










Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2023/2050(INI)	Procedure completed
Role of preventive diplomacy in tackling frozen conflicts around the world ? missed opportunity or change for the future?		
Subject 6.10.05 Peace preservation, humanitarian and rescue tasks, crisis management 6.10.08 Fundamental freedoms, human rights, democracy in general 6.10.09 Human rights situation in the world		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Foreign Affairs	 ZOVKO Željana Shadow rapporteur  SÁNCHEZ AMOR Nacho  KYRTSOS Georgios  WAITZ Thomas  KARSKI Karol  VILLANUEVA RUIZ Idoia	08/09/2022

Key events			
20/04/2023	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/11/2023	Vote in committee		
06/12/2023	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0404/2023	Summary
16/01/2024	Debate in Parliament		
17/01/2024	Results of vote in Parliament		
17/01/2024	Decision by Parliament	T9-0034/2024	Summary

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2023/2050(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 118
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/9/11747

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report		PE752.799	10/10/2023	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE754.949	26/10/2023	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0404/2023	06/12/2023	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0034/2024	17/01/2024	EP	Summary

Role of preventive diplomacy in tackling frozen conflicts around the world ? missed opportunity or change for the future?

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by eljana ZOVKO (EPP, HR) on a European Parliament recommendation to the Council, Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the role of preventive diplomacy in tackling frozen conflicts around the world missed opportunity or change for the future?

The UN defines preventive diplomacy as diplomatic action taken to prevent disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of conflicts when they occur. Preventive diplomacy in the EU encompasses political and financial support for the multilateral system, trade, development, humanitarian assistance and human rights, focusing on identifying opportunities to address the causes of conflict and creating spaces for dialogue, often in partnership with international and regional organisations as well as concerned parties.

Recommendations

The recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the VP/HR focus on six main areas where improvements in EUs preventive diplomacy arsenal should be achieved:

1. Understanding the local and cultural context

The EU should develop preventive diplomacy tools and state-building assistance tailored to the cultural, historical and political context of the country. It should carefully select its envoys and representatives in conflict and post-conflict regions in order to avoid sparking controversy linked to appointments from Member States with historical past in these countries or regions.

The European Council and the EEAS are called on to further enhance the EUs visibility in other non-EU and partner countries and strengthen the EUs cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations dimension and activities as a relevant instrument for peace, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, as well as for addressing global challenges, and to demonstrate the EUs added value and advance cooperation and relations with these countries and international partners.

2. EU Conflict Early Warning System

To ensure that the EUs conflict Early Warning System is sufficiently proactive, it should be provided with the necessary resources and be based on forward-looking, comprehensive and robust analysis of risk factors that frequently correlate with the outburst of violence, as well as management tools that identify, assess and help to prioritise situations at risk of violent conflict.

3. The role of EU Special Representatives and Envoys in preventive diplomacy, their accountability and overview of their results

Members recommended that the initiatives undertaken by EU special representatives and envoys should be thoroughly assessed, including scrutiny in Parliament. The appointment of EU special representatives, special envoys and ambassadors should only be confirmed after a positive assessment by Parliaments Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4. Lessons learned from EU mediated conflict resolution and frozen conflicts

Looking at the lessons learned from EU mediated conflict resolution and frozen conflicts, in particular in Africa, the Western Balkans, Nagorno-Karabakh, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Afghanistan and Ukraine, the report recommends that future EU preventive diplomacy actions consider the missed opportunities and avoid similar situations in the future. In particular, the EU should assess and analyse carefully and continuously the risk factors and adapt its actions in conflict regions in order to prevent the creation of political vacuum that could be filled by actors that might not be acting in the best interest of the country or region in question, or the spread of false narratives.

5. Strengthening partnerships and international coordination

Partnerships and international coordination are key to successful preventive diplomacy and the EU should continue strengthening its partnerships with international, regional and sub-regional actors, such as the UN, OSCE, the African Union and ASEAN, including what concerns early warning, conflict prevention and mediation. An integrated approach, combining humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, security assistance and diplomatic engagement, in coordination with partners, would be more comprehensive and deliver more favourable results in preventive diplomacy.

Efforts should be stepped up in fighting disinformation, misinformation and foreign interference operations.

6. From strategic autonomy to preventive diplomacy

The EU should step up its strategic autonomy in order to be seen as a strong actor in preventive diplomacy. This can be achieved if the EU speaks with one voice and action on the ground is aligned between the EU and its Member States, moving away from individual interests. Building on past experience with joint EU mechanisms, like the EU civil protection mechanism or EU peace keeping missions, the EU can adopt similar approach when developing an integrated and pan-European approach to preventive diplomacy missions. It also remains important to communicate EUs achievements and success stories better. While being the biggest development aid donor in the world, the output from this significant investment in the public diplomacy scene is insignificant and often even overridden by false narratives presented by other major powers present in developing countries.

