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Publisher

STETE - the Finnish Committee for European Security
Pohjoinen Hesperiankatu 15 A 5th floor
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## FOREWORD

Welcome Helsinki + 40  
**Katja Pehrman**  

## THE SYRIAN PLIGHT

*Kick-starting the Peace Process and Responding to the Expanding Humanitarian Disaster*

- Turning Points of Syria’s War and the EU’s Civilian Crisis Management Support to a Peace Process in Syria  
  **Ari Kerkkänen**  
  10

- Factors that Led to the Eruption of the Syrian Civil War and Possible Scenarios for the Future  
  **Alan Salehzadeh**  
  18

- Syria’s Uncivil War  
  **Mikko Patokallio**  
  23

- Peace in Syria Requires Small Steps  
  **Tom Packalén**  
  29

  **Sanna Olli**  
  32

- Europe and New Syria - a Partnership  
  **Mania Alkhatab**  
  35

- Syyrian pakolaisia Suomeen  
  **Sirkku Päivärinne**  
  37

## ALIENATION, RADICALISATION AND TERRORISM

- Can the Bird’s Nest Fall into the Ground without the Bird Noticing? A case for why preventing violent extremism in Finland is something to be done now and not tomorrow  
  **Ari Evwaraye**  
  42

- Alienated Youth and the Risk of Radicalization in the Virtual World - An interview with four experts from different fields  
  46

## ARMS CONTROL TIMELINE

- Constant Challenges: Finnish export controls and international arms trade  
  **Elli Kytömäki**  
  52
Arms Control: UN Asia
ESSE HYNNINEN 55

NORDIC DEFENCE COOPERATION

The New Dynamics of Nordic Defence Cooperation
JACOB WESTBERG 60

Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO): Balancing Efficiency and Sovereignty, NATO and Nonalignment
HÅKON LUNDE SAXI 68

Common Courses for Common Purposes: Cooperation in Nordic professional military education
GARY SCHAUB, JR. 73

CYBER SECURITY

Cyber Cooperation: A Framework
MIKA KERTTUNEN 82

Kyberturvallisuus Venäjän kansallisen turvallisuuden viitekehysessä
KATRI PYNNÖNIEMI 91

OSCE

HUMAN DIMENSION

HDIM: The Important and Controversial Discussions Take Place during Side Events
KATI LEPOJÄRVI 98

Two Sides of the Same Coin? The blurred line between freedom of speech and hate speech
ANNE PELTONEN 104

Vihapuhe on demokratialle kuin pisara joka hitaasti mutta varmasti syövyttää kiven
EVA BLAUDET 107

CIVIL SOCIETY

OSCE Civil Society Forums: Past, Present and Future
VILLE ANTILLA 111

The Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship: The Year of Lost Opportunities?
HANNA SHELEST 114

EPILOGUE 118
FOREWORD

WELCOME HELSINKI +40

As I was assuming my tasks as the Permanent Representative of Finland to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in September 2013, I was asked about my expectations for the largest regional security Organization in the world. This question is challenging. First of all, I must confess that I am a strong supporter of the OSCE, as the Organization certainly possesses great potential. At the same time, the role of the OSCE has occasionally been questioned – mainly, how can it better respond to current security challenges of its 57 participating States?

The year 2015 will mark the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. A process, which fittingly carries the name “Helsinki +40”, offers possible answers to the current security challenges, provided that the political will of the participating States can be mobilized. The process should define the OSCE’s place in today’s security architecture, focus on the organization’s activities, and help in finding ways to bridge political divides. In fact, the process itself is an important confidence-building measure.

The so-called OSCE Troika of present, past, and future OSCE Chairmanships (Ukraine, Switzerland, and Serbia), divided the Helsinki +40 process into eight thematic clusters at the end of 2013. Each one is headed by an appointed OSCE Ambassador. Upon request, Finland agreed to coordinate the cluster on protracted conflicts. The work will concentrate on three main areas: strengthening the mediation capacity within the OSCE; enhancing engagement with civil society and parliamentarians; and exploring various confidence-building measures in conflict resolution processes.

Cooperation with civil society, including the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions, is of utmost importance to Finland. The Network is preparing a research project on threat perceptions within some of the OSCE participating States. Hopefully these results can benefit the Helsinki +40 process. Moreover, I am confident that our excellent cooperation with the Finnish Committee for European Security (STETE) will continue, and that we will have the opportunity to explore new avenues for discussing the future of the OSCE together. Switzerland, during its Chairmanship in 2014, will continue to strengthen the involvement of civil society in the work of the Organization, to enhance its visibility, and to make its voice heard.
For the Helsinki +40 process to succeed, high-level political engagement is necessary. This includes the relevant work and contribution of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I look forward to continuing the cooperation with our active Finnish Parliamentary Assembly Delegation. Together, we have already identified joint objectives in the Helsinki +40 process, including the enhancement of mediation support. The Parliamentary Assembly will hold its Annual Session in Helsinki in July 2015.

What kind of opportunities does the Helsinki +40 process then offer? I would say, first of all, the OSCE’s role as a forum for dialogue should be strengthened. Already in the Helsinki Final Act, the participating States committed themselves to resolving conflicts by peaceful means and through dialogue. Secondly, the OSCE offers a common roof over the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. The efforts should be redoubled to translate dialogue into more common and substantial results.

Thirdly, we should not forget that the OSCE is a field-based Organization. This means that action and assistance take place on the ground. For years, the field presences have offered participating States valuable support in implementing OSCE commitments. This valuable work should continue, including in the current crisis in Ukraine.

Military stability, transparency and predictability cannot be taken for granted. Therefore, conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building regimes remain major instruments of security. However, these instruments should be updated to respond to current needs.

Within the Human Dimension, the year 2013 was successful with two Ministerial Council decisions on religious freedom and improving the situation of Roma and Sinti, with a particular focus on women, youth and children. We also welcomed the adoption of the first set of confidence-building measures to reduce the risks of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technologies.

Finland will continue its efforts to enhance the agenda of Women, Peace and Security at the OSCE. The protection of the rights of women in armed conflicts and full participation of women in all conflict prevention, peace-building, mediation and post-conflict reconstruction processes are some of the main issues where the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 needs to be strengthened. The OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security constitutes the basis of our endeavors.

The OSCE has always been innovative and flexible and is therefore used to adapting to the challenges of the day. The OSCE constitutes a multilateral format to discuss, build and shape peace. It is a platform for dialogue that helps foster transparency and predictability, build trust, develop common norms, find non-violent solutions to conflicts, and shape common responses to common challenges. One has to remember, however, that the Organization is only as strong as its members let it be. Therefore, it is my sincere wish that the Helsinki +40 process, through the participating States’ expressed political will, will give us answers and guide us for the future.
THE SYRIAN PLIGHT

KICK-STARTING THE PEACE PROCESS

AND

RESPONDING TO THE EXPANDING HUMANITARIAN DISASTER
According to Ari Kerkkänen, Syria stands now on the brink of explosion. In fact, the civil war in Syria has reached a stage where the only way to stop indiscriminate killing and to alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe is a peace process based on political compromise between the regime and its opponents. With regards to the peace process, Dr. Kerkkänen suggests that the European Union would, with its civilian crisis management capability, be ideally placed to take over the confidence-building task in Syria. Indeed, since the Arab League cannot easily play a confidence-building role, as some of its member states have been so deeply involved in the conflict, and since the United Nations peacekeeping force cannot be the main actor in confidence-building, as heavily armed soldiers are not perceived as mediators among the population nor are they trained to act as mediators; this provides a space for the EU to bring its expertise and civilian crisis management experience into play. Hence, as Dr. Kerkkänen argues, the costs of the continuing war in Syria, in terms of humanitarian assistance and flow of refugees, are far greater for the EU than the costs related to a peace process supported by the crisis management mission. The possibility to deploy a mission to support the peace process entails also a prospect for ending the war. The question remains, however, whether the EU can muster enough political will to make a contribution in Syria.

The war in Syria has reached the stage where the only way to stop indiscriminate killing and to alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe is for there to be a political compromise between the regime and its opponents. The death toll has already exceeded 100 000, one third of them being civilians and the rest combatants. More than 2 million refugees have left the country and millions of Syrians are internally displaced. The country has been de facto divided into the regime- and the rebel-held territories. Rebel-held territories are subject to continuous fighting and shelling, making it difficult, if not impossible, to provide basic services (i.e. salaries, schools, health care, and a rule of law) as well as humanitarian assistance for the population, while these services still function to some extent in Syria’s
regime-held territories.

While the regime has consolidated its grip on the capital Damascus, the numerous armed opposition groups have increasingly become radical. The Salafist and Islamist groups with linkages to Al-Qaeda dictate the events on the ground on behalf of the opposition. Political opposition continues to be diverse and divided and does not control the rebels. Syria's geo-strategic position makes it an epicentre of the Levantine Middle East. It lies on the schism dividing the Sunna and the Shia. The one that rules Damascus has a say in the regional power politics beyond Syria's borders. This makes Syria a powder keg, of which explosion has a both regional and global dimension. Syria now stands on the brink of this explosion.

The EU cannot escape the war in Syria as it has both direct and indirect consequences for many, if not all, EU member states. So far, the EU’s response has mainly been on the humanitarian aid front. While it is critical to have a humanitarian crisis response, it is only through politics that this humanitarian catastrophe can be brought to an end. Geneva II is now on the agenda. The EU must be prepared to take a robust role in Syria's peace process and peacebuilding. The objective of this paper is to propose that the EU contribute to supporting a peace process with a specific focus on confidence-building and reconciliation through the civilian dimension of its crisis management capabilities. This would be an indispensable and complementary support of the UN’s peacekeeping force.

FROM UPRISING TO OPEN WAR

Syria’s current conflict situation began with the start of a popular uprising that has set off a chain of events, transforming the uprising into a civil war. In order to succeed, the peace process must start with a ceasefire, which would address the current tumultuous situation on the ground. Once a ceasefire is in place and adhered to, the political transition would then need to address all the grievances that have triggered ordinary Syrians to protest in the streets in the first place.

In the Spring of 2011, ordinary Syrians took to the streets to demand greater freedoms, both in public and private spheres of life, as well as to improve political plurality, employment, and advocate for the lifting of the emergency law kept in place since 1963. In addition, tangible actions against endemic corruption were at the heart of their demands. Corruption had peaked since a more liberal economy was introduced, following the ascendancy of President Bashar al-Assad to power in 2001. The corruption was directly linked to the inner circles of the regime, including Assad's family, through some mega-enterprises. This angered the ordinary people. Also, the Sunni population, representing the majority in Syria, felt that they were not adequately being represented in the country’s governance. They also harboured grievances going back to the massacre of Hama in 1982, when the previous countrywide insurgency launched by the Muslim Brotherhood was violently crushed. The massacre left deep wounds for many Syrians that have not yet healed. Moreover, poverty was one of the factors creating discontent. The gap between the have's and the have not's
was steadily increasing. This was partly due to natural disasters such as droughts, which the regime proved unable to respond adequately. The main burden of poverty was also felt by the Sunni population, and forced some Sunni members of the rural population to be internally displaced. As a result, the Sunnis had steadily started to flock into the suburbs of major cities, creating a sort of rural belt around traditional urban dwellers; the belt that was utilized by the rebels during the war.

The regime's violent response to the peaceful demonstrations, which mimicked its previous dealings with uprisings in the end of the 1970s and beginning of the ‘80s, paved the way for the first armed clashes between the regime and the opposition as early as the Spring of 2011. While armed opposition activists, whether army deserters, criminals, or just ordinary civilians were claiming that they carried up arms to protect civilians, it quickly became clear that their priority targets were army and/or police checkpoints and facilities. It is worthy to note that many of the focal points of the uprising were small towns on the borders of Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, towns that had traditionally became known for their smuggling activities.

The first major turning point of the budding uprising was the month of Ramadan in the summer of 2011. Demonstrations, so far held during the weekends, became daily and the death toll kept climbing. A few targeted assassinations of prominent Syrians in September-October 2011 on different sides of the sectarian divide added a religious/ethnic dimension to the increasingly violent uprising. The so-called Free Syrian Army was formally established by the end of 2011, as well as major political umbrella organizations in exile, like the Syrian National Council. The Free Syrian Army was purported to lead the struggle against the regime and called for the ousting of Assad. Some of the most influential regional states like Turkey, Saudi-Arabia, and Qatar threw their support to the opposition at the same time. This development gave some legitimacy to the regime’s narrative that they needed to wage war against imported terrorism and terrorist acts conspired outside of Syria. While regional dimensions of the war became visible; Syria had also become a playground for regional power politics.

**ANNAN'S 6-POINT PLAN AND GENEVA I**

The first serious international effort to mitigate emerging civil war since the failure of the Arab League’s (AL) mediation efforts was the appointment of the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, as a Joint Special Envoy for the UN and the AL for Syria. The UN Security Council unanimously endorsed support for Annan's efforts and his six-point peace plan in April of 2012 (UNSCR 2042). At the outset of Annan's mission, the death toll was about 6000. The core of Kofi Annan's peace plan was a:

“Syrian-led political process to address the aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people, UN-supervised cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties to protect civilians, and all parties to ensure provision of humanitarian assistance to all areas affected by the fighting. In addi-
The ceasefire was to be monitored by the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), whose establishment was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2043.

The regime committed, on paper at least, to the implementation of the Annan plan, while the response of the diverse opposition groups was lukewarm. Some were willing to abide with the ceasefire; thus allowing the UN to proceed with the plan, but some opposition groups had already stated before the implementation of the ceasefire that it was a failure. The ceasefire held hardly for a few days and began to crumble. There were abundant spoilers on every side of the conflict who were not willing to see the ceasefire holding. The prevalent thinking was still that the war could be solved through military means. While deployed UN observers noticed that their presence usually de-escalated prevailing situations, often, they themselves became targets of firing.

Since the ceasefire was at jeopardy and its implementation was charged with increasing obstacles, the so-called Geneva meeting on the foreign minister level was called up to enhance the implementation of Annan's plan. The conference agreed unanimously about the implementation of the plan, endorsed also by the United States and Russia. According to the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012, the following key steps were to be taken: “the establishment of a transitional governing body exercising full executive powers including members of the present Government and the opposition and other groups. The transitional government was to be formed on the basis of mutual consent.”

The violence, however, escalated during the month of Ramadan in 2012 and the implementation of the Annan Plan, on the parameters of the Geneva Communiqué, became impossible. A frustrated Annan resigned and Lakhdar Brahimi was eventually appointed as his successor. The failure to implement Annan's plan, however, cannot be attributed to the United Nations. The parties of the conflict, whether the regime and/or its opposition, did not have the will to abide by the ceasefire and allow for the political process to get off the ground. Some opposition factions, for example, feared that the plan would have given Assad a chance to stay in power.

In addition, this lack of will was demonstrably present within the regional countries, which, irrespective of the UN Security Council resolutions, continued their active support of some of the rebel groups and/or the regime. Even some of the UN Security Council permanent members, who voted for the resolution, were busily assisting some of the factions by various means. The results were deplorable and the implementation of Annan's plan became impossible. A minor shortcoming in the Annan Plan was the small number of UNSMIS observers assigned to oversee the implementation of the plan. This number was by far too small to ensure adequate 24/7 monitoring throughout the country. Most likely, the host government would not have allowed for a bigger mission, which just underlines the genuine lack of will for a resolution to the conflict.
The second major turning point took place during the summer and autumn of 2012. The development was marked by an influx of Sunni Islamist extremists not only from Iraq, but also from Turkey and Lebanon, to Syria. Some of these extremists were closely affiliated, or a part of, Al-Qaeda in Iraq, and were striving for establishing a state based on Sharia law. Organizations like Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria became well known. Moreover, some other Islamic rebel formations grouped under the so-called Syrian Islamic Front. As a fighting force consisting of numerous small irregulars, they quickly made progress in the northern part of Syria, occupying parts of Aleppo and spreading southwards, partly surrounding Damascus. The Kurds in the northeast of Syria who had enjoyed a de facto self-rule for more than a year were the only challenge for the Islamists. The Free Syrian Army then became a secondary actor in terms of its opposition fighting capabilities.

The radicalization of the war deepened the humanitarian catastrophe. The armed rebels aimed at occupying major cities with a sizable civilian population. The civilians were left at the mercy of the regime's firepower and were kept as captives of the situation. After a relatively sweeping advance by the Islamists in the autumn of 2012 and the early winter of 2013, the tide finally turned when Hezbollah entered the scene supporting the regime. By the summer of 2013, the situation had again reached a stalemate with neither side being able to make a decisive move. Suspected crimes against humanity were recorded and attributed to different sides of the war.

The regime and the rebels received open or clandestine support from their regional allies, fostering the regional dimension of the war. The very legitimate demands of Syrian demonstrators in the spring of 2011 had turned them into victims of the region’s power politics as the conflict transformed. Their initial hopes to get their demands heard were swept away. Many Syrians came to realize that the overall loss was becoming greater now than the democracy and freedom deficit that they had experienced during the 40 years of Assad’s regime. After all, Syria had been one of the official secular states in the Middle East, giving the freedom of religion to all of its citizens and where, for example, gender equality was significantly better than in many of its neighbouring countries. There was free schooling, including university education as well as public health care. The authoritarian regime provided a sense of stability and safety, though this stability was not entirely free from citizens’ fears and wants. The memory of the recent past is still cherished by a significant part of the population who still give support to the existing regime.

The regime played a major role in manipulating the uprising into a violent one by using brutal force in the beginning to suppress demonstrations. They failed to perceive that the examples of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya had encouraged Syrians to break their walls of fear. The demonstrators were not frightened away. The armed rebels actively contributed to the deepening of the cycle of violence and to causing civilian suffering by bringing the war into urban centres (i.e. Homs in the winter of 2012).
The situation has become very complex in Syria. There are many conflicts currently fought simultaneously on Syrian soil. One is a legitimate citizen-based uprising for greater freedoms, the second is a civil war between the regime and the rebel forces, and the third is a regional power struggle fought at the expense of Syria. At the same time, the political situation remains vague as the regime’s opponents continue to be deeply divided and plagued by internal fights. The changing nature of the conflict has pitted many Syrians along divisive ethnic and sectarian lines. The result is a deeply divided and fragmented society to the extent that the mere existence of Syria as one state is at jeopardy. The atrocities committed have caused deep wounds that will take generations to heal. The war has already spilled over beyond the borders of Syria, destabilising Lebanon and Iraq. Unless a credible peace process is able to stop the war, regional destabilisation will grow. The potential consequences are unimaginable.

Chemical weapons, or some chemical agents, were used in Syria already before the major use of such weapons in some suburbs of Damascus on 21 August 2013. Surprisingly, this event turned out to be one of the major turning points of the war. Syria was obligated, under an imminent threat of military strikes by the US, to join the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, as well as destroy their existing chemical weapons production capabilities and storages.

The indiscriminate use of a weapon of mass destruction opened a window of opportunity to renew the Geneva track. The credibility of Annan's plan was recognized by the UN Security Council resolution 2018 about disarming Syria from chemical weapons as it refers to the Geneva Communiqué as a basis for the agreed principles and guidelines for a Syrian-led transition process. The Annan Plan currently forms the most workable foundation to build on in order to resolve the conflict. Geneva II process is currently underway.

For Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations and Arab League Special Envoy to Syria, it had been extremely challenging to come up with something even more workable than the plan Kofi Annan had already designed. A couple of calls for a ceasefire had fallen on deaf ears. Brahimi can be credited, partly by his own efforts and partly by the stroke of luck (in this instance, a political opening after the chemical attack), for bringing Russia and the United States closer to each other on Syria's question. Unfortunately, some of the regional powers like Saudi-Arabia and Qatar are still potential spoilers of the political process. Likewise, it is difficult to perceive a significant progress on the Geneva track unless Iran is invited to join the talks.

EU's Civilian Crisis Management to Support a Peace Process

Upon Geneva II, the ceasefire should be agreed upon to be followed by a robust UN peacekeeping deployment; or alternatively, if the transitional government can guarantee security, the large UN military observer mission is in demand. This creates conditions and a space
for the political process in Syria. The confidence building, as part of the reconciliation, will be one of the most difficult challenges in a deeply polarized and divided society, but, at the same time, it is imperative for a successful political transition. In fact, confidence building will be a cornerstone in rebuilding Syria. Unless broken bridges of confidence between Syrians can be rebuilt, the future seems very bleak and most likely, the reconciliation and the whole political transition will fail.

Confidence building and reconciliation are aspects of conflict resolution where a third-party involvement is crucial. Although the potential for a Syrian-led confidence building cannot be excluded it is difficult to conceive that a divided society along ethnic, sectarian, religious and regional lines could be bridged without the mediation of objective outsiders, the ones who have not been a part to the conflict. For this reason, the Arab League cannot play a role in confidence building, as some of their member states have been so deeply involved in the conflict. This provides a space for the EU with its expertise and experience in the civilian dimension of crisis management.

It is not likely that all parties to the conflict will attend the Geneva II talks. Some of the most radical Islamist groups already declared their non-participation. But if the regime and the main political factions of the opposition – both in exile and within Syria – can agree about the guidelines of the political transition with a transitional government, it may allow for a gradual deployment of a robust UN force or UN military observer mission and a ceasefire in all territories that are not under de facto control of the groups not attending the Geneva II. This still poses a great risk for the international community’s involvement, however. Nevertheless, a strong enough UN force can create buffer zones to supervise and protect areas abiding with the ceasefire. Of course, the most ideal development would be that Syrian security forces under the transitional government protect these areas. In the best-case scenario, pockets of the radical rebel-held territories would be isolated and gradually merged with the Syria proper in such a process. The UN peacekeeping force cannot, however, be the main actor in confidence building. Heavily armed soldiers are not perceived as mediators among the population nor are they trained to act as mediators.

For this reason, a strong enough civilian mission under the UN Security Council mandate and UN peacekeepers will need to be involved in mediation, confidence building and reconciliation in Syria. The EU has developed its civilian capacities already for more than a decade. The first European civilian mission, called the European Commission Monitoring Mission (ECMM) in the former Yugoslavia, and referred to since 2001 as the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM), was launched more than two decades ago. Even though the Common Security and Defence Policy, and the crises management structures in Brussels within the European External Action Service did not exist at that time, the EUMM gave an invaluable model for developing civilian dimensions of crisis management for the EU.

The EU is in an ideal position due to its extended knowledge of the civilian dimension of crisis management to take over the confidence-building task in Syria. The mission could be established as a monitoring mission (like the one in the former Yugoslavia, or in the still
on-going mission in Georgia) but focus on the local and regional level confidence-building monitors being deployed as mediators at the local, grassroots level in Syria. Other mandated tasks could be, for example, monitoring human rights, the return of refugees/IDPs, the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and monitoring the rebuilding and political peace process. Priority, however, should be on confidence building and reconciliation.

