

# W O S C A P

ENHANCING EU PEACEBUILDING CAPABILITIES



## Discussing the EU's Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capabilities in Ukraine: Report from the Kyiv policy roundtable

Association of Middle Eastern Studies (AMES) & Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)

## Colophon

# DISCUSSING THE EU'S CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING CAPABILITIES IN UKRAINE: REPORT FROM THE KYIV POLICY ROUNDTABLE

29 June 2017

Deliverable 5.3: Roundtable report Ukraine

Association of Middle Eastern Studies (AMES) & Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)



**A Network of People  
Building Peace**

## Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

The Roundtable report Ukraine was produced as part of the project “Whole-of-Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding” (WOSCAP). It summarises the aims and results of the Policy Roundtable that was organised by AMES, in partnership with IWP, ESSEC IRENE and GPPAC on 6 June 2017 in Kyiv, Ukraine. The aim of the roundtable was to engage with the EU national representation, local and international security sector representatives, regional organisations, local UN agencies and local stakeholders to discuss the case study conclusions and collect input for recommendations relevant to enhance the EU’s capabilities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

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## Context of the WOSCAP Project

The aim of the WOSCAP project is to enhance the capabilities of the EU for implementing conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions through sustainable, comprehensive and innovative civilian means. In order to achieve this goal, different steps have been carried out, among which case studies conducted in Georgia, Ukraine, Mali and Yemen that take an in-depth look at selected EU policies. Based on these case studies, policy recommendation documents have been elaborated, with the aim of converting research findings into policy recommendations for the EU, national and other international actors.

## The aim of Kyiv Policy Roundtable

Several roundtable(s) have been or/are to be organised in order to discuss, validate and finalise produced policy recommendations and gain the participatory bottom-up process(es) in target countries. Participation and inputs from local stakeholders are required to discuss and fine-tune these recommendations that will be presented to the EU during the final conference in Brussels on 8 November, 2017.



The roundtable discussion of WOSCAP policy recommendations presented by the Institute of World Policy, took place on 6 June 2017 in Kyiv, Ukraine. The Policy Roundtable was organised by the *Association for Middle Eastern Studies* (AMES), in close cooperation with the *Institute of World Policy* (IWP) and ESSEC IRENÉ, implementing partners of the EU-funded WOSCAP project led by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC).

The aim of the roundtable was to present and discuss policy recommendations prepared by the Institute of World Policy and AMES in the context of the WOSCAP project. The policy recommendations were based on a case study performed by the IWP as part of WOSCAP project, titled "[Assessing the EU's conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions in Ukraine](#)". It covered the EU interventions including the Normandy format, the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), the EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine (EUAM), and the EU assistance in the area of decentralization. The roundtable was attended by a total of 25 people, including various international and national policy makers (also EUAM), members of civil society and academic researchers.<sup>1</sup>

The roundtable was conducted according to the agenda that permitted a dynamic, structured debate and guaranteed the participation of all interested parties (see agenda in Annex).

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<sup>1</sup> The list of attendees is not public but available upon request

## Content of the Kyiv Roundtable

The event was opened by Gabriëlla Vogelaar, (GPPAC) and Sergiy Solodkyy (First Deputy Director, IWP). An introduction into the findings and recommendations on Multi-Track Diplomacy (MTD) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) was provided respectively by Leonid Litra (Senior Research Fellow, IWP) and Kateryna Zarembo (Deputy Director, IWP). Leonid Litra discussed the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the Normandy Format as a conflict mediation format. In particular, the issue was raised whether or not it would be better for the EU to take the lead in similar multitrack negotiations or if the nation states should take on this role (as had indeed been the case with France and Germany in Ukraine). Kateryna Zarembo analysed the role of the EU Security Sector Reform (SSR) missions in Ukraine, namely the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) and the EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine (EUAM).

The discussions session was opened by Dept. Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, Dr. Oleksandr Lytvynenko, who spoke positively of the findings of the case study and recommendations and praised the EU's assistance to Ukraine, particularly in the area of security sector reform.