Role of preventive diplomacy in tackling frozen conflicts around the world ? missed opportunity or change for the future?

The European Parliament adopted, by 533 votes to 64 with 25 abstentions, a recommendation to the Council, Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the role of preventive diplomacy in tackling frozen conflicts around the world missed opportunity or change for the future?

The United Nations defines the UN defines preventive diplomacy as diplomatic action taken to prevent disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of conflicts when they do occur. The EU should actively pursue preventive diplomacy in frozen conflict regions to prevent escalation and promote stabilisation.

Recommendations

Parliament recommended that the Council, the Commission and the VP/HR recognise the strong link between EU internal and external policy and security dimensions, place respect for fundamental and human rights at the heart of its preventive diplomacy efforts and strengthen their role and effective participation in conflict prevention and resolution processes, as well as mediation for the implementation of ceasefire agreements concluded under EU auspices.

The Union's preventive diplomacy tools should be integrated into structural prevention mechanisms and actions, such as political agreements between the different actors involved in conflicts, national dialogues for reconciliation, peace-building and transitional justice, as well as truth and reconciliation commissions.

Parliament's recommendations focus on six main areas where improvements in EUs preventive diplomacy arsenal should be achieved:

1. Understanding the local and cultural context

The EU should develop preventive diplomacy tools and state-building assistance tailored to the cultural, historical and political context of the country. It is important to foster open communication and consultation with local stakeholders and all parts of society in the relevant country, in particular civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations, to better understand the local and cultural context and build confidence.

The European Council and the EEAS are called on to further enhance the EUs visibility in other non-EU and partner countries and strengthen the EUs cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations dimension and activities as a relevant instrument for peace, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, as well as for addressing global challenges, and to demonstrate the EUs added value and advance cooperation and relations with these countries and international partners.

2. EU Conflict Early Warning System

To ensure that the EUs conflict Early Warning System is sufficiently proactive, it should be provided with the necessary resources and be based on forward-looking, comprehensive and robust analysis of risk factors that frequently correlate with the outburst of violence, as well as management tools that identify, assess and help to prioritise situations at risk of violent conflict.

3. Role of special representatives and special envoys in preventive diplomacy, their accountability and overview of their results in conflict resolution processes

Parliament recommended taking account of local, cultural and historical backgrounds when appointing special representatives and envoys in order to avoid sparking controversy in conflict regions should the appointment come from a Member State with historical ties to the region concerned that could threaten their perception as honest broker. It also recommended to ensure that the appointment of EU special representatives, special envoys and ambassadors can only be confirmed after a positive assessment by Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4. Lessons learned from EU mediated conflict resolution and frozen conflicts

Parliament suggested conducting a study on the lessons learned from the EUs prior actions, missed opportunities for preventive diplomacy and its achievements in the process of peaceful conflict resolution, for example, in the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa, the Western Balkans, South Caucasus, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Moldova and Ukraine.

It recommended:

- avoiding, in the future, the potential negative consequences of the premature suspension of EU missions in conflict regions;
- improving the range of tools in the field of preventive diplomacy for the Union's civilian and military missions and operations;

- drawing lessons from the lack of progress in implementing ceasefire agreements concluded under EU auspices;
- ensuring that the Union plays an active role whenever a breach of international humanitarian law is committed;
- enhancing the EUs ability to rigorously and continuously analyse and predict the political and security situation in crisis regions and adapt the EUs response to shifting realities on the ground.

5. Strengthening partnerships and international coordination

Partnerships and international coordination are key to successful preventive diplomacy and the EU should continue strengthening its partnerships with international, regional and sub-regional actors, such as the UN, OSCE, the African Union and ASEAN, including what concerns early warning, conflict prevention and mediation. An integrated approach, combining humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, security assistance and diplomatic engagement, in coordination with partners, would be more comprehensive and deliver more favourable results in preventive diplomacy.

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The EU should step up its strategic autonomy in order to be seen as a strong actor in preventive diplomacy. This can be achieved if the EU speaks with one voice and action on the ground is aligned between the EU and its Member States, moving away from individual interests. Building on past experience with joint EU mechanisms, like the EU civil protection mechanism or EU peace keeping missions, the EU can adopt similar approach when developing an integrated and pan-European approach to preventive diplomacy missions. It also remains important to communicate EUs achievements and success stories better. While being the biggest development aid donor in the world, the output from this significant investment in the public diplomacy scene is insignificant and often even overridden by false narratives presented by other major powers present in developing countries.

Transparency				
ZOVKO ?eljana	Rapporteur	AFET	28/03/2023	United Nations Liaison Office for Peace and Security (UNLOPS)