

Conflict Prevention

[A5-0394/2001](#)

European Parliament resolution on the Commission communication on Conflict Prevention (COM(2001) 211 - C5-0458/2001 - 2001/2182(COS))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication (COM(2001) 211 - C5-0458/2001),
 - having regard to its recommendation of 10 February 1999 on the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 June 2000 on the establishment of a common European security and defence policy with a view to the European Council in Feira⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 30 November 2000 on the establishment of a common European security and defence policy after Cologne and Helsinki⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 March 2001 on developing the Union's capabilities in conflict prevention and civil crisis management⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to its position of 17 January 2001 on the proposal for a Council regulation creating the Rapid Reaction Facility (COM(2000) 119 - C5-0272/2000 - 2000/0081(CNS)⁽⁵⁾,
 - having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Göteborg European Council which endorsed the European Union Programme for the prevention of violent conflicts as well as the EU-UN cooperation in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management,
 - having regard to the Council Decision of 22 May 2000 setting up a committee for civilian aspects of crisis management⁽⁶⁾, and to the development of concrete targets for civilian crisis management in the fields of police, rule of law, civilian administration and civil protection during the Swedish Presidency;
 - having regard to the Council Decisions of 22 January 2001 setting up the Political and Security Committee⁽⁷⁾, the Military Committee of the European Union⁽⁸⁾ and on the establishment of the Military Staff of the European Union⁽⁹⁾, thus setting up the permanent bodies of the CESDP, in particular the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which will play a central role in the definition of and follow-up to the EU's response to crises,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 381/2001 of 26 February 2001 creating a rapid-reaction mechanism⁽¹⁰⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 47(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and the opinion of the Committee on Development and Cooperation ([A5-0394/2001](#)),
- A. whereas the most important elements of the European Parliament's views on conflict prevention have already been expressed in several official positions, most of them still being valid,
- B. whereas the scale of any possible conflict in the modern world underlines the necessity to maintain both a parallel global and European approach simultaneously,

C. whereas there is no reference in the Commission communication to the conflicting impact that several common policies of the European Union could have on the origin and development of local conflicts in some areas,

D. whereas the European Parliament's proposal, submitted to the 1996 IGC, to establish a European Civil Peace Corps has not yet merited any comment from the Commission or Council, despite being examined at the above-mentioned 1996 IGC, and supported by some countries,

E. whereas sole reliance on the traditional resources associated with political, diplomatic or military strategies is inadequate for conflict prevention and there is a need for a comprehensive peace-building approach, involving humanitarian aid, development cooperation, trade and foreign and security policies, restoration and maintenance of the internal legal order, the creation or re-creation of administrative structures, inter-ethnic dialogue and other approaches to conflict settlement,

F. whereas security and solidarity are increasingly two sides of the same coin in today's world and a massive programme promoted by the international community for poverty eradication must, for this reason, also be a priority for the EU,

G. whereas it is essential to highlight as potential causes of conflicts, among others, ethnic, religious, ideological and economic tensions, any form of terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking, the fight for the control of trade in raw materials, particularly of diamonds, lack of democracy as well as environmental degradation and water issues,

H. whereas in a post-violence period such interventions need to contribute to rehabilitation and reconciliation, involving as much as possible all members of the civil society, anticipating conflict or solving it with non-military instruments, such as civilian crisis management and also post-conflict action,

I. whereas interventions to prevent conflicts need to be coordinated at international level, related to the needs of the population in the conflict area, compatible with civil society and other actors in the field, non-violent and distinct from enforcement actions, flexible and practical, and capable of counteracting violent escalations at an early and timely stage,

J. whereas the need for an enhanced relationship and institutional coordination in this area is greater than ever, with regard to both the system of the United Nations and the regional level, with particular reference to the activities and bodies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe,

K. whereas it is necessary to avoid any possible duplication between the Commission and Council to ensure that the Union's approach to conflict prevention is effective,

L. whereas the European Union has a number of options available to it under its code of conduct on arms exports and its programmes on halting the transfer of small arms with a view to banning the flow of arms to conflict zones; recalling in this connection its resolution of 15 March 2001 on the UN Conference on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects [\(14\)](#), which has since taken place, and in particular its call for the development of a binding code of conduct including the prohibition of arms transfers to government and non-state perpetrators that systematically violate human rights or international humanitarian law,

M. whereas the UN Charter is the ultimate international legal and political basis for guaranteeing international security and for the security policy of the European Union and its Member States, and has universal validity,

