



EUROPEAN UNION

CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

NEIGHBOURHOOD SOUTH

SUMMARY and KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

**From the CSO PREPARATORY MEETINGS
26-27 April 2016, Jordan**

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BACKGROUND

The preparatory meetings to the Civil Society Forum took place on April 26-27, 2016 in Jordan, and the recommendations of these meetings will be presented and will feed the dialogue at the Civil Society Forum – Neighbourhood South, in Brussels on 26-27 May 2016 (EU/South Med - Multi-Stakeholder event).

In response to the Arab uprisings (2011), EU institutions and Member States acknowledged the need to engage in dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders in the South Mediterranean Region (beyond formal relations with governments). Therefore, since 2012, the political leadership of the EU (Former Commissioner Füle & High Level Representative Morgherini), EU services (The European Commission: DG NEAR & EuropeAid, European External Action Service/EEAS, European Economic & Social Committee/EESC and the European Committee of Regions /CoR) encouraged various stakeholders to engage with CS and consulted them on the European Neighbourhood policy: towards regional meetings and CS Fora in Brussels.

These initiatives aim to strengthen the role of CSOs in building peace, and democracy, while responding to shrinking space in the region. They echo the global strategy of the EU engagement with Civil Society: as reflected in the EU COM(2012) - ***The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations*** or in the Roadmaps within EU Delegations.

In Jordan, about 100 participants represented a diverse range of civil society actors from 10 countries of the South Mediterranean Region for building a meaningful Dialogue at regional level and preparing Brussels Forum: with stakeholders from the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

OBJECTIVES

During the Meetings in Jordan, proposals were made to:

- provide input to the CS Forum, to feed ongoing and new processes,
- better integrate voices of Women, Youth and media into the dialogue and regional activities,
- feed institutional thinking regarding new programmes and instruments to support Civil Society in the region following the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

In terms of methodology, working groups were going through a process of 3 steps: updates and recent findings, deepening discussions on key topics, concrete recommendations
key issues at stake focused on **3 themes** (agreed in the regional meeting of Tunis, 2014):

- **Migration and mobility:** Update on recent EU Negotiations with countries of the region / Assess new Regional decisions on Migrants & Refugees (including ENP) / Role of CSOs / Propositions of benchmarks to monitoring EU agreements against international Treaties and engagements / advocacy strategies to influence the debate in Europe and in the South Region
- **Inequality and Sustainable Development:** Based on previous policy papers / reports issued by CSOs, advocacy strategies regarding: economic paradigm, current Free Trade Agreements, Investments Policies / benchmarks to monitor Economic frameworks / CSO to involve (Trade Unions, Social Economy actors, Business /Women organisations) / Link with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs – Agenda 2030).
- **Shrinking space for Civil Society** (including issues of Human Rights and democratisation): Assessment of the ENP review and the way it integrates CSOs / Update on the 'CSO Road maps' & links with EU Delegations / Human Rights EU programmes – impact in the region / advocacy strategies to influence the debate at EU level and in the South region.

CS Forum on 26-27 May 2016 - four main objectives:

In 2016, the outputs to be elaborated in the framework of the CS Forum will aim at:

- defining next priorities and implementing the ENP,
- contributing to policy making and programming at levels of European Union institutions in Brussels and EU Delegations, on the role of Civil Society in national and regional frameworks (i.e. roadmaps),
- contributing to the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial dialogue in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership since 2008 / Barcelona process since 1995),
- providing specific inputs into ongoing initiatives for peace and conflicts resolution

Through:

- Direct dialogue between participants and EU institutions' representatives
- Validating and sharpening policy recommendations from Jordan
- Increasing awareness on ongoing initiatives, programs and projects at REGIONAL level (south Mediterranean)
- Moving the current process of dialogue to the next phase

In addition, emerging issues like 'radicalisation' or 'stabilisation' will also be addressed in a format that provide a constructive environment to debate them.

The purpose of this Forum is to move from consultations to implementation through various mechanisms which can allow civil society to dialogue and discuss also virtually.

Key recommendations from Brussels' deliberations should pave the next phase of the dialogue between all actors involved. It should also provide the conditions for genuine and long term collaborations among Civil Society from the South region and with partners in Europe.

"Human Development is expanding the possibilities of the poor. The possibility of choosing a life free from poverty is greater in a country with democratic governance, where social and political structures promote civil society participation and ensures just distribution of power and resources. We can have no better inspiration than this Forum and your dedication."

