

Tbilisi Policy Roundtable Report

Strengthening Conflict Prevention: Recommendations for the EU - Policy Roundtable Georgia, 2nd of June, 2017

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.

The aim of Tbilisi Policy Roundtable

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

The Tbilisi Policy Roundtable “Strengthening Conflict Prevention: Recommendations for the EU” took place at the Tbilisi Marriott Hotel Tbilisi in Georgia on 2nd of June, 2017. The Policy Roundtable was organized by ICCN, in partnership with TSU and ESSEC IRENÉ, implementing partners of the EU-funded WOSCAP project led by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC).

Objectives of the Tbilisi Policy Roundtable were to:

- Discuss and the Policy Recommendation Document by bringing together national and international stakeholders to , review, complement and adjust Policy Recommendations for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, through an inclusive participation and policy-practice dialogue.
- Organize a free flow dialogue and provide all participants with an opportunity to exchange contrasting views and share experiences from different level stakeholders, from the bottom to the top and vice-versa with the national and international perspectives.

Conducting Tbilisi RT

In order to get an all-inclusive participation, the organizers have invited high level national (Government and Parliament) and international stakeholders (EU Delegation, EUMM, UNDP, COBERM, EUSR office representative, and diplomatic corps), as well as independent experts, academics and SC representatives. Representation was significant taking into account the number (52) and the level of participants at the event.

Aiming at fostering the discussion of the roundtable, the Policy Recommendations Document (alongside with the Case Study on Georgia) has been disseminated among the distinguished

invitees from national and international stakeholders. This decision bore its fruits, as it permitted a free flow discussion focused on policy recommendations.

The ICCN representative opened the roundtable. A general introduction of the Case Study Report on Georgia and Policy Recommendations Document was provided (by TSU and ICCN representatives) the participants with explaining the process and main outputs of presented documents. The round-table was moderated by an ESSEC IRENÉ representative.

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).

Results of the RT

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 elaboration of efficient and productive policies. However several issues were commented and a feedback was generated by stakeholders.

- **European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM)**

It was noted that EU should continue the engagement without recognition policy, as well as EUMM, its mission that is considered to be a successful tool. Some participants did agree that Policy Recommendations concerning the EUMM are relevant. First, the mandate of the EUMM should not be restricted, but should rather be expanded (even if that partially done as the Mission is extended to two years' term). The importance of institutional memory has been agreed, as well as the incentive for work on confidence building. EU representatives also noticed that EU missions should pay more attention to human security in general, including a gender perspective. If civil society coordination meetings are perceived as a good suggestion, participants also expressed the necessity for civil society to be more pro-active.

- **Geneva International Discussions (GID)**

It was noted that GID is a tool that permits dialogue between parties to the conflict, including Russia. However, participants agree that more flexibility is needed. Ideas were advanced to open parallel formats to the GID with possibility of participation of CSO's, because the highest level format is distanced from the society and is not considered to be enough and effective. It was highlighted that there is a huge need to foster Georgian Russian dialogue and the Bilateral Dialogue of Special Representatives of Georgia and RF, so called "Abashidze-Karasin format" is to be strengthened.

- **The Joint-up EU-UNDP Programme Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM)**

It was noted that COBERM is an interesting example of cooperation between EU-UN, however more integration between UN and EU was considered to be desirable and other spheres should be explored that can foster peace building and conflict resolution.

It was highlighted that there is a huge need to foster Georgian-Russian dialogue. The proposition was to establish track-two and track-three dialogue and international institutions to maintain it financially.

The strengthening of the role of women in peace processes, as well as the importance of cooperation with the wide range of stakeholders, including the government, civil society actors and the private sector, have been reminded by the participants.

- **General Comments**

Participants underlined the necessity to regularly organize similar debates among the CSO's Georgian Government and International Stakeholders. It was equally noted that Georgian Government should charge itself to organize and support the dialogue with CS and involve them in conflict resolution and peace building policy elaboration processes.

Participants emphasized the importance of EU and all other international stakeholders from the OSCE and UN area in peace building in Georgia. However, it was noted that more resources should be pooled out by EU and other donors, otherwise it will be difficult to achieve a sustainable peace process. Less conservative approaches and more creative and courageous steps (both by international and national stakeholders) should be undertaken while economic connectivity, trade, education, free movement and other issues.

Participants noted that Abkhazia and South Ossetia are in an information vacuum, in order to deliver alternative information to those regions funds should be allocated to sustainably support new media platforms and projects like online media.

Strengthening of economic connectivity with breakaway regions of Georgia is to be prioritized under AA DCFTA was equally suggested during the discussion, the economic cooperation using the tools available to EU can promote reconciliation, trust and peace building between the divided societies.

Next Steps

The next step should be to fine-tune the Policy Recommendations Document taking into account the ideas, comments and suggestions made by participants during the Tbilisi RT. 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 Tbilisi Round Table

Annex 2: The List of Participants

This Report is prepared by ICCN, contributed by WOSCAP Project team, GPPAC and ESSEC IRENÉ representative.

7th of June, 2017

Tbilisi, Georgia