1. Welcomes the recent Commission communication on conflict prevention, as a substantial step forward identifying ways in which EU policy can be made more coherent and informed by conflict prevention objectives;

2. Considers, nevertheless, that the Communication does not adequately address the rigidities of the current pillar system for conflict prevention, the need for strengthened interinstitutional cooperation and to overcome fragmented pillar policies, the difficulties of securing the cooperation of Member States, the difference in timing of civilian and military programmes, the need for significant internal capacity-building, and the lack of real strategic and operational coordination with NGOs and other actors in civil society, to name but a few obstacles;

3. Welcomes the Commission's plans to work closely with the Council to identify and monitor potential conflict zones, encourages both parties to make use of the information gathered by third parties, such as specialised NGOs and the academic community;
4. Urges the Commission to evaluate systematically the impact of EU actions targeted to prevent conflict in specific regions of tension; or if the Commission makes any use of the wide range of such analytical studies produced by third parties;
5. Calls for the two-pillar structure and the resulting inconsistency of European foreign policy to be fundamentally called into question in the Laeken Declaration and the subsequent Convention;
6. Stresses that both long and short-term conflict prevention requires stronger commitment and political direction on the part of the Member States, as the Community instruments alone are not enough to resolve all possible sources of conflict, and also requires stronger Commission delegations to ensure that conflict prevention is mainstreamed in EU programmes; considers that the EU's external policy budget needs to be raised in order to give the Union an opportunity to realise its ambitions;

EU Programme for the prevention of violent conflicts

7. Welcomes the programme for the prevention of violent conflicts decided by the Göteborg European Council on 15 and 16 June 2001; welcomes in particular the concept of a 'culture of prevention' as expressed in that programme;
8. Invites the future Presidencies, the Commission and the Secretary-General/High Representative to pay greater attention to the proposals submitted by the European Parliament, including the proposal calling for the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps, and to guarantee that resources are set aside for this Peace Corps;
9. Underlines the need to raise awareness of conflict prevention and to provide appropriate training to Commission staff at headquarters and in the delegations to enable them to overcome obstacles to the mainstreaming of conflict prevention;
10. Welcomes the new Council common position of 14 May 2001 concerning conflict prevention, management, and resolution in Africa⁽¹²⁾, and recommends a similar approach for each geographical zone where a risk of conflict is apparent;
11. Invites Member States to strictly abide to the code of conduct on arms exports and to work in order to give this code a binding value as soon as possible;

Conflicting impact of the common policies of the EU - the need for conflict prevention assessment

12. Considers it necessary to ensure that decisions linked to the common policies of the European Union do not have an undesirable and even harmful impact on local conflicts by distorting or even annihilating the market as well as the economic, social and ecological structure of non-member countries;
13. Believes, therefore, that greater consideration be given to the proposal to make the concept of conflict prevention a horizontal issue in all common policies of the European Union (environment, trade, agriculture, energy, etc.) in order to mainstream conflict prevention, and to the proposal of more closely integrating conflict indicators and the objectives of Conflict Prevention into the programming of Community external aid programmes;
14. Proposes that the harmful influence which certain private and public undertakings have in unstable regions should be acknowledged by creating a legally binding framework with sanctions for companies which contribute to conflicts;
15. Proposes to carry out a "Conflict Prevention Assessment" when examining major decisions concerning the common policies of the Union as well as when launching any type of programme in non-member countries, in order to establish the eventual impact that these decisions or programmes could have from a conflict prevention perspective;

16. Stresses the importance of integrating political analysis and conflict prevention objectives in the Country Strategy Papers;

17. Reiterates, as an additional contribution to local conflicts prevention, its resolution of 15 March 2001 on EU election assistance and observation in non-member countries⁽⁴³⁾ and, in particular, the attention paid to the need to complete EU's involvement in the country concerned by providing long-term sustainable support of the democracy process;

18. Is of the opinion that the EU needs an appropriate structure, which should consist of a "non-military rapid reaction unit", to select technicians and economists who have received specific training to be used in all relevant sectors, ranging from prevention activities to technical operations, and also a well-trained police force;

Establishing a European Civil Peace Corps

19. Regrets that none of the recent communications from the Commission, the Council or the European Council have given any kind of follow-up to the proposal submitted by this Parliament in its resolution of 17 May 1995 on the functions of the Treaty on European Union with a view to the 1996 IGC - Implementation and development of the Union⁽⁴⁴⁾, and in its Recommendation to the Council of 10 February 1999, on the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps;

