

ISP.2 - Conflict Prevention and Peace Mediation

FACT SHEET

CONFLICT ANALYSIS

“Looking ahead, the EU can put ever more emphasis on conflict prevention as well as long term peacebuilding, and increasingly work in an integrated manner with Member States on the ground, as well as with all relevant international, regional, state and non-state actors in any particular conflict setting” (2019 reviewed EU Global Strategy).

WHAT IS CONFLICT ANALYSIS?

As a **key instrument for conflict prevention**, the EU engages in conflict analysis as a means to arrive at a shared understanding of conflict risks in a country or a region. Conflict analysis involving staff from different EU institutions dealing with external relations enables formulating and implementing more efficient and conflict sensitive EU external engagement.

Conflict analysis is a structured analytical process that offers insights into risks of violent conflict in a particular area, country or region. It offers an evidence-based foundation for prevention and resolution of violent conflicts. It follows an interactive process, aiming for a joint outcome. Conflict analysis helps to ensure that EU engagements in fragile countries are integrated and conflict-sensitive.

The EEAS Conflict Prevention Team, within the ISP.2 Division, has been operational since 2019. It conducts conflict analysis of countries facing instability or violence, advises on conflict sensitivity in fragile contexts, and provides support to prevention activities.

Through conflict analysis, ISP.2 aims to realise the [2019-reviewed EU Global Strategy](#) commitment to

conflict prevention, and the [2018 Council Conclusions](#) on the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises that invited the HRVP to “ensure that joint conflict analyses are systematically conducted.”

The [2020 Guidance Note on EU Conflict Analysis](#) sets out the key features of an integrated, joint conflict analysis and explains its added value for EU external action. The Note reflects a shared commitment by the EEAS and the European Commission DG INTPA to conflict analysis as a key conflict prevention instrument.

WHY CONDUCT CONFLICT ANALYSIS?

The EU conflict analysis aims to:

- foster a joint understanding of the conflict landscape, the risks and opportunities;
- shape conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts;
- ensure effective and conflict-sensitive EU engagement and programming;
- strengthen coherence and coordination in line with the ‘integrated approach to conflict and crises’.

EU conflict analysis makes tangible contributions to external action, by informing policy, security planning, and election support.

KEY COMPONENTS OF EU CONFLICT ANALYSIS

1. Conflict dynamics, an overview of the historical and current conflict environment, highlighting the main contested issues, the scope and nature of ongoing violence (e.g. insurgency, extremism, election violence) and its overall impact (e.g. in terms of migration, humanitarian toll, economic consequences, human rights abuse). Conflict analysis also requires an integrated gender perspective (based on gender analysis) and a human rights-based approach;

2. Causes/drivers of conflict, including an analysis of structural causes resistant to immediate change, triggers that may tip a high-risk situation over the threshold of violence, correlations with climate change and environmental degradation, and patterns of resilience or local capacities for peace that allow high-risk areas to withstand the risk of violence;

3. Stakeholder mapping, including parties to the conflict, people affected and those with interests and stakes in the conflict;

4. Possible future scenarios, including a variety of combinations of key uncertainties. Scenarios are analysed in terms of their likelihood and their impact on (human) security;

5. Review of ongoing engagements to ensure integrated and conflict-sensitive EU external actions, including a mapping of prevention, peacebuilding and stabilisation activities and programming, focussing on lessons identified;

6. Actionable recommendations for EU conflict prevention and resolution, to implement alone or in partnership, including short- and long-term initiatives.

To be effective and provide added value, the analysis needs to be:

- Joint – involving the political and cooperation sections at the EU Delegation concerned, HQ representatives from EEAS, DG INTPA, DG NEAR and other relevant Commission services, as well as EU Member States and international and local partners.
- Evidence-based – focused on those risks that are known to increase the possibility of violent conflict.

Some conflict analyses adopt a specific thematic angle, e.g. on the nexus between climate and conflict, or the risk of election violence.

The EU also conducts analyses on conflict scenarios, theories of change, and actor mapping.

ISP.2 engages in regular capacity-building on conflict analysis, including an online training available to EU staff.

WHEN TO CONDUCT A CONFLICT ANALYSIS?

Conflict analysis takes place, ideally, at the earliest signs of a violent conflict or tension. It is particularly opportune in countries that are in a state of unstable peace, where the risk of violence is substantial but still latent. However, conflict analysis also serves an important purpose in ongoing conflict or post-conflict situations, as it informs efforts to prevent a violent escalation or the repetition of a recent violent conflict.

Between 2020 and 2023, ISP.2 is coordinating approximately 60 EU conflict analyses in fragile and conflict-affected countries to support the new programming cycle of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), in close collaboration with DG INTPA/DG NEAR, and the EU Delegations.

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