The EUMM in the former Yugoslavia provides a workable template to be followed in Syria. Teams would be deployed in all 14 governorates of Syria, with the capacity to visit all districts and localities at regular intervals, establishing a continuous presence and interaction with inhabitants, civil society, and officials. The deployment of several years or a decade (such as in the former Yugoslavia) would contribute to a long-term and sustainable impact on confidence building. Also, having a gender balance in civilian monitoring personnel would help to gain the trust and confidence of the general populace.

The operational environment is a challenge and involves security-related risks. The EU’s civilian missions have already experienced working in hazardous environments. The ECMM was deployed while the war was still on-going in the former Yugoslavia (in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina). The Middle East is not a new operational environment for the EU, as it has already deployed rule of law missions in Iraq (EUJUST LEX) and the Palestinian territories (EUPOL COPPS), border missions in the Palestinian territories (EUBAM Rafah), and recently launched a mission in Libya. No doubt, the lessons learned from EUMM Georgia would be valuable, in addition to those learned from the ECMM/EUMM in the former Yugoslavia. Taking EUMM Georgia as an example, this mission has contributed to the reduction of tensions through liaisons, the facilitation of contact between parties, and other confidence-building measures. The similar mandate, but as a priority task, could be vested on EUMM Syria. It would be a tangible EU civilian crisis management contribution to the peace process.

Some 500 EU-monitors (if divided evenly between the member states, it would make about 18 monitors per member state) would be the minimum requirement in order to ensure a sufficient level of deployment in all governorates and a continuous operational capability. The budgetary implications of such an extensive EU crisis management engagement may hamper certain member states’ political will to participate. Many EU member states are likely to contribute to the UN peacekeeping deployment as well. The costs of the continuing war in Syria, in terms of humanitarian assistance and flow of refugees, however, are far greater for the EU than the costs related to a peace process through a crisis management mission. The possibility to deploy a mission for supporting the peace process entails also a prospect for ending the war. The question remains as to whether the EU can muster enough political will to make a contribution as described above. The Nordic EU-countries – Denmark, Sweden and Finland – can and should take the initiative in promoting the deployment of the civilian dimension of the EU crisis management in Syria.
FACTORS THAT LED TO THE ERUPTION OF THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR
AND POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE

In the following article Alan Salehzadeh sheds light on the factors behind the eruption of the Syrian civil war from both national and international perspectives. Due to the complexity and the many actors enmeshed in the conflict, it is very difficult to end the civil war. However, if the conflict is to be solved, Salehzadeb suggests that merely a confederation system that guarantees equal civil rights to members of all ethnic and religious minorities, similar to that established in Iraq, would be a good and lasting solution to Syria’s turmoil.

The Arab Spring has been successful in many North African countries led by Sunnis. However, no Shiite country has managed so far to overthrow their government, despite many attempts. When the Arab Spring came ashore in Syria in 2011, people thought that there, too, power would be changed in a relatively peaceful way, as had happened in Tunisia and Egypt. But that wasn’t the case. Syria’s geostrategic location and alliances differ drastically from those of other countries involved in the Arab Spring. One of the main differences is that Syria is a Shiite country, and thus part of the Shiite axis led by Iran.

Iran has had a major role in the Syrian civil war. Without the support of Iran, the opposition forces would probably long ago have overthrown al-Assad’s regime. But since Iran – alongside many others – keeps fuelling the crisis, the conflict has protracted considerably. China and Russia are also supporting al-Assad’s current regime, whereas most of the international community is supporting opposition forces.

BACKGROUND

Many factors have led to the Syrian civil war. Syria’s colonial history, the conflict between Shiites and Sunnis, Syria’s alliances with foreign powers, and the country’s economic plight are all factors that have led to the prolongation of the conflict. All these factors have partially contributed in turning Syria’s uprising into one of the biggest humanitarian disasters of the millennium, claiming dozens of thousands of lives and causing over 4 million refugees to seek shelter both within and outside of Syria. In addition, the civil war has
severely damaged the country’s economy, bringing it to an unparalleled economic crisis. The roots of the problem lie in the collapsing of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. That led to the founding of numerous new states, such as Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Saudi-Arabia, Lebanon, Armenia, and Kuwait. Syria was under the French mandate until it gained independence in 1946. Later, Syria founded with Egypt the United Arab Republic, which existed from 1958 to 1961.

In 1961, the government in Syria was overthrown, which led to the collapsing of the United Arab Republic. Between 1949 and 1970, some fifteen attempts to overthrow the government took place.

In 1970, Hafez al-Assad, father of the current leader Bashar al-Assad, made a coup d’état and ruled Syria until his death in 2000. After the coup, the secular and pan-Arabic Baath party, founded in the 1950s and led by Hafez al-Assad, stepped into power. Hafez al-Assad installed an oligarchic system in the country, and under his rule, the army and secret services were highly influential and played major roles in the country’s domestic affairs.

Under Hafez al-Assad’s rule, important events were, among others, Syria’s participation in the war against Israel of 1973, and sending troops to the civil war of Lebanon in 1976. In Hafez al-Assad’s Syria, ethnic minorities and Sunni Muslims had difficult conditions. For instance, the violent Arabization process of the Kurdish regions and the mass murders of the Hama city in 1982 that killed thousands of Sunnis, supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, happened under his rule.

After Hafez al-Assad died, his son Bashar al-Assad took power in 2000. He promised the people many political and economic reforms, but the promises weren’t kept and Syria became more and more militarized.

These are the backgrounds that have led to the growing discontentment of the Syrian people against their regime. Now, the bloody civil war has been ravaging the country since 2011, and it looks like Syria will not be able to solve its problems without foreign interference.

Figure 1 and 2: The repartition of Syria’s ethnic and religious minorities
SYRIA’S ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

There are many ethnic and religious minority groups in Syria, and the dynamics between them has a massive influence on the current conflict. The biggest ethnic minority groups in the country consist of Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians, Armenians, Turkmen, and Circassians. Figure 1 represents the repartition of these groups in Syrian territory.

About 80 per cent of the population are Sunni Muslims. Significant religious minority groups are Shiite Muslims, Alawites, Christians, Druzians, and Ezdis. Figure 2 shows where these different groups mostly live in Syria.

The Syrian opposition is very fragmented. It’s composed of four main groups, and each of those is composed of dozens of different political groups. The main groups forming the opposition are: the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, the Syrian National Council (SNC), the National Co-ordination Committee (NCC), and the Kurdish Supreme Committee.

The problem is that these groups have very different goals. For instance, the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces and the SNC want to overthrow the current government through military actions, and they’ve both played a big role in the conflict so far. They enjoy the support of Sunni countries such as Saudi-Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar, as well as the western allies of these countries. The Free Syrian Army (FSA) is their military wing.

On the other hand, the NCC and the Kurdish Supreme Committee are committed to overthrowing the government without military action, and are in favour of a peaceful solution. Kurds have established their own de facto autonomy in the northern parts of Syria, but other opposition groups are opposed to this autonomous Kurdish region. Nonetheless, it remains a de facto autonomy, and Kurds have a strong defence. They have been able to keep the area for themselves without any help from Shiites or Sunnis.

Apart from the political coalitions, the armed groups engaged in the conflict are also fragmented and have very different goals. The main military groups of the opposition involved in the conflict are:

- The Free Syrian Army (FSA)
- The Islamic Front, which does not include Al-Qaeda affiliates. At the moment, the Islamic Front has good relations with Qatar and is ideologically close to the Muslim Brotherhood. It would like to establish a government similar to that in Egypt under Morsi.
- The Popular Protection Units (YPG), which is a Kurdish group that defends the de facto autonomous region of the Kurds.
- The strongest military groups are Al-Qaeda affiliates jihadist groups, such as the al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.
(ISIS). Like the Taliban in Afghanistan, they want to establish an Islamic state that follows Sharia law.

These military groups are not collaborating with each other. All have their own regions and areas of control. Despite the fact that they have a shared enemy, Bashar al-Assad, armed conflicts and shoot-outs between the opposition’s military groups erupt constantly.

THE CIVIL WAR WAS AN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING

The conflict between Shiites and Sunnis is a major force behind the Syrian civil war. Saudi-Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey form the Sunni axis, and they and their western allies support opposition groups in Syria. At the same time, the Shiite axis formed by Iran, Hizbollah, and Iraqi Shiites are supporting al-Assad.

The Sunni axis wants to diminish the influence the Shiite axis has in the region by overthrowing Bashar al-Assad and by installing a government that is closer to the Sunnis. The Shiite axis is not ready to let this happen, and are fiercely supporting al-Assad’s regime.

It isn’t just Islamic countries that are enmeshed in the conflict, but their western allies are as well. China and Russia are supporting the Shiite axis, whereas the Sunnis are supported by the US, the UK, and France, among others.

Figure 3 represents the different forces entangled in the conflict.

Figure 3: Actors in the Syrian Civil War
Because of its complexity and the many actors enmeshed in the conflict, it is very difficult to solve the Syrian civil war. These are four possible scenarios:

A. Either Al-Assad or the opposition forces win the war
B. Al-Assad and the opposition forces form a joint government
C. Syria is divided into two or more parts
D. International forces intervene and different federations are established in Syria

It’s highly unlikely for scenario A to happen, because the civil war has lasted for three years now and neither party has been able to win. Scenario B is also very unlikely, because if the two sides were willing to collaborate, war wouldn’t have erupted in the first place.

The most likely scenarios are C and D. In the 1990s in Iraq, the international community interfered and destroyed chemical weapons, established federations within the country, established a no-fly zone, and finally forced Saddam Hussein to change the Iraqi regime.

The same scenario seems to be taking place in Syria. At the end of 2013, Syria’s chemical weapons were destroyed through a UN mandate, and the country is now divided into three unofficial and highly contested regions between Kurds, opposition forces, and al-Assad’s supporters.

The Geneva II conference held in January 2014 was not successful because not all parties enmeshed in the conflict participated. Neither representatives of the Syrian Kurdish autonomous region, Iran nor the al-Qaeda were invited, even though they are perhaps the most significant players fueling the conflict. This is the key reason why the Geneva II conference failed to accomplish any real results. The most important task for the conference was to stabilize the current division of Syria into three, and to basically agree on the territorial divisions between Kurds, opposition forces, and al-Assad’s supporters, but this didn’t happen. Representatives of the Syrian Opposition present at the conference didn’t have real power over those fighting the war.

The opposition wanted to form a transitional government, without Bashar al-Assad in it. Al-Assad’s goal on the other hand was to destroy opposition forces and continue to rule Syria. With goals this far apart, it is no surprise that no real progress was made in Geneva II. Currently the situation is that the Sunni axis, with its mighty western allies, is stronger than the Shiite axis led by Iran. It is likely that, eventually, the Sunni axis will be able to break the Shiite front and remove al-Assad from power, and establish a new government in Syria. If this occurs, the new government must be able to guarantee a peaceful existence for Israel; otherwise the international community will not let this happen.

I personally think that a confederation system that guarantees equal civil rights to members of all ethnic and religious minorities, similar to that established in Iraq, is a good and lasting solution to the Syrian conflict.
SYRIA’S UNCIVIL WAR

Mikko Patokallio illustrates some of the numerous obstacles to peace in Syria that are in turn complicated by the vast array of local, regional, and international actors now involved in the conflict. Thus, while a complete military victory is no longer plausible for either side, both are still trapped in the logic of confrontation. Given the violent polarization present in Syria, Patokallio suggests that only an international body, such as the UN, could muster enough resources to both find a solution, and implement it in a workable fashion. In the meantime, as Patokallio concludes, every passing day the civil war is slowly, but systematically dismantling Syria’s societal, economic and institutional existence.

More than 1000 days have passed since what has now come to be the Syrian civil war started. and, over this time, the conflict has morphed from a peaceful popular uprising into a protracted and destructive civil war. The conflict has claimed more than 150,000 deaths, created over two million refugees with a further six million internally displaced, and inflicted incalculable damage to Syria’s economic and social fabric.

Undeniably, the Syrian civil war is a complex conflict, involving countless internal and external actors, with various interests and abilities to act. This multitude of actors and interests on one hand serves to perpetuate the conflict, but also makes it difficult to find a satisfactory resolution. When looking for solutions for the conflict in Syria it is all the more important to understand not only what sparked it, but also what sustains and drives it.

TRANSFORMATION OF THE OPPOSITION

At its core, the conflict in Syria is a civil war, albeit one that is wider than that of an opposition versus a regime. Fully accounting for what drives war in Syria is made difficult by the fact that very rarely are the factors, which spark conflict the same as those that sustain violence. This is certainly the case with the Syrian opposition, which has greatly transformed during the course of its struggle. The spontaneous emergence of a widespread, cross-sectarian popular protest movement against the repressive regime of Bashar al-Assad in early 2011 strongly reflects the severity of underlying socio-economic and political grievances in Syria.
However, since coalescing in early-to-mid 2011, the Syrian opposition has been shaped by a series of disappointments that it has faced since.

The perseverance of the regime in the face of peaceful mass protests, coupled with violence provoked by the regime, led to many in the opposition to pick up arms for self-defense, and created a chance for some to bring about militarily what protests had not achieved. In retrospect, the militarization of the Syrian uprising is a watershed moment. It ended the possibility of a swift political solution, but also over time began to reshape both the opposition and the regime around the demands of military struggle. The use of military force also trapped the opposition in an unequal military contest against better-equipped regime forces. The Syrian opposition has slowly weakened the regime’s military edge, but – especially in terms of firepower – it continues to be an uphill struggle.

Despite international assurances, only modest assistance to the opposition has been forthcoming from Western countries, Turkey, and Persian Gulf countries. The greatest source of outside support for the opposition is from Salafists and Salafist-jihadist networks, and, unsurprisingly, jihadist and hardline Islamists, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or the Islamic Front. Such groups are now the most prominent military opposition forces in the conflict. Their ascendance comes as a result of their access to outside networks of funding and arms. For the opposition at large, reliance on these transnational Islamist networks and private Gulf funding has shaped mainstream opposition groups to adopt, or at least to mimic, Islamist symbols.

However, the costs of engaging in a military struggle against the regime have greatly detracted from the opposition’s potential support. The militarization of the conflict, coupled with an increase in Islamist rhetoric, has undermined the original cross-sectarian and national basis for what was still then the Syrian revolution. The militarization of the opposition has also made it more reliant on outside assistance – for both money and arms – and intensified competition between armed opposition groups for scarce resources. When opposition forces were making gains against regime troops these problems were manageable, but as opposition forces have suffered setbacks, these costs have become more apparent. Militarization has steadily decoupled the civilian leadership of the opposition from its military commanders, furthering the fragmentation of the leadership of the Syrian opposition as a whole. The outbreak of major intra-opposition violence between ISIL and sections of armed opposition in early 2014 has proven yet another painful setback for Syria’s opposition to weather.

**Regime Resilience**

The Assad regime has proven tremendously resilient in the face of enormous domestic and external pressure, surprising many observers. However, this resilience has come at the cost of narrowing the regime’s base and deepening its dependency on external support.
The Assad regime was formed around its war-making capability, and – to a certain extent – was designed for an eventuality like today, with a singular focus on survival in the long-term through short-term sacrifices. To no small extent, the opposition’s fragmentation is a result of deliberate regime policy. Throughout the Syrian conflict, the regime has meted out violence and collective punishment in an effort to cower its opposition into submission, unsuccessfully. Moreover, the regime has stoked sectarian tensions to deter opposition support.

Only through tremendous exertions has the Assad regime survived the military conflict it provoked. Only through fierce fighting in late 2012 and early 2013 did the regime manage to stall, and later partially reverse opposition gains. It should be underlined though that, despite its qualitative edge, the regime is militarily unable to defeat the opposition – although it still hopes to outlast it.

This resilience has come at the cost of increased reliance on external aid. Iranian support, primarily through the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRGC), has been essential for the survival of the Syrian regime. In economic terms, Iran has extended loan guarantees and budgetary support worth billions of dollars, while providing military and technical assistance to regime forces and paramilitaries. Moreover, growing numbers of Shiite fighters from Iraq and Lebanon have been essential auxiliary forces for the regime. While less vested in the fate of the regime, Russia has provided invaluable political support for the Assad regime by shielding Syria in the UN Security Council and by servicing existing arms contracts.

Within Syria, the regime has come to increasingly rely on loyalist paramilitary formations – such as remnant Ba’athist paramilitaries, the newly raised “Popular Committees,” and the “People’s Army” – to complement its strained armed forces. These pro-regime paramilitaries are those most often connected to different massacres and to the rise in sectarian violence in general. As the war in Syria goes on, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate between regular military forces and paramilitaries, as both are being used for similar tasks with similar equipment.

In addition to strengthening its military position, the regime is concentrating efforts into conveying a sense of normalcy in territories it controls – by, for instance, providing salaries/subsidies and maintaining control of symbolic public spaces. On the other hand, the regime maintains the ability to escalate violence – through, for instance, starving opposition strongholds or indiscriminately shelling opposition-controlled neighborhoods – to wreak destruction on opposition-controlled areas. However, as the Syrian state recedes, due to the its cannibalization by the regime and the attrition it suffers in the course of the conflict, it leaves behind a power vacuum not fully occupied by those opposing the regime.
REGIONALIZATION OF SYRIA’S CONFLICT

While the militarization of Syria’s conflict has transformed the natures of both the regime and the opposition, it has also drawn in regional and international actors and interests. More so than any other factor, the regionalization of Syria’s conflict has greatly complicated any efforts to find a resolution.

As noted above, both the Syrian regime and its opposition have come to increasingly rely on external assistance in furthering their military conflict, and, in doing so, these external actors have imported their own ideologies and interests into the Syrian context. Often regionalization, and internationalization, is viewed as a one-way conduit – with regional interests being applied and transforming the original, local conflict. However, regionalization is better understood as a two-way interaction between local and regional actors.

Most support for Syrian combatants comes from regional actors – Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey – or transnational networks in neighboring countries, such as Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Regional actors provide vital support for Syrian combatants, and without their support, neither the regime nor the opposition could hope for a military victory. Even so, by turning Syria into something of a proxy war, the conflict has changed wider regional positions – e.g. Saudi Arabia’s aggressive support for Syrian opposition factions sharpened rifts with Qatar, and has turned Syria into a central front for Saudi-Iranian confrontation. The influence of transnational networks should also not be dismissed, as there are thousands of foreign fighters in Syria – both pro-regime and pro-opposition – and significant logistical networks supporting them as well. Moreover, transnational networks involved in Syria have seen jihadism being evoked as a catchall explanation for Syria’s civil war and the division of regional interests around it. While there are opposing regional camps concerning Syria, the dividing line is political, not theological. Communalism – in essence, salient local identities, which can range from religion to class to ethnicity – is undeniably a power force for mobilization, but it is also a very fluid one. The saliency of certain identities often shifts in tandem with the conflict. This debate is especially potent within Syria’s opposition, where views greatly vary, and reducing it all to a sectarian numbers game neglects the various cleavages within a supposedly unitary identity group such as Syria’s Sunni population. Both within Syria and the region at the large, sectarian identity entrepreneurship is a powerful tool that can serve to delegitimize opponents, rally supporters, and divert attention. Sectarianism in Syria is present and undeniably nasty, but should be examined with non-predeterminist caution.
Dismal Prospects for Peace

Syria has been in the international limelight for almost three years now. This is reflected in the high-level diplomatic attention the conflict has received: first in the Arab League observer mission in 2011, in 2012 with the UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), and in 2013 with the OPCW-UN chemical disarmament mission. Yet, despite diplomatic wrangling, little has been achieved to create lasting peace in Syria. As it stands, there are numerous obstacles to peace in Syria, which are in turn complicated by the vast array of local, regional, and international actors now involved in the conflict in one way or another.

Given the violent polarization present in Syria, only an international body – like the UN – can command enough wherewithal to find a solution and implement it in a workable fashion. However, a successful solution also needs to be acceptable to the UN Security Council, and also factor in regional and local interests – in case neglected interests turn into future spoilers. So far, peace initiatives have failed to account for these interests. UNSMIS, which has been the most promising initiative to date, was unable to bring about the commitment of local actors and their regional benefactors. The Geneva II conference prematurely tripped on this issue, by failing to include Iran, while inviting Saudi Arabia.

Even if a new international commitment, with regional support, arises in the case of Syria, it is exceedingly tough to get Syrian combatants to sign up for such an agreement. The militarization of the conflict has accelerated the fragmentation of both sides, and has reoriented opposing sides around the needs of the military struggle. While a complete military victory is no longer plausible for either side, both are still trapped in the logic of confrontation. The civil war has fostered a zero-sum mindset among both the opposition and the regime, centered on the annihilation of the other. Outside of military means, there are no political avenues for contestation, or alternative tracks to resolve the conflict. Ideally, Geneva II or a similar process could foster such a political track – a transition process aimed at restoring civil peace in Syria.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the sides at present can commit to such a process. The regime formally says it is willing to be part of a transition, but constantly adds conditions that are fundamentally unacceptable to the opposition. Moreover, the regime has a track record of using negotiations as a tool to play for time and frustrate the opposition – therefore, as long as negotiations do not entail any substantial concessions by the regime, it is unlikely that the regime will approach such plans in a sincere fashion. As for the opposition, its amorphousness – a condition engendered by the violent struggle it is engaged in – makes creating a representative and credible opposition delegation exceedingly difficult. The Syrian National Coalition in particular, which is already tasked with proving its relevance to those fighting on the ground, faces a herculean task in balancing international pressure and disillusionment and anger among opposition supporters if it agrees to any concessions. More likely than not, the Syrian opposition stands to fracture even further in the resulting phases of any transition.
In the absence of a political process, it is Syria as a whole and Syrians who stand to suffer. The country already faces an unparalleled humanitarian catastrophe, which strains the region at large. There will come a day when war in Syria ends, but in the meanwhile, with every passing day, the civil war is slowly but systematically dismantling Syria’s societal, economic, and institutional existence.
According to the United Nations’ estimates approximately 120 000 people have died in the Syrian civil war. As Tom Packalén points out in the following article, the civil war is however not just about the goals and objectives of domestic parties and coalitions, but also about the interest of their international allies. Therefore, the conditions for peace may not be excessively ambitious and, as the certainty grows, the ability to agree upon small things will eventually open up the door for further progress. Indeed, peace cannot be built by a single agreement. Instead, the overall process may be slow and take several years to complete. As Packalén suggests, for instance, the creation of a buffer zone could be the first concrete step towards lasting peace.

The civil war in Syria has been raging already for almost three years. The amount of refugees outside Syria is beyond two million and there are millions of Syrian refugees also inside Syria’s borders. According the UN estimates, approximately 120 000 people have died in the fighting and several tens of thousands are civilians. The need for humanitarian aid is acute in Syria, and also in its surrounding countries. Even though the need for a solution is imminent, there seems to be no model for finding peace that would be sufficient for all parties engaged in the conflict.

What makes the problem even worse is that many countries have their own interests in Syria. The civil war is not just about what different parties or coalitions in Syria are fighting for – it is also about what the countries that support them want for themselves.

