

Roundtable

Peaceful Responses to the Crisis in Ukraine

28 January 2015, 09:00 . 13:00

European Foundation Centre . Philanthropy House, rue Royale 94, 1000 Brussels

Background

Ukraine is facing a combination of acute and latent conflicts which have led to different forms of violence and unrest. In November 2013, a political crisis was triggered by the unexpected decision of President Yanukovich not to sign a proposed Association Agreement with the EU; the crisis spread and took on new social and geographic dimensions. The situation has generated discord between Ukraine and Russia, on the one hand, and the EU and Russia, on the other. Different regions of Ukraine . particularly those with large Russian-speaking populations and/or those economically tied to Russia . have found themselves facing pressure to choose between Russia and Ukraine and are now the theatre of a bloody armed confrontation. Questions linked to the reform and reconstruction of the Ukrainian state also need to be addressed urgently.

In this context, it is useful to assess current and possible peacebuilding responses to the conflicts, as well as the longer term need for reform. Creative and courageous local peacebuilding initiatives have been launched and their experience could assist in the design of a potential national-level dialogue process. It is likely that measures for ending violence, such as disarmament and demobilization, effective policing, and economic revival, will need to be carried out in parallel with crafting a longer-term political process. The process would need to encompass both the open and the still dormant conflicts and to involve all stakeholders, including strategies to integrate potential spoilers.

As Ukraine has become a site of geostrategic confrontation, with international actors playing positive and negative roles, it is likely that potential responses to the crises will also need to embrace high-level diplomacy and include trade and energy policies.

Local and international civil society could play a larger role in shaping international policy debates on Ukraine . and the international policy initiatives that follow . in order to ensure that they are informed by the views and needs of the population. The EU, intergovernmental organizations, including the OSCE, and European and local civil society all have roles to play in the search for peaceful solutions to the current crises and the longer term conflicts.

Objectives of the meeting

- To assess the medium and long term impact of the current crisis;
- To assess the different international approaches to the conflict;
- To identify peacebuilding responses to end current violence and to tackle the root causes of the conflict.

Participants and format

This roundtable will bring together around 40 participants, including academics, representatives of international organisations and civil society selected for their expertise and experience in peacebuilding initiatives in Ukraine.

Brief opening comments will be followed by interactive discussions in carefully facilitated sessions held under the Chatham House rule.

Agenda

09h00	Registration of participants
09h10	Welcoming remarks from the co-organisers
09h20	<p>Session 1: Addressing the systemic conflict drivers in Ukraine: identifying peacebuilding responses</p> <p>Moderator: Catherine Woollard, EPLO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the triggers of violence in the current crisis in Ukraine? What are the underlying causes of conflict(s) in Ukraine? • What are the risks of escalation at the local, national and international levels? • What peacebuilding responses have been used in Ukraine and what impact have they had? • What local, regional and international actors have a role in escalating or de-escalating the conflict? <p>Opening presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natalia Shapovalova, Associate fellow, FRIDE • Igor Semyvolos, Executive director, Association of Middle East Studies <p>Opening comments followed by a facilitated debate.</p>
11h00	Coffee break
11h30	<p>Session 2: The role of Europe in supporting peaceful responses</p> <p>Moderator: Catherine Woollard, EPLO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What local capacities for peace exist in Ukraine? How can they be supported? • What peacebuilding options are available to the international community to support peace in Ukraine? • What is the role of European civil society in supporting peace in Ukraine? How can they support Ukrainian peacebuilding initiatives? • How can local and wider European civil society influence policy debates and policy initiatives on Ukraine? <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natalia Mirimanova, Co-director of Crimea Policy Dialogue <p>Followed by a facilitated discussion.</p>
13h00	End of the meeting