Public diplomacy, development cooperation or security policy: the EU’s support for conflict prevention and peacebuilding

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Outline

1. EU Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding
2. Public Diplomacy
3. Development Cooperation
4. Security Policy
5. Conclusions
6. Indicative Bibliography
1. The EU and Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding
The EU self-identifies as a project to promote peace in Europe through economic integration and democratic reforms. The EU institutions are traditionally seen as a civil and value-driven ‘soft power’ with a strong tradition in development [cooperation] and a commitment to multilateralism. Foreign and security policy are newer elements in the EU integration process and remain largely member state driven.

The idea of the EU promoting normative values and principles is of course central to the Union’s (fuzzy) self-identity. Nevertheless, there is the danger that this will create a bifurcated form of diplomacy in Europe with the Member States promoting their first order interests (specifically prosperity and security) while the EU pursues an ethical agenda, or second-order interests (human rights, democracy promotion, the rule of law, tackling poverty etc) - Simon Duke, 2013 THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE AND THE QUEST FOR AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY - IPSI Analysis No. 216

In the absence of any common definition, the EU institutions have had to find their own way of defining and understanding the term [peacebuilding]. In the EU context, the understanding of peacebuilding is complicated by the more general debate surrounding the nature of security in the post-cold war era – Simon Duke and Aurelie Courtier, 2009 EU Peacebuilding: Concepts, players and instruments, CLEER WORKING PAPERS 2009/3.
Conflict prevention and peacebuilding – what might the EU trying to achieve and why?

The EU’s 20 year policy development journey in support of conflict prevention and peacebuilding

Also available as A3 handout so you can see the detail
SIGNIFICANT & RECURRENT FACTORS INFLUENCING EUROPEAN SUPPORT TO PEACEBUILDING

- Major conflicts and instability
- Geopolitical era
- Domestic political culture
- Domestic events with international dimension
- Allies and other governments’ initiatives
- International commitments & norms

National / EU system of governance

Other policy priorities
Development policy priorities
Conflict-related ‘policy’ / guidance / narrative & framing concepts

Support for peacebuilding

CHOICES FROM TOP POLITICAL LEVEL

Decision-making
Influencing decision-making
2. Public diplomacy and EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding
1. Public diplomacy - a good match for EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding?

“Public diplomacy is about engaging with primarily non-governmental groups and the construction of long-term and sustainable relationships. The EU should therefore continue to move away from public-diplomacy-as-information models towards more sustained dialogues that involve, among other things, active listening and engagement of non-governmental actors.”

Simon Duke, 2013 The European External Action Service and the Quest for Effective Public Diplomacy. IPSI Analysis No. 216
2. Public diplomacy and EU institutions - conflict prevention and peacebuilding: Some ‘examples’ & contradictions

- Peacebuilding and conflict prevention definitions and ‘best practices’ emphasis similar understanding of ‘best practice’ in EU public diplomacy (e.g. long-term, sustainable relationships, listening, dialogue, and key engagement of non-state actors – with also strong values base)

- EU institutions including in post-Lisbon era increasingly developed their outreach and engagement with non-state actors (and professional peacebuilding NGOs and their partners) at ‘global’ and ‘in country’ level – often widely appreciated – money and political backing can be demonstrated

- Yet non-state actors and ‘societies’ have often been critical of being ‘co-opted’ or ‘instrumentalised’ to the EU’s [public] diplomacy and have expressed increasing concerns more recently of ‘securitization’

- EU’s public profile impacts ‘added value’ as an actor in promoting conflict prevention and peacebuilding and significantly impacted by context and leverage (Kosovo not Philippines or Somalia)
3. Successful EU public diplomacy related to peacebuilding - or something else...

Editorial: Thank you, EU

The Jakarta Post | Editorial | Mon, May 28 2012, 9:00 AM

On a hot December day in 2006, the people of Banda Aceh gathered in a field, to watch the unimaginable: The handing over of weapons by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) to the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AHM), joined by Indonesian police and military personnel. Since then, the war of the past three decades, fought with bullets, has been replaced by the ballot.