The fighting parties can be coarsely divided in four

The most distinct group is the regime led by Bashar al-Assad and the Ba’ath-party. This party is mostly Alawite, which is a religious sect that is officially a part of the Shiite minority of Syria. The regime is supported by Iran, due to its Shiite religious affiliations and political ties. Russia also supports the regime politically and sells weapons to Syria, profiting from a longstanding bilateral military cooperation with the country. In addition, there are some fighters within the ranks of the regime that come from the Shiite majority of Iraq and from Lebanon’s Hezbollah Shiite group.
The second party in the conflict is the Free Syrian Army, which consists of several political factions, most of which are religiously moderate Sunnis. Their hope is to have a democratic Syria and give more power to the Sunni majority. Many western countries support the Free Syrian Army, particularly the United States, France, and Great Britain. The neighbouring Sunni countries, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, also support this group. From these neighbouring countries we can suspect that behind their support is the wish for more political and religious influence of Sunnis in Syria.

The third group is comprised of radical Islamists, which includes the Jabhat al-Nusra, the Islamic State of Iraq, and ISIS. This coalition, led by the same Al-Qaeda leader, has the best military equipment of all the groups fighting against the regime. Their aim is to create a state that has norms based on a conservative interpretation of Sharia law. Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey also support this third group, even though the latter is currently changing its politics towards radical groups.

The fourth party in the civil war are the ethnic Kurds. The Kurds strive to gain an autonomic or an independent Kurdish area in the north, a model similar to that of Iraq. This fourth party fights mostly against the radical Islamist groups in the north and tries to protect areas already in their possession. Turkey is especially concerned that the Kurds have gained the position they originally were seeking when the regime retreated from the territory in the north.

When we understand the different coalitions and the current situation in Syria, we can start looking at the future and possible peace solutions. How can the peace process be initiated?

It is crucial to engage other nation-states and international organizations in Syria’s peace process. Single countries such a Russia, the United States, France, and Great Britain, as well as major international organisations such as the UN and the EU, need to step up in order for the situation to be solved. Every passing day makes it more difficult for a sufficient resolution to be reached. It is important then not to create conditions that are too strict for peace. This way, it is possible to calm the situation as soon as possible and ensure that all parties will remain engaged in the peace process. There must be a recognition that peace is not created by one treaty, but that the overall peace process may be slow and will take several years in order for the situation on the ground to be truly transformed.

The establishment of a buffer, conflict-free zone within Syrian territory would be an ideal starting point for the peace process. This could already be agreed upon in the Geneva II conference. The zone would not be used as a military base for any group, but rather, a place for forming functioning systems within Syrian civil society again. Moreover, the territory could be used to take in refugees, which would help ease regional humanitarian issue’s relating to displaced persons.

This designated area should be controlled by the Free Syrian Army and selected unanimously by all of the four parties engaged in the civil war. The Free Syrian Army should control the
area because it represents a moderate Sunni-party that foreign countries could commit to working with. The Free Syrian Army should also work in collaboration with UN-mandated peacekeepers to secure the area. The major threats for this kind of zone would potentially be from the radical Islamist groups, and not the regime.

With this proposed solution, the building of Syrian society could in some parts of the country start right away, and help ease the humanitarian crisis of this conflict. The creation of a buffer zone could be the first concrete step toward building a lasting peace in Syria.
“THE WILD, BEAUTIFUL - AND CRUEL - MEMORIES” –
THE SYRIAN VOICES OF DIGNITY

SANNA OLLI

“Looking from outside, Syrian life seems to be overwhelmed with brutality and violence. But looking from the inside, there is, and has always been, the other side of the coin – warmth, resistance of injustice, and a refusal to give up hope even in the direst of situations. It is that conviction in dignity and humanity – which I have witnessed with my own eyes – that gives me a reason to believe that the future can still hold something better for the Syrians.”

Sanna Olli is preparing her Master’s Thesis on structuration of collective life in Syria. In this article Olli recounts the story of Syria and Syrians the way she knows them.

At the end of Ramadan in 2006 in Damascus, my Syrian friend asked my mother, who was visiting me at the time, and me to join her in her new apartment to celebrate. My friend and her husband had to relocate when the security agencies had found out, yet again, where they lived. She had explained to me how to find their new place, and how to instruct the taxi driver to drop us off at a near-by flower shop. Getting out of taxi, my mother and I went to the flower shop to wait for the taxi to leave, just in case. It took some time, but eventually the taxi took off. I knew I had found my way to the right alley between the apartment buildings when I saw my friend’s silhouette nearing in the shadows of the buildings. I couldn’t see if she was smiling, but I knew she was, and I was too. She took my hands and we greeted unhurriedly, kissing first on the right cheek, then the left one, the left, the left... The Syrian way. The more near and dear you are, and the more time has passed from the last rendez-vous, the more you’ll be kissed on the last cheek. When you are gone for six months it will take some time to get through the initial greetings. But that’s the beauty of Syria – or was, at least, of the old Syria. People had time, affection and the time to show that affection.

From the dark alley we walked arm-in-arm to their apartment building and up the stairs. Their door was open to the stairway, and in the dim light I saw the outline of Fares – dear sweet, stooped Fares with his wrinkled hand resting on the banister and the most delighted smile anyone could ever think of on his bearded face. He opened his arms and greeted me warmly while muttering many things in Arabic. It didn’t matter that I was only able to understand about half of the words, as they were all warm and welcoming.
Fares’ back was not stooped because of his age. It stooped because he had been imprisoned for 29 years. Fares had joined the Arab Communist Organisation at the age of 25 to promote unified and socialist Arab society and social justice. Soon he was arrested with his friends. Their sentences varied from 15 years of hard labour to capital punishment. Fares had been sentenced to life in prison. From early age he had suffered from a type of rheumatism, which was made worse by the prison conditions, especially the constantly changing temperatures and deprivation of medication. Still, he could have been treated outside Syria after his release, but he was never granted permission to travel. Despite all those stolen chances, I never saw any bitterness in him. He found happiness in what he had and did not wallow in what he didn’t have. With his encouraging and truly inspiring spirit, Fares never abandoned his belief in humanity, even if it cost him half of his life in prison and shortened his life.

The night was delightful. We talked and laughed, ate, and did the dishes. Nazem translated one of his poems. It likened the works of Pablo Neruda, my mother thought, and they got into a deep conversation about the Chilean poet. While I was doing the dishes with my friend, we talked about different foods. She wanted to taste something other than Syrian, but not being allowed to travel made it hard. It was difficult to get other foodstuffs in Syria apart from, well, Syrian. We agreed I’d bring back ingredients for sushi on my next trip and we would make something different.

During my stay in Syria, my friend became irreplaceable to me. I had met her through work, but quickly I began to visit her after work more than during work. I’d go to her office and we’d have coffee (the Arabic version). She’d make me prepare it and tease me in a friendly way when I’d make a mistake. Sometimes we’d just sit and do nothing – especially on those days when it was nearly 50 degrees Celsius outside and one could no longer even think. It was hard to leave her and the others. Under a travel ban, she could not travel. As for me, writing about Syria here and there, I could not be sure of getting another visa. It was an odd feeling to leave her behind and not know if I would ever see her again.

I was chatting with her during the Egyptian uprising in 2011. I hated the idea of causing her troubles so most often we talked about something else than politics. But this time I just had to ask, just one question. “When in Syria?”... “Never,” she replied oddly quickly. It left me wondering – was she saying what she really felt, or did she know something more than she was telling... I never revisited the question.

Only weeks after that discussion, the protests
flared up in Dar’aa. My friend quickly became busy in coordinating nation-wide protests and documenting human rights violations. As the weeks grew into months and years, you could see the toll of the violence- direct and indirect, physical and psychological - on her and on everyone else. Many activists fled or were eliminated, but my friend refused to leave despite living under constant threats. She, her husband and her friends, carried on their work documenting the gruesome violations so that no death would go unnoticed or forgotten, and so that the attackers could one day be brought to justice. On top of the documentation, they worked for supporting civil governance and society in the areas where the state system had collapsed.

In mid-December last year, the threats they had received became reality: Razan Zeitouneh, Wa’el Hamada, Nazem al-Hamadi, and Samira al-Khalil, lawyers and civil rights activists, were abducted.

Not too many of my Finnish fellows understand what it means to fear for a friend to be abducted, especially in an environment of such sadistic violence. Not too many know Syrian people and the Syrian way of life behind the impersonal headlines of killings and political deadlocks in the country. Fewer still can overcome the tragedy of death and violence, and keep working to end it. But let me tell you this: this violence is not going to stop by any amount of horrified titles or news reports we publish. It will not be stopped by bickering over the wordings of papers. It seems that some of us have forgotten that actions speak louder than words. Some of us in this jungle of laws and norms and directives seem to have forgotten the meaning of morality. Some of us even seem to have lost the understanding of the worlds beyond our own. Just because the world is not driven by the logic we would expect, it does not mean that it shouldn’t be driven by some logic – it just takes time to begin to understand worlds that are different from our own.

To put an end to Syria’s humanitarian crisis, there needs to be an incredible amount of resilience, determination, tolerance, and ability to work together, regardless of differences of opinions. The situation needs a strong sense of humanity, morality, and justice. It needs a strong knowledge of self and the other; whoever that may be. Razan, Wa’el, Nazem, and Samira had these abilities, which they developed and determinately cherished over many years. They were popular among civilians because they did not distinguish people based on race or religion. For the same reason, they became unpopular among armed parties engaged in human rights violations. The warring factions obviously have problems of getting along with each other, but those people who are working together despite all sectarian or religious lines are the ones who have the seed of peace within them. It is those people and their team spirit that needs to be encouraged in order for Syria to find peace. These seeds cannot, however, be forcefully or hastily planted, but slowly nurtured and supported so that, little by little, they will begin to grow on their own.

Why do we always have to be so much in a hurry in the modern world? Can peace be sown in such a world? 

SOURCES: Documentary on Fares Mourad (in which also the abducted activists appear) in three parts: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-zXaCKsLog http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SapZFGJ1tp0 AND http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVQsZGPe24s
The Syrian revolution wasn’t started by a political force, certain thinkers, or any particular organized groups, and that is why this historic event has surprised even the Syrians themselves.

The revolution started in March 2011 like an explosion, which spread like wildfire throughout the entire nation.

The international community did not react in a way that the challenge needed; to protect the civilians from being massacred by their own regime. In reality, the regime continued its wrongdoings because it did not recognize a real danger being posed to them from the outside.

During this long-lasting humanitarian crisis, the possibility to influence the Syrian media has become easier and easier for the groups willing to drive their own agendas.

One of these groups is the far right extremists, who, so far, have appeared as the most serious enemy to the regime. Yet, it seems as though the regime itself participated in the increased influence of such extremist groups, using their revolutionary influence to show the Syrians and the international community what the alternative would look like to Bashar Al-Assad’s regime. These extremists are not supported among the Syrians, however, they do receive support from some military forces in order to continue the fight against Syria’s regime.

As recent news shows, the extremists are now forming a danger for the real change-makers in society, such as certain civil activists and the Syrian Free Army, which is acting to protect civilians instead of actively engaging in a fight.

In this rather complicated situation in Syria, it is difficult to present a clear-cut solution in terms of building a partnership between European and certain Syrian groups. Such a partnership, though, if put into effect, should focus particularly on strengthening Syrian civil society, specifically those groups looking to promote the interests of the people themselves, and not extreme, radical ideological groups.
When building partnerships with Syrian groups, the following issues should be included to meet the locals’ needs:

1. To reduce bureaucracy because it does not work within this specific context, especially in a time of crisis.

2. To facilitate mutually-beneficial learning between Europeans and Syrians, keeping in mind the different contexts in which we live, and what type of thinking works for the societies in which we or the other group lives.

3. To support club activities in Syria, e.g. community centres so that the Syrians can organize themselves, cooperate between each other, and work together.

Despite the bloody war that is taking place against civilians in Syria, we can still find civilian groups who are carrying the seeds of democratic change, especially among the youth. Young people can be the real change-makers, and the media fails to mention the work that is being done to create change on the ground, amongst...
In this article Sirkku Päivärinne, immigration director at the Ministry of Interior, addresses the Syrian conflict as the most serious and extensive refugee crisis in a long time. Indeed, by the end of 2013 already 2.3 million people had ended up as refugees and, according to the UNHCR, the number is constantly growing. Alongside humanitarian aid, the UNHCR has appealed for the international community to do more to share the burden fallen on Syria's neighbours, in terms of receiving and resettling Syrian refugees. Hence, in order to respond to UNHCR's plea, Finland has announced to be prepared to resettle up to 500 Syrian refugees in 2014, whereas in 2012 and 2013 altogether less than 350 asylum seekers arrived to Finland. Regardless, Päivärinne reminds that for preventing further escalation of the refugee crisis it is essential that alongside relocation the international community continues to apply precautionary measures in Syria as well.
2013 lopuun mennessä 17 maata on lupautunut vastaanottamaan alueen pakolaisia. Sitoumuksia on saatu noin 15 400 pakolaisen osalta, lisäksi tarvitaan vielä yli 14 000 uutta paikkaa. Kaikkein haavoittuvimmassa asemassa olevien pakolaisten uudelleensijoittaminen Libanonista, Jordaniasta ja Egyptistä on pidetty välttämättömänä tukitoimena kyseisiä naapurivaltioida kohtaan.

Suomessa katsottiin, että kansainvälinen yhteisön jäsenenä maamme tulisi vastata Syyriasta kiirineisiin hätähuutoihin. Näin ollen ryhdyttiin valmistelemaan vastausta YK:n esittämiin vetoomuksiin sekäselvitettiin erilaisia humanitaarisen vastaanoton ja uudelleensijoittamisen vaihtoehtoja.

Ulkomaalaislain 90 §:n mukaan Suomeen voidaan ottaa pakolaiskiintiössä UNHCR:n pakolaisiksi katsomia henkilöitä tai muita kansainvälisten suojelun tarpeessa olevia ulkomaalisia uudelleen sijoitusta varten. Ulkomaalaislain 91 §:n mukaan sisäasiainministeriö valmistelee yhteistyössä ulkoasiainministeriön ja työ- ja elinkeinoministeriön kanssa esityksen valtioneuvostolle pakolaiskiintiön alueellisesta kohdentamisesta. Ulkomaalaislain 92 §:n mukaan perustee oleskeluluvan myöntämiselle pakolaiskiintiössä ovat: kansainvälisten suojelun tarpeessa olevat henkilöt, joiden kotimaa on haavoittunut; se, että henkilö on uudelleensijoituksen tarpeessa ensimmäisestä turvapaikasta; se, että vastaanoton ja kotoutumisen edellytykset Suomeen on arvioitu; ja että oleskeluluvan myöntämiselle ei ole esteitä, kuten yleisen turvallisuuden vaarantaminen tai säännösten kiertyminen. Lain esitöissä korostetaan yhteistyötä UNHCR:n kanssa (HE 28/2003 vp).


**HALLITUS PÄÄTTI LISÄKIINTIÖSTÄ SYYSKUUSSA 2013**


**LISÄKIINTIÖSSÄ OTETTAVIEN HENKILÖIDEN VASTAANOTTO SUOMESSA**

Kiintiöpakolaiset asettuvat Suomeen saavuttuaan kunnan asukkaiksi, jolloin he ovat välttömästi oikeutettuja kunnallisiin peruspalveluihin ja erityisiin kotoutumista tukeviin palveluihin. Nähtävissä on, että Syyrian kriisi on pitkäkestoinen, eikä turvallinen paluu ole lähiaikoina mahdollista. On siis selvää, että Suomeen saapuvat syyrialaiset tulevat kotoutumisen piiriin ja tulevat tarvitsemaan kuntapalveluja. Tällöin syyrialaisen asettuminen suoraan kunnin on perusteltua.

Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö vastaa kunnian osoittamisen valtakunnallisesta koordinaatiosta ja ohjauksesta, sekä sopii vuosittaisista alueellisista kuntapaikkatavoitteista ELY-keskusten kanssa. ELY-keskus neuvottee alueensa kuntien kanssa sopimukset kansainvälistä suojelusta saavien sijoittamisesta kuntaan.

**SYYRIALAISIA TURVAPAIKANHAKIJOINA SUOMEEN VAIN VÄHÄN**


Suomeen turvapaikanhakijoita on Syyriasta tullut vähäisiä määriä. Vuonna 2012 hakijoita oli yhteensä 183 ja vahvistamattoman tilaston mukaan vuonna 2013 yhteensä 149 henkilöä.
Pakolaiskriisien ratkaiseminen kansainvälisen yhteisön toimin edellyttää kaikissa tapauksissa ensisijaisesti pakolaisuuden syiden poistamiseksi tehtävää työtä. Ponnistelut tulituon aikaansaamiseksi, vihollisuuksien lopettamiseksi, sisällissodan osapuolten saattamiseksi neuvottelemaan rauhasta ovat Syyriankin osalta välttämätön edellytys. Toisaalta humanitaariset toimet pakolaisten auttamiseksi ovat yhtä välttämättömiä ja kiireellisiä. EUn jäsenenä meidänkin tulee tehdä kaikkemme avun saamiseksi hädässä oleville. YKn tavoitteena on alueellisen suojeluohjelman kautta tukea Syyrian naapurivaltioita niiden toimissa pakolaisten avustamiseksi lähialueilla.

Pakolaisten uudelleensijoittaminen kaukaisimpiin maihin on sekin yksi tärkeä keino. Sitä kautta voidaan auttaa pientä osaa kaikkein haavoittuvimmassa asemassa olevia pakolaisia, mutta toisaalta myös tukea tilanteesta suurinta kuormaa kantavien lähialueiden tilannetta, jotta ne edelleen voisivat sallia pakolaisten pääsyn turvaan maaperälleen.
ALIENATION, RADICALISATION AND TERRORISM
CAN THE BIRD’S NEST FALL INTO THE GROUND WITHOUT THE BIRD NOTICING?

A CASE FOR WHY PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN FINLAND IS SOMETHING TO BE DONE NOW AND NOT TOMORROW

Ari Evwaraye
Senior Advisor in the Finnish Ministry of Interior and the Secretary of the National Network for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

Violent extremism in Finland is still in its infancy. Finland is, however, in many ways also in a pivotal point to do something about the issue. In fact, there are more than weak signals of the potential growth of violent extremism. Thus, as Ari Evwaraye proposes, it is our all responsibility to contribute and play an active role in tackling the use of violence for whatever reason.

We live in a bird’s nest - is a metaphor we Finns often use to describe our society when referring to its geographically- and socially-sheltered status in relation to problematic circumstances or unwanted phenomena that other countries encounter more frequently. The analogy is that, like the bird, the Finnish society is distanced from the “ground-level reality of predators” and other threats. Only from time to time does such a threat rise up to the branches and manifest itself to us.

This has long been our view on issues of violent extremism and, luckily, it still at least partially holds true. A testimony to this is that even the term “violent extremism” is new for us and does not come up often in daily rhetoric. When asking the average citizen, it is rather unlikely for one to get a coherent and informed description of its meaning. We do have a grasp of what “terrorism”, “skinhead”, “extreme right”, “jihadism”, “anti-fascist” and such terms imply, but seldom are these seen as part of the abstract concept of violent extremism, which acts as an umbrella term for different sorts of movements and groups that legitimize, promote or conduct violence based on an ideological worldview. Terrorism and large-scale violence have, in a painful way, become a realistic, although a marginal threat even in this bird’s nest. Below, however, are some arguments speaking for the case that lesser forms of ideological violence should not be disregarded within Finnish society.

In 2012, the Finnish Government adopted its third Internal Security Programme, a high-level Government Resolution comprising mostly of concrete multi-sectoral measures to intervene in and prevent everyday safety and security risks. Different
forms of violence play a big role in everyday security risks in Finnish society. Our homicide rate, for example, is notably higher than in other countries of similar social, political, and economic structures. As part of the Programme, a national action plan towards the prevention of violent extremism – “Towards a Cohesive Society” – was also adopted. Perhaps as a result, we have witnessed a quick and ongoing evolution in how we Finnish authorities perceive and deal with violent extremism. It is probably too early to tell, but there is a temptation to draw an analogy to how we viewed corruption in our society not so many years ago. Finland has for a long time placed very highly in international comparison studies on the levels of anti-corruption. For an equally long time, we believed this was synonymous with Finland being free from corruption. After a series of exposés made by investigative journalists and more detailed national academic studies, our view of corruption in Finland has (apart from starting to acknowledge that, yes, there is corruption in Finland) become more nuanced. Perhaps our bird’s nest perspective prevented us from seeing the “predator” that, however small it was, preyed right underneath the nest.

VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN FINLAND: ANTI-DEMOCRATIC, OFTEN SELF-PERPETUATING, BUT STILL QUITE UNCOMMON

What then is the absolute extent and nature of violent extremism in Finland, if the argument here is that it should be taken seriously? As a part of the action plan, a network of authorities publishes a biannual publicly-available situation review of violent extremism. The
year 2013 saw the publishing of the first two iterations of this document. According to its findings, violence motivated by extremist ideology is small in its extent. In approximation less than 100 crimes are reported to the police yearly where either the obvious motive for the crime is an extremist ideology or where, for example, the background of the perpetrator and the circumstances where the crimes were committed imply that it has an extremist motive. Almost all of these crimes are related to right-wing extremism, but it is worth noting that only in a third of them the victim represents an ethnic minority. These crimes are often committed in similar circumstances as the bulk of Finnish violence: on the street at night and when the perpetrator is often intoxicated. When comparing these numbers to the total of about 38 000 violent crimes (including misdemeanor assaults) per year, we can easily see that the number is small, i.e. the argument does not hold based on numbers alone. Also, many forms of violent extremism, like Jihadi activities and sentiments do not yet manifest themselves as crime statistics, although authorities know of them. A further analysis is necessary.

One of the core traits of violence motivated by extremist ideology is that, apart from being an attack against the actual victim, it is also an attack on democracy itself on at least two levels. On a more abstract level, it often attacks the fundamental rights of freedom of movement, freedom of speech, or non-discrimination. The victim, in turn, is targeted because he or she is somewhere the perpetrator wishes them not to be, speaks in a manner the perpetrator does not want her to speak, or represents some group the perpetrator does not approve of. But apart from the actual victim, the act victimizes other individuals. The act is an intended or an unintended message to all others like the victim, saying “don’t be here”, “don’t say that” or simply “don’t be”. This affects not only the actual possibilities of such individuals to freely exercise their aforementioned democratic rights, but it also impacts their feeling of security. This feeling and its impact on the extended group of victims do not show in crime statistics. An element that also separates violent extremism from other forms of violence is its self-perpetuating nature. The radicalization and violent actions of one group often lead to a reactive radicalization in another group. An example could be a situation where the rise of Islamist extremism fuels a neo-Nazi or an anti-Muslim group which, in turn, increases the feelings of exclusion in some vulnerable Muslim youth and makes them more susceptible to violent radicalization and so on.