Andrea Fontana, Head of the EU delegation in Jordan

I. Migration and Mobility

Recommendations from Jordan regional meeting

A. Migration and mobility for development:

1. Clear Mobility & Migration process (online and physical offices) accessible for people in south countries.
2. Foreign aid Education scholarships for countries South neighborhood, which enable mobility for education and under the condition of returning of the beneficiary to the country of source for a minimum of two years before migrating again to EU. (The aim to have development in the South countries and manage the brain/skilled migration)
3. Foreign Investment & fostering entrepreneurship for Job Creation
4. Creating inclusive educational programs between migrant and local in the south countries before migrating to EU (Limiting unskilled migration)

B. South – South migration challenges:

1. Put strong legislations in place that respect human rights and migration mobility and monitor them through strong institutions.
2. Reform existing policies and programs.
3. Develop programs for awareness and sensitization vis-à-vis local populations.
4. Concentrate on integrated development and not imposed development.
5. Put a system of good governance and democratization through migrant participation.
6. Encourage programs to combat human trafficking.
7. Better organize cooperation South-South through adoption of mechanisms and conventions on bilateral or multilateral agreements.

C. Refugees:

1. Institutionalizing infrastructure and services in host communities.
2. Sustainability of aid and regulating it.
3. Ensuring the minimum standards as provided under Sphere Refugee program in all host communities.
4. Opening legal channels for refugees.
5. Supporting projects for both the host communities and the refugees.
6. Coordination and cooperation to provide procedures for international elections within the host communities.
7. Work towards combatting human trafficking and protecting victims especially women, children and marginalized groups.

II. Reducing Inequalities & Sustainable Development

Recommendations from Jordan regional meeting

A – Horizontal and regional level:

1. Supporting the establishment of horizontal and regional coalitions in order to exchange expertise and to revise policies based on specific sectors.
2. Supporting South – South cooperation in the exchange of successful expertise and lessons learned in various sectors. For example, Trade Union work in Tunis.

B – South with European Union:

1. To give priority to investments of wealth production and work, instead of commodity cooperation (trade markets), on human rights basis.
2. Evaluation of lending projects for governments, in order not to increase marginalization, discrimination and inequalities.
3. Evaluating public policies in the field of delegating public services.
4. Putting indicators to measure the effect of the EU policies on the inclusive participation, taking in consideration the following: decentralization, women, youth and people with disabilities.
5. Technical support and designing programs to develop the expertise concerning successful public policies in European countries (i.e. Education in Sweden, vocational training in Germany).
6. Focusing economic empowerment programs on cooperative projects, targeting women and marginalized people. Through inclusive financing, microcredit, and supporting organization of civil society that work on improving work conditions.
7. Supporting the initiatives of developing renewable energies, in order to reduce dependency on oil; public policies for energy transition.
8. Support society policies to fight terrorism, extremism and hatred speeches.
9. Discussing the possibilities of exchange between Neighborhood organizations and European civil organizations in the fields of refugees and political conflicts.
10. Supporting South – North cooperation in the field of successful expertise.
11. Introducing the inequality on individual local level by measuring well-being (education, employment, water, infrastructure, rights, environment...etc) and local/territorial development with social cohesion.

C – Relation with stakeholders:

1. Establishing mechanisms of follow up and evaluation, concerning the plans between European Union Delegations on regional level and civil society organization on the national level.
2. Emphasizing on the importance of more simplification of procedures of cooperation with the European Union on different levels concerning the financial support to civil society organization.

III. Shrinking Space for Civil Society

Recommendations from Jordan regional meeting

The Group tackled the current situation of CS space in the Arab region: many challenges in the region are common and request coordinated responses. Participants felt useful to continue cooperation on the issues analyzed during the meeting. Key recommendations from discussions can be summarised as follows:

A. Civil Society needs:

1. Arab organizations to create an internal co-operation in order to:
 - a) have a strong representation in EU;
 - b) make connections and partnerships between southern and northern organizations;
 - c) decide on a common agenda between CSO in the Arab region;
 - d) search for help in writing proposals for funding.
2. Search and create of new ways of communication between the government, the EU and CS.

B. Future advocacy and networking initiatives:

1. create national mechanisms to represent the south CS at the Brussels forum/dialogue;
2. create a code of best practices;
3. have EU trainings on EU procedures and the manner in which they create policies;
4. use several languages (include Arabic) in writing proposals for funding, or/and to translate the info and the conditions to Arabic;
5. have and foster more dialogue between Arab organisations.