The European Union (EU) was one of the parties actively involved in peace attempts before the historic signing of the MoU in Helsinki, Finland. It proceeded to set up the AMM; its weekly meetings with former combatants, led by Pieter Feith, helped build trust in the early years of peace building.

Despite the occasional acts of violence, residents, now led by the
3. Development cooperation
2. EU Development cooperation – increasing focus on EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding

- Dates back to formation of the European institutions – the oldest EU ‘external’ policy

- Progressively has had elements of conflict prevention and peacebuilding and commitments to it financially and in policy terms since 1990s (when political space opened up at end of the Cold War) – driven by a number of factors

- Conflict prevention and peacebuilding has been looked on somewhat suspiciously by certain poverty focused professionals/activists from the development community – seen as potential back door to securitsation / promotion of EU self-interest

- Significant and increasing amount of EU institutions development cooperation funds devoted to conflict prevention and peacebuilding – rising 403% from 2007-2016.

- Not uncontroversial EU innovations – such as creating African Peace Facility (mainly supporting African ‘peacekeeping’ in places such as Somalia) being funded out of the European Development Fund - although many peacebuilding professionals would not regard most of this as “peacebuilding” (and most is not counted as Official Development Assistance).
A Global player or payer - EU Institutions 4th biggest spender of Official Development Assistance on conflict prevention and peacebuilding over the last 10 years

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<th>2007 ($349m)</th>
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Source: ECDPM analysis from OECD figures, CRS code 15220, in millions of US dollars. Gross disbursements in constant 2016 prices.
3. Security Policy
2. European security policy – some evolutions since Lisbon Treaty in relation to EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding

- EU Global Strategy of 2016 – explicitly refers to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in a number of sections (upgrade from European Security Strategy of 2003) as part of “integrated approach”

- European External Action Service – was created with a specific ‘Division’ focusing on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (and specific budget lines in the EEAS budget on “Conflict Prevention and Mediation Support Services”) – Division now housed with CFSP “” structures in EEAS

- Recent security policy focus more or PESCO and military cooperation than conflict prevention and peacebuilding - and specific new policy commitments globally related to conflict prevention & peacebuilding in Council conclusions or a HRVP/Commission new Communication

- Security related concerns increasingly feature in EU’s financial proposals for next EU budget 2021-2027 including within the proposed merged Neighbourhood, Development, International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and off-budget ’European Peace Facility’
3. Conclusions
Conclusions and “Challenges for the Future”

- EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding multidimensional and aspect of public diplomacy, development cooperation and security policy – progressively developed over last 20 years

- This type of “integrated approach” to violent conflict has been central to EU policy commitments since at least 2001, and often restated ”comprehensive approach” (under HRVP Ashton), “integrated approach” again in EU Global Strategy – yet progress has been limited – need to confront incentives and disincentives for change honestly.

- Different EU policy communities (and institutions) in the security, development and [public] diplomacy sphere tend to look and approach conflict prevention and peacebuilding from ‘their’ perspective – despite commitments to an integrated/comprehensive approach. How to reconcile these without “throwing the baby out with the bathwater”?

- The Geopolitical era, European political culture, The EU’s system of governance, and major conflicts and instability have had a significant impact on EU support to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the past and are likely to in the future. Support to EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding does not happen in a vaccum.
Indicative Bibliography
Indictative Bibliography (non exhaustive)


Duke, S. 2013 The European External Action Service and the Quest for an Effective Public Diplomacy, - *IPSI Analysis* No. 216


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European Commission and HR/VP, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the EU’s Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises, JOIN(2013) 30 final,


HRVP. 2016 EU’s global strategy for foreign and security policy, Shared Vision Common Action: A Stronger Europe: A global strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy


Thanks! - This is work in progress

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