

Developments for the establishment of Civil Peace Service (CPS) programmes in Europe

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Austria

In 2006 the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), linked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had restructured its guidelines for the deployment of personnel in development co-operation ("Richtlinien für Personelle Entwicklungsarbeit"). The draft of these new guidelines included a Civil Peace Service programme, similar to the German CPS programme, next to a programme for classical development services and a volunteer programme.

Limitations of the programme's conception (according to the guidelines) were, however:

- To start the CPS programme at least 25 projects needed to be carried out in the first year, while Austrian peace and development NGOs do not have the organisational capacity to make this jump from 0 to 25 projects.
- ADA financing for Austrian NGOs doing CPS projects would have amounted to max. 80% while out of the remaining 20% only a max. of 5% could have come from other public funding sources (such as EU or other countries' development agencies).
- The ADA guidelines foresaw the placement of peace consultants inside local partner organisations which can have implications on the Austrian organisations' independence for action and might have limited the peace consultants' role as "third party".

These guidelines, however, did not come into force because of the Austrian two-year ODA budget cycle and the early elections in 2008. In any case, the initiative goes back to lobby efforts of the Austrian CPS Group, a group of Austrian peace and development NGOs that united in 2006, using the example of the German CPS Consortium. Some of the organisations involved have a track record in similar field work, some in training for civilian peace missions while others have a more traditional development cooperation background.

Currently the Austrian CPS Group is engaging in consultations around the development of a holistic concept for all Austrian engagements abroad ("Auslandseinsatzkonzept"), an official initiative which is coordinated by the Federal Chancellery. In addition, the proposal for an Austrian Civil Peace Service programme is also being raised in a parallel process for developing strategic guidelines on Security and Development ("Strategischer Leitfaden zu Sicherheit und Entwicklung") which is led by the Ministry for European and International Affairs. According to Austrian NGO partners there is quite some interest and openness to the CPS proposal, but the question of financing such a programming would likely be critical.

France

For the 2007 presidential election campaign the French Green party commissioned the drafting of a proposal for a new law for "the promotion of a culture of nonviolence and a voluntary civil service". Inspired by the German CPS example, the proposal included the promotion of civil peace interventions for peacebuilding and conflict resolution tasks and suggested the establishment of a funding mechanism and a peace volunteer contract. Though this proposal, presented by a minority party in the French Senate, has never been voted, it has been the first law proposal in France promoting the establishment of a CPS scheme and the topic of civil peace interventions.

A group of French peace and development organisations interested in the topic continues to meet regularly in the framework of the Comité d'Intervention Civile de Paix (Comité ICP). The leading organisation of this Committee, Mouvement pour une Alternative Nonviolente (MAN), is currently also involved in a partnership project with the organisations Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), Peacebrigades International France and Collectif Guatemala, funded by the French Foreign Ministry. More concrete lobbying activities for institutional solutions or more structured recognition and support of civil society peace interventions currently don't exist.

Italy

Several Italian NGOs have been promoting civilian peace interventions for many years, often inspired by early nonviolent actions (Mir Sada, European Civil Peace Corps proposal, etc.), but lately also more actively integrating the conceptual work of the German Civil Peace Service (the German CPS standards have been translated into Italian, the proposal for a European Civil Peace Service programme circulated within the Italian NGO community). Noteworthy is the Catholic organisation Associazione Giovanni XXIII with its Operazione Colomba projects in Kosovo and the Palestinian Occupied Territories where volunteers engage in reconciliation work and do accompaniment and human rights monitoring (similar to the work of for instance Peacebrigades International). The organisation with best connections at the European level and actively promoting professional Civil Peace Services similar to the German model is Centro Studi Difesa Civile, member of the European Network for Civil Peace Services.

Under the previous Prodi government (2006-08) the then Vice Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the creation of a regular round table with NGOs on "Civilian Interventions in conflict areas". This platform still exists and several of its members are cooperating on public awareness raising and training initiatives under the title Civilian Peace Interventions ("Interventi Civili di Pace"). More concrete lobbying activities for institutional solutions or more structured recognition and support of civil society peace interventions currently don't exist.