C. General recommendations:

1. Ease of (governmental) restrictions for funding civil society organizations; facilitating the financial support process.
2. Demanding the EU to have a clear position and active role in dealing with violations against Human Rights Defenders, Activists.
3. National Mechanism that ensure the involvement of South Neighborhood in Brussels.
4. Implementing Code of conduct/ Best Practices that will enhance decision making, consultation and dialogue.
5. Facilitate mobility/movement of CSOs workers and HR defenders and activists between Europe and their region (including across the region).
6. Create a direct dialogue between 3 parties (Governments, CSOs and the EU).
7. Request to enhance direct relation between EU and the CSOs without an intermediary (such as large NGO, institutions, European networks, etc.).
8. Emphasis on core funding which can ensure sustainability.
9. Put pressure on governments in order to harmonize its domestic legislation with international standards on one hand, and to play a significant role – watch dog role- in monitoring violations against CSOs (not only ensuring the ‘visibility of the EU’ during their projects).
10. Involvement of civil society and youth in the implementation plans of EU and also engaging them in the monitoring process of EU policies.

IV. Cross Cutting Issues:

Women voices and participation

Recommendations

1. Economic empowerment:

- Lobby and advocate for more gender equal legislations, including the ratification and implementation of international agreements that enforce equality amongst the sexes.
- EU encouraged to support micro funds to Small business projects in order to support women in rural areas, who can create jobs for other women.
- Should work on new consumers and production culture and patterns, work on existing patterns amongst women regarding their roles in economy.
- Share and transfer the knowledge and experiences between Women leading CSOs.

2. Develop the organisations:

- Develop the language and rhetoric being used within the institutions to be more gender sensitive.
- Develop the concepts of gender and highlight the gender equality requirements in all EU projects.
- More focus on gender Qualitative and Quantitative data in reporting.
- Study the women needs and reflect on the project and/or strategy design making process.

3. SDG 5 and its corresponding indicators is a headline for all project implementations and mainstreaming gender in all EU projects and make it a prerequisite.

4. Activate the EU Gender Action Plan in all delegations in the neighborhood south.

5. Ensure women safety by activating or increasing the Capacity building programs for CSOs in the fields of women security.

6. Focus on women victims of war or security deteriorated spots.

7. Promote women participation on setting the priorities for development and civil society engagement.

8. Encourage the initiatives aiming at women empowerment.

9. Promote the women political participations.

Youth voices and participation

Recommendations

1. Remove barriers and promote mobility: for employment, education, cultural exchange, etc.

- Facilitate visa process and transparency. A closer look on Visa problems, for instance, applications for visas are complicated, sometimes financial requirements cannot be met. In addition, reduce minimum required amount (financial availability), letter from embassies.
- Youth pass as an example of an initiative for informal training to be issued by southern countries and ability to be generated in Arabic.

2. Facilitate youth participation into policy-making:

- Open spaces for political participation;
- Exchange of experiences;
- Access to media;
- Mobility;
- Facilitate cultural exchanges;
- Programs should facilitate participation of youth and women, to impact local development, ensure diversity in the region – cascading from individual to collective.
- Micro-financing projects;
- Education through partnership and exchange;
- Collaboration between institutions and organizations.

3. Provide or facilitate spaces for dialogue among youth, even through virtual exchanges.

4. Develop formal education systems in the Arab countries, through:

- Developing learning methodologies;
- Changing techniques of delivering information; soft skills and critical thinking;
- Teacher training programs for primary and secondary education;
- Supporting small and youth organizations and giving them priority.

5. Technical tools for vocational training (after working hours / morning for unemployed).

6. Support soft skills programs.

7. Support entrepreneurship and provide them with funds:

- Training for youth;
- Better understanding of entrepreneurship programs;
- Sustainability for these programs.

8. Provide exchange programs between south and north:

- Increase numbers of fellowship programs;
- Accountability and monitoring system to support youth programs;
- Transparency of funding.

Freedom of Speech and Independent Media

Recommendations

A. Challenges:

1. Distortion of reality and the influence of government on content.
2. Chaos in usage of social media.
3. Lack of confidence between media and civil society.
4. Lack of Media independence.
5. Lack of media which focuses on human rights and public policies (national and international).
6. The obstacle of higher education.
7. Media education and lack of linkages with needs.
8. Subjectivity of Media.
9. Using press cards as an identification card.

B. Recommendations:

1. Create Funds for professional and distinguished journalists
2. Enhancing partnership between civil society and media
3. Allocated support for journalists
4. Specialized and skill based training for journalists
5. Train journalists in issues key to society (Human Rights, Human Resources, public policies)
6. Provide protection and professional security for journalist and raising legal awareness for journalists.
7. Provide monitoring and documentation tools to track and document violations
8. Establish monitoring centers which has the capacities to monitor and analyze independence of medias
9. Provide professional training for journalists in social media and digital journalism
10. Revising and developing the legislation of media organization
11. Provide training related to media for judges and other staff of the justice system & administrations
12. Provide training for CSOs for specialized people in media in-order to build their capacities in media
13. Women must have their main role in the media sector.