



"The Union's aim is to promote peace"¹. - Let's do it!

Key proposals for the 2009 European Parliament elections

In preparation for the 2009 European Parliament elections, civil society organisations working on peace and conflict issues from nine EU member states (see list below) have united around a common position. Jointly our organisations promote more efficient, more sustainable and less cost-intensive approaches to international conflicts and crisis. Together we advocate for the further development of professional peacebuilding and civilian conflict resolution capacities, with special attention to the added value civil society organisations can give in these fields.

For the upcoming European Parliament elections we invite you to take note and to make use of the positions and key proposals presented in this short paper.

Today the European Union has the potential to contribute to a more peaceful world. With its external policies and aid instruments on the one hand and its Common Foreign and Security Policy on the other, the EU has a large variety of instruments at its disposal. The European Union's role in the world, its future identity and its acceptance by European citizens will be also influenced by the approach the EU will prioritise in its external policies. How will this approach reflect the Union's fundamental values of peace and democracy?

Considering the vast expertise in civilian conflict resolution and peacebuilding available on our continent and the fact that currently most EU missions under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) are civilian in nature, we see the European Union's particular strength in a preventive and civilian approach of dealing with international conflicts. But to prevent crisis, to manage and resolve conflicts peacefully a corresponding infrastructure, better coordination and innovative instruments are needed.

Based on this assumption our key proposals are the following:

- More investment in building civilian capacities for handling conflict should be a clear priority, and ongoing institutional reforms should be used to strengthen the EU infrastructure for civilian peace policies. Following earlier demands by civil society organisations to create a European Peacebuilding Agency as a counter-part to the European Defence Agency, we suggest that at least a **peacebuilding department / directorate** be established within EU bodies managing external actions to achieve better coordination with all relevant actors, improve strategic planning and capacity development on the civilian side.
- The important contributions both local and international non-profit civil society give to peacebuilding and crisis prevention need to be better recognised and supported within the EU institutional framework. Building on the European Commission's recently launched Peace-Building Partnership and current ad-hoc consultations with civil society by the

¹ European political leaders agreed that in a new version of the EU Treaty article 2.1 should state "The Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its people." (art. 1.4 of Treaty of Lisbon).

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Council, **dialogue with civil society needs to become more structured** through an institutional mechanism which regularly brings together representatives of all relevant stakeholders.

- The EU's image and efficiency as a global actor for peace would benefit from institutional support for a **"European Civil Peace Service" (ECPS) programme**. An ECPS programme would also be in line with earlier European Parliament resolutions for a European Civil Peace Corps (ECPC). It would provide a mechanism for certified civil society organisations to send out trained peace consultants and peace teams to support and protect local civil society working for dialogue and reconciliation with nonviolent means.

Policy making processes with direct effects for European citizens need to be transparent and open to civil society participation. In times of globalisation this also holds true for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy and other external policies. Therefore, we welcome an even stronger role of the European Parliament as the democratically elected EU institution.

Organisations supporting the key proposals

Promoters

Austria: Promoted by Österreichische Friedensdienste (ÖFD), **Finland:** Promoted by Sadankomitea (Committee of 100), **France:** Promoted by Mouvement pour une Alternative Nonviolente (MAN), **Germany:** Promoted by Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst (*forumZFD*) & Bund für Soziale Verteidigung (BSV), **Italy:** Promoted by Centro Studi Difesa Civile (CSDC), **Romania:** Promoted by Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR), **Slovakia:** Promoted by Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia (PDCS), **Spain:** Promoted by NOVA - Centre per a la Innovació Social, **The Netherlands:** Promoted by Nederlands Expertisecentrum Alternatieven voor Geweld (NEAG).

All over Europe many other organisations are currently considering to support this initiative.

International

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP)