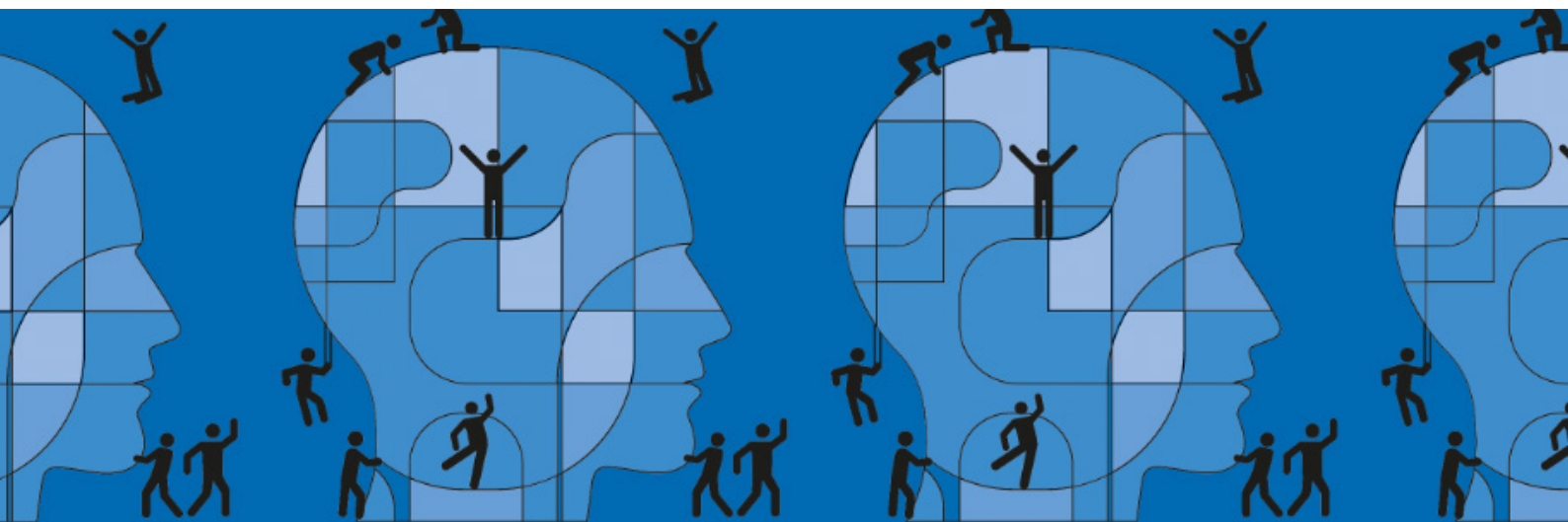




Guidance Note on
Conflict Sensitivity no. 13 on:

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)

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A complement to the 2015 EU Staff Handbook on Operating in
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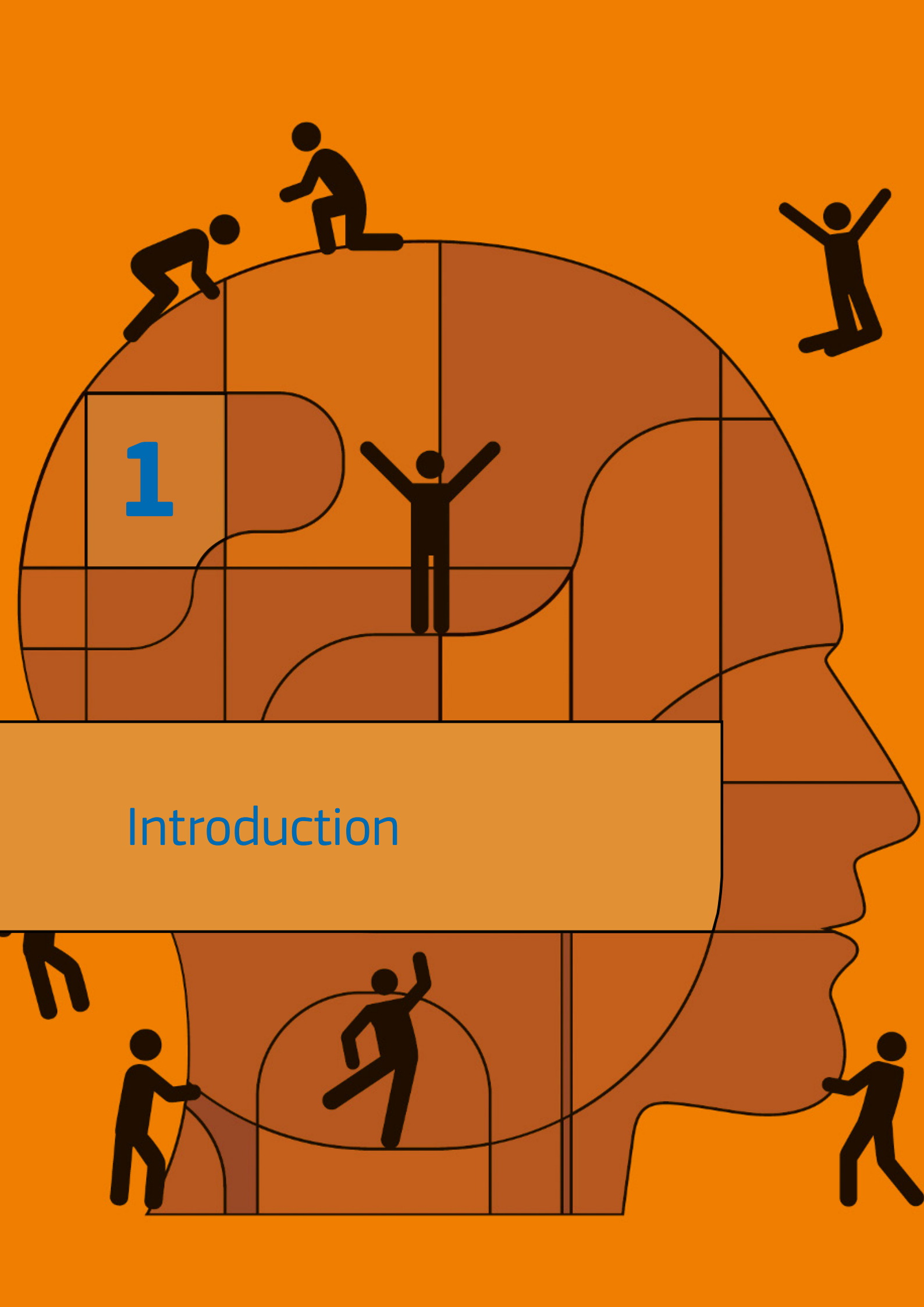
Directorate General International Partnerships

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This document aims to provide thematic guidance on how to take into account key conflict sensitivity issues when supporting processes related to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR). It presents general background as well as key conflict sensitivity dimensions when designing or managing support of DDR. The questions at the end of the document draw attention to specific conflict sensitivity considerations, including measures to address and prevent conflict risks and risks of doing harm. They may be used in various discussions, particularly during the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of DDR-related support or programmes. This note should be read in conjunction with the rest of the EU's thematic guidance notes on Conflict Sensitivity (Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding; Gender; Democracy and Human Rights; Working with National Actors; Working with International Actors; Economic Development and Employment; Climate Change, Environment and Natural Resources; Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture; COVID 19; Education), as well as the new Guidance Note on SSR.



1

Introduction

In December 2021, the EU adopted the Joint Communication on “**An EU strategic approach in support of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of former combatants**” (European Commission, 2021b), which provides an update and revision of the EU’s 2006 Concept on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and an alignment with the UN’s (revised) Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) (United Nations, 2019). The enhanced DDR policy aims at increasing the EU’s capacity to adapt to the evolving nature of conflicts and armed groups and to better reflect gender and conflict sensitivity as required by the NDICI-GE legal and programmatic requirements, and the Gender Action Plan III, incorporating the Women, Peace and Security Action Plan.

This guidance note outlines ways in which EU support of **Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)** could be a genuine **contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding**. Since most DDR support takes place in environments affected by conflict and with residual potential for conflict, it is critical to ensure that such support is conflict-sensitive and that is considered in its broader peacebuilding and stabilisation context. This would also allow EU actors to link any discussions and planning on DDR with associated aspects, such as good governance, public finance, security sector governance, transitional justice, gender equality, economic recovery, livelihoods and employment creation.

Peacebuilding involves a range of measures that aim at reducing the risk of conflict and at addressing root causes of conflict; it is often connected to the implementation of ceasefires, peace agreements and reconciliation processes. It may be linked to processes for strengthening national capacities for conflict prevention, management and resolution and for laying the foundations for sustainable peace through a broad number of actions.

Positive peace does not merely mean the absence of conflict, but the presence of conditions necessary for all people to live full and dignified lives and to sustain social, political and economic development. It requires addressing structural causes of conflicts, fragility and crises through long-term approaches to conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

1 Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. Author(s): Johan Galtung Source: Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1969), pp. 167–191 Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/422690>

According to the EU definition, DDR refers to ‘**the voluntary engagement of male and female members and associates of armed forces and groups in laying down their weapons, breaking away from command and control structures, and transitioning to civilian life**’ (European Commission, 2021b, p. 2).’ The Communication stresses the need for a community-based focus of DDR support, as well as the need to ensure conflict sensitivity and real inclusion of all sectors of society.

As also specified by the United Nations (2019; Module 2.10: The *UN Approach to DDR*; p.2), DDR is relevant for the following groups:

- a. Members of armed forces or groups who served in combat or in support roles
- b. Abductees and victims
- c. Dependents/families
- d. Civilian returnees, self-demobilised/internally displaced people
- e. Community members

Each DDR exercise is different, responding to specific needs in a particular setting. The elements briefly described below – disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration support – are usually components of DDR processes:

Disarmament is the safe assessment, collection, documentation, control and disposal of arms, ammunition and explosives used by combatants and their associates, and occasionally also by the civilian population. It may take place at all stages of DDR, be transitional or generally depends on broader political developments or an ongoing peace process. It aims to build confidence in the peace process and the DDR process, as well as to contribute to the overall security and to a reduced likelihood of re-recruitment. The safe and controlled disposal of weapons is a delicate process, ideally requiring independent observation and accountability, to minimise the risk of illicit weapon capture or transfer. It should be noted that, even if all members or associates of demobilising

armed groups or military forces do not hand over a weapon, that does not mean that these individuals, for example, female or child combatants but also women and children in support roles, would not benefit from a DDR programme. This issue should be closely observed and clearly communicated to these groups and to the wider public in terms of rights, clear eligibility criteria, benefits or entitlements.

Demobilisation refers to the formal and controlled discharge of adult combatants from armed groups or armed forces in order to transition to a civilian life. It is usually an organised process based on peace accords, legislation or political agreements, but it can at times also ensue spontaneously. The processing and discharge of combatants and their associates normally includes a certain amount of transitional, short-term targeted assistance, often referred to as **reinsertion** support. Best practice points to the need of medical and psychosocial support during these early stages, as well as some short-term support for economic livelihoods. During the demobilisation process, women and children should be separated from adult men until security needs, family situations or other possible concerns are assessed and addressed. Women who are former combatants or associated with armed groups may experience greater stigmatisation than their male counterparts or may not be clear about their rights and possible entitlements within a DDR programme. Often, they may not know about their eligibility for DDR or they may not consider it, precisely to avoid blame and finger-pointing. Being part of armed groups often changes gender norms and roles, and, frequently, during DDR processes, female ex-combatants may have to return to more stereotypical gender roles and livelihoods, which might give them less freedom and power.

Reintegration is the process through which former combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups make the transition to living as civilian community members. The process

has short-, medium- and long-term aspects and is usually open-ended. It also involves the communities in which the former combatants reintegrate, be it in their place of origin or elsewhere. It could be seen as part of wider recovery, peacebuilding and development processes. The reintegration process is multidimensional and multifaceted. The institutions supporting it, including international donor agencies, should therefore consider **in detail all relevant** psychological, social, health, cultural, religious, economic, political, security-related and legal dimensions.

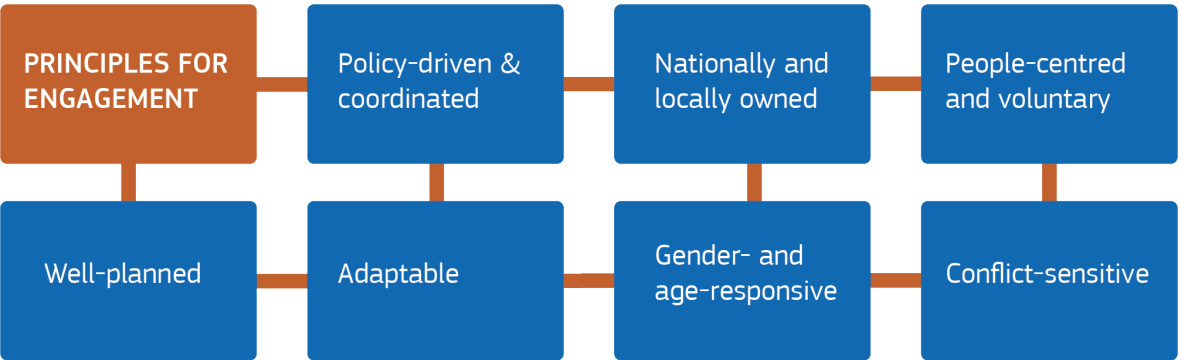
The success of DDR depends primarily on whether most of the ex-combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups are successfully and sustainably reintegrated into civilian life. A key challenge is usually that the economy in the areas in which reintegration takes place has greatly suffered due to conflict and violence. Often unemployment is high, and immediate economic opportunities are few. Those reintegrating may lack skills, resources and networks to sustain themselves through employment, self-employment and/or constructive participation in the social and political arena while facing legal and practical obstacles. Access to services is usually limited and structural inequalities generally persist. Moreover, people engaging in DDR processes often face social exclusion, ostracization and stigmatisation. They may have broken family ties, educational gaps or health problems, including mental health issues that may involve substance abuse and/or individual or collective trauma, including traumas from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and human trafficking, displacement, etc. At the same time, the affected or recipient communities may suffer from collective trauma, fear and mistrust and may experience a deteriorating security situation, which could enhance suspicion towards the presence of former combatants and their associates.

The EU has been supporting DDR processes for decades. However, DDR should not be seen as a single programme, but it is more useful to see **DDR as a set of activities and processes** that could be sustained through a more holistic approach and/or flexibly applied in specific situations, as required. From an effectiveness, efficiency or sustainability perspective, a full roll-out of a DDR programme is not always necessary or the most appropriate response. Nor are relevant activities always explicitly labelled as *DDR*. In some countries, the national authorities do not want to use this terminology. It should then be up to the international donors, such as the EU, to be flexible with terminology, while maintaining the validity of the principles and experiences associated with DDR-related activities in a partner country.

The EU support to DDR can be achieved through a **flexible toolbox**. Regarding reintegration support in particular, it is essential to take a broader peacebuilding and development perspective, supporting initiatives in favour of a broader reintegration, rather than focussing on only those that had been directly associated with armed groups. In these and other instances, the EU should consider supporting activities closely related to DDR. For example, overlapping issues may exist between security sector governance and demobilisation, which in some countries could be considered critical for success. Moreover, community-based reintegration (CBR) support in selected regions could provide assistance to ex-combatants, persons formerly associated with armed groups, as well as returning refugees, IDPs and other community members affected by conflict.

The EU has adopted the following principles for DDR engagements:

Table 1: The EU principles for DDR engagements:



Source: European Commission, 2021b.

The UN Integrated DDR Standards establish certain **preconditions for DDR**, namely:

- a. the signing of a negotiated ceasefire and/or peace agreement that provides the framework for DDR;
- b. trust in the peace process;
- c. willingness of the parties to the armed conflict to engage in DDR; and
- d. a minimum guarantee of security (United Nations, 2019; Module 2.10: The *UN Approach to DDR*; p.2).’

These preconditions are indeed important to consider when planning and negotiating external support for a (possible) DDR programme. From an EU perspective, however, it should be noted that, in particular circumstances, some DDR type of activities could be usefully supported, even if all of these conditions are not met. Decisions should be based on a thorough analysis of the specific situation. For example, in light of the increasingly complex and protracted nature of conflicts, which does not always follow the standard or theoretical conflict cycle² or continuum, **(elements of) DDR could be – in some cases – usefully supported when a conflict is still active**. In some circumstances, reintegration support may be provided to those who voluntarily leave armed groups or the communities in which they settle. This support may be combined with

other DDR-related tools, such as Community Violence Reduction (CVR) or mediation activities. Moreover, transitional weapons and ammunition management or transitional security arrangements may take place in conjunction with community-based reintegration (CBR) support.

Children associated with armed forces and groups (CAAFAG) should normally not be part of a DDR operation. All children (under the age of 18 years) should be released immediately and unconditionally from armed forces and armed groups, irrespective of the designation of the groups they may be associated with, in compliance with international standards related to the rights and protection of children. This applies to all children, regardless of how they were recruited or their roles in the armed force or group, thus including, but not limited to, boys and girls used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or those exploited for sexual purposes. This does not exclusively refer to children who were involved as active combatants.

All recruitment processes of children must be considered illegal, and children should always be considered victims in these conditions. Therefore, focus must be placed on the inclusive nature of appropriate support provided to all conflict-affected

2 <https://www.usip.org/public-education-new/curve-conflict>

children, supporting the prevention of recruitment and reintegration. Due recognition is needed for the particular vulnerability of girls, disabled children, and children internally displaced or with refugee status. Children should be physically separated from adult combatants and protected. For example, in delicate situations of forced marriage, girls or young women should remain in a safe space, in order to get psychosocial and other support (e.g. health care, etc.) and supported to be able to make their own future choices, in relation to their family situation or reunification with the family of origin. The UN monitors the situation of children in armed conflict (CAAC) through the status of **Six Grave Violations** (UNSC Res. 1612), namely:

1. Recruitment & use
2. Killing & maiming
3. Rape & sexual Violence

4. Deliberate attacks on schools & hospitals
5. Abduction
6. Denial of access to humanitarian assistance

In light of all aspects and considerations mentioned above, the EU has committed to a **conflict-sensitive and inclusive approach to DDR**, which is also **gender- and age-responsive**. The EU DDR approach is thus multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional, considering the different, specific and non-homogenous needs, capacities, rights and expectations of men, women, boys and girls of different ages.³ This should also consider other dimensions of identity, such as the belonging to (minority groups and indigenous peoples). In these endeavours, the EU will also take into account disability-related issues as well as healthcare challenges in fragile settings.

³ Actions, processes and approaches that may intersect with DDR are: security sector management and reform; inclusive decision making processes, especially of women, youth, and minorities (WPS, YPS, leave no-one behind); children associated with armed conflict (CAAC); small arms and light weapons (SALW) control; transitional justice and justice sector reforms; confidence building measures such as mediation and dialogue; supporting the development and implementation of peace agreements in an inclusive and participatory manner; psycho-social support for victims and survivors of conflict with a gender-sensitive perspective; wider humanitarian action, socio-economic development and livelihood measures; illegal exploitation of natural resources, etc. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017L0541>



2

Key Conflict-sensitive Issues

DDR is in many circumstances seen having the capacity to play an important role in stabilisation and building lasting peace. The EU's experience has demonstrated that, in order to contribute effectively, it needs to engage early with a long-term perspective, flexibility and a capacity to react swiftly – connecting diplomacy, mediation, development, humanitarian, peace and security efforts in high-risk contexts.

In recent years, much of the support of DDR processes has become increasingly challenging and also more ambitious. Armed groups to be demobilised tend to be more complex, having more fluid command structures, transnational dimensions and diverse agendas. Some might have ties to organised crime or radicalised ideologies. Any support of their demobilisation and reintegration would need to take these specific complexities into account. Furthermore, the relationship between DDR support and other peacebuilding activities needs to be well thought out, defined, coordinated and communicated. Other approaches could include efforts to counter terrorism and address violent extremism (CVE/PVE), which are clearly falling to the EU Counter-Terrorism Framework and **cannot be categorised as DDR**. These may present elements of coercion as well as imprisonment, prosecution, disassociation, rehabilitation and reintegration⁴ that do not fall under the EU DDR policy approach and definition (which instead focuses on the voluntary nature of the process and on child protection standards).

On the other hand, reintegration programmes, especially CBR support, could have the broader aim to contribute to preventing re-recruitment and sustaining peace by supporting communities of return, restoring social relations, strengthening local conflict management and avoiding perceptions of inequitable access to resources. Successful reintegration could indeed play a role in the prevention of conflict. It would at least reduce interest among reintegrating ex-combatants to return to fighting.

A possible decision of EU actors to actively engage in supporting DDR activities in a specific country should ideally consider all the issues mentioned above,⁵ as well as the risk that the intended DDR support may actually negatively impact the peace and conflict in the country or region concerned. A **conflict sensitivity perspective** is essential in all externally supported activities, especially in fragile contexts. Given that armed forces and armed groups have access to weapons, the risk that conflicts may re-emerge and turn violent is even higher. Such violent confrontations

4 PRR – Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/terrorism/expertise/prosecution--rehabilitation-and-reintegration-strategies.html>; DDRR (Disengagement, disassociation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration): <https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/documents/DDRR-Eligibility-Conditions-and-Practices%20%281%29.pdf>

5 As mentioned above, children associated with armed forces and groups (CAFAAG) should normally not be part of a DDR operation. The challenges and risks of doing harm in relation to CAFAAG are multi-fold and complex. See: (United Nations, 2014; OG 5.30) and (United Nations, 2019; Module 5.20 – updated 9 November 2021).

and threats could, for example, take the form of homicide, hostage-taking, threats to communities and former combatants, etc.

Some possible conflict-sensitive issues and areas to be considered are:

1. Engaging in DDR

To prevent EU-supported DDR activities from inadvertently doing harm, aggravating tensions or even causing or contributing to conflict, it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the historical setting and the socio-economic, political and security situation. A first step would therefore be to **conduct a comprehensive conflict analysis** (European Commission, 2020). For example:

- Would the DDR operation contribute to the resolution of existing conflicts and root causes of conflict?
- What type of new conflicts could develop and how?
- What are ongoing violence and security risks?
- Are there any negative perceptions of the role of security forces?
- What are the current threats of armed groups and/or organised crime?
- How could tensions and conflicts over natural resources impact DDR support?
- So, considering all this, (how) is it that the foreseen DDR will effectively contribute to peace-building?

A solid (and regularly updated) conflict analysis would help make the design of the support efforts more conflict-sensitive and also support the design of a conflict-sensitive monitoring and adaptive approach during the programme implementation. Conflict sensitivity risks and issues would need to be linked to a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that keeps track of changes in the conflict context and how these relate to the DDR activities supported and the role of development cooperation.

Setting the actual objectives and timeframe for the DDR is in itself quite sensitive. These need to be realistic and obtain the full buy-in of various national stakeholders. If these are not met or otherwise lead to unfulfilled expectations, it could lead to dispute and conflict. According to the UN's IDDRS, not only a formal agreement is needed for a successful DDR programme, but also sufficient trust in the peace process (United Nations, 2019). Thus, the details of what has been agreed upon as well as the timeline must be communicated to the public, clearly and consistently, and by the relevant authorities through broadly trusted and sufficiently independent media or other relevant actors. This would help manage expectations in relation to DDR support and processes and facilitate the involvement of various communities affected by conflict.

2. Disarmament and Demobilisation

The actual decisions on **who will disarm and demobilise and under what conditions** are essential and highly sensitive from a conflict perspective. Each person who has agreed to go through the process must surrender all weapons and fully disengage themselves from the relevant military structure. In cases where a DDR process is linked to a possible amnesty, its legal basis and conditions should be made clear well in advance. From a EU perspective, international human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL) set important restrictions on the eligibility for DDR processes for perpetrators of war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights. DDR processes may also be linked to transitional justice commitments as part of a specific political settlement or peace accord.

Moreover, DDR may be **linked to an agreed security sector reform** (SSR).⁶ For example, a political agreement on integrating former members of armed groups into the regular national armed forces

⁶ A Guidance Note on SSR and Conflict Sensitivity (no. 14) is published in parallel to this note.

may be pending or moving forward. This normally requires a trade-off between political and military considerations, often a complex and delicate issue. This can also offset political negotiations and power sharing agreements if it does not sufficiently suit the interests of (former) armed groups or if it undermines the political elites in power.

Decisions to support DDR need to consider that giving up weapons significantly changes the **status, identity and power of (former) combatants**, at times making them vulnerable to reprisals and attacks. In addition, demobilisation often includes a general weakening of the significance of symbols and norms that previously underscored the power and prestige of armed groups or armed forces. Under such circumstances, it may be necessary to consider incorporating certain protection measures along with reinsertion and reintegration support, and consider specific protection measures for women and children. Even in the presence of an agreement between the (leadership of the) relevant parties to enter into a DDR process, some demobilising combatants might still resist their actual disarmament in circumstances where gun-ownership is culturally seen as an entitlement. Addressing this challenge needs to be approached and carried out within broader efforts to control small arms and light weapons (SALW).

The issue of creating **encampments for demobilised combatants** and persons formerly associated with armed groups needs to be assessed based on the specific circumstances. Consideration should be given to the short- and longer-term implications for sustainable peace, as well as the relationship with the communities and reintegration processes in general. Indeed, in some cases, having kept ex-combatants in such camps, especially if they are held longer than initially intended, negatively affected their reintegration and caused insecurity in and around these camps.

3. Provision of Reintegration Support

As mentioned above, reintegration in a war-affected environment is usually challenging, particularly for those with few skills and assets. Effective reintegration support is therefore critical for the success of DDR and the positive role of DDR in peacebuilding. From a conflict sensitivity perspective, a key issue is the **degree of individual targeting of reintegration assistance**. Over the past decade or so, there has been a general trend to move away from individual targeting – reinsertion support would have previously been provided – towards more community-based reintegration (CBR) support, as well as to more needs-based support. Several possible advantages and disadvantages of individual targeting (part of) the reintegration assistance need to be identified; these should be carefully weighed in the design of each programme to reach an appropriate balance between individually targeted assistance and CBR support.⁷

One of the disadvantages of individually targeted assistance is that it **could undermine reconciliation processes**. Ex-combatants and those associated with them are likely to be viewed by some groups in society as guilty of having caused violence and committing crimes. If only the ex-combatants (and persons formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups) would be (viewed as having) benefitted, this might create discontent among (parts of) the conflict-affected population and particularly undermine the social dimension of reintegration. Targeting economic assistance to ex-combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups thus risks frustrating real and potential opportunities for reconciliation. In addition, the very process of determining who will and will not receive individual assistance could also lead to delays, tensions and conflict.

Targeted reintegration assistance and the associated entitlements could also provide **reverse incentives, encouraging youth to actually join or re-join armed**

⁷ See also (United Nations, 2019; Module 4.30 – Reintegration).

groups. If a programme is designed to involve individual benefits, it might be in the interest of youth and leaders of armed groups to mobilise in order to benefit from the material or financial hand-outs at a later time.

Moreover, targeted economic assistance involves a higher risk that **resources provided to support reintegration will be 'taxed' by the leadership of (former) armed groups**, thereby financing violence. Moreover, ex-combatants – particularly female ex-combatants – who could be clearly identified as such could **be stigmatised** as a result of the assistance.

It happens quite often that **reintegration support is provided considerably later than expected** and that actual levels of support are lower than foreseen due to, for example, slow political processes, logistical constraints and/or financial reasons. This could lead to frustration and tensions. It would thus be important to prevent any delays, plan realistically and consider the risk of the possible negative impact of having to wait for reintegration support for actual reintegration processes. It is also vital to communicate the timeframe and potential delays clearly and openly to all the relevant stakeholders.

4. Clear and effective public information and communication

It is often unclear who will be demobilised and how reintegration will be supported. Effective and credible communication campaigns are therefore key to **building trust and avoiding the possible exclusion** of women, children and vulnerable groups. Moreover, such communication is key to managing the expectations of ex-combatants and communities at any point of the DDR process and to mitigating the risk of political or other types of manipulation of the process. This is often coupled with the lack of clarity regarding peace dividends for all groups (men, women, children, communities) which could possibly be perceived as not being equally distributed (livelihoods, education, health services, other

benefits, etc.), potentially creating tensions among communities and ex-combatants.

It is therefore important from the immediate outset of the initial discussions on the possible need to implement DDR activities to consider the **risks resulting from unrealistic expectations**, at times caused by active misinformation. The conditions for DDR need to be clearly communicated as well as the relation of DDR to the (transitional) justice process.

Early expectations that a **full DDR** would be implemented and that external financing would be forthcoming to fund individually-targeted reintegration support might affect or even undermine other related rehabilitation and development processes in various ways. It might, for example, slow down genuine national SSR efforts if soldiers and officers do not know whether they will remain in service. Possible anticipation of 'packages' for individual combatants might even lead to new recruitment. The expectations of individual (ex-) combatants of receiving such 'packages' could likewise affect their normal processes of finding their way back into communities. Independent economic initiatives of ex-combatants and other community members could be thwarted.

The media used to provide **information on DDR** should be reliable; media selection should be suited to the circumstances and access capacity. Civil society organisations and traditional leaders could also play a role in explaining the DDR programme to host communities and including them in decision-making, while ensuring gender-inclusive and age-responsive approaches. If possible, authorities should also be supported in challenging the activities of possible spoilers who spread misinformation.

5. Flexibility

To be able to provide an effective response in specific country situations, **operational flexibility and creativity**

may be required. However, it should also be noted that providing *ad hoc* reintegration support has, in several programmes, shown to be problematic. Experience shows that one of the challenges of DDR programmes is to provide early clarity to the ex-combatants, persons formerly associated with armed groups as well as the wider communities regarding the reintegration support that could be provided, the benefits involved and possible eligibility criteria, while, at the same time, maintaining sufficient flexibility in the programme to be able to respond to changing needs and circumstances. Predictability and a broad awareness about the programme are required to minimise the risk that violence and other types of pressure would be used to influence the programme.

6. Land and Other Natural Resources

Disputes over property and key natural resources, such as land, in areas with returning populations can lead to conflict, which must be considered when planning return, resettlement and reintegration support. Special attention should be paid to women, disabled persons, indigenous peoples and youth as they are often excluded from owning land or other property. Moreover, it is crucial to assess vulnerabilities and risks in relation to environmental degradation and climate change when planning socio-economic reintegration, for example, in relation to agricultural development, fisheries, forestry, land use and ownership, or water management. Reintegration can also create tensions in the areas of housing as well as access to social services, such as education and health facilities.

7. Financial Resources, Illicit and Conflict Economies

Another potential source of conflict could be concerning the **financial resources involved in DDR operations.** Given the complexity of DDR and the time

pressures involved, it is often challenging to establish and manage appropriate financial and procurement systems. Mismanagement and a possible diversion of funds through corruption could affect (the confidence in) the entire process. Frustration among demobilised combatants could affect the peace process. These resources could then become the focus of competition between powerful groups and even feed into a persisting war economy, which should in fact be dismantled.

A related issue is that, in conjunction with the DDR, (members of) armed groups and/or security forces should **withdraw from any possible involvement in illegal business,** such as drug trade, poaching, logging, smuggling, mining, etc. Such economic interests involving different conflict actors could in fact influence the willingness of combatants to demobilise. The active presence of criminal groups dealing with illicit and war economies often fuelled the conflicts in the first place and could, in some situations or areas, play a decisive role in the remobilisation of armed groups. Thus, the role of financial and natural resources in DDR programmes can be best understood in the framework of disrupting the broader conflict economies.

8. National ownership and the role of the international community

National and local ownership are an important factor in the contribution of DDR activities to genuine peacebuilding efforts. Experience shows, however, that despite the formal principle, external assistance is at times quite dominant in the entire DDR process. Donors may have carved out their piece of 'DDR' without enough consideration for the broader set of supports. Often, DDR programmes step in when a weak government with little experience and occasional lack of legitimacy is still seeking a political balance between themselves and (remnants of) the previously combating parties, which could in fact

include members of the government itself. Quite often, the **national institutions in charge of managing and coordinating the DDR operate in a fluid political environment**, including changes in the institutional setup and the senior personnel involved. Moreover, in some situations, there is a lack of ownership by local governments, as well as a lack of inclusivity in consultation and decision-making processes related to DDR support, especially in the case of communities and more vulnerable persons associated with armed groups.

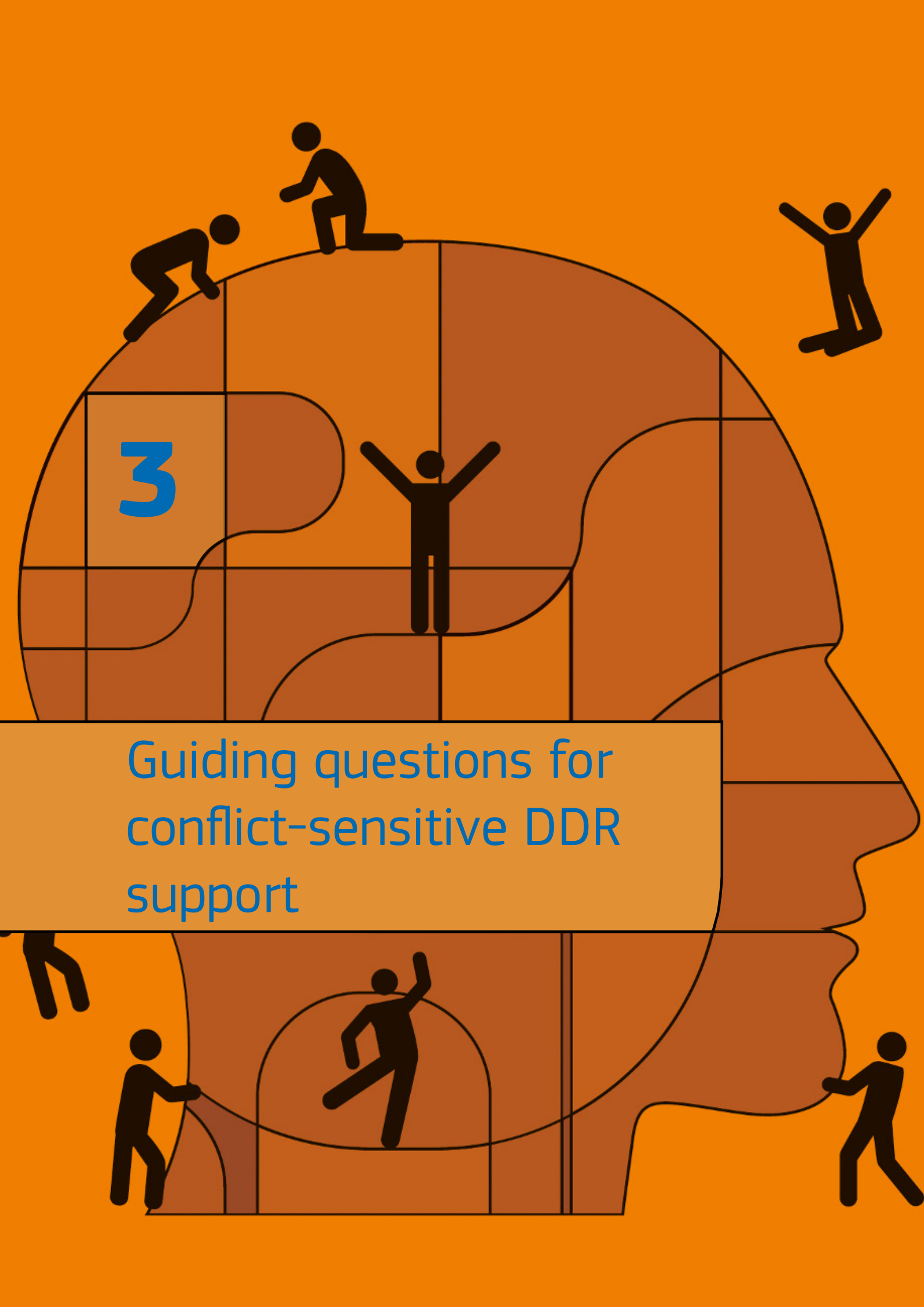
Important contributions from the EU could include expansive institutional support as well as efforts to provide more clarification on the national legal framework and policy on DDR. National and local decision-making processes and capacity need to be more openly discussed. The role of the EU and other members of the international community would also include **support for strengthening cooperation and coordination**, making it less cumbersome for the host government (at various levels) to deal with its partners.

9. Psycho-social Impacts

Last, but certainly not least, the cultural and psychological changes that ex-combatants and associated individuals have to experience after demobilisation are considerable. Some combatants

may have spent a significant part of their lives outside civilian communities. **War and related violence can leave numerous traumas on ex-combatants and society**, which could contribute to new forms of conflict down the road. The war and other types of violence could still be affecting individuals and society through stigma and re-traumatisation. Many could be victims and survivors of SGBV, including children – often also leading to stigmatisation and exclusion. Challenges to family reunification are common, often caused by such social exclusion as well as the association to armed groups in general.

Post-war trauma, especially in combination with an alcohol or drug addiction, can dramatically affect community and family life and may reduce the capacity for non-violent resolution of conflicts. Victims and survivors, as well as perpetrators of violence could in fact be living side-by-side in the same communities. Beyond direct human suffering, these scars could lead to new tensions and violence at several levels between groups in society, but they could also manifest themselves in domestic violence, ostracism, substance abuse, child abuse, etc. **Addressing psycho-social issues and providing relevant support from the international cooperation community while strengthening national systems** is therefore important for peacebuilding processes and should be part of sustained support for DDR.



3

Guiding questions for
conflict-sensitive DDR
support

SAMPLE GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Is some form of DDR included in a peace agreement or in ongoing negotiations? And if so, does it provide a detailed analysis of the size and composition as well as command-and-control arrangements of the armed forces and groups foreseen to undergo DDR?
2. Does an up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of the conflict and security dynamics exist? If not, when is such conflict analysis foreseen?
3. Have armed hostilities actually stopped? And how might ongoing violence affect the planned DDR?
4. To what extent are disarmament and demobilisation realistically achievable in the current context? Is there a plan with different scenarios?
5. What non-state security actors exist and what role do they play in the security sector? Are they supporting or threatening the stability of the state? Are they supporting or threatening the security of individuals and communities?
6. Do security sector actors understand and accept their role in the DDR? Do they have sufficient capacity and political will to play this role?
7. What security concerns remain after the signing of the ceasefire or peace agreement? For example, are large numbers of small weapons and ammunition still in circulation?
8. What steps will be taken to provide security to communities and ex-combatants after their disarmament? What are the risks of reprisals, vendettas, summary executions, gender-based violence, etc.?
9. Do national and local actors have sufficient capacities and resources to manage the DDR programme, as foreseen? How reliable and sustainable are the commitments of international partners to support the DDR, including reintegration support?
10. Is there a capacity needs assessment, including NGOs and CSOs, for example, in relation to policy advice, technical assistance, training and financial support for DDR?
11. Will the DDR programme take into account the different roles of those involved in armed forces and groups, especially women, girls and children?
12. Are risks concerning possible diversion and co-optation of international funding for DDR considered and mitigated?
13. How will data about ex-combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups be collected (including gender, age, education levels, etc.) and by whom? How will the sensitivity of such personal data be protected?

14. What measures are being taken to ensure the unconditional release and protection of all children associated with armed forces and groups?
15. How will state and non-state actors at the national, regional and local levels, including civil

society, NGOs, women's organisations and local communities, be represented in DDR decision-making bodies?

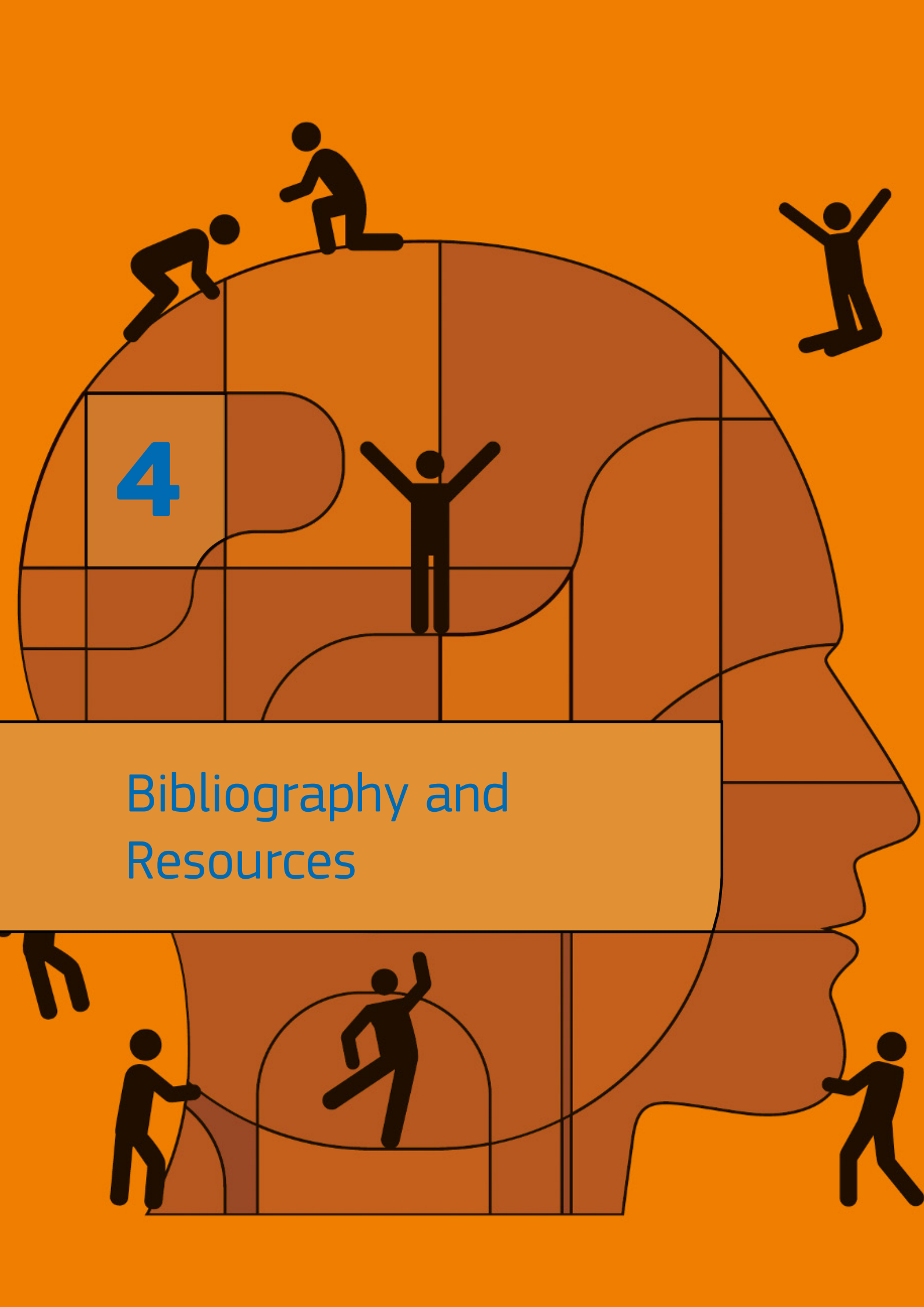
2. REINTEGRATION

16. Are some of the combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups already in the communities where they will reintegrate? How is their social relationship with the community?
17. Does an assessment exist for the different needs of women, men, girls and boys in accordance with the specific roles they played as combatants, supporters or/and dependants?
18. Does an assessment exist for the employment and livelihood opportunities for former combatants and persons previously associated with armed forces and groups in their host or neighbouring communities? Are existing reintegration opportunities expected to respond to the specific needs of different groups (including women, children, minorities, indigenous peoples)?
19. In light of the advantages and disadvantages of individually targeted support, including the risk of causing conflicts, how much of the reintegration support could best be provided through the communities as CBR support?
20. Is there sufficient involvement and consultation of individuals and communities in the planning and design of the reintegration support? Does it include women, children and minorities?
21. How might the return of ex-combatants reinforce rather than undermine social cohesion and reconciliation?

22. What is the capacity, nationally and locally, to deliver basic services, such as health, education and psycho-social support?
23. How will reintegration support apply the knowledge and experience of local communities, civil society and the private sector?
24. What type of support will be needed for community-based organisations, local businesses, vocational training centres, local financial institutions and local NGOs in order to support training opportunities as well as job and livelihood creation?
25. Are natural resources issues (including land) included in the employment and livelihood support, taking into account the risks of sustaining illegal and illicit economies or indirectly motivating re-recruitment?
26. Are natural resources issues (including land) taken into account in relation to gender, ethnicity and age, and in efforts to reduce existing inequalities?
27. Is adequate psycho-social support provided and tailored to different gender and age groups? Are there specific programmes or activities to support SGBV survivors?
28. Are children being consulted with regard to their expectations and needs in relation to reintegration and family reunification?

3. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

29. Is a clear and systematic communication system (with the ability to run campaigns) in place that provides information and explains demobilisation and how reintegration will be supported to potential beneficiaries as well as the broader communities (including the most marginalised)?
30. Are the relevant national actors aware of the risks of negative or false information on DDR and on what type of support will be provided to whom?
31. Have the necessary precautions been taken to avoid raising unrealistic expectations among participants and beneficiaries?
32. Is there a public information and planned communication strategy organised for each target group (participants, beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders)?
33. Does the communication strategy take into account different languages, accessibility as well as specific needs and interests of women, children and minority groups?



4

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