-structure with a generational horizon, for which “the goal is not stasis, but rather the generation of continuous, dynamic, self-regenerating processes that maintain form over time and are able to adapt to environmental changes” (Lederach, 1997, p. 84). Peacebuilding dynamic maps onto the conflict dynamic and the two may be synergistic at times, while antagonistic at other times. Political and economic liberalization interventions interact with the conflict and peacebuilding in a number of constellations. Furthermore, the societies in conflict transform over time in various aspects and in various directions, which may have repercussions for the conflict: they undergo political regime changes and revolutions, experience demographic tides, are exposed to secluded or global economic shocks and environmental disasters. This is not to mention conscious conflict transformation efforts by domestic and outside agencies towards a peaceful and just resolution of the core and secondary issues and the overall transition from a war-system towards a peace-system.

Civil society has the capacity to develop “peripheral vision”, or “the capacity to situate oneself in a changing environment with a sense of direction and purpose and at the same time develop and ability to see and move with the unexpected.... With the peripheral vision change processes have a flexible strength, never find dead ends that stop their movement, and relish complexity precisely because complexity never stops offering up new things that may create ways forward, around, or behind whatever jumps in the way” (Lederach 2005:119). This capacity is invaluable with regard to the constantly changing conflict context. The EU has serious limitations in its manoeuvring with regard to the redistribution of funds and speedy proposal processing. Incorporation of the “constant feedback loop” (Körppen 2006) into the EU policy and financing instruments is highly unlikely. Hence the recipient CSOs ought to be entrusted with greater flexibility in the project and program implementation in order to be able to adjust to the changing context and to exercise “serendipity” to maximize the effect of own efforts when the contexts turns out more favourable.

#### **4.2. Civil society as an institutional basis for peacebuilding**

Professional peacebuilding by civil society organizations is desirable and not objectionable as some suggest (Paffenholz and Spurk, 2007) if professionalization is



regarded as an antithesis to dilettantism. This concerns both international and local CSOs. Professional peacebuilding organizations operate in the mode of ‘reflective practitioner’ and build their interventions on the basis of theories and apply specific methods, while at the same time reflecting on the experience to amend and enrich the theoretical pool and perfect the methodology.

Professional peacebuilding CSOs reach out to those who are hard to reach – political leaders, fighters, radical political parties, big business, otherwise peace practice turns into “preaching to the choir” activities. At the same time, if civil society does not expand the ranks of ‘peace constituency’ among the society at large either through involving more people into the orbit of its peacebuilding activities or through a multiplier such as television or the Internet, Lederach’s pyramid is inverted hence the peacebuilding is fragile and not sustainable.

Professional peacebuilding CSOs work with all clusters that can be identified as having their own conflict experience, goals, ideology regarding conflict resolution methods, their level of motivation to act to approach a more peaceful and just state of society. Instead of classifying civil society actors in conflict as ‘civil’ and ‘uncivil’ it is more instructive to elicit to which collective needs they cater and which frustrated aspirations they voice. The ability of ‘civil’ society to constructively engage with ‘uncivil’ society in the dialogue, cross-conflict initiatives, and conflict sensitive development is an indicator of their maturity as peacebuilding agents<sup>41</sup>. Within the professional peacebuilding the principle that “civil society needs to be civil and thus excludes groups that show uncivil behavior” (Paffenholz and Spurke 2006: 8) can do more harm than good to peace process, because those excluded on the grounds of being ‘uncivil’ may easily turn into ‘spoilers’ and undermine the most ‘civil’ peace efforts. People may fear peace made by the leaders on an unclear hence suspicious pretext. People may feel abandoned, betrayed and revengeful if violence and injustice that had been done to them was not addressed and justice was not compromised. People may simply not know any other way to live and make ends meet rather than warfare. Yet these people may be identifying themselves as civil society that advances a social cause and has a constituency.

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<sup>41</sup> For example, ex-combatants rehabilitation and re-socialization projects make many of them ardent peace activists – as was the case in Northern Ireland and Nicaragua

Finally, professional peacebuilding CSOs are capable of the promotion of social change. Their civil society capacity and power is fully mobilized for the promotion of unpopular ideas and approaches in a hostile or indifferent environment. The strategies involve modelling co-existence, public awareness raising, demonstration of their adherence to universal human rights principles, generating process and solution alternatives to the zero-sum game approach to the conflict and other advocacy avenues.