Another consideration is that violent extremism, like other forms of delinquency or anti-social behavior, is detrimental not only to the victims but also to the well being of the individuals involved. International experiences show that individuals involved often have a range of social problems. Even though a universal causal link between these problems and involvement in violent extremism cannot be drawn, it is clear on a general level that exposure to environments that promote delinquency may also further the spiral of social marginalization and subsequent health, abuse, or crime problems. Some studies also speak to a “hereditary” nature of violent extremism: growing up in an environment of violent extremism increases the likelihood of the children becoming violent extremists themselves – with the accompanying risks of social marginalization. Rather surprisingly, then, violent extremism is among other things at times a child protection issue.
Finland in many ways is in a unique position to prevent violent extremism from growing into the scale witnessed in many continental European countries. The problem is still small and we can draw from the good and bad experiences from work that has been done in other countries. Finland is in a pivotal point in terms of choosing to do something about the issue. A recent study sponsored by the Finnish Ministry of Interior dealt with what Finns fear. This study showed that feelings of uncertainty and a mentality of “us and them” are growing rapidly. Such sentiments are unfortunately good breeding grounds for groups and movements that provide simple, populist, and radical solutions to real or perceived social issues as well as a perhaps false and ill-directed feeling of cohesion. This is more than a weak signal of the potential growth of violent extremism. Our bird’s nest perspective includes a key vulnerability that we have taken steps to counter. As much as authorities should and can do about these issues, a potentially great inhibiting or furthering force in what kind of foothold violent extremism can get in our society is the silent approval or public acceptance it enjoys. By understanding what we are dealing with, authorities, NGOs, local communities, and families – all of us – can do our part in sending a clear message: we do not approve of the use of violence for whatever reason and we condone groups that do so. This empowerment has served as a strong basis for Finland’s evolving strategy to prevent all forms of violent extremism.
ALIENATED YOUTH AND THE RISK OF RADICALIZATION IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD

AN INTERVIEW WITH FOUR EXPERTS FROM DIFFERENT FIELDS

STETE’s summer seminar was organized in Lohja for the 18th time. As in previous years, the seminar attracted both experts and local audiences for a vivid human security-themed discussion.

With this year’s theme, “Alienated youth and the risk of radicalization in the virtual world”, STETE aimed to take part in the very topical issue of young people’s societal alienation, but from a security point of view. Societal alienation has been a recurring topic during the years of the financial crisis, from widening social differences to cuts in financing social services. The Finnish Government launched a Youth Guarantee programme to provide work or education for young people. These young people without jobs and/or higher education comprised five percent of 15 to 29 year olds in 2010. The President of the Republic has also taken the initiative in this issue to start a campaign that encourages people to act individually in order to prevent societal alienation. STETE wanted to take part in this debate and focus on a far less discussed aspect, security, which, as our experts proved in this interview, has important connotations within the social sector as well.

After a lively discussion at the seminar, STETE’s office workers sat down with our expert speakers to find out more about the connection between societal alienation and radicalization processes, the risks we find here in Finland, and their ideas on how our preventive services could be developed.

The expert speakers included Tapani Aulis, a violence worker from the Aggredi-project of HelsinkiMissio, Ari Evwaraye, Senior Advisor at the Ministry of the Interior, Elina Hermanson, Physician-in-Chief of School Health at the City of Helsinki, Teemu Sinkkonen, a researcher on terrorism and radicalism from the Finnish Institute for Foreign Affairs, and Senior Constable Jarno Saarinen from the Internet Police.

WHAT DO YOU CURRENTLY SEE AS THE GREATEST RISKS IN FINLAND WITH REGARD TO RADICALIZATION?

The experts agree that Finland is not an opportune basis for violent radicalization. We have stable governmental and judicial systems and a well-functioning democratic process. The experts interviewed agree that the risks of radicalization in Finland are linked to individual problems and to social services’ abilities to answer to them.

Factors that can be linked to radicalization processes in all societies are, according to Evwaraye, feelings of outsidersness and powerlessness – feelings that are always individual and that are difficult to generalize to the societal level. These emotions can then lead to feelings of societal alienation, which Aulis specifically refers to. This is also the primary worry of Hermanson, who says that it is easy for a person with these feelings to be absorbed in the world of the Internet.
After losing a normal 24-hour rhythm, it is possible that the Internet world becomes a shadow reality. This habit may then lead to a person’s total loss of reality. Saarinen argues that second generation immigrants are at a risk in this sense, especially those whose parents have not fully integrated into the country. He states his worry about seeing the impacts of the Arab spring in Finland as well.

According to Evwaraye, the most important factors in securing a low risk of radicalization are upholding trust in the political system, in democracy, and in one’s own individual future. Aulis adds that we may also thank our educational system, social system, and various organizations for the low risks of radicalization in Finland. He also states, however, his worry about the cuts in social services as part of the financial crisis. Saarinen and Sinkkonen echo this risk as well. Should youth services be declined radically, there will certainly be an impact on radicalization as well, states Saarinen.

Sinkkonen argues that, although political violence is not a part of our political culture and terrorist organizations do not exist in Finland, a Norway-type attack may in principle be possible in Finland as well, when we take into account that there is some support for the kind of anti-jihad ideology of Breivik in Finland as well and that school shootings, which we have experienced, bear similarities with the dynamics of terrorist attacks. Finland is not an interesting target for Islamist extremism. Attacks like this are more likely to focus on the Middle East or the Horn of Africa.

What kind of preventive actions do we have? How should they be developed?

The experts highlight that, as was mentioned in response to the previous question, social work, including support for immigrants, is the most effective preventive action. Sinkkonen emphasizes that there is a lot that can be developed in these services, which should not be forgotten during the financial crisis. Young people should be given access to the social services they need. Saarinen also finds it important that the current social structures are at least kept at their current levels. This is especially important considering that all the school shooters in Finland have sought out help from social services at some point in their lives, adds Aulis.

Aulis, who works for the Aggredi project with people who have committed a violent act outside of home, states that more research should be focused on the stages of the radicalization process in order to improve the prediction and identification of certain signs. The following questions should also be answered: What mechanisms drive an individual to violent radicalism? At which stage and in what kind of a life situation is an individual sensitive to such mechanisms?

Another factor that the experts point out is effective network cooperation between officials and other actors. Evwaraye argues that when an individual or a group of young people begin to show symptoms of radicalization, a network of officials needs to be able to come together to find out the reasons for such symptoms and to offer appropriate and individual help for them all. According to Evwaraye, it is important that such activities are based on providing help instead of on practicing criminal justice. It is a challenge to develop capabilities for identifying such symptoms and creating such networks, but resolutions have been given at the actions of the report on inner security. Evwaraye
mentions the Helsinki Police multi-official working teams as an example of such a network activity. This network consists of the police, social workers, and psychiatric nurses. According to Saarinen, the results of the network have been encouraging, but now the city is considering withdrawing nurses from the group. This would be a clear step backwards for such multi-official efforts.

**What are the most effective means for answering the needs of troubled youth?**

Institutions and people within society should be prepared to answer to the needs of young people, first of all, by providing them with possibilities, the experts say. Sinkkonen argues that a central and effective way to address youth needs is through employment. Youth unemployment is a major risk with long-standing impacts on societies. A sense of inequality from birth, coupled with difficulties later on in regard to access to higher education and to employment can lead to an individual questioning and resisting the societal system, Sinkkonen argues. Evwaraye agrees that an important part of answering to the needs of alienated youth is by providing them with a safe growing environment, interesting social and spare-time activities, and increasing their possibilities for higher education.

On the other hand, Evwaraye says, society needs to be able to answer to the needs of young people showing signs of alienation or violent radicalization. In this regard, he argues, network teams are opportune in helping youth. For example, an individual may benefit from the help of voluntary organizations for some issues, and from health care services at other organizations, without all officials’ efforts overlapping one another. Aulis also sees the merit in using our existing resources in cost-effective ways.

Hermanson sheds light on the problems of finding troubled youth. After primary school, she says, conscription is the only situation when health care practitioners meet an entire male age group. This situation is focused on fitness for service, and, even if a young man shows signals of radicalization and is directed to appropriate care, it is a very rare situation for a young person to be willing to receive help at this age. Preventive measures should therefore, according to Hermanson, begin at an earlier age, before a young person becomes independent.

Our school healthcare is, in principle, good and able to provide aid despite its tight resources. The weakness of school healthcare is, however, its limited time scale, although general practitioners obviously pay attention to the young person’s future development as well. Hermanson would be happy to see more involvement from general practitioners in school healthcare. An ideal situation would be one where the a young person facing problems at school, having difficulty establishing a 24-hour rhythm, and/or finding it difficult to maintain friendships would be able to visit the general practitioner once every three months. In these meetings, the young person could be joined by a trusted professional with whom he or she meets with more often. The goal of the meetings would be to analyze the development of the situation and, more importantly, allow time for the young person to have his or her own questions answered as well. Many troubled youth have to work through fears in their head, or are scared of having a disease, and would thus greatly benefit from getting their
questions answered, and having their voices heard.

This is an idea that Saarinen brings forward as well. It would be of the utmost importance to show a troubled young person that he or she is cared about. Adults should pay more attention to general communication with the youth in their lives. Saarinen fears that our collective communication culture is depreciating, and wants to encourage adults to take action when a young person is showing signals of alienation or troubledness.

**How could cooperation be developed with NGOs or local administrations?**

Sinkkonen states that it would be important to lower the threshold for making contact. External communication is also important. Many people working in NGOs or in local administrations do not even know who works within these issues and may not necessarily know whom to contact in such situations. In addition, responsibility lies not only with these officials, but also with peers and other people close to the person “at risk”. One should not only wait for the members of societal institutions to take responsibility. Evwaraye adds that official structures should be formed for cooperation – or rather, for working together. These could be either cooperative meetings or the so-called “one booth solutions”, such as the aforementioned Anchor network at the Helsinki Police station. Structures do not guarantee effectiveness, but they create the conditions necessary for understanding each other’s goals and working models. Officials often work similarly but, when looked at from legal, linguistic, or ethical points of view, their habits can seem very different. For example, security, welfare, and health often go hand-in-hand and can all therefore be strongly influenced by one another.

**The ability of officials working in networks to answer to the needs of youth has already been discussed, but how well does cooperation and information sharing work between officials outside of these networks?**

Evwaraye restates that preventing violent radicalization, especially for youth, is similar to any kind of early support given to people with negative behavioural issues. Preventive work has to have an effective influence on the factors behind a person’s seeming issues. Information sharing and cooperation work rather variably across Finnish cities. Overall, one can say that there is a lot of cooperation but not enough work is done together. Saarinen mentions the Helsinki Police’s network teams, where cooperation is seamless. Such a model could be further developed in and across other organizations as well.

On information sharing, Evwaraye comments that one can witness certain precautions in terms of not wanting to cross the information protection law. Nevertheless, our child protection law provides officials with the ability to share information unrestrictedly when it is seen as appropriate. One should not forget that many young people are willing to seek help if it is offered to them in the right situation. In these cases, officials are allowed to exchange information with the person’s permission.
The experts’ presentations and a report on the Lohja conference can be accessed at:

CONSTANT CHALLENGES:

FINNISH EXPORT CONTROLS AND INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE

Elli Kytömäki
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Elli Kytömäki gives an overview of the current challenges surrounding the topic. As the article exemplifies, although there exist stringent arms transfer control systems, risky or suspicious arms deals regularly make headlines across Europe. This is true even with regards to Finland, mainly due to the lack of transparency and de-centralized export licensing.

European countries have some of the most comprehensive and sophisticated arms export control systems in the world. For over 80 years, Finland has had laws to govern the exports of defence materiel, and it remains active in international efforts to improve international controls, most recently through supporting the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) at the UN in 2013. The ATT aims at regulating the international trade in conventional arms to foster peace and security by *inter alia* preventing human rights abusers and violators of international humanitarian law from being supplied with arms.

Export control systems are complex and their functioning is determined not only by existing regulations, but also by the structure of the national defence industry and the day-to-day practices of government officials. A well-functioning system is comprehensive, effective, predictable and reactive. The ever-changing international environment sets continuous challenges to the development and functioning of such national systems.

ARMS TRADE MAKES HEADLINES

The major EU arms exporting countries—France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom—account for one third of the world's arms deals. Despite their stringent arms transfer control systems, risky or suspicious arms deals regularly make headlines across Europe. For example, earlier this year, a group of UK parliamentarians, together with Amnesty International, raised concerns over the country’s approval of the sale of arms worth over GBP 12 billion to countries that, according to them, have very questionable human rights records. They called for the government to apply significantly more cautious judgments when considering export license applications to authoritarian regimes and
demanded more transparency and accountability for arms trade.

Also, the Finnish media sometimes reports about arms export cases where the end users might have utilized the equipment for human rights violations. For instance, in 2011, Finland exported sniper rifles, ammunition, and related military equipment to Bahrain worth over EUR 3.5 million. The licences were processed before societal violence escalated across North Africa, and, as a result of the Arab Spring, all granted licences to the region were reassessed. Unfortunately, the review seems to have come too late, as by the time the licences were put back on the table, the unrest was already widespread and the items had already been shipped. The media reported that the division of authority in the licensing system led to a situation whereby only one-fourth of the exports were reported in the official statistics, and less than half of the materiel was processed through the export control system.

Similar examples can be found across the world, in different contexts and magnitudes. Despite a range of instruments developed especially in the past decade, weapons end up in places where they are used for internal suppression, inhuman and degrading treatment, torture, and other grave violations of human rights. Is it simply impossible to know who the responsible recipients are and how we could punish the wrongdoers? Are the instruments for evaluating responsible trade not effective enough, or does this happen because authorities or companies do not care, or fail to follow the rules and procedures?

RISKY BUSINESS: ARMS EXPORTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Suspicious deals happen, and some actors in the arms trade still work like real-life “Lords of War”. Given the strengthened norm of responsible trade advocated by the ATT, it is safe to say that European countries work to improve their systems and do not deliberately break the rules to create headlines. Yet, mistakes happen and weapons sometimes end up in the wrong hands. For instance, the authorities’ assessment about the prospective export might turn out to be insufficient, failing to reflect the related risks or reality. One can also imagine a situation, where after receiving an application, a country conducts a thorough and accurate risk assessment and deems that the export can safely go ahead. Given the time that it often takes from authorization to the actual delivery, there is always a risk that the political or security situation in the recipient country changes and new concerns arise that could not be detected at the time of authorization.

The only way to effectively address these risky scenarios is to further strengthen the international norm of responsible arms trade. The ATT, possibly entering into force already in 2014, will hopefully start making a difference. In addition to developing normative transfer control instruments, a core challenge lays in the national application of existing human rights criteria. In order to be truly effective and reliable, the decisions of export control authorities have to be well informed and based on a thorough and objective analysis of all relevant data. To enable this, the authorities have to have at their disposal adequate resources and be able to utilize all relevant means.
Taking into account the broader aspects of human rights and other humanitarian concerns seems to be an area where continuous learning and readjustment is needed and where the biggest risks of miscalculation lie. More stringent human rights considerations at the time of license authorizations would not only help authorities avoid headlines, but also assist the defence industry by creating a more predictable and reliable system, with fewer reputational risks. Also, post-authorization and post-delivery controls are central: despite political and economic pressures, a country should be able to withdraw already granted licences and actively follow-up the delivery of these weapons.

**Can we do better?**

Compared to the world’s largest arms exports, the Finnish trade is relatively small – there are about 200 export licences every year, worth around EUR 70 million. Finland still belongs to the top 25 arms exporters. According to the SaferGlobe arms export database, the value of exported Finnish defence materiel has doubled after 2000.

Export licensing in Finland is divided between three ministries and different departments, depending on the type and intended use of the exported items, as well as the value and political importance of the intended transfer. The division presents challenges, because the responsible authority—Ministry of Defence or the National Police Board—is determined case-by-case. There is no list of national defence products or categorization. Without this type of clear criteria, it is sometimes difficult to determine which products should be licensed as war materiel and which as civilian weapons.

The situation has both political and practical consequences: for example, in the case of Bahrain, the licence applications were divided between the authorities in a way that kept each licence under the threshold of EUR 1 million, avoiding being subjected to governmental approval.

Also, the transparency of Finnish export licensing is currently quite limited: the system is based on hard copy applications and practices on publicity vary, hindering coordination between the different authorities as well as civil society’s ability to follow policy developments. Creating a centralized electronic database of applications would improve effectiveness and increase transparency. Responsibility to oversee actual exports lies with Customs. Licensing authorities do not systematically monitor materialized transfers or the end use of exported products. This creates a situation where Finnish arms can potentially be exported and re-exported to countries and regions where they are used in human rights violations. Despite best efforts, further work is needed to face the challenges posed by the ever-complicating system of international arms trade, where the ATT will also hopefully start to make a difference.
COMING SOON
COMING SOON
COMING SOON
COMING SOON
THE NEW DYNAMICS OF NORDIC DEFENCE COOPERATION

Dr. Jacob Westberg
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Swedish National Defence College.

Even though the Nordic countries have a long and successful history of intergovernmental and transnational cooperation covering a great number of policy areas, when it comes to issues related to collective defence, the historical track-record of Nordic cooperation is, with one notable exception, a sad reading. Thus, in the subsequent article, Dr. Jacob Westberg from the Swedish National Defence College reviews the successes and misfortunes of Nordic security cooperation and provides reasons why there now indeed are good prospects for more long-term development. In fact, as Dr. Westberg concludes, given enough time and political support, Nordic defence integration via NORDEFCO has ample potential to facilitate a solution to the traditional uncertainties of cooperation by creating trust among participant countries and interoperability with potential allies.

The Nordic countries have a long and successful history of intergovernmental and transnational cooperation covering a great number of policy areas. In issues related to international security cooperation, this history includes meetings between members of the peace movement in the different Scandinavian countries in the later part of the 19th century, cooperation related to the Hague conferences 1899 and 1907, minister meetings to coordinate policies in the League of Nations during the inter-war era, and the Nordic UN cooperation during the Cold War. As non-aligned states, Finland and Sweden also made important contributions to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe during the last decades of the Cold War. But when it comes to issues related to collective defence, the historical track record of Nordic cooperation is, with one notable exception, a sad reading. In the following text, I will first present some examples of previous attempts to establish different forms of defence cooperation between two or more Nordic countries, together with a brief analysis of the enabling and restraining factors of greatest importance for the outcome. Secondly, I will present a short analysis of the motives and driving forces of today’s Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO).
A conflict between the Danish king Fredrik VII and the separatist movement in German speaking parts of Schleswig-Holstein in 1848 triggered a military intervention by a Prussian-led coalition of German states. This time, the Swedish king Oscar I managed to get support from both the Swedish parliament and the Norwegian government for a decision to use Swedish and Norwegian soldiers to assist Denmark. 4 000 soldiers were transported to the Danish island of Fyn and 11 000 soldiers were left as a reserve in southernmost Sweden. The Swedish king had claimed that the attack against Denmark was a threat to all Nordic countries and, at the time, the transnational cultural movement of Scandinavianism provided support for active engagement within the small part of the Swedish population that had any views on foreign policy issues. But this policy of Nordic solidarity proved to be an exception. When the second Danish-German war began in early 1864, Denmark was left alone and defeated by Prussia and its allies, in spite of renewed promises of support from the new Swedish king Karl XV in 1863.

In 1927, the Swedish General staff presented a plan for the defence of Sweden in case of a Russian attack against Finland. The plan proposed for Sweden to take military control of the Åland islands early in the conflict to make it possible to give further military aid to Finland as a part of a military intervention authorised by the League of Nations. In 1937, a new plan was developed by the Swedish general Staff, which suggested that the greater part of the Swedish army be sent to Finland to aid in the defence of south-east Finland. Again, the plan was based on the assumption that the Swedish intervention would be preceded by a decision concerning military sanctions in the League of Nations. In the spring of 1939, the Swedish government presented a proposal, the “Stockholm plan”, in the League of Nations that would have made it possible for Finland to prepare the defence of the demilitarised group of Åland in cooperation with Sweden. In May 1939, the newly appointed foreign minister Molotov declared that the Soviet government considered the plan as a threat to its security and the proposal was withdrawn.

In November 1939, there were still hopes in Finland that Sweden would take part in the defence of Åland in case of a Russian attack. When the Swedish government was about to decide on the issue, a clear majority believed that basis for the “Stockholm plan” had been altered by the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, and later, demands from Russia on Finland. The Swedish military assistance to Finland during the Winter War in 1939-1940 was therefore restricted to voluntary military personnel and military equipment. The German attack on Denmark and Norway on 9 April 1940 was followed by an immediate Swedish declaration of neutrality. In the case of Denmark, the invasion was concluded within hours and there was little the Swedish government and its armed forces could have done. In Norway, the fighting continued until June with allied help, but Norway received no help from Sweden. In 1948, Sweden invited Denmark and Norway to join a military defence union. Earlier the same year, Finland had signed the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union and it was considered impossible for Finland to take part in this cooperation. From a Swedish point of view, the proposal was an attempt to provide
Denmark and Norway with an alternative to military affiliation with the United Kingdom and the US. The Swedish offer of a binding defence union implied that Sweden would go to war if Norwegian or Danish territory was attacked. Neither Denmark nor Norway believed that an isolated Nordic defence union would be enough to deter Soviet Union from aggression, and both countries instead became two of the founding members of the Atlantic pact in April 1949. During the remaining parts of the Cold War, Nordic defence cooperation was restricted to the secret cooperation between Sweden and a number of western countries, including Denmark and Norway.

THE OLD DYNAMICS OF MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY AND POWER POLITICS

The successes and misfortunes of Nordic security cooperation before the end of the Cold War are closely related to two external factors: the availability of well-functioning institutions for multilateral security building and the regional balance of power. The successful cooperation in efforts to promote international peace was dependent on the availability of international institutions that provided arenas for small states to act as mediators and bridge-builders. These institutions in turn depended on active support from the great powers. The balance of power between regional great powers has also had a direct impact on the previous efforts of Nordic cooperation in defence matters. Germany’s withdrawal of its troops in 1848 was preceded by a diplomatic note from Russia demanding Prussia to support an armistice that included Danish control over Jutland. In 1864, Denmark faced an unbalanced coalition of German States, and a Swedish involvement would probably not have changed the outcome of the war. The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact from August 1939 increased the Soviet Union’s freedom of manoeuvre and decreased the likelihood of military assistance from Sweden. A Swedish challenge of German power in 1940 would have been suicidal and the increased bipolar tension between East and West during the early years of the Cold War made the attempts to create a Nordic defence union in 1948-1949 impossible. The secret defence cooperation that occurred during the Cold War was primarily motivated by the fear that the policy of neutrality may fail and that Sweden would be attacked in spite of her government’s neutral intentions.

NORDIC DEFENCE COOPERATION IN AN ERA OF NORMALISATION, AUSTERITY, AND UNCERTAINTY

Which enabling factors, motives, and driving forces can explain today’s increased interest in Nordic defence cooperation?

The end of the Cold War was a necessary precondition for the present cooperation within NORDEFCO. Issues related to defence cooperation were banned from the official agenda of the Nordic cooperation during the Cold War because the Finnish and Swedish governments feared that cooperation in these matters would compromise the credibility of the
two countries’ policy of neutrality. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw pact made these considerations less important, and during the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century, Finland and Sweden gradually adjusted their security policies to a new international environment. Both countries are still non-aligned militarily, but this policy is no longer seen as an obstacle to membership in the EU or to different forms of partnership cooperation with NATO.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the expansion of both the EU and NATO to include a number of former members of the Warsaw pact, including Poland and the three Baltic states, created a security environment in northern and western Europe that seemed to be both peaceful and stable. This development changed the fundamental view of security in many European countries. Existential territorial threats were seen as less likely and immediate. Instead, questions related to international security, failed states, and transnational security threats related to organised crime, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism were put on the top of the agenda, together with concerns related to human, environmental, and societal security. In most cases, this development was also reflected in constant or shrinking defence budgets followed by demands to transform and modernise old invasion defences to be able to perform new types of voluntary expeditionary warfare related to international military crisis management. The perceived absence of existential threats also meant that defence policy was “normalised” and no longer seen as a policy area worthy of special concern. Another enabling factor, analysed by Janne Haaland Matlary, was the creation of a new system of cooperative security involving a more active UN security council, a reformed NATO, and a transformed EU. This cooperative system offered opportunities for states to share costs, risks, and responsibility for international military crisis management.

This development also provided strong incitements for different forms of international defence cooperation. The combination of constant or shrinking defence budgets, the need to modernise Cold War military equipment and develop new capabilities to use military force in both national and international contexts, together with armed forces from other countries, created a need to find new methods to be able to “do more with less”. A first reaction to this challenge in most countries was to limit the numbers of units of different capabilities, which meant fewer but more efficient soldiers, fighters, frigates, tanks, etc. This solution, however, faces two problems: other countries modernise their equipment and techniques as well, so even if your new equipment is superior to your older one, this does not necessarily mean that your equipment is superior to your opponent (especially not if your potential opponent is a great power). The other problem has been referred to as “the critical mass problem”. The former Norwegian chief of defence, General Sverre Diesen, has defined “critical mass” as “the lower number of systems or units of each capability ... which can be sustained before it becomes either unpractical (that is the capability is irrelevant for many military purposes or impossible to sustain over even a shorter time frame), prohibitively expensive (due to increasing unit cost) or both”. According to Diesen, all European defence forces are facing the critical mass problem to some extent, but the problems come earlier and are more severe for smaller countries, because they decrease the numbers from initially
lower levels. NATO’s concept of “smart defence”, the various initiatives for “pooling and sharing” in the EU context and the present Nordic defence cooperation – which was initiated by Diesen together with the Swedish chief of defence Håkan Syrén in 2006 – can all be seen as attempts to handle the challenges and capacity gaps created by increasing austerity with the help of closer international defence cooperation. 2

The disintegration of the Eastern bloc, the normalisation of defence politics, austerity, and the critical mass problem does not, however, explain why the Nordic countries should prefer to cooperate in a Nordic context rather than in an EU or NATO context. The increased interest in Nordic defence cooperation in the last five years correlates with three changes in the external security environment of the Nordic countries: a growing asymmetry in defence spending between Russia and EU member states, the failure of the EU to develop the defence and security cooperation that was included in the Lisbon Treaty, the US rebalancing of forces to the Pacific, and increased demands for Europeans to take greater responsibility for the security in its own neighbourhood.

If the present asymmetric trend in defence spending continues for ten or fifteen years, the balance of power in Europe will change and the likelihood that military force is again used for political purposes will increase. The war in Georgia 2008 was a reminder of this risk. This challenge could have been met by a more effective and deeper cooperation between EU member states and European member states of NATO, but both organisations have so far failed to coordinate the policies of its member states when it comes to questions related to the production of military capabilities necessary for collective defence. The increasing number of member states in the two organisations also makes it more difficult to agree on common policies since the strategic interest of the member states are very different. In response to this defence cooperation on more limited issues occurs, in smaller groups of similar and likeminded countries, a sub-regionalisation of defence cooperation that Tomas Valasek has termed the “island of cooperation”. It is in this context of growing uncertainty that Nordic defence cooperation is again seen as a complement to other institutional platforms.

NORDEFCO – COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES AND IMPORTANT LIMITATIONS

Are there any reasons to believe that the present Nordic defence cooperation will be more successful than the failed efforts in the past, and to what extent can Nordic cooperation compensate for the failure to achieve efficient coordination in other contexts?

An evaluation of NORDEFCO’s chances of success
must start with the specific aims of the cooperation. According to the agreement establishing NORDEFCO, “the main aim and purpose is to strengthen the participating nations’ national defence, explore common synergies and facilitate efficient common solutions”. The ambition is to achieve cooperation “across the entire range of defence structures” in order to reach “better cost-effectiveness and quality, and thereby creating enhanced operational capability”. The agreement also explicitly addresses the critical mass problem: “Through cooperation in the development and production of capabilities the Nordic countries can maintain and develop depth and width of their national capabilities. This means the ability to keep single capabilities over the point of critical level”. A further aim is to “enhance interoperability … and the capability to act jointly”. Related to this a “deep and comprehensive cooperation” is also supposed to make it possible to “contribute with larger, more efficient and sustainable units to international efforts for peace and security within EU, NATO and UN-led operations”. Finally, NORDEFCO should also promote “the competitiveness of the defence industry, and strengthen cooperation on any other possible future area of cooperation”. 

The first thing to note about these ambitions what NORDEFCO is not: it is not a defence alliance, an alternative to NATO, or a future European collective defence cooperation. Instead, NORDEFCO can be seen as the first step in a “process of defence integration”. In issues related to collective defence, the main benefits of the cooperation lie in promoting interoperability, the ability to act together. In the perspective of an integration process, it is also important to keep in mind that the benefits of the cooperation have to be seen in both a short time perspective – the increased cost effectiveness and capabilities created for the participating nations here and now – and a longer time perspective focusing on the long term consequences of the cooperation.

Considering the short time perspective, cooperation in areas like education, training and exercises has increased interoperability. One of the success stories so far has been the cross border training (CBT) between the Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish air forces. In this context, Nordic cooperation also makes it possible to exercise in larger formations. Geographical proximity, similarities in climate conditions, strategic interest, and culture give NORDEFCO several comparative advantages in questions related to training and exercises. The cooperation between Finland and Sweden in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan is an example of successful cooperation relating to international efforts for peace and security.

In addressing the critical mass problem through other forms of integration of the participating countries’ force production, the results so far are more mixed. Ideally, all support functions underpinning operational capabilities
(e.g. military schools and specialist centres, exercise fields, maintenance workshops, storage facilities, etc.) should be jointly distributed among the participating countries. But a division of labour along these lines creates deep dependences and external distributional effects related to regional employment and intra-organizational prestige within different parts of the participating countries’ armed forces. When it comes to procurement, co-development, joint acquisition, or pooling of military materiel, cooperation could of course also provide great opportunities for increased cost effectiveness. But also in these matters Nordic defence integration faces a number of obstacles, such as the long lifetime cycle of existing national weapon systems, national strategic industrial interest, and different forms of vested interests. To handle these kinds of problems, the people working with NORDEFCO will need a stronger political support and efforts to create package deals that compensate for uneven distributional effects among participating countries.

In the long time perspective, NORDEFCO has several comparative advantages to other sub-regional competitors: The organisational structure of NORDEFCO, which includes representatives from the participant countries’ defence ministries and Chief of defences, provides opportunities for both top-down and bottom-up initiatives to deepen and widen existing cooperation. The open organizational structure also creates opportunities for cooperation to continue when specific projects are finished or aborted. The principle of flexible cooperation allows for two or more members to cooperate on issues that other states may not be interested in. Cooperation within the NORDEFCO framework may also include other states. In 2012, a structured coordination with the Baltic states was established with the aim to identify activities for cooperation with mutual benefit. Common borders, a general public support for Nordic cooperation, previous good experiences of Nordic cooperation in other policy areas, common values, and similar strategic interests in relation to the present security environment also mean that the Nordic countries are a “small group of similar and likeminded countries”, which is a key factor for their success.

In terms of long-term spillover effects, research on the European process of regional integration may occur within NORDEFCO as well. Positive personal experiences from cooperative projects, education, training, and exercises may create socialisation effects promoting Nordic strategic thinking and defence identities. Successful cooperation in one issue area may also spill over to further cooperation. An example of this would be if the CBT-cooperation (aiming at interoperability) would spill over to cooperation concerning air surveillance and the actual use of this capacity. But the opposite is of course also true: bad experiences and failed attempts may also undermine trust and confidence.

Focusing on NORDEFCO’s internal dynamic, there is good potential for its long-term development. However, an analysis of NORDEFCO’s future potential must also include an analysis of changes in the external environment. The previously mentioned uncertainties related to Russia, the development within the EU, and the priorities of the US have already created increased attention to questions related to national security. If the bad old days of territorial existential threats return, NORDEFCO will not be able to offer an isolated solution. But, when given enough time and political support, Nordic defence integration may
facilitate a solution by creating trust among participant countries, and interoperability with other potential allies.

References

1 This part of the article is based on Ch. 2 and 4 in Doeser, Petersson, and Westberg (2012)
2 This definition of critical mass was presented by Diesen in a speech at a roundtable conference arranged by the Finnish foreign affairs committee in April 13th, 2012. For further discussion on the driving forces behind the present Nordic cooperation see Forsberg (2013).
3 For more information concerning NORDEFCO, see www.nordefco.org
4 Concerning spillover effects in the context of the European integration process, see Westberg (2008).

Further reading

Diesen, Sverre "Multilateral defence integration: potential in the Nordic region", Key note speech, Round table conference of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Parliament 2012-04-13
Since 2007, the Nordic states have sought to integrate their armed forces more tightly. Their objective has been to get more out of their shrinking or static defence budgets, while simultaneously seeking to avoid falling below a “critical mass” in some categories of weapon systems and units. This integration effort has yet to achieve the ambitious aims originally envisaged. The reasons are multifaceted, but a key obstacle has been the reluctance to surrender national sovereignty and freedom of action, as well as concerns about (in Sweden and Finland) drawing too close to or (in Denmark and Norway) too far away from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

All the Nordic armed forces have been struggling with the same economic challenges for decades. Budgets are mostly static or falling, and costs are constantly rising. To address this, these countries have embraced cooperation as a means of getting more from less- “more bang for the buck”. In 2007, the armed forces of Norway and Sweden published a joint study outlining a partnership aimed at increasing cost-effectiveness and avoiding falling below a “critical mass” in some weapon system categories and unit types. The aim was to enable their militaries to retain their full range of military capabilities. Working together would complement rather than rival their close relationship with NATO and the EU, and cooperation was to be structured in such a way so as to preserve the two countries’ freedom of action. ¹ This report was followed in 2008 by a joint Norwegian-Swedish-Finnish report outlining 140 areas of military cooperation, about 40 of which were to be initiated by the end of 2009. ² The report used strong language to describe the situation facing the three militaries: “We face two options: either to share capabilities with strategic partners on a bilateral or multilateral basis or to face a future with fewer capabilities”. ³

NORDEFCO – IDEAL CLUSTER GROUP, BUT TOO FEW RESULTS

In 2008, Denmark and Iceland joined the partnership, and in 2009, it was reorganised under a unified framework called the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO). ⁴ The same year, the Stoltenberg report, commissioned by the Nordic foreign ministers, was issued. It
contained 13 proposals on strengthening Nordic cooperation on foreign and security policy. Meanwhile, countries outside the Nordic sphere were also looking at defence cooperation as a way to tackle economic challenges. Both NATO and the EU were striving to increase multilateral military cooperation, but progress in these large and heterogeneous organisations was slow. Both organisations therefore encouraged smaller groups of member states to push ahead with defence integration in what were referred to as “cluster groups”.

In the late 2000s, NORDEFCO came across as the ideal “cluster group”. After all, the Nordic states seemed to be the perfect partners. They are geographically proximate, share a common culture and history, and – apart from Finland and Iceland – a common language. For all these reasons there was, as we have seen, a powerful momentum towards a closer Nordic partnership, with defence at its centre, by the end of the 2000s. But despite all the things NORDEFCO had going for it, and despite initially having been hailed as the answer to the defence economic challenges facing the Nordic states, results have so far not been particularly promising.

Indeed, as Finnish Chief of Defence General Ari Puheloinen stated in March 2013, NORDEFCO has so far failed to generate financial savings of significance for the Finnish Defence Forces (FDF). What Finland had managed to save was generated through the Finnish purchases of surplus Swedish and Norwegian defence materiel – in other words, a short-term saving – but the envisioned long-term savings on joint procurement, maintenance, and training had simply not materialised. While Nordic cooperation has produced many significant benefits – such as a joint air and maritime surveillance and many types of joint activities – Puheloinen argued that the ambitious goals outlined six years ago had not only failed to appear, but, in the most likely scenario, probably never will.  

The generals’ disillusioned assessment of NORDEFCO’s potential is unusual. It is often considered bad form to say anything critical about Nordic cooperation; better to say nothing at all. Nevertheless, while no one has conducted a comprehensive audit of NORDEFCO, it seems obvious that the general is correct in his assessment. While members of the NORDEFCO framework will no doubt continue to work closely together and produce valuable benefits also in the future, they have been scaling back ambitions since 2007-2008. The interesting question is, why? Given the need to save money in the military sector, and with so many factors pointing to the Nordic states as suitable partners, what is holding NORDEFCO back?

**A WEB OF CHALLENGES**

I will argue that the main problem, and the main challenge to NORDEFCO, is the continuing concern for national sovereignty, freedom of action, and relations with the Transatlantic...
Alliance. It is these challenges that have effectively prevented the NORDEFCO process from reaching the ambitious targets first outlined by the Swedish and Norwegian Chiefs of Defence in 2007. Firstly, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland have very different attachments to the EU and NATO. Norway and Iceland are members of NATO, Sweden and Finland members of the EU, and only Denmark is a member of both. Adding to the complexity, Denmark has an “opt-out” from all EU decisions and actions with defence implications, so Denmark takes no part in the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy. This complex web of organisational affiliations has complicated things further. But, more importantly, even when Nordic countries are members of the same security alliance, they are still extremely reluctant to integrate their armed forces in ways that increase their mutual dependency and limit their governments’ freedom of action. Let me give you four concrete examples of joint procurement and capability projects stymied by these concerns.

**SOVEREIGNTY TRUMPING EFFICIENCY**

Even between close NATO allies, “pooling” capabilities – especially combat capabilities – poses a major challenge. When a proposal was presented in the Danish Parliament in 2007 about Norway and Denmark, “pooling” their F-16 combat aircraft to increase cost-effectiveness, it was quickly shot down by the Danish and Norwegian ministers of defence. The legal ambiguity of such a close integration of their combat forces, it was argued, would be overwhelming. It probably was not lost on either the Danish or the Norwegian government that the two countries had chosen very different stands on the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, and the NATO-led deployment in the volatile southern Afghanistan in 2006. Concerns about sovereignty and national freedom of action clearly trumped efficiency in this case.

Another example of sovereignty trumping efficiency is the Swedish-Norwegian Archer artillery project. Formalised in 2007, it was considered something of a poster child of Nordic defence cooperation. That is, until Norway abruptly withdrew from the project – due to technical dissatisfaction with the artillery system – in December 2013. At its optimistic start, in order to increase cost-effectiveness, it initially envisioned the joint storage of ammunition and the joint maintenance of guns at a depot in Sweden. However, this plan ran into serious trouble when Sweden refused to issue an ironclad guarantee to Norway that the ammunition and guns would be made available to Norway in a crisis. Such a guarantee would be incompatible with Swedish nonalignment. Norway thus feared abandonment by nonaligned Sweden in a crisis, while Sweden feared becoming entrapped and losing its freedom of action vis-à-vis NATO member Norway. These concerns seem to have overridden concerns about efficiency. After all, the most efficient solution would have been to have a single, joint Swedish-Norwegian ammunition depot...
Similar concerns of potential abandonment were evident when Norway and Finland discussed joint maintenance on their future NH-90 helicopters a few years ago. Norwegian officials offered to maintain the helicopters in Norway, to which Finnish officials replied that in that eventuality, the Norwegian Leopard 2 main battle tanks should be maintained in Finland. The tanks would serve as collateral, giving Finland something more than paper guarantees that Norway would return the helicopters in a crisis. This kind of conditional-ity, stemming from fears of abandonment rather than concerns about efficiency, was not acceptable to Norway.

Finland seems to have had barely more confidence in Sweden. When the Swedish ministers of defence and foreign affairs in January 2013 reiterated Sweden’s desire to see joint ownership of some types of military equipment and capabilities – i.e. “pooling and sharing” – their Finnish counterparts replied that, firstly, it would require some form of a defence pact between Finland and Sweden, and, secondly, the Nordic NATO states should not be involved. These conditions demonstrate how careful nonaligned Finland, which shares a 1,300 km. border with the Russian Federation, continues to be about maintaining an autonomous defence capability and about drawing too close to NATO. In 2007, the Finnish Minister of Defence Jyri Hääkänsie (infamously) identified “the three main security challenges for Finland today” as “Russia, Russia, and Russia”. Moscow, for its part, signalled that it would consider Finnish membership of NATO as a military threat to Russia.

What then do these four examples imply for NORDEFCO’s future in terms of where we go from here? It is perhaps unfair to hold today’s partnership up against the very ambitious plans outlined back in 2007. After all, much has been achieved, and everybody agrees that more cooperation is needed. Also, an obvious counter-argument to the “glass half-empty” argument presented here is that NORDEFCO just needs more time. It is still in its infancy, and it will arguably get there eventually. While this opinion was not shared by the Finnish Chief of Defence in 2013, it is a plausible argument.

It would also be incorrect to suggest that concerns about sovereignty and (non-) alignment are the only reasons why NORDEFCO will probably not reach its most ambitious goals. The domestic factor is also a powerful obstacle. After all, close Nordic cooperation in the defence sector would require a reshuffling of jobs, military bases, and industrial contracts among the participating countries. The huge popular and political support for Nordic cooperation would almost certainly become much more nuanced the moment someone started proposing sending scarce jobs in vulnerable rural communities abroad.

Nevertheless, to summarise, I would argue that NORDEFCO’s record so far demonstrates that sovereignty and concerns about military alignment are a much greater obstacle to military cooperation than many in the Nordic countries and in Europe seem to realise. Those in NATO and the EU, and in the European capitals, who seem to believe that “pooling and sharing” or “smart defence” will allow Europe to maintain its present military capabilities
while reducing defence spending should definitely take note of the challenges we have experienced in the Nordic countries so far.

References

3 Ibid, 1.
COMMON COURSES FOR COMMON PURPOSES:
COOPERATION IN NORDIC PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

In the following article Dr. Gary Schaub Jr. overviews the history and current standing of the cooperation in Nordic professional military education and training. Even though the Nordic cooperation dates back to as far as 1965, Schaub argues that there remain too few exchanges among the Nordic militaries. Yet, similarly to other European higher education systems, Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO) has in recent years began to focus on developing “common courses for common purposes” to supplement specialty training and facilitate international mobility through harmonization. So far the kinds of opportunities have been entirely unsuitable for the graduates of professional military education. Even so, depending on how far the participating states decide to go, Schaub suggests that the Nordic countries could indeed offer common courses in core subjects, harmonize their entire curriculum, or even form a Nordic defence college. Thus, as the article goes to show, harmonization should not present insurmountable obstacles and the question remains rather as to how deep and far-reaching the NORDEFCO reforms are likely to be.

European higher education systems have undergone substantial reform under the Bologna Process, and the Nordic countries have been at the forefront of such developments. Bologna seeks to establish a basis for mutual recognition of educational credentials so as to facilitate student exchange during the educational process and labor mobility afterwards. The harmonization of education credit systems in particular has enabled standardization of degrees and their requirements, the development of institutional, national, and international frameworks to assure the quality of education, and the recognition of credits and degrees earned in another country.

Professional military education (PME) institutions have traditionally been separate from European systems of higher education, but they have been involved in Bologna. Most PME institutions in the European Union adopted Bologna standards as part of a process of converging with their national higher education systems. Nordic PME has been no different. Finland’s National Defence University was accredited in 2006, Norway’s Defence College in 2005, Sweden’s National Defence College in 2008, and Denmark’s Defence College in 2013. So what is next?
The purpose of Bologna is to facilitate international mobility through harmonization for students during their education and employment after graduation. Such mobility is entirely unsuitable for the graduates of PME, however. Unlike the 19th century, military officers today do not go abroad to seek employment with another state’s military after graduation. Exchanges of officers during their schooling, especially for mid-career officers, are more common and facilitate greater understanding, social ties, and interoperability between nations. But there are too few exchanges among the Nordic militaries, primarily because their schools have not yet been harmonized. They should be.

Harmonization should not present insurmountable obstacles. There is a substantial history of Nordic cooperation in military education and training. For over forty years, the Nordic nations together have trained and educated military and civilian personnel for participation in UN peacekeeping operations. These four countries have decided to pursue further cooperation in this field under the auspices of Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO). They are doing so by developing “common courses for common purposes.” These countries can use the principles of Bologna to greatly expand their cooperation to include mid-career officers—captains and majors—in their command and staff programs. Depending on how far they decide to go, they could offer common courses in core subjects, harmonize their entire curricula, and even form a Nordic defence college. These three options will be discussed below.

THE NORDIC ADVANTAGE

Nordic cooperation in military education and training dates back to 1965 when a joint UN training program for military personnel was put into effect. As Peter Viggo Jacobson recounts in his book, “Nordic Approaches to Peace Operations,” in the 1970s, Sweden and Finland hosted a course for UN observers, Denmark hosted a course for military police, and Norway hosted courses on logistics and controlling the movements of people. Later a Nordic seminar on UN peacekeeping operations for civil servants and military officers was added. By 2003, 850 students attended 25 courses on UN peacekeeping, offered cooperatively by the four Nordic countries. In 2008, almost 900 students under NORDEFCO were trained in the various courses – 300 of which were not Nordic.

Since 2009, NORDEFCO has focused on developing “common courses for common purposes” that supplement specialty training. In 2013, they offered twenty weeklong training courses for personnel deploying to multinational assignments in partner capacity-building or low intensity stabilization and training missions under the auspices of NATO’s Partnership for Peace program or the United Nations. Furthermore, a working group has identified language courses (English, Pashto, and Farsi), technical courses in aircraft maintenance, combat medical courses for special forces personnel, mine counter-measures, and logistics as areas with “good potential for further cooperation” in training and education. The working group has even indicated that “common competent bod[ies] for recognition [and] certifying staff” should be pursued to ensure quality. Such language indicates that the
countries of NORDEFCO can do more and, most importantly, have an interest in doing more to cooperate.

**Principles of PME Harmonization**

But how can NORDEFCO countries move from cooperative delivery of short training courses to yearlong education and training courses? The harmonization of civilian higher education suggests that a principled approach is useful. The Bologna Process is based upon five principles: standardization of educational credit; standardization of degree requirements; development of competency descriptions for higher and vocational-technical education; quality assurance at the institutional, national, and international level; and recognition that incentives built into the layered processes are sufficient to perpetuate harmonization across institutions, educational sectors, and borders.

Cross-border PME harmonization should begin with the recognition that common competencies are expected from officers of particular ranks and levels of responsibility. In PME, such competencies have long been explicitly used to develop and assess curricula. So far, Sweden and Finland’s Defence Colleges have developed and adopted national competency descriptions and use them to assign credit. The Defence Colleges of Norway and Denmark are moving in that direction and should continue to do so.

Agreement on common competencies that should be developed to educate mid-career officers would enable a wide degree of cooperation that can go beyond that in the civilian realm. Common competencies suggest that similar curricula should be offered by the Defence Colleges since officers at this point in their career are being prepared for similar levels of responsibility. This is especially true among nations that share strategic proximity and undertake military operations together. The Nordic Chiefs of Defence have already adopted the principle of “common courses for common purposes” in NORDEFCO’s specialty training courses. Therefore, it is a short step to conclude that developing common courses would create common competencies amongst field-grade officers – particularly with regard to education and training that address multinational cooperation.

Second, the most substantial barrier to foreign officer participation in higher education is language – even among the Nordic countries. Common courses for common purposes should be taught in a common language: English. This principle has also been recognized. Meetings between the Nordic Chiefs of Defence take place in English. Nordic courses in peace-keeping and peace support operations have used English-language materials and instruction because English is the language that will be used in multinational military operations. Preparation to perform well in those circum-

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4 Principles:
- Common Competencies
- Common Courses for Common Purposes
- Common Language
- Layered Quality Assurance
stances requires mastery of the material in that language. Today, Finnish and Swedish officers are assessed in their English-language proficiency and can take many courses in English at their Defence Colleges, while Norwegian and Danish officers are learning English as cadets in their military academies.

Third, a common governance structure to facilitate monitoring of competency development and assure the quality of the education provided must be established. Harmonization of civilian educational systems is driven by the layered governing structure of quality assurance. National militaries have an even greater incentive than national educational ministries to ensure that their educational institutions produce competent graduates, as these graduates are their own employees. NORDEFCO’s working group has indicated that “common competent bod[ies] for recognition [and] certifying staff” should be pursued as a means of ensuring the quality of common courses. The logic of the initiative suggests that these “common competent bodies” can develop into a certification and accreditation regime for the training courses as well as common command and staff courses.

**INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSIONS OF PME HARMONIZATION**

Establishing a curriculum of common courses that develop common competencies in a common language, and mechanisms for assuring its quality, provides a firm basis to consider how such curricula’s cooperative delivery can be implemented. I will consider the following three mechanisms as plausible alternatives for cooperation: a Nordic Defence College, standardization of existing courses, and the limited standardization of curricula around a core of common courses for common purposes. Each option is based on common courses for common purposes in a common language. They vary with regard to the degree to which the entire curriculum is common in content, delivery, and accreditation. They also vary in their potential to promote officer exchanges. Despite such variance, each requires increased cooperation amongst NORDEFCO members and presents different challenges to be overcome.

The first option is a Nordic Defence College that would supplement or supplant the existing programs for mid-career officers in the Nordic states. A NORDEFCCOL would consist entirely of common courses for common purposes, would use English as the language of instruction, and would be governed by a committee of participating states that would provide guidance with regard to curriculum content, accredit the course of study, and assure its continued quality through monitoring and evaluation. Beyond this, a NORDEFCCOL should have a large number of slots available to “foreign” officers and common entrance standards should be required in order to ensure that performance standards could be uniform and rigorous. To ensure fairness, the selection of officers to attend would also be explicitly managed through a certain exchange scheme. The result would be something like the Baltic Defence College on a larger scale.

The second option is the standardization of existing courses for mid-career officers across
the Nordic region in content, time, and length. This would be a NORDEFCOL-like education with the curriculum delivered in national training and educator centers. A common curriculum delivered by each existing center would require each institution to change its curriculum and working language. Decentralized delivery of a common curriculum would require extensive curriculum guidance, separate accreditation for each country’s program, and consistent monitoring and evaluation to assure continued quality. Deeper cooperation could be enabled through synchronous scheduling of the academic year, which would enable foreign officer participation and exchanges for part of the year. Entrance requirements could remain national, although the greater the number of officer exchanges, the more likely it would be that common entrance standards would be required in order to ensure quality and rigor. The result would be something like the American system of Joint Professional Military Education across its four services.

The third option is a common core curriculum offered in the context of national courses. Common courses for common purposes taught in English would be developed and offered at each Defence College. A committee of participating states would govern accreditation, monitoring, and evaluation of core courses. Other courses – national courses for national purposes – could remain as such, accredited and governed by national authorities. Entrance requirements could remain national. Academic calendars could be synchronized to facilitate the exchange of students within a coordinated scheme that could allocate slots across the nations according to a common formula and require certain common entrance requirements as well as a cap for maximum participation. The result would be something like the multinational Combined Joint Exercise (CJEX) filtered through the core of the Defence College curriculum.

These three alternatives are summarized in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Courses</th>
<th>NORDEFCOL</th>
<th>Standardization</th>
<th>Common Core</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Entire</td>
<td>Entire</td>
<td>Common Courses Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance Standards</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td>NORDEFCO</td>
<td>NORDEFCO</td>
<td>NORDEFCO + National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Schedule</td>
<td>Entirely</td>
<td>Academic Year</td>
<td>Academic Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchanges</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Facilitated by Scheduling</td>
<td>Facilitated by Scheduling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Possible Institutional Expressions of Nordic PME Cooperation

Each of these three alternative ways of institutionalizing PME cooperation in the Nordic countries has different degrees of potential in terms of enabling further reform and cooperation. Each option also has its own liabilities. A NORDEFCOL would require significant
investments during a period of austerity, although it might prove to be more efficient over time. It would focus any efforts to further reform PME into one organization and would certainly give a Nordic profile to any subsequent cooperation in multinational military operations. Like the Baltic Defence College, a NORDEFCOL could serve as a single provider for all mid-career officer education for the Nordic countries. It could also serve as an elite institution for officers bound for multinational, rather than national, positions.

Standardizing courses of study across Nordic education centers would require significant adjustments of the curriculum and eliminate its national content. It would thereby provide opportunities for economies of scale in curriculum production, validation, and accreditation, as well as provide an institutional focus for further PME reform, and again establish a Nordic profile in multinational military operations. It would eliminate the need for officer exchanges between the Nordic countries, at least for curricular purposes, as they should receive the same education regardless of the provider. Still, exchanges to facilitate greater understanding and to foster a common Nordic identity could and should be pursued. Such exchanges would require harmonization of the academic year to accommodate officer duty assignments. Common entrance standards would facilitate such exchanges and help ensure the rigor and quality of the education provided.

Finally, establishing a common core of courses would require the fewest adjustments in terms of the purpose and structure of mid-career officer education across the Nordic states. Such reforms would provide for a common Nordic profile in multinational operations and lay the basis for further cooperative reforms. The common core courses would likely occupy a large portion of the curriculum and be built from what is currently offered. Officer exchanges do not necessarily have to occur in order to facilitate a common core education, but should be pursued to foster greater Nordic identity and understanding. They would require common scheduling for the academic year in order to accommodate officer duty assignments. Common entrance requirements should also be required in order to maintain high education standards. Such a solution represents perhaps the most likely step forward in cooperation among the Nordic states at the command and staff course level.

**Fostering Greater Nordic Cooperation**

The Nordic nations have cooperated to develop common courses for common purposes for decades. The result has been acknowledged leadership in the education and training of military and civilian personnel in the best practices of United Nations peacekeeping and civil-military-cooperation (CIMIC). The Nordic countries have agreed to expand these offerings to include other areas. Indeed, the Chiefs of Defence agreed to explore the details of implementing the alternatives presented here at their meeting in Oslo on 3 March 2014. They have recognized that courses that provide the knowledge and skills expected of a mid-career officer – who is likely to participate in multinational operations – represent an obvious and relatively easy area in which to deepen their cooperation.
Harmonization would greatly enhance the ability of the Nordic states to cooperate in the defence field. Common approaches and common processes learned in the classroom can be the basis for common exercises amongst national militaries, such as the NORDEFCO Arctic Challenge exercise, the NATO Crisis Management Exercise and its Cyber Coalition Exercise, as well as the Iceland Fighter Meet that occurred in February 2014. These training exercises help familiarize officers from these militaries with common processes at the headquarters as well as in the field. Such an understanding will facilitate future cooperation as well as reduce the chances of disastrous accidents that may arise in confusing, disjointed times.

Furthermore, harmonization will facilitate officer exchanges during their education, allowing them to get to know one another, build trusting relationships, and understand how each other works. As incoming NATO Secretary General Thorvald Stoltenberg stated, “There is a widely held perception that because of their geographical proximity, the Nordic countries have many foreign and security policy interests in common, despite their different forms of association with the EU and NATO.” Despite these common interests, substantial differences have hampered cooperation and unified action in the past. Building relationships across the officer corps in the classroom can facilitate greater cooperation from the bottom-up, in an area that can affect the “high-politics” of national defence without triggering nationalist responses about diminutions of sovereignty. In this way, greater Nordic cooperation can be generated and a greater Nordic identity can be fostered.
CYBER SECURITY
In the following article Mika Kerttunen presents a general framework of international theories of cyber cooperation and its characteristics, and applies the same information to the man-made sphere. As it becomes evident, speaking of regional cyber cooperation seems by definition off-focus; as cyberspace is global and does not recognize national borders the purpose of any regional, i.e. territorial arrangement seems obsolete. Yet, there are increasing amount of cyber cooperation between different groups of states and international organizations, which manage to have a positive effect. Indeed, as Kerttunen concludes, technological cooperation and material capability development are not sufficient; shared understanding and joint operations are needed to cope and counter the emerging and polymorphic challenges of the cyber ecosystem.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking about cyber without attaching the very term, a prefix, into a noun is idle and empty speech, which points to nothing and everything at one and the same time. Departing from but not remaining satisfied with the more technological readings of cyber space, cyber security, or cyber defence, such as the use of electronic and electromagnetic spectrum to create, manage, modify, exchange, and exploit information 1, cyber politics, policies, and activities can be understood to deal with and contain three dimensions: systems, functions, and ambitions. Recognizing this trinity of being, doing, and power allows for investigating and adding depth to the theme of cyber cooperation. This exploration identifies potential areas of cooperation and outlines ideas for practical cooperation, particularly within Nordic-Baltic geographical space and cyberspace.

This article takes a normative stand to cyber cooperation as not only a good idea, but also a necessity. Cyber threats do not recognize territorial or organization borders; the often-political lines of demarcation we draw to control our daily life on the planet. Intentional cyber attacks to steal, exploit, or destroy information target every country
and organization. Cyber attacks can cause not only nuisance when a favourite website is down, but also serious damage to societal, industrial, or financial systems and processes as well as to human life.

Following Isaiah Berlin’s well-known concept of two liberties, cyber security is not only about “security and freedom from” threats but, perhaps more importantly, “security and freedom to” run our lives, lifestyles, societies, organizations, and activities the way we choose to. However, before entering the field of actual cyber cooperation, a few theoretical observations on cooperation will be presented. This article takes a predominately state- and admittedly security-centred approach preferring governmental direction, support, and even pushes, without forgetting innovative bottom-up initiatives from e.g. the private sector.

**COOPERATION**

Cooperation can be defined as actors adjusting “their behaviour to the actual or anticipated preferences of others, through a process of policy coordination” ii. What cooperation therefore requires is that the involved actors at some minimal level acknowledge and share similar goals and also gain certain rewards. iii This expectation raises two main challenges: who defines the goals and how are the gains distributed among the participants. The latter also implicitly refers to the distribution of the costs of cooperation.

In addition to the explanations of shared goals, possible threats, and expected gains, genuine cooperation is expected to occur when:

- The number of participants is relatively low; however, a larger number of participants would increase the opportunities of interaction and gains;
- The participants continue to interact with each other for a long or indefinite period of time; i.e. trust, often a rare commodity in politically-, financially- and militarily-sensitive areas would increase because of repeated positive exchanges;
- International regimes, organizations or other external actors facilitate cooperation;
- Epistemic, expert communities speak for cooperation;
- Power and capability asymmetry exist, allowing the stronger actors to have more dominant roles, while enabling the weaker ones to excel in niche capabilities and receive absolute gains. iv

A lack of shared conceptual understanding, goals, experiences of mutually-beneficial cooperation, and required expertise remains the reality in cyberspace, and pushes for cooperation among the broad variety of diverging actors remain lukewarm. As Clausewitz observed, “it is traditional in European politics for states to make offensive and defensive pacts for mutual support – though not to the point of fully espousing one another’s interests and quarrels”v. Especially in the case of several participants, the risk of free riding; taking
the benefits without fully committing, is obvious. Especially during the Cold War, some smaller NATO members were accused of not allocating resources to their defence. The current implicit expectation within NATO of spending two per cent of one’s gross domestic product on defence seeks to not only develop defence capabilities, but also to guarantee more equal burden-sharing among the allied nations.

Seen through a general framework of international theories of cooperation, cyber as a field possesses a number of catalytic characteristics. Cyberspace is borderless; its systems, functions, as well as threats, are interconnected – and thus – shared. Practically the whole epistemic community speaks for cooperation, and the mightier and lesser nations could find that their specific roles in cooperation should constitute a rule rather than an exception. However, as cyber vulnerabilities and capabilities are often sensitive by nature, dealing with political, military, or commercial interests, the necessary trust and courage to reveal one’s true status of affairs is, understandably, often lacking. Since cyber as a policy area is also relatively new, there are few established or proven fora, patterns, or experiences to build on. Yet, in front of terra incognita, cooperation is more needed than within well-known regions. Cooperation creates trust, and there are several areas to cooperate in and proceed from within this field.

However, the aforementioned favourable and contextual factors do not determine cooperation or its outcome. Politicians and states calculate and balance between competing needs and available options. Cooperation that does not follow traditional political and organizational boundaries, albeit in a new policy area, is easily resisted. Since all politics focus on local domestic political considerations, requirements to allocate resources to more urgent and politically more tangible policies and projects can strike through cyber security investments. Although nations and societies are dependent on functioning information technology systems, their structural, functional, and ambition levels within cyberspace differ. Last but not least, established administrative and bureaucratic patterns, i.e. turf wars between national authorities such as different ministries as well as international agencies and organizations, e.g. NATO and the EU, can inhibit otherwise rational-appearing cooperation.

**MAPPING CYBER COOPERATION**

Cyber as a phenomenon is systemic, cognitive, and scientific. It can be regarded as a man-made domain, environment, and ecosystem consisting of networks of computers and processors operating with and using data-shaped information. A systemic understanding of cyberspace emphasizes hardware, software, networks and other infrastructure, and one is easily absorbed into the fascinating world of bytes and programmes, cyber capabilities, and the technical promises of the flickering modernity. A cognitive reading of the cyber domain pays attention to the intentional aspect of this man-made sphere: it is designed for specific human, social, or political purposes and it runs specific functions. These purposes range from entertainment to financial gains, political and technological supremacy and military victories. Within the abysses of the cyber domain, the electromagnetic exchanges
obey the rules of natural sciences. The marriage of physically-, industrially- and socially-constructed elements is not alien to other fields of defence – i.e. think only about the linkage between ballistics, aerodynamics, and deterrence – but, within cyber affairs, technological fascination, even hype, is rather predominant.

A framework for cyber cooperation can accordingly be outlined alongside the three dimensions of operating and networked systems, the functions the systems perform, and the political, financial, industrial, military, academic or administrative ambitions the systems and functions are serving. The framework – cyber cooperation between national and international authorities, organizations, agencies and private actors – should cover three broad fields: knowledge development, capability development, and operational cooperation.

**Knowledge Development**

Knowledge development refers to the increase of cognitive awareness and appreciation of as well as the legal leadership and administrative steps and measures taken to regulate, control, and manage the phenomenon. Within this field, cooperation consists e.g. of the exchange of information, advice, and consultations on specific issues. In more concrete terms, like-minded countries and other actors can design cyber strategies, doctrines, and procedures together, offering one another their best practises and sharing their lessons learned by designing and implementing joint cyber studies, education, and training.

Training, courses, and degrees in e.g. programming, computer science, information assurance, or cyberculture are available, but since holistic and generalist views and skills in cyber affairs are required, higher and broader cyber education needs to be designed. Such a curriculum should focus on skills, knowledge, and a comprehensive understanding of the political, governmental, financial, industrial, and military and law enforcement leaders, planners, and implementers operating within the system. As themes covered easily vary from basics of computer science to internet governance to moral and social issues to designing and leading national cyber strategies and programmes, no single authority or educational institution and faculty can alone grasp or master the field. The exchange of views, ideas, and practises between natural scientists and humanists, civilian universities, and defence colleges, and educators and practitioners, public and private, helps to design education and training that truly meets the mental, intellectual, and practical requirements needed for such a field. Similarly, mutual participation in and contribution to exercises helps those within the field to share and absorb knowledge on potential risks and threat scenarios, thought practises, and intellectual and material shortfalls. In short, not only a whole-of-government, but also a whole-of-society approach to cyber studies, security, and defence is needed.

Such cooperation does not only promote the intellectual capacity of those in the field, but can also reduce both costs and time required to develop policies, documentation, practises, and education needed to design, steer, govern, and regulate cyber activities. Cross-disciplinary exchanges might help for example legislators and other regulators to foresee the potential
shortfalls that constant technological developments might cause. Quite obviously, state authorities as the principal owners of the administrative, financial, and educational processes are the main cooperative partners, but as cyber security covers all levels and areas of society, both municipalities and the private sector are potential contributors and benefactors of cooperation. For example, when the city of Jyväskylä was chosen as the “Cyber Security City” in a Finnish national innovation programme, successful cooperation within the targeted areas of research, education, and innovation were demanded for intensified local, regional, and international cooperation. The City, the University, the Defence Forces and other local actors and the private sector have formed a real cluster of knowledge and innovation that rightfully can be expected to benefit not only the region, but also the nation as a whole. The involved actors hopefully look beyond the region and, without inhibiting prejudice, map potential partners and scan for fresh ideas, best practises, and lessons to be learned.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Capability development often refers to rather tangible issues of hardware, software, and operational practises and procedures. As interest in cyber affairs has predominately been technological, this field easily becomes deployed by innovative ideas. Here, state actors such as individual ministries, defence forces, or the police specify their needs and predominately private companies develop information systems and specific hardware and software solutions. The core of cyber security is information assurance and systemic reliance. As common desired qualities, they constitute very potential areas of cooperation. Strengthened resilience of a default networked partner benefits all. Within the cyber domain, security truly is indivisible.\[vi\]

Three examples of NATO cyber initiatives and cooperation show how an international regime, here a collective defence alliance, can promote cooperation. NATO, with its focus in cyber defence and defensive capabilities, has taken a facilitating role in assisting allies to develop their capabilities. The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) was established in May 2008 to enhance NATO’s cyber defence capabilities and to evaluate education, consultation, lessons learned, research, and development in the field of cyber security. The Centre has done pioneering work, particularly within the legal aspects of cyber security and warfare. Currently eleven member states participate in the work as sponsoring nations, providing financial and human resources to the Centre. The Alliance has also established the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCI Agency) in July 2012 to provide NATO with wide information technology services and capabilities, including cyber and missile defence. It provides technical support to the Alliance and its member states, particularly in the fields of computer security, situation awareness, and assessment of threats, vulnerabilities, and risks. The NCI Agency has launched a Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP) that allows “a trusted community” to share technical characteristics of malwares without needing to expose the source, objective, target, and impact of such an attack. The purpose of the MISP is to support the detection of threats and incidents, and to improve intelligence, attribution, and the speed
of the production of defensive measures. The MISP is open to NATO member state cyber
defence and governmental constituencies. vii

**OPERATIONAL COOPERATION**

The third area of cyber cooperation, operational cooperation, is politically, bureaucratically,
and humanly the most difficult to implement. Taking real action together to e.g. detect,
defend, and defuse a cyber attack requires not only a considerable amount of political
courage and human trust, but also rather similar intellectual, doctrinal, and technological
preparedness and capabilities. A head-first dive into operational cooperation, or rather, aid
and support, can solve timely and critical issues, but does not remove the core problems,
such as a lack of comprehensive understanding of the nature of threats and risks or the
legal, administrative, bureaucratic, and material deficiencies causing systemic vulnerability.
Therefore, it is essential to notice that, cooperation within the two previously elaborated
areas, knowledge and capability development, though not being prerequisites of operational
cooperation, increases its efficiency. For example, jointly-developed forensic capabilities
or vulnerability and intelligence assessment and risk management tools could easily lead
to the joint use of them.

The principle of territorial responsibility, that cyber infrastructure is subject to the jurisdic-
tion of the flag state, creates at least a moral obligation to cooperate with the victim state.
viii Again, as cyber attacks and responses do not take place in isolation of the political
realities, the loose concept of like-minded countries is the most probable collaborative
group. Naturally contingent coalitions vary case by case, but strong political, economic, and
military ties as well as a similar level of adherence/non-adherence to values such as rule of
law, human rights, and civil liberties, helps to predict and create operational cooperation. It
should also be noted that since cyber operations and counter-operations are not, compared
to, for example, deploying ground troops or a carrier group, visible or costly cooperative,
cyber manoeuvres do not necessarily get unwanted public or political attention.

Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves’ vision of Estonia and Finland jointly running
integrated e-state and governance solutions and public services is a perfect example of fruit-
ful cyber cooperation where petty national interests and strangling organizational barriers
could be side-lined. ix Estonia giving their data exchange layer x-tee code to Finland for
free testifies not only of their trust in Finland, but also takes a strategic view on coopera-
tion and absolute and relative gains. Developing and sharing vital capabilities and allow-
ing for the wider use of them is needed in security issues as well; and shared capabilities
and activities can be seen as vital steps in increasing both national and individual security.