20. Reiterates the necessity of establishing, in the framework of the Commission's rapid reaction mechanism, such a European Civil Peace Corps, whose task would be to coordinate at a European level the training and deployment of civilian specialists to carry out practical peace-making measures such as arbitration, mediation, distribution of non-partisan information, de-traumatization, and confidence-building between the warring parties, humanitarian aid, reintegration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, education, and monitoring and improving the human rights situation, including human rights accompaniment measures;

21. Proposes that full attention be paid to the training of monitors, mediators and specialists in conflict transformation; underlines in particular the need to continue to set up databases to mobilise when needed professional individuals and groups at any stage of a crisis; in this light calls on the Commission and the Member States to approach the Canadian Government which has set an excellent example with 'Canadem';

22. Urges, in this regard, the Council and the Commission to make the most of the expertise in the EU bodies; calls on the Council to make a full and critical evaluation of the work of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) outlining the future perspectives, the possibilities of a flexible and effective common action of EU-observers with those from other international organisations, in particular those of the OSCE, the shortcomings and the possible new tasks in relation to the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps; calls on the Council to report this evaluation to Parliament;

23. Outlines that the ECPC's tasks would be exclusively civilian in nature and devoted to preventing crisis situations from escalating into violence, by making full use of the resources of civil society;

24. Underlines the need, in this perspective, for NGO's specialised in conflict prevention and crisis-management, both international and region-based, to be allowed to make their own social and scientific contributions to conflict prevention where these are necessary and desirable, with the support of the Commission;

Enhanced relations with the United Nations and the OSCE

25. Recommends strengthening the operational links between the different institutions and organs who play a role in Conflict Prevention within the EU institutional framework with the OSCE REACT mechanism, the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE Representative of Media Freedom, as well as the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre;

26. Welcomes the General Affairs Council conclusions on EU/UN cooperation in conflict prevention and crises management presented to the Göteborg European Council and strongly recommends a similar approach in order to establish the modalities of enhanced cooperation between the European Union and the OSCE in the same areas;

27. Recommends strengthening the operational links between the different institutions and organs who play a role in conflict prevention within the EU institutional framework with the OSCE REACT mechanism, the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE Representative of Media Freedom, and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre;

Other initiatives

28. Suggests that extensive use of the knowledge and expertise available from the academic Conflict Prevention Network (CPN) continue to be made; recalls that the CPN was proposed by the European Parliament and has been built up over the past five years; considers, in line with the original idea, that the Network should assist not only the Commission but also the Parliament and the Council by providing a coherent, inter-institutional approach to an ambitious and successful conflict prevention policy; underlines, therefore, that the Network should extend its future activities by also assisting with the best implementation of preventive policies and the monitoring of their outcomes;

29. Reiterates that the proliferation of light weapons and small arms is a major force for instability in all crisis regions and therefore asks the EU to continue to call for an effective control of arms exports, including licensed production, industrial cooperation agreements and arms brokering; reiterates, to this end, the need to make legally binding the European Union code of conduct on arms exports;

30. Requests that more attention and resources should be devoted to education as a key instrument for conflict prevention and to this end calls upon the Commission to contribute to the activities of the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence by promoting the inclusion of peace-building and training in non-violence, mutual respect and non-hatred into the educational curricula throughout the world; and in particular in specific conflict areas such as the Balkans, the Middle East and the Great Lakes;

31. In this perspective, stresses that the empowerment of women should be encouraged as much as possible;

32. Requests its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, as well as to the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OSCE

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- [\(1\)](#) OJ C 150, 28.5.1999, p. 164.
 - [\(2\)](#) OJ C 67, 1.3.2001, p. 283.
 - [\(3\)](#) OJ C 228, 13.8.2001, p. 173.
 - [\(4\)](#) OJ C 343, 5.12.2001, p.261.
 - [\(5\)](#) OJ C 262, 18.9.2001, p. 141.
 - [\(6\)](#) OJ L 127, 27.5.2000, p. 1.
 - [\(7\)](#) OJ L 27, 30.1.2001, p.1.
 - [\(8\)](#) OJ L 27, 30.1.2001, p.4.
 - [\(9\)](#) OJ L 27, 30.1.2001, p.7.
 - [\(10\)](#) OJ L 57, 27.2.2001, p.5.
 - [\(11\)](#) OJ C 343, 5.12.2001, p. 311.
 - [\(12\)](#) OJ L 132, 15.5.2001, p. 3.
 - [\(13\)](#) OJ C 343, 5.12.2001, p.270.
 - [\(14\)](#) OJ C 151, 19.6.1995, p. 56.