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## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **EU enhances its comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises**

The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission adopted today a Joint Communication setting out concrete steps that the EU, collectively, is taking towards an increasingly comprehensive approach in its external action.

The comprehensive approach is about the strategically coherent use of EU tools and instruments. The Union has a wide array of policies, tools and instruments at its disposal – spanning the diplomatic, security, defence, financial, trade, development cooperation and humanitarian aid fields. It is the world's largest trading block and, collectively, the world's biggest donor of official development assistance (ODA) and humanitarian aid. Today's document establishes as a guiding principle the joined-up deployment of EU instruments and resources when dealing with situations of crisis and conflict, while taking into account their respective strengths and added value. It also highlights the shared responsibility of EU-level players and Member States – the proactive engagement of Member States is a pre-requisite for success.

The Communication sets out a number of concrete steps to further improve the coherence and effectiveness of EU external action in crisis or conflict situations:

- Develop a shared analysis among all EU players – EU institutions and Member States – setting out the EU's understanding of a potential crisis situation and identifying the EU's interests, objectives and potential role(s);
- Define where useful a single, common strategic vision for a conflict or crisis situation and for future EU engagement across policy areas;

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- Focus on prevention, whenever possible, through diplomacy as well as early warning and early action;
- Mobilise the EU's different strengths and capacities in support of shared objectives;
- Commit to the long term, even while carrying out short-term engagements and actions, by ensuring natural synergies between different EU tools to effectively build peaceful, resilient societies;
- Better linking policy areas in internal and external action, looking for example at energy security, environmental protection and climate change, migration issues, counter-terrorism, organised crime and global economic governance;
- Make better use of the EU Delegations' central role in co-ordinating EU dialogue and support in the field, including through Joint Programming with Member States to make development cooperation more effective.
- Work more and better with partners – such as the UN, NATO or the African Union – and civil society.

The Communication calls on EU Member States "to provide their full support for this approach and to fully engage in order to ensure that this vision and these objectives are fully implemented".

### **Background**

The Treaty of Lisbon sets out the principles, aims and objectives of the external action of the European Union. In the pursuit of these objectives, the Treaty calls for consistency between the different areas of EU external action and between these and its other policies.

The communication covers all stages of the cycle of conflict or other external crises: through early warning and preparedness, conflict prevention, crisis response and management to early recovery, stabilisation and peace-building in order to help countries getting back on track towards sustainable long-term development.

### **More Information**

JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises

[http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131211\\_03\\_en.pdf](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131211_03_en.pdf)