**REGIONAL COOPERATION**

Speaking of regional cyber cooperation seems pointless; as cyberspace is global and does
not recognize national borders, so the purpose of any regional, i.e. territorial arrangement may seem obsolete. Admittedly, however, cooperation takes place more and more among like-minded countries sharing similar values, concerns, ambitions, and capabilities. The example of the geographically distant five NATO countries; Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Romania agreeing in March 2013 to collaborate on the “Multinational Cyber Defence Capability Development Project” underlines the argument. x

Although international cyber cooperation is often contingent, regional proximity matters, too. Neighbouring countries by definition share a similar geopolitical environment, which might lead to rather similar readings of risks and threats. Cultural, educational, and societal similarities and shared aspirations within a sensed security community – a group of integrated nations whose security concerns and solutions cannot be separated from each other – increases the likelihood of cooperation.xi

Within the Baltic Sea region, intensified cyber cooperation could, for example, take place between Estonia, Finland, and Sweden. xii All nations have society-based approaches and interests in cyber security, all advocate for openness, transparency, and civil liberties in cyberspace, and all are interested in developing their strategies, doctrines, and capabilities to face cyber-related attacks or other disturbances. The Swedish-Finnish-Estonian hub of cyber excellence could build on their well-educated populations, existing industries, and infrastructure, and make collective use of their innovative experts and epistemic communities, private as well as public, military as well as civilian. Other Baltic and Nordic countries could, according to their interests, dedication, and capabilities, join and be welcomed to the group. xiii

Following the previously mentioned framework of cooperation, “SWFIEST in Cyber” should cover e.g. the issues of “cyber security management”, focusing on situational awareness, information system security, and the required legal, doctrinal, and administrative concepts, practises, and frameworks, “developing resilient and robust security and defence capabilities” including intelligence, forensics, attribution, and deterrence as well as “joint education, training and exercises” to test and develop systems and understanding. The fact that Estonia is a NATO member should not hinder but encourage cooperation. Since cyber attacks are oftentimes not comparable to an armed attack, and since NATO is solely focusing on defensive cyber strategy and capabilities cooperation with the Alliance or its individual member states, cyber cooperation should be as unproblematic in terms of cooperation in international crisis management or in issues of protection of other critical infrastructure.

Nordic and Baltic parliaments, respective ministries, civilian authorities, defence forces and colleges, universities and private companies do consult and visit each other and design and run joint projects already today, but more ambitious, structured, and directed cooperation would be more effective. A short but meaningful step Sweden and Finland are taking is to join the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn to develop national and international cyber security and defence and to enhance regional cooperation.
Theoretical literature on cooperation points to certain conditional factors forwarding cooperation. Shared values can cause similar understandings of the risks as well as the potential gains in cyberspace, leading to conceptual and practical cooperation. As cyberspace is a domain where a broad scale of complex operations takes place, cyber cooperation must accordingly be comprehensive by nature. Technological cooperation and material capability development are not sufficient; shared understanding and joint operations are needed in order to cope with and counter the emerging and polymorphic challenges of the cyber ecosystem.

One should observe that although the above elaborated cooperation is easiest to be implemented among likeminded nations and actors cooperation in various forms creates trust, transparency and confidence. Cyber related areas that can and should be developed into agreed confidence-building measure among a larger body of nations, globally or regionally, include inter alia commitments to restrict attacks on specific objects such as the internet backbone, underwater cables or legitimate cyber research personnel, establishing permanent mechanisms of communication and exchange and as well as conducting third party attribution to prevent escalation, manage on-going conflicts and re-stabilize situation. The existing OSCE and other confidence (and security) building frameworks such as Open Skies might offer practical cooperative yet demanding ways forward.

Following former Norwegian Chief of Defence General Sverre Diesen’s thoughts on defence cooperation, the choice also in cyber cooperation is between retaining “a maximum amount of capability for a minimal loss of independence” and retaining “a maximum of independence with a minimum amount of capability”\textsuperscript{xiv} Within global cyber affairs, neither full operational control or readiness nor full independence can be achieved. Similarly, resilience and adaptability have become more precious values than (illusionary) control. Given the non-material and non-territorial aspects of many cyber capabilities, pooling and sharing of resources is not such a critical issue than in conventional domains of security. Having a minimum amount of knowledge, capabilities, and practical skills in cyberspace would be an unfortunate choice for cyber policy.

The expressed views do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Baltic Defence College, the governments of Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia, or Finland but are solely of the author’s.

References


iv Milner, following mainly Keohane, Krasner, Axelrod, Haas, and Grieco, p. 470-480.

v Carl von Clausewitz, On War (1831), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), Book 8, Chapter 6 A.


viii Tikk, op.cit.


x Defence News, 21 March, 2013. The involved countries will according to public sources “improve the sharing of technical information; shared awareness of threats; and develop advanced cyberdefense sensors”.


xii See e.g. Mika Aaltola, “Finland should aim to be a cyber connector”, FIIA Comment 15/2013 and Jouni Backman, “The Silicon Sea”, Baltic Rim Economies, no. 5, 2013 for advocating cyber cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. Finland’s Cyber security Strategy emphasizes national collaboration and “active and efficient” international cooperation (Government resolution, op.cit.).

xiii As cyber defence cooperation is not explicitly in the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanain agenda of mainly defence cooperation such an exclusive move would make sense – and encourage to develop regional cooperation.

xiv Sverre Diesen, lecture at BALTDEFCOL, Tartu, 14 August, 2013.
The subsequent article: "Kyberturvallisuus Venäjän kansallisen turvallisuuden viitekehityksessä", presents an overview of the current state of cyber security in the context of Russia’s national security. Moreover, it also briefly summarizes the main differences that the West and Russia tend to have in regard to their approach to cyber security. According to Katri Pynnöniemi, senior research fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, for Russia it is mainly the content of information that constitutes a threat, while the western approach is to prioritize the principles of free flow of information and freedom of speech. To learn more about Russia’s information security and why its approach to the issue is different from many western countries, Pynnöniemi’s article gives an informative overview to that specific dilemma.


Kyberturvallisuuden normalisoituminen osaksi turvallisuuspoliittista diskurssia on tapahtunut eri tavoin eri maissa. Yhteistä on ilmiön arkipäiväisyminen, josta kertoo useissa maissa laaditut arviot kyberrikollisuuden aiheuttamista taloudellisista vahingoista. Yhdistävä tekijä
on myös säännönmukaisuus, jolla poliittinen välien kirstyminen tai konflikti heijastuu lisääntyneenä aktiivisuuteen kyberulottuvuudessa. Toisaalta, lähtökohtaiset erot kyberturvallisuuteen liitetyissä uhkakuvissa tai itse käsitteen määrittelyssä ovat myös ilmeisiä ja osaltaan vaikeuttavat yhteistyötä kansainvälisellä tasolla.


**INFORMAATIO- JA KYBERTURVALLISUUDEN MÄÄRITTELY**


Venäläisissä kyberturvallisuutta käsittelevässä tutkimuksissa ja julkisessa keskustelussa puhutaan informaatioturvallisuudesta, informaatioturvalaismainonnista (informatsionnoe protovoborostvo) tai informaatio-psykologisesta vastakkainasettelusta, jotka kaikki viittaavat laajasti ymmärrettynä kyberturvallisuuteen. Informaatioturvallisuuden merkitystä selventävä tapahtumista nostetaan venäläiskeskustelussa esiin Yugoslavian sodan aikaiset

Lähtökohtaisesti Venäjällä katsotaan, että informaatio-psykologinen sodankäynti on yksi (suurvaltojen välinen) geopolitiikan kilpailun ilmentymä. Se on ”keino ratkaista kahden osapuolen välinen konflikti”, jossa toiminnan päämääranä on ”saavuttaa ja ylläpitää informaatioetuo toiseen osapuoleen”. Venäjän virallista kantaa asiassa edustaa Venäjän armeijan vuonna 2011 julkistama informaatio-psykologisen sodankäynnin konsepti, jossa informaatio-psykologinen sodankäynti määritellään informaatioalalla tapahtuvaksi valtioiden väliseksi kamppailuksi, jonka päämääranä on:

"Vahingoittaa informaatiojärjestelmiä, elintärkeitä rakenteita, haitata poliittisia, taloudellisia ja sosiaalisia järjestelmiä sekä saattaa yhteiskunta ja valtiop painostaminen vastoontäydentävä massamaisella psykologisella manipulaatiolla".

Sama määritelmä on käytössä myös Venäjän vuonna 2000 YK:lle jättämässä päätöslauselmaesitykessä koskien informaatio-psykologisen sodankäynnin sääntöjä.

**UHKAKUVISTA**

Venäläistutkijoiden laatimassa selvityksessä geopolitiikan käsitettä tulisi kyberulottuvuuden huomiomisen johdosta laajentaa niin, että informaatio-resurssit nähdään osana geopolitiikkaa. Perinteinen jaottelu merivaltoihin ja mannervaltoihin ei enää päde, vaan sen sijaan keskeinen valtapolitiikan tekijä on ko. maan informaatioresursset (kyberulottuvuuden) kehitysaste. Vaiikka tutkijat hahmottavat valtakampapultin toimijoiksi myös ei-valtiollisia toimijoita, kuten virtuaalisten kooltojen ja ylikansallisten yhtiöiden, he näkevät kuitenkin informaatio-psykologisen sodankäynnin resurssina ”geopolitiikan tasapainon” ylläpidossa.

Venäläistutkijoiden mukaan suurin uhka Venäjän kansallisselven turvallisuudelle (ml. sisäinen turvallisuus) ei suinkaan ole uudet ”eksoottiset” informaatioasemat, vaan ”vaarat, jotka liittyvät Venäjän suureenin itsemääräämisaseman ja historiallisen suurvalta-aseman menetykseen”. Toisin sanoen, Venäjän suurvalta-aseana tukevan narratiivin vahvistaminen on jopa teknologisten kykyjen kehittämistä tärkeämpää. Vastakkaisiakin tulkintoja varmasti
löytyy, mutta merkillepantavaa on, että tutkijat määrittelevät ongelmaksi nimenomaan ”informaatio-psykologisen neokolonialismin”. Siihen voidaan vastata parhaiten aktiivimalla Venäjän kyky tuottaa ja vahvistaa sen omaan historiallis-kulttuuriseen ajatteluun pohjautuvaa informaatio-psykologistia tilaa, tutkijat toteavat.

Keskustelua informaatio-psykologisesta sodankäynnistä hallitseekin uhkakuva Venäjän omintakeista historiallis-kulttuuristen arvojen täydellisestä häviämisestä lännenn edustaman liberaali-demokraattisen ideologian edessä. Aki-Mauri Huhtisen huomauttaa informaatio-psykologisesta paradigmassa raja rauhan ja normaalin toiminnan ja sotatoimen välillä on huomaamaton ja häilyvä”. Sen väkivaltamenetelmät ovat hienovaraisia, ja ne saattavat koostua aivan tavallisista arkipäiväisistä vuorovaikutusvälineistä, Huhtinen jatkaa. Tulevaisuuden uhkakuva, dystopia, on orwellilainen ikuinen sota, jossa radikaali voitto voidaan saavuttaa vain ”vastustajassa aikaansadun syvän kulttuurimuutoksen kautta”.

Lännen ”pehmeä valta” eli houkuttelevuuteen ja positiivisiin mielikuvuihin perustuva vallassyntyy Venäjän lähialueilla koetaan siis merkittäväksi uhaksi Venäjän kansalliselle turvallisuudelle. Venäjän kannanotoissa nimenomaan informaation sisältö muodostaa uhan, johon pyritään vastaamaan kontrollia lisäämällä. Tämä taas on lähtökohtaisesti ristiriidassa läntisen näkemyksen kanssa, jossa priorisoidaan tiedonkulun ja mielipiteenvapauden perusperiaatteita.

TOIMIJOISTA


Venäläistutkijoiden mukaan turvallisuusviranomaisten yhteistyö tai eri toimijoiden työn koordinaatio on aivan viime aikoina asti ollut kuitenkin hyvin vaatimatonta. Kaikilla informaatioturvallisuuden kannalta keskeisillä venäläisviranomaisilla, joihin luetaan kuvuvaksi ainakin FSB; Venäjän sisäministeriö; Venäjän armeija; Federaation valtiollisen viestinnän ja informaation virasto (FAPSI); ja presidentin turvallisuuspalvelu (FSO), on omat informaatioturvallisuudesta vastaavat osastonsa. Venäjän turvallisuusneuvosto on myös keskeinen toimija. Turvallisuusneuvoston apulaissihteeri toimii vastikään perustetun
Venäläis-amerikkalaisen kyberturvallisuuteen keskittyvän yhteistyökomitean Venäjän osapuolen johtajana. Venäjän ulkoministeriöön on vuoden 2011 lopulla perustettu erityiskoordinaattorin toimi, jonka tehtäväalueena ovat ”IT-teknologian poliittisen käytön kysymykset” ja hän toimii myös edellä mainitun yhteistyökomitean varajohtajana.


Lähteet:


OSCE

HUMAN DIMENSION
**HDIM:**

**THE IMPORTANT AND CONTROVERSIAL DISCUSSIONS TAKE PLACE DURING SIDE EVENTS**

KATI LEPOJÄRVI  
STETE SECRETARY GENERAL

The seventeenth OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) took place in Warsaw, Poland from 23 September to 4 October 2013. Thousands of participants representing OSCE participating States, OSCE structures, other international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and human rights organisations attended the meeting. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) organized the event. The HDIM provides a unique opportunity every year for representatives of civil society to meet and exchange ideas, not only with their civil society counterparts, but also with government representatives and international organizations. A great number of side events were organized on the margins of the HDIM and these events provided opportunities for more in-depth and focused discussions on various issues related to democracy and human rights in the OSCE area.


**CURRENT CONDITIONS AND NEW THREATS FACED BY HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN THE FORMER USSR**

The Center for Civil Liberties, Coalition for Fundamental Freedoms in Eurasia, International Youth Human Rights Movement, Civil Solidarity Platform, and the International Coalition of NGOs on Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship convened for a Side Event of the ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting on 31 September 2013. The side event presented a report on threats faced by human rights defenders (HRDs) prepared by the Coalition for Fundamental Freedoms in Eurasia, covering the period of 2012-2013 and including all the ex-URSS countries with the exception of the Baltics. These 12 countries included: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. HRDs from the region presented cases of human rights’ breaches and their latest findings and recommendations to address systematic threats through cooperative efforts of civil society, the media, and international organizations.
The report was completed in June 2013. Young lawyers in Tadzikistan, activists of trade unions, etc. are among the contributors of this report. The aim of the report was to get a broad picture of HRDs in the former Soviet region, considering the region as a whole and individual countries separately. The main aim was to reduce the harm directed at HRDs and to define areas of possible civil activism in the post-Soviet area. The degree of implementation of the UN resolution was also considered (UN Resolution A/HRC/22/L.13). The HRDs’ situation in the region worsened in March 2013. The following recommendations and conclusions were made in the report – Part I: pressures on individuals, review of cases; and Part II: pressures suffered by organisations.

The Moscow Helsinki Group collects info on HRDs, threats, and pressure exercised. It has gathered data from international reports, monitoring organisations, and the mass media. There have been various measures taken against NGOs concerning registration, autonomy of NGOs, financing, taxation, provisions concerning the governance of NGOs, checks, hearings of NGOs, refusal of registration, seizure of documents, fines, defamation accusations, etc.

The cases presented concerned HRDs’ – individuals’ and organisations’ – activities and hardships that they have encountered in post-Soviet countries. Many of the cases included anti-corruption activities or suppressing opposition politics or free media/speech. The Russian legislation on ”foreign agents” and its spillover to other countries in the region were also widely debated. An unprecedented campaign was led in Spring 2013 in Russia against NGOs to discover foreign agents. Using child rights as a justification or an excuse to limit human rights and ostracizing LGTB rights representatives are commonplace. The use of the copy-paste methodology of the foreign agent legislation was said to pose a real risk in Tadzikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Gaining access to organisations’ data has been used to prevent them from organising various events. Open persecution against activists is also a wide practise. For example, Ukraine used to be more or less advantageous for NGO activity, but the situation is degrading. Eg. In 2012, the killing of an environmental activist was followed by an insufficient investigation. As a result, the country is no longer seen as advantageous for NGO activity.

Numerous assaults have taken place against journalists who report on countries’ activities against human rights. HRDs have been forced to emigrate. Discreditation campaigns have been applied throughout the former Soviet area. Discretionary refusals of registrations are common. Disappearances, abductions of people, threats, assaults by law enforcement agencies or third parties followed by insufficient, ineffective investigations to the assailants are proof that human rights work in the region is life-threatening. New worrying trends are also emerging, such as government pressure against trade union activists in Ukraine or pressure against attorneys and HRDs in Belarus, including stopping attorney licenses to halt their activities. Also, effective exchange of practises have been reported to shut activists up in the former Soviet area.

The OSCE countries should go beyond merely allowing an arena for HRDs once a year to voice the human rights’ violating practises used in and by some of the member states.
One can only hope that the Organization’s declaration of a stronger involvement of CSOs in its work, as well as the revision of the Organization’s role and activities that should be brought forward by the Helsinki + 40 -process, will facilitate CSO activities throughout the OSCE area.

**Scenario for Peace Operations 2025**

The world of peace operations has changed tremendously in recent decades and will continue to do so in the future. But how will it change? What will be the drivers and key factors? What kinds of conflict will we face and what concepts, instruments, and resources will we have to face them?

The Center for International Peace Operations ZIF, a subsidiary body of the German foreign office, funded by the foreign office, is responsible for the recruitment of civilian experts for peace operations. ZIF organised a side event in the HDIM on 1 October 2013, where it presented its new report. Building on the contributions of a group of international experts, practitioners but also non-insiders to peace operations, ZIF had applied modern scenario methodology to generate four scenarios for peace operations 2025: **Erratic Progress, National Interests, Regional Diversity, and Global Cooperation.** The report gives scenarios for the future, not predictions. A number of identified key factors, ranging from climate change to the rise of new political and economic powers, drive these four “possible futures”. Even though these scenarios do not focus directly on human rights issues and international mechanisms used to protect and enforce these rights, this is an underlying theme of the scenarios. The presentation of the scenarios addressed their influence in more detail.

The scenarios were made as key factor prediction compilations by a group of experts with as many different backgrounds as possible, plus ”wild cards” who have no knowledge on the topic. Many organisations and academic institutions were included in the first steps, but the number of participants was reduced to 12+2.

**The methodology** used was backcasting, i.e. inventing a history and thinking of steps for how the world could have gotten there. Four stories were invented using the key factors, which are true in all possible outcomes of the future. Two given factors, demographics and climate change, were first assigned, followed by 12 factors with different possible outcomes. The key factors’ relation to conflict likelihood are described as follows:

**Demographics:** 95% of the world’s 8 billion people live in developing countries. The ”youth bulge” phenomenon (i.e. a majority in a society of people under 25 years of age), has a strong correlation with the likelihood of conflict. For example, Latin America is more peaceful now that the 1960s-1980s youth bulge is over. Also, as an example, the European youth bulge was timed around 1870-1920 – a time of higher instability.
Climate change includes phenomena, such as the rising of sea levels, desertification, and loss of agricultural land. Countries will lose 5-20% of their GDP due to climate change, but there are “winners” as well, including Canada and Russia. People who experience difficulty mitigating climate change will suffer more, and this tends to increase conflict. 40% of the population in developing countries lives 100km from the coastline and are mainly employed by agriculture, so they end up as victims of climate change.

State of the world economy will determine the supply for peace operations. There is a strong relationship between national interests and global interdependence. Nation-states form a core in a global world. Delivery of global public goods is a global governance failure.

Future of multilateralism?: Will there be more or less multilateralism? Will new forms of multilateralism emerge? One scenario depicts increasing regionalisation, for example, the African Union taking over African peace operations completely.

Internal evolution of international organisations:
Eg. CSTO – the “Russian NATO”, CELAC, ASEAN (considering peace operations), the Arab League, SADEC, NATO, etc. are moving into the civilian field. There will be many actors in the field, making the peace operation field very cluttered. These partnerships will become increasingly important. The niche capacities of actors will be highlighted, including the EU’s rule of law capacities, the OSCE’s election observation and human rights defence capacities, and so on.

Economic and political power shifts:
Eg. the BRICS are economically and militarily emerging powers. MICT (Mexico, Indonesia, Corea, and Turkey) and other emerging regroupments are all interested in peace operations. China is also expanding its peace operation capabilities rapidly.

Regional specialisations:
China and Brazil’s influence is growing exponentially. China and India might become great powers in Africa. For example, Angola and Liberia have disclosed information about the Chinese buying off their countries. One scenario of the report describes a possible war between China and India with regards to East Africa.

Evolution of norms and values:
It goes without saying that mentalities matter. An integral question in the future is: where does peacekeeping end and peace enforcement begin?

State fragility is the driving factor behind peace operations today. Fragility occurs when the state cannot provide a minimally sufficient level of security, public services, etc. Fragile states have a severe risk of suffering or relapsing into violent conflict. 1,5 billion people live in fragile states. No fragile state has ever reached a single millenium development goal (MDG).
Organised crime constitutes 7-10% of the world’s economy. It feeds conflict and is fed by it. It can be manifested by giving politically-motivated candidates money, such as with the Farc in Columbia, or the other way around, in Mali, for example, by allowing criminal actors to take over the government. It also presents a major problem to Afghanistan, West Africa, and the Balkans, amongst other regions.

Scarcity of resources concern classic energy, food products, arable land, and also water. Resources tend to be concentrated: local crises can have global repercussions. The main problem is not with an absolute scarcity (e.g. running out of food globally), but the problem is of uneven distribution.

Migration, refugees:
3% of the world’s population are migrants and 27 million IDPs exist worldwide. Remittances from migrants constitute huge amounts of money: e.g. 440 billion USD is sent by migrants to their home countries. In Tajikistan, 60-70% of the GDP comes from Tajiks in Russia and Kazakhstan.

Role of diasporas:
Somalia, South Sudan, and Sri Lanka, for instance, have important diasporas. The representatives of the diasporas often have an important role to play in mitigating conflict and in organising post-conflict peacebuilding.

Role of new media in peace operations:
30% of the world’s inhabitants have internet access, and the number is rising fast in Africa and Latin America. In 2008, there was one mobile internet device per person. By 2015, more people are predicted to have access to internet than to electricity or toilets.

Examples of the influence of new media:
• Tracking refugees in the desert is easiest by tracking their cell phones.
• MIT uses cell phone data to predict refugee flows.
• NGOs are better at taking advantage of new media than international organisations.
• ”The innocence of Muslims” video case. As fast as 10 minutes after its publication, the first rocks were thrown at western embassies in Arab countries.

Influence of new technologies:
One of the scenarios concerning the role of new technologies has come true already. This concerns the use of drones by the United Nations in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo for monitoring purposes.

Other scenarios related to this factor are:
• In the next few years, a major cyber attack will be carried out against an international organisation. The EU, for instance, is very badly prepared
for such an occurrence.
• Proliferation of high-tech weapons in the hands of people who did not possess them before. The UN is particularly becoming a target.

**Role of private security providers or contractors** in peace operations:
It needs to be noted that private security providers are not all mercenaries. What is worrying with this development is the privatising trend of peacekeeping operations, including "private blue helmets” in Africa. These actors have no rules of engagement or code of conduct and can cause huge damage to peace operations’ reputations.