Norway

The Norwegian Development Agency NORAD has funded the Norwegian Peace Association to run several training courses in co-operation with International Alert's training department and under the title of "Peacebuilding Academy" (the founder of this initiative is an alumni of one of the Academy for Conflict Transformation's 9-week qualification courses).

NORAD also granted a small fund to the same organisation to further develop their proposal for a Norwegian Civil Peace Service programme. The publication is available also in English, it draws heavily on the example of the German Civil Peace Service programme and the unarmed civilian peacekeeping experience of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP).

Norwegian Peace NGOs also ran a lobby campaign around the 2009 parliamentary elections with the key request to the government to commission a bigger, more in-depth feasibility study on creating a CPS programme as a co-operation between the State and civil society. Several political parties have integrated the demand for CPS into their electoral programmes. In a country where large parts of the population have a good level of English, Norwegian colleagues are using extensively English versions of information material from Germany. The next activity planned is a one week summer Academy on Civil Peace Service in August 2010 with the participation of the famous peace researcher Johan Galtung.

Romania

As a new EU member state Romania has only recently developed an International Development Cooperation Strategy and is setting up the institutional infrastructure for its implementation. These developments might open up possibilities for peacebuilding issues and related civil society engagement, especially since Romania's geographic priorities lie with the conflict-prone Black Sea region.

On the nongovernmental side, the National Platform for Development Organisations (FOND) includes working groups on peace and development education as well as on peacebuilding initiatives. One key organisation following European debates around Civil Peace Services actively for several years is the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR), member organisation in the European Network for Civil Peace Services (EN.CPS). There are currently no concrete lobbying activities for institutional solutions or more structured recognition and support of civil society peace interventions in Romania.

Spain

In 2005 the parliament of the Autonomous Region of Catalonia approved a "law for the promotion of a culture of peace". Based on this law an International Peace Institute of Catalonia has been founded, an institution which since has set up a series of high-quality training courses in cooperation with the Swedish Folke Bernadotte Academy at a castle near Barcelona. In 2006 the Barcelona based EN.CPS network member NoVA – Centre per a la Innovació Social has also developed a proposal for an "Agency of civilians for peace" which then in cooperation with one political party was translated into a Spanish law proposal which has been discussed in the Foreign Affairs commission of the Spanish parliament (Congreso). The proposal called for a multifunctional governmental agency covering all aspects of civilian crisis management and peacebuilding: finance and conduct of civilian missions abroad, under Spanish or under international mandate; the set-up of a governmental Peace Corps; cooperate and co-fund non-governmental Civil Peace Services; foment training and recruitment capabilities on state and non-state level. The law proposal, has not been voted in plenary.

Using the Spanish translation of the German CPS standards NoVA, together with other Catalan civil society organisations promoted the idea of a Catalan Civil Peace Service Programme at an event in the Catalan Parliament in April of 2009. Catalan public institutions engaged to look into this initiative and the regional government decided to undertake a feasibility study through the International International Peace Institute of Catalonia (see above). An external consultant prepared the study between July and December 2009, the document was submitted to the Catalan parliament in January and approved May 2010. Implementation, i.e. starting a pilot phase for a Catalonian CPS will depend on the outcome of regional elections, officially the document is currently "under discussion".

Sweden

Even though Sweden does not have a Civil Peace Service programme, the Swedish development cooperation agency SIDA has been supporting projects of civil society peace interventions for several years. One example is the protective presence project by the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR) with accompaniment projects in South and Central America. However, the current government is making budget cuts which also affect these programmes.

Though there haven't been any concrete lobbying activities for more structured institutional recognition and support of civil society peace interventions, colleagues from SweFOR have become quite engaged with the European network and are studying the example of the German Civil Peace Service programme (and related documents) to evaluate the possibility to bring forward a proposal for a similar programme in Sweden.

Other countries where NGO partners promote Civil Peace Services, taking inspiration from the German CPS programme are **Finland**, **Slovakia** and **The Netherlands**.