Policy recommendations as presented by IWP during the event (in summary):

- The Normandy Format could be taken as a blueprint for EU conflict mediation.
- The EU, through its HRVP, needs to raise its profile in international affairs.
- The EU should negotiate a mission's mandate with the local partners prior to dispatching a mission (not just the government).
- The EU should have a flexible approach towards the missions' mandates.
- The EU should consider using EUBAM's "hybrid" nature a blueprint for further missions, rather than a unique exception.
- CSDP security sector reform missions should be dispatched as pre-emptive measures rather than as reactions after the eruption of a conflict.
- In the times of conflict the EU presence matters even more than in peaceful times.
- The EU should continue supporting Ukraine in a wide range of reforms contributing to good governance.

## Results of the Roundtable discussion

All the participants outlined the necessity and the importance of the RT and showed their support to the Policy Recommendations that were drafted. The document was positively received by all stakeholders and was evaluated to be a necessary step ahead in the elaboration of efficient and productive policies. However, several issues were commented and feedback was generated by stakeholders, as presented below.

### The Normandy format

The significance of the Normandy format has been underscored in the course of discussions. For Ukraine now it is the most important negotiation venue, and it plays an important role in shaping the future of the Ukraine-EU relations in a longer term perspective aside from serving its immediate purpose of forestalling further aggression.



Furthermore, it was argued that Russia indeed treats the EU as a set of separate countries rather than a single political entity, which makes a member state led format such the Normandy more efficient in dealing with Russia. Also, the EU's internal dynamics, including particularly the current populist trend in European politics, is seen as limiting the EU's ability to act effectively in situations such as the Ukrainian crisis. Ukraine therefore needs to be realistic regarding what it could expect

from the EU. Ukrainian domestic politics also are prone to populism. As soon as any political party goes into opposition, it usually backslides into populist rhetoric again. Such a situation is the result of a gap between the establishment and the population in Ukraine as well as in Europe. One of the participants, a former Ukrainian MP, also recalled his time as a member of the Ukrainian delegation to the Assembly of the Western European Union and the idea of creating a European rapid reaction corps which could help address security contingencies on the continent.

Another proposition was to include the US and Great Britain into the process of solving conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Their inclusion in the Normandy or any other international negotiations format that may emerge was deemed essential particularly in view of their status as signatories to the Budapest memorandum. The argument was however countered by pointing to the perhaps unrealistic expectation that the EU would seriously consider adding the Ukraine issue on top of the already complicated agenda of Brexit negotiations. Another participant, referring to an identified US diplomatic source, argued that the decision by the US to withdraw from the Normandy format was a calculated move, designed to take off unnecessary pressure arising from the already complicated relations between the US and Russia, which might have only impeded the process.

## Security Sector Reform: EUBAM and EUAM

It was commented by some participants that Russia's aggressive policy nowadays is nothing new and that it is effectively a replay of what the Soviet Union did in most of the post-WWI period by escalating conflicts in different parts of the world. Not only in Ukraine but also in Balkan countries such as Macedonia and Montenegro, hybrid warfare is going on. Interference with the election processes in key European countries such as France or Germany is a well-known fact. Studying Ukraine's experience of hybrid warfare would benefit the EU as it may help it to improve its defence infrastructure and develop long term strategies. In that sense Ukraine appears to be a useful partner for the EU.

One participant stated that the most important lesson in the field of SSR one may learn from the situation in Ukraine, is that Russia's aggression primarily became possible due to the institutional weakness of Ukraine and its incapacity to respond effectively and promptly to the emerging challenges. However, Ukraine's institutional weakness has also been a bit exaggerated. The events of 2015-2016 have proven Ukraine's ability to cope with the problems rather successfully. In this context, the EUAM's contribution to civilian security sector reform appears to be extremely important for Ukraine. It is the delayed response by the civilian security sector that allowed the situation to escalate and transform into a military conflict. If Ukraine would have the ability to react on time and have an appropriate early warning mechanism in place at the time of mounting crisis, it would be able to prevent the military phase.

Another highlighted issue was that although the collaboration between NATO and the EU in Ukraine is rather useful, it would be reasonable to broaden the scope of the EU assistance in the defence sector.

## Strengthening the role of CSO's in Ukraine

Linking the case study findings with the potential of civil society in Ukraine, GPPAC's Eastern Europe regional network representative, Nonviolence International, presented its perspective on the recommendations. It was stated that through greater engagement with CSOs the EU could contribute significantly to the peacebuilding process. The WOSCAP Ukraine case study, while being focused on the role of the EU institutions and member states indeed, has little to say on how the civil society could be further involved. The lack of reference in the study to the role of civil society could however be accounted for by the nature of EU policy instruments that it addressed.

Four areas were suggested as goals for civil society efforts in Ukraine: 1) contributing to greater social cohesion by enhancing civil society capacity to transform conflict at the national level; 2) integrating the conflict-affected groups including the IDPs, ex-combatants and people who suffer from physical injuries; 3) developing an infrastructure for peace (particularly at the local community level); 4) build bridges with people who live in the territories that are currently not on the government control.

Another participant believes that the Whole of Society Approach as advocated by the project now is not functioning in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the role of experts who are able to link up the civil society expertise with the government policies is growing. It would be helpful for EU further efforts at conflict resolution to be able to mobilize such 'internal communicators',

who combine the civil society expertise with an experience of working with the government agencies.

A more comprehensive program that the EU could support in Ukraine could build on the existing capacities in the area of community-based conflict transformation that had been developed through a series of efforts by various CSOs. Such effort could help further enhance the civil society involvement in decision making, advocacy and government oversight, develop tools and knowledge for CSOs engagement as watchdogs, advocacy groups and think tanks.

### The EU's conflict prevention capabilities in Ukraine

It was argued by some participants that in the final analysis both Ukraine and the EU have failed in preventing the conflict in Ukraine. The EU incapacity to ensure a prompt and adequate response to security crises is attested by what happened in Moldova's breakaway region of Transnistria and the recent situation in Macedonia. The EU strategy of coping with such crises appears to be inefficient or the assessment of the situation faulty. Furthermore, member state-led efforts at conflict resolution were seen as more efficient than the EU-led ones, particularly in view of the fact that the EU appears to have entered a difficult phase, which may continue for a decade. Ukraine, therefore, should be under no illusions regarding the EU's capacity to formulate an effective policy toward Ukraine. Ukraine should perhaps invest more in developing strong relations with particular countries, focusing more on Germany, France and Poland and other neighbours.

Building 'bridges' now with people who live on the territories outside of Ukraine's control may be called into question. It is hardly feasible at the time of war given, in particular, the official policies of economic blockade. Now, it seems that security issues should be prioritized over other concerns. Yet another participant also argued that security concerns would allow people in the occupied territories to build 'bridges' with parties under Ukraine's control. A successful engagement with people living in the war zones and their subsequent re-integration will also need a clear government policy to be put in place, according to another participant, and cannot be achieved by the civil society efforts alone, not the least because of the size of the population in the affected areas: 5-6 million people in zone outside of Ukraine's control and 9 million in the whole of Donbas<sup>2</sup>.

It has been noted that the EU presumptions regarding the nature of conflict and means to cope with it as reflected in its policies do not seem to fully reflect the reality on the ground, which limits the efficiency of the EU interventions such as the ones addressed in the case study.

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<sup>2</sup> The figure does not account for at least 1.5 IDPs living now in areas under the government control and an unspecified but substantial number of those, who relocated to Russia.

## Other comments

One participant expressed concern over the plight of the Crimean Tatar people both in the Crimea and the Crimean Tatar IDPs on the main land. He expressed the hope that further EU-led efforts would take greater account of the needs of the Crimean Tatar people, particularly in the area of human rights. Once the areas that are under occupation would return under the Ukrainian jurisdiction there arises a need for the institutions of transitional justice that would best ensure that negative repercussions of violent conflicts including the legitimate grievances of those who suffered from various human rights abuses are addressed in manner that does not compromise social cohesion are the need to restore a peaceful and normal life in both Crimea and Donbas. As Ukraine lacks expertise on transitional justice, the EU assistance would be helpful and highly appreciated.