**Desirability/achievability** of the above factors are determined by:

• The world economy external from international organisations’ influence (such as the OSCE, the UN, etc.).
• Extreme interconnectedness of the above factors.
• Structures/capacities needed in the peace operations community to prepare for the uncertain future.
• Flexibility and resilience.
• Who should be there; who should pay for it; who should send the experts, especially civilians, to the operations?
• How should “youth bulge” problems be handled?
• The problematic R in DDR: reintegration. Eg. African combatants are mostly young males. The ownership of a peace process by the local youth is a key issue. The problem is, who should be included in order to achieve representative local ownership? For example, a local youth speaking English may not be the best representative counterpart.
• Peacekeeping is not enshrined in the UN Charter.
• There is always a political element to human rights abuses and violations. This can be seen in the conflict in Syria.
• Human rights are universal and non-negotiable.
• The dilemma within the “responsibility to protect” is highlighted by the expression: ”If you say R2P, you really mean regime change”. However, things are moving in the right direction, as it is becoming harder and harder to do certain despicable things. E.g. Libya did to Syria what Somalia did to Rwanda, that is, made deeper commitment possible.
• The lessons learned from early peace operations in Afghanistan were that they ended up mostly as public relations disasters, since no one was allowed to say what they were doing there.
• There have been better developments in West Africa, such as in Sierra Leone. Peace operations have been expensive, yet they have worked.
Problems in peace operations:

Problems in peace operations are caused by diverging projects, for example, organisations focusing on the rule of law one year, media empowerment another year, and so on. Looking at international operations from a local point of view often proves their incoherence. Also, too precise a mandate of an operation (as it most often is) makes it hard for internationals to act in a local reality framework. Crises are also often media-driven, which has been seen with e.g. CNN in Syria. Also, peace operations are hard to sell. At least ten years are needed to implement an operation, and if you go for less, you tend to do more damage. Many operations doing things poorly get bad press, which, then again, they deserve. The UN has been good at doing things better, and has avoided doing things wrong “the third time around” (referring to UN work in Kosovo, Rwanda, etc.). On the other hand, well-working organisations in Africa are drowning in money, since it is hard to find local organisations who are able to do something good in the field.

Famous quotes of peace operations gone sour:

"If you have no clue on what to do, you send an international peace operation!"

"We don't have a policy on them, we have a mission there."

TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN?
THE BLURRED LINE BETWEEN FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND HATE SPEECH

Anne Peltonen
STETE Assistant

STETE has attended the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) every year for almost a decade and this year STETE organized a side event, “TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN? The blurred line between freedom of speech and hate speech”, on 30 September 2013 in Warsaw. The side event was organized with the support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, in collaboration with SaferGlobe Finland and Plan Finland. This year’s timely event aimed at shedding light on the delicate balance between everyone's inalienable right to freedom of speech and, on the other hand – to the more visible, possibly growing – hate speech phenomenon.
The Secretary General of STETE, Kati Lepojärvi, welcomed the speakers and participants by giving the opening remarks. Marjatta Hiekka, Deputy Director of the Unit for Human Rights Policy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, represented the new Human Rights Strategy, which outlines the main principles and actions of the ministry for the coming years. The Human Rights Strategy has two crosscutting objectives: the elimination of discrimination, and greater openness and inclusion. These two themes are also essential when talking about freedom of speech and hate speech. Hiekka emphasized that human rights belong to everyone without discrimination, and freedom of speech can be restricted only when strict conditions are fulfilled. However, these conditions should never be discriminatory. Freedom of expression is a fundamental value for any democratic society and is also a prerequisite for other human rights. Hiekka also stressed that cooperation with civil society cannot be overlooked when talking about freedom of speech and hate speech. Cooperation within civil society is key to positive change.

Eva Biaudet, Ombudsman for Minorities in Finland and the former OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, started by telling more about her current job, which includes monitoring discrimination towards ethnic minorities, promoting equal treatment, fighting against racism, as well as advancing the rights and interests of migrants. An ombudsman’s daily work includes handling complaints about discrimination, and hate speech is one type of complaint. Her mandate is to monitor authorities, public actors, and also private actors when they are providing services to the public. An ombudsman does not have a mandate to intervene when hate speech is between two private actors. However, it is part of her job to find the best ways to fight against hate speech and racism.

Biaudet mentioned that it is sometimes surprising that, in Finland, hate speech is growing, even though everything is going quite well in this country. To understand this phenomenon, Biaudet suggested that we go back to the very basic needs of human beings, like the need for recognition and self-esteem. When society changes quickly, people start to feel like they are not able to keep up with everything, and a sense of exclusion grows. The Internet has brought us to a completely new situation because it is easy to find people who think the same way as you. Hate speech and discrimination hardly ever target just one group, but is directed towards everything that is not considered “normal”. Biaudet also stressed that the criminal code is only a tip of the iceberg and we need to find other ways to tackle hate speech. People who are in the weakest position hardly ever report to the authorities, and people who are behind hate speech know very well how to avoid legal consequences. Therefore, it is important to discuss why we have human rights and equality, and how we can fight against hate speech, even when it is not a crime.

Researcher Antti Kivijärvi concentrated on ethnic minority youth in his remarks. He said that, in Finland, we have good legislation against racism and hate speech, but everyday life is often another story. The law cannot control every interaction; so we also need to be able to use other means to work against hate speech. People from ethnic minorities who feel excluded from society often feel solidarity towards other foreigners, and tend to not trust the majority of society and its institutions. These minority communities tend to exclude
any members of the majority in their gatherings. This leads to a situation where dialogue between ethnic minorities and the majority in society are missing. Kivijärvi gave some suggestions for how we can try to solve this situation. First of all, we need to consider the weight of different public or common values, like protection against hate speech and freedom of speech. Absolute freedom of speech cannot be taken for granted, because it favours the more dominant parties. For young people, the best way would be to focus on educational institutions and their ability to prevent hate speech and intervene in certain situations. Hate speech should be dealt with in schools and in other youth platforms. All in all, Kivijärvi’s conclusion was that the perspective of the minorities and the majority people should be openly discussed from the beginning of young people’s educational careers in order to avoid creating a culture that accepts racism and hate speech.

Jarosław Włodarczyk, President of the International Association of Press Clubs, stressed the importance of freedom of speech. It is not the legal actions that should end hate speech, but discussion, debate, and education. Banning hate speech gives too much power to the governments. However, freedom of speech is not absolute; there are some limitations, which we all should agree upon. The problem is defining and finding the border between protecting minorities and guaranteeing this freedom of speech. It is also important to consider that hate speech does not necessarily lead to taking action. If we put restrictions on hate speech, we are telling people they are wrong about what they believe. Włodarczyk suggested instead that we should work to fight against anonymity on the Internet. NGOs and ombudsmen are needed to fight against hate speech. The government should not be taken too deeply into this issue. Overall, Włodarczyk argued that this is a complex issue and that there are many aspects that need to be considered.

The discussion following the presentations was lively and the audience presented a variety of questions. The audience also shared their own experiences and problems related to the topic. Many people also wanted to hear concrete solutions from the speakers. The last audience question was, “Where do you draw the line between hate speech and the freedom of speech?”. The speakers’ responses wrapped up the session, but also showed how blurred the line between freedom of speech and hate speech is.

Włodarczyk did not want to define the concept. He argued again that because the line is so difficult to draw, it is dangerous for governments to regulate it. Hiekka said that hate speech is a misuse of the freedom of expression to the point that it violates certain universal and undivided rights. Like Włodarczyk, Kivijärvi did not want to define anything clearly, but he said that we need to have a public debate in the field of civil society, including a discussion of whether the government should be able to restrict what people can say. Some of these debates need to also be organized in a smaller scale in classrooms, youth centers, and on web platforms. Biaudet said that hate speech is, in general, hateful and it is usually quite easy to recognize. She also argued that there should be some limitations to what people can say so that they know what lines they should not cross. The most important element is still the unofficial as well as the public support that leaders should give to minority groups and to ensuring their rights.
The article written by Eva Biaudet, the Finnish ombudsman for minorities, discusses the current standing of hate speech in Finland. According to Biaudet, Internet has created a phenomenon, where similar-minded people are able to gather and share their radical thoughts online, in a way that was impossible just 20 years ago. As Biaudet argues, anonymous and dissent free environment has further enabled hate speech to spread. Yet, as recent examples show, it is rather difficult to intervene in a way that a person accused of delivering hate speech would have to take a moral liability on both the speech and its consequences. Thus, it is important that the issue will be raised both to the Finnish political and media agenda, so that the aims of the United Nations Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities can be protected.

Tasa-arvo ja ihmisarvon kunnioittaminen ovat pohjoismaisen ja eurooppalaisen yhteiskunnamme kivijalka. Tämän päivän poliittisen keskustelun historiattomuus näkyy esimerkiksi siinä, että nämä arvot kyseenalaistetaan päivittäin sekä puheessa että teoissa. Yhdenvertaisuusvaatimus ratkaisun tai toiminnan perusteluna ei välttämättä yksin riitä ja se ymmärretään ylellisyydeksi, johon ei aina ole varaa. Kuitenkin vain harva meistä pystyy edes kuvittelemaan, millaiselta maailmamme näyttäisi, jos me sallisimme yhdenvertaisuuteen liittyvien arvojen murtuvan altamme. Demokratiamme syöpyisi sisältäpäin yhtä varmasti kuin vesi vähitellen syövyttää harmaan kiven.

erimielisiä ihmisiä, joiden kritiikki aiheuttaa meissä alemman tunnetta ja häpeää. Nämä emme joudu osallistumaan tavalliseen, moniarvoiseen ja kriittiseen keskusteluun.


**Vihapuheeseen puuttuttava silloin, kun se yleisesti toimii yhdenvert- taisuutta vastaan**


Tapaus on hyvä esimerkki siitä, että kaikkeen vihaheeseen tai suvaitsemattomuuteen ei voi pykälen avulla puuttua. Moraalisesti hyväksytävä tai eettisesti toivottava viestintä vaatii siis korkeampaa tasoa kuin se, mikä laissa on määritelty vähimmäisnormina. Laki ja moraali ovat tietysti yhteydessä toisiinsa, mutta ne eivät ole toistensa kopioita. Meidän yhdenvertaisuustoimijoiden, kuten lain perusteella syrjimmättömyyttä valvovan ja yhdenvertaisuutta edistävän vähemmistövaltuutetun, on siis puututtava vihaheeseen myös silloin, kun se yleisesti toimii yhdenvertaisuutta vastaan. On tärkeää, että myös yhteiskun-
tavaikutatajat käsittelevät rasmin, suvaitsemaattomuuden ja vihapuheen olemusta ja ilmenemismuotoja julkisessa keskustelussa ja keskustelevat siitä, miten vuoropuhelu voisi kehittää eettisemmäksi ja yhteiskuntamme perusarvoja kunnioittamaksi. Tosiasia on, että vihapuheen suvaitseminen pikemmin rajoittaa sananvapautta, kuin edistää sitä. Useat tutkijat Suomessa ovat julkisuudessakin sanoneet, että he eivät halua osallistua julkiseen keskusteluun esimerkiksi maahanmuuttopoliitikasta tai rasismista, koska siitä vääräämättä näyttää seuraavan heihin kohdistuvia vihapuhehyökkäyksiä ja jopa uhkauksia.

VIHAPUHE KOVEMPAA JA VAARALLISEMPAA, MUTTA MYÖS HIEOSTUNEEMPA JA TAVOITTEELLISEMPAA


Asbjörn Eide, entinen vähemmistöpuitesopimuksen neuvoa antavan komitean puheenjohtaja, totesi sopimuksen 25-vuotisjuhlaseminaarissa marraskuussa 2013, että suvaitsevaisuuden ja ymmärtämysten edistäminen uskontokuntien välillä vaatii kiireellisiä toimenpiteitä, sillä äärioikeistoliiikkueet pyrkivät muun muassa rajoittamaan sanan- ja ilmaisunvapautta.

Mutta tiedämmekö me miten meidän tulisi puuttua tehokkaasti vihapuheeseen ja rasismin eri ilmenemismuotoihin? Asiasta puhuminen ja asian nostaminen myös poliittiselle agendalle on tavoite, johon me kaikki voimme panostaa. Mielipidejohtajien merkitystä ei tässä asiassa voi vähätellä. Yleisen tietoisuuden lisääminen perus- ja ihmisoikeuksistamme, niiden synnystä ja merkityksestä olisi hyödyllinen projekti tulevaisuuden yhä monimuotoisempaa ja kansainvälistä yhteiskuntaa varten. Olisikin välitetävä kiireellisesti, miksi yksilön oikeuksiin perustuva järjestelmämme ja lainsäädäntömme tänään on se mikä se on? Erityisesti tulisi kertoa, miksi syrjinnänvastainen lainsäädäntömme on olemassa ja miksi sitä sovelletaan siten, kun esimerkiksi mediassa viime aikoina esiin tulleissa tapauksissa ilmenee.
The OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference “Increasing Comprehensive Security as Helsinki +40 Approaches” was held from 2.–5.6.2014 in Kiev, Ukraine, alongside the annual OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting.

The conference was organised by the International Civic Solidarity Platform in cooperation with the regional branch of the National Institute for Strategic Studies in Odessa, the Ukrainian Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, and the regional office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation in Ukraine, with the additional financial support of the International Renaissance Foundation.

I was privileged to take part and to give a speech in the conference as a representative of STETE. Unfortunately, I was only able to be present during the last two days of the event, so I missed interesting conversations and panel discussions dealing with the Helsinki +40 process that STETE actively follows. The organisers were interested in hearing our insights on the conference’s themes, especially since STETE organised the first parallel civil society forum in connection with the OSCE Ministerial Council in Helsinki in December 2008.

**Pushing the Civil Society Agenda during the OSCE Chairmanships**

Ever since the forum in Helsinki, these parallel conferences have provided opportunities for civil society actors to raise discussion
on current challenges and to focus the Ministerial Meeting participants’ attention on negative trends developing within the OSCE states, particularly related to human dimension activities. The Civic Solidarity Platform has been organising these events during past years in various countries.

I took part in a panel discussion with the title, “Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship: Lessons to be Learned”, together with Dr. Frank Evers from the Center for the OSCE Research (Hamburg, Germany) and Oleksandr Tytarchuk, Director of the Institute for the International Research (Kiev, Ukraine). While other panelists assessed the expectations and outcomes related to Ukrainian OSCE chairmanship, I was trying to tackle the question of whether there is an opportunity for civil society to push its own agenda (also during subsequent OSCE chairmanships) and how that would best be done.

The facilities and arrangements in Kiev were excellent and the conference program – mainly concentrating on OSCE human dimension issues – was broad and interesting. However, for some reason, the conference participation was split in a peculiar way: the first days several NGO representatives and speakers were present, and on the last day only a handful of NGOs and others participated. On the last conference day when my panel took place, more people with different backgrounds and opinions could have engaged in order for there to have been a more comprehensive perspective on the discussion topics.

BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND DECISION-MAKERS

Similarly to the Helsinki Forum in 2008, the Kiev conference also attracted some diplomatic attendance. However, these parallel conferences would benefit from a wider participation
of diplomats and other high-level political actors. This would be an effective way to pass the torch to the decision-makers concerning important issues and problems that are dealt with in civil society conversations. Building a bridge between mainly an NGO event and an intergovernmental high-level meeting is a challenging job, but at the same time, a task that really should be tackled. It would be a great improvement and a major act of acknowledgement from the side of the Ministerial Council if representatives of the parallel conference would be invited to some of the Ministerial Council Sessions and even be granted a chance to hold a presentation on important questions there.

The main purpose of the parallel conference was to produce civil society recommendations for the OSCE Ministerial Council. In the case of the Helsinki 2008 Civil Society Forum, the main themes to tackle were first drafted in preliminary organising partners’ meetings, and then in thematic working group meetings. The themes and the recommendations given were largely consistent with the priorities that had been set by Finnish OSCE Chairmanship. The draft recommendations were circulated via networks of local and international NGOs within the OSCE area – who had the possibility to comment on them and add topics and questions to be discussed. In this way, even the NGOs that did not attend the Civil Society Forum could comment on the recommendations and have their voices heard. In this respect, the conference itself can be seen as a culmination of a longer process.

This has been the procedure in the forums since Helsinki, also in Kiev in 2013. The problems regarding this, however, are questions of commitment and engagement. It is crucial to guarantee having as broad a spectrum of committed NGOs as possible from various countries participating in the preliminary drafting and commentary processes. Also, NGOs from former and subsequent Chairman-in-office countries should be involved in the drafting recommendations process in order to achieve better continuation and coherence in the long term for the forums and the recommendations they produce. Doing so also increases the possibilities of evaluating the impact and implementation of such processes. This was done well in the Kiev conference. These matters ought to be taken into consideration early when planning and organising future parallel conferences.

The civil society recommendations of the Kiev conference were passed to the OSCE participating states and institutions during the Ministerial Council Meeting. The drafted policy document contains civil society analysis and recommendations on tackling alarming human dimension issues across the OSCE region and especially in Ukraine.

It is excellent to see that the tradition of parallel conferences has lasted and developed since 2008. The continuation, evaluation, and impact of the conferences have also improved, but much still needs to be done to raise the voices of civil society in the corridors of the OSCE. Let us hope that in the following years, the parallel conference tradition goes on and that parallel conferences continue to be important and topical fora for fruitful discussions.
Political analyst in a country in turbulence, Hanna Shelest gives a review of Ukraine’s year 2013 as Chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). As the article goes to show, even though Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship could be considered as rather successful, Ukraine did not quite manage to live up to the expectations. All in all, according to Shelest, the Ukrainian Chairmanship demonstrated that the state was able to fulfil serious tasks, but, at the same time, is not ready for greater responsibility and initiatives in the international arena.

In 2013, Ukraine took the Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. This was a chance to empower the country to implement its foreign policy priorities and to advance its influence and prestige in the international arena. However, during this year, both internal political processes inside the country and external factors, such as competition of some states over the main issues of the Organization’s activities, as well as the current necessity to reform the OSCE’s structure, influenced the Ukrainian Chairmanship.

The Ukrainian persistent efforts in 2013 has almost been dismissed by the pro-European demonstrations held in Kyiv since the end of November 2013, and the brutal crackdowns of January 2014, after which a new Chairman-in-Office, Didier Burkhalter, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, called upon the Ukrainian authorities to do their utmost to prevent further escalation of tensions, bring those responsible for the casualties and violence to justice, and propose for the OSCE’s assistance.

Despite the call of some states to relocate the Ministerial Council meeting from Kyiv to Vienna due to the violation of human rights in Ukraine, its carrying confirmed that the participating states still perceive OSCE as a key platform for dialogue in the area from Vancouver to Vladivostok, and also highly appreciate the efforts made by the Ukrainian Chairmanship in 2013.
Leonid Kozhara, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chairman-in-Office, announced the priorities of the Ukrainian Chairmanship in Vienna on 17 January 2013. Among others, they included: ensuring greater military stability, transparency and predictability, including arms control, disarmament, confidence- and security-building measures; completing the update of the 1994 OSCE Principles Governing Non-proliferation; the destruction of surplus stocks of small arms, light weapons and ammunition; facilitating resolution of protracted conflicts; addressing common threats to security such as terrorism, trafficking in drugs and human beings, cybercrime, and the new challenges and threats that have a direct impact on the OSCE states bordering Afghanistan.

In the economic-environmental dimension, Ukraine clearly indicated its priority in improving the OSCE’s economic and environmental effectiveness, in particular, through the development of an institutionally-strong second dimension of the OSCE; adaptation of the 2003 Maastricht Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension; increasing the OSCE’s role in the development of existing and establishment of trade and transport corridors; and conducting events on improving the environmental footprint of energy-related activities in the OSCE region. At the same time, amongst their declared priorities, little attention was paid to issues of environmental security.

The following priorities of the Ukrainian Chairmanship concerning the OSCE’s third “basket” of activities were announced: combating all forms of human trafficking; supporting free media ensuring free and fair elections; promoting tolerance and non-discrimination through human rights education for youth; achieving freedom of association and assembly; protecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities; achieving freedom of movement; improving access to quality education for Roma and Sinti; working towards gender equality; and increasing inter-religious dialogue.

It is worth mentioning that apart from the priorities in the three dimensions of OSCE’s work, the Ukrainian Chairmanship set as its goal some organizational tasks, including improving mutually beneficial cooperation between the OSCE and its Asian and Mediterranean partners, as well as reinforcing OSCE’s effectiveness and efficiency. The attendance of many Asian and Mediterranean states of the Ministerial Council meeting in Kyiv in December 2013 is evidence of this priority success. In terms of the OSCE’s operational effectiveness, the following initiatives were put into place, but worked on a procedural level within the OSCE Secretariat: improving the budgetary planning process, promoting dialogue to strengthen the OSCE legal framework, and positive involvement and co-operation with other international organizations.

In general, it is possible to state that Ukraine has managed to secure a balanced approach to cover all three “baskets” of the OSCE work. At the same time, the political-military dimension can be considered more successful than others due to the number of adopted documents. This situation confirmed the common approach of the participating states to
the Organization, when economic-environmental dimension escapes attention of the OSCE to be considered in the framework of other international institutions.

**ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP**

As a matter of fact, we can state that Ukraine has continued to implement the procedural level of the main priorities of the OSCE activities in the first dimension. Activities on border control, disposal of hazardous substances and small arms have continued, events on transport and marine security have been supported, and an anti-terrorism conference was held in Kyiv in October 2013.

The priority that gained the most attention was the settlement of conflicts in the post-Soviet region. Despite some difficulties, which could be witnessed in the Transnistrian settlement at the time of the Chairmanship, Ukraine has managed to secure a steady dialogue between two parties involved in the framework of the “small steps” approach. As a result, not only high-level contacts were resumed, but also concrete agreements were signed.

At the time of the Ministerial Council meeting in Kyiv, the Ministerial Statement on the Work of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transnistrian Settlement in the "5+2" Format was adopted. In addition, other adopted documents included: the Ministerial Statement on Nagorno-Karabakh, the Decision on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition; the Ministerial Declaration on the Update of the OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation; and the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the OSCE’s Efforts to Address Transnational Threats, where participating states considered not only traditional threats, including drugs trafficking, terrorism, and border security, but also conflicts stemming from the use of information and communication technologies.

Most of these documents have a declarative nature, but taking into account the consensus principle of the decision-making process within the OSCE, and existing contradictions between the participating states, the very fact that the adopted statements focus on a discussion of certain questions is evidence of a positive tendency and success of the chairing state. Within the second dimension, Ukraine in general fulfilled a procedural role in organizing the annual XXI Economic and Environmental Forum “Increasing Stability and Security: Improving the Environmental Footprint of Energy-Related Activities in the OSCE Region”, which took place 11-13 September 2013 in Prague. Different states have contradicting positions in energy issues, and that is why focusing on environmental aspects is important in stimulating further cooperation. At the Ministerial Council in Kyiv, two documents were adopted: the Decision on Improving the Environmental Footprint of Energy-Related Activities in the OSCE Region; and the Decision on Protection of Energy Networks from Natural and Man-Made Disasters.

Another positive contribution was the enhancement of cooperation between the MFA of Ukraine and the expert community, in particular, the organizing of discussions and the
elaboration of recommendations for the update of the Maastricht Strategy Document of the OSCE for the Economic and Environmental dimension, which was presented in April 2013. The work in the third dimension was some of the most controversial and selective. On 10-11 June 2013, a High-level OSCE conference on trafficking human beings took place in Kyiv, where, as proposed by Ukraine’s Chairmanship, an addition to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings was adopted. Moreover, at the