### **4.3 Components of the new framework**

The new framework for the forecast and assessment of the impact of peacebuilding projects and longer-term strategies employed by CSOs in light of prospective cooperation with the EU should contain the following:

#### Conflict context

- The class of the conflict
- The EU<sup>42</sup> support to Track I diplomacy and “soft power” application strategy

#### Peacebuilding by civil society

- Theories of change. ‘Peacebuilding clusters’ within civil society needs to be delineated first. I propose that a ‘peacebuilding cluster’ is not a permanent membership club, but rather an open system that encompasses occasional projects by organizations that are not peacebuilding CSOs per se and have a different primary mandate and scope of operation (media peacebuilding projects, conflict-sensitive development, art for peace), thematic work by specialized CSOs that is a necessary and integral part of post-war peacebuilding (de-mining, refugee assistance, rehabilitation of ex-combatants, justice processes, trauma healing), and properly peacebuilding CSOs that have a more or less specialized area of activities. The criterion for the inclusion into the ‘peacebuilding cluster’ is an explicit or discernible theory of change. Theories of change ought to be assessed in the totality of all projects and initiatives on the ground. This task can be approximated by means of the analysis of theories of change in the conglomerate of projects funded by the same donor (Church and Shouldice 2003), on a particular thematic dimension, or within each category of change (Mial 2004; Mitchell 2005). Thus overlooked and excessively elaborated areas would be identified and amendments to the strategic and targeted support for peacebuilding by civil society could be made.

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<sup>42</sup> This could be any inter-governmental organization, such as the UN or OSCE.

### Civil society operation context

- Civil society maturity and capacity
- Historical/temporal relationship between civil society evolution and conflict
- Structure of the external (EU) support for civil society

## **5. Conclusion**

A notable step in the direction of acknowledgement and partnership with peacebuilding CSOs was taken by the European Commission (EC) in the form of the establishment of the Peacebuilding Partnership (PbP) within the crisis preparedness of the IfS to channel targeted support to non-governmental organizations that specialize in peacebuilding. Irrespective of the clear budgetary emphasis in favour of crisis response compared to crisis preparedness where CSOs take the lead, this marks two important developments. First, peacebuilding is being recognized as a freestanding professional field that requires specialized funding mechanisms, just like the fields of development and human rights. Secondly, civil society organizations are recognized as institutions that are the depository of the required expertise and skills. It is important to stress that this happened to a large extent thanks to the diligent and focused advocacy by the European peacebuilding non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their coalition European Peace Liaison Office (EPLO), in particular. Conflict Prevention Partnership is an educational and consultative strategy by the European peacebuilding CSOs targeted at the EU institutions. EPLO advocates the inclusion of peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict by CSOs into the European Commission's financing documents as an explicit goal and a funding priority. The establishment of the PbP is an important milestone in their advocacy work. PbP is in its infancy and the first results of its work, in particular the funding procedure, received critical overview by the peacebuilding CSO community. A cumbersome EC proposal compilation procedure that PbP has to work through has been much commented on. The PbP department is currently understaffed, and the proposal of the international and European civil society peacebuilding CSOs to set up a Directorate for Peacebuilding is met with interest but with no enthusiasm. However, an even more pressing issue is the transfer and exchange of competence in the field of peacebuilding. A dialogue of equals between civil society groups and European officials and decision makers with the aim to set the agenda of the PbP is a significant breakthrough, and the idea of the institutionalization of this dialogue to the degree of shared decision making does not look as abstract now as it may have some years ago. These developments, even if very new and humble, indicate a slow but

sure movement on behalf of the EC towards the integrated framework for peacebuilding (Lederach 1999). Within this framework it is equally correct to say that civil society supports the EU peace efforts and that the EU supports civil society peace efforts. Conceptualization of within-the-conflict and outside-the-conflict CSOs as the institutional basis and organized change agent within the infrastructure for peacebuilding opens new horizons for the cooperation between the EU and civil society in the conflict-ridden parts of the European Neighbourhood. Keeping the infrastructure for peace functional is a mandate of civil society until the conflict becomes history.