## Concluding remarks

IWP's Leonid Litra, while answering the question regarding EU role in conflict resolution, argued that EU does not appear to be willing be more engaged in the conflict in Ukraine. However the EU is willing to help with funds and sanctions. It is the EU's achievement that the negotiations are going on as Russia initially had indeed not been willing to talk to Ukraine before.

Answering the question about US and Great Britain involvement into the negotiation processes Mr. Litra said that IWP is now working on a paper on this issue. Including the US into the Normandy format would not necessarily be helpful given the current EU – US dynamics.

Mr. Litra agreed with the comment about the EU's weakness in respect to conflict prevention, but argued that the EU acted quite well in terms of mobilizing funds and agreeing on sanctions. He highlighted the importance of personality in negotiations. Part of the reasons why Germany had to take the lead in the negotiation process is the lack of confidence in Mogherini's ability to lead. Ashton appeared to be more capable, but still insufficiently prepared and might not have had enough experience in negotiations with such a difficult counterpart as Putin.

With regards to the comments concerning Crimea, Kateryna Zarembo responded she did not bring it up as there is affectively no EU led 'multi track diplomacy' effort regarding Crimea as opposed to the situation in Donbas.

While commenting the issue whether other countries could be involved in the Normandy format, Serhii Solodky of the IWP argued that the UK itself might not necessarily be interested in being engaged. Regarding the engagement with people in the uncontrolled territories, he mentioned that such projects exist but are not widely publicised.

Gabriëlla Vogelaar (GPPAC) concluded the discussion saying that we had to keep in mind that the EU is a relatively new actor in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and is the process of learning and improving its policies. The CSDP mission is only running a few years now. Also in terms of expectations, it is important to note the limited defence and military capabilities of the EU, and that it is for instance unlikely for it to deploy any battlegroups soon. There is also a risk of securitisation of the EU, as it remains to be primarily a civilian actor. Such type of assistance should perhaps not be expected from the EU but from

another actor. It is about complementarity and a lesson from the Normandy discussion: who should be involved in this discussion and who can really play an effective role in it? Should the EU not act then in a specific area – this is a question to reflect on. Today's event is very important because it might be seen as a kind of cross fertilization of the recommendations arising from a number of case studies – performed in Ukraine, Georgia, Yemen and Mali.

## Next Steps

The next step will be to fine-tune the Policy Recommendations Document taking into account the ideas, comments and suggestions made by participants during the Kyiv Roundtable. As it was already mentioned in the report, the document was positively perceived by the various stakeholders involved, and the efforts undertaken under the WOSCAP project were encouraged.

### List of Annexed documents

Annex 1: The Agenda of the Kyiv Policy Roundtable

The List of Participants is only available upon request.

This Report is prepared by AMES, with contributions from IWP, GPPAC and ESSEC IRENÉ.

June 29, 2017

Kyiv, Ukraine

## Annex 1: The Agenda of the Kyiv Policy Roundtable

### Round-table discussion of WOSCAP policy recommendations presented by the Institute of World Policy

June 6, 2017, Kyiv

Venue: Leonardo Hall, Bohdana Khmelnytskogo 17/52, Kyiv

Time: 11:00 – 12:30

10:30 Welcoming coffee and registration

11:00-11:10 Opening remarks on WOSCAP project

Presenters: *Gabriëlla Vogelaar, GPPAC*  
*Sergiy Solodkyy, First Deputy Director, IWP*

11:10-11:20 **Ukraine case study. Recommendations to the EU**  
***Multi-track diplomacy cluster***

Presenter: *Leonid Litra, Senior Research Fellow, IWP*

- Should the Normandy Format be taken as a blueprint for the EU conflict mediation or does it have to be elaborated, improved or abandoned
- Should member states or Brussels take the lead

11:20-11:30 ***Security sector reform/CSDP cluster (EUAM, EUBAM)***

Presenter: *Kateryna Zarembo, Deputy Director, IWP*

- The recommendations will focus on the role of EU missions for security sector reform, based on the cases of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) and the EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine (EUAM)
- Major highlights:
  - What is the role of the EU missions in security institution-building and conflict prevention?
  - EU presence at times of conflict – does it matter?

11:30-12:30 Discussion



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