## **Annex I. List of interviews**

1. Alessia Gariggio, Research Director, EUROMID (European Institute for Research on the Middle East), Brussels
2. Amal Elsana Alh'jooj, Director, Nagev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (R.A.), Israel
3. Thierry Béchet, Adviser, External Relations Directorate-General, European Commission, Brussels; Head of the EC Delegation in Jerusalem (1996-1999)
4. Tiffany Simon, Brussels Desk Coordinator, Mossawa Center, Israel
5. Smadar Shapira, Representative in Europe, The Peres Center for Peace, Israel
6. Ghassan Khatib, Bitterlemons.org; Jerusalem Media and Communications Center, Palestine
7. Yossi Alper, Bitterlemons.org; Political Security Domain (NGO), Israel
8. Maysa Zorob, EU Advocacy Officer and legal Researcher, Al-Haq, Ramallah, Palestine
9. Jessica Montel, Executive Director, B'Tselem, Israel
10. Soulaiman Khatib, Combatants for Peace, People's Peace Fund, Palestine
11. Gadi Kenny, People's Peace Fund, Combatants for Peace, Israel
12. Alexander Russetsky, Country Director, Helsinki Citizens Assembly; Coordinator, South Caucasus institute for Regional Security, Georgia
13. Paata Zakareishvili, Republican party, Georgia
14. Arda Inal-Ipa, Center for Humanitarian Programs, Abkhazia
15. Yulia Gumba, Director, Union of Women-Entrepreneurs; Caucasus Business and Development Network, Abkhazia

16. Arzu Abdullayeva, Country Director, Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Azerbaijan
17. Shahin Rzayev, Country Director, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Azerbaijan
18. Ilham Safarov, Director, Internews-Azerbaijan
19. Avaz Gassanov, Society for Humanitarian Research, Azerbaijan
20. Seda Muradyan, Country Director, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Armenia
21. Nouneh Sarkissian, Director, Internews-Armenia
22. Karine Ohanyan, Stepanakert Press-Club, Nagorny Karabakh
23. Karen Ohanjanyan, Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Nagorny Karabakh
24. Oscari Pentikainen, International Alert, Caucasus Business and Development Center, London
25. Diana Klein, International Alert, Business and Conflict, London
26. Jonathan Cohen, Co-Director, Conciliation Resources, London
27. Denis Matveev, Regional Director - Black Sea Programme, Department of Peace Operations (DPO), Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR), Romania
28. Yuri Ataman, Joint Committee for Democratisation and Conciliation (JCDC), Moldova
29. Oazu Nantoy, Institute for Public Policy, Moldova
30. Sergey Tcach, Independent Television Center, Moldova
31. Valery Demidetsky, Independent Television Center, Moldova
32. Joe Camplisson, Moldovan Initiative Committee of Management (MICOM), Northern Ireland
33. Natalia Djandjgava, Office of the EU Special Representative for Moldova, Cisinau, Moldova
34. Vlada Lysenko, World Window (till 2006), OSCE, Transnistria
35. Sergey Shirokov, 'Mediator' Bureau of Political Research, Transnistria
36. Andrew Byrne, Principal Administrator, Crisis Response and Peace Building, External Relations Directorate-General, European Commission, Brussels

37. Catherine Woollard, Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO),  
Brussels
38. Andrew Brown, Talk Together, Oxford, UK
39. Mirjam Hirzel, Mike Fitzgibbon, International Development and Food Policy,  
Cork University, Ireland

## **Abbreviations**

CSFP - Common Foreign and Security Policy  
CSO – civil society organization  
DFID – Department for International Development, UK  
EC – European Commission  
EEAS - European External Action Service  
ECHO - European Commission Humanitarian Office  
ECJ – European Court of Justice  
EU –European Union  
EUSR – European Union Special Representative  
ENP – European Neighborhood Policy  
ENPI - European Neighborhood Policy Instruments  
EP – European Parliament  
EPLO – European Peace Liaison Office  
ESDP - European Security and Defense Policy  
GTZ - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)  
IDP – internally displaced person  
IfS - Instrument for Stability  
INGO - international non-governmental organization  
IWPR - Institute for War and Peace Reporting  
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
NGO - non-governmental organization  
OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe  
PATRIR – Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania  
PbP – Peacebuilding Partnership  
PfP – Partnership for Peace  
RRM - Rapid Response Mechanism  
SADR - Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic  
SME – small and medium enterprise  
UN – United Nations  
UNDP - United Nations Development Agency  
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
USA – United States of America  
WFP – World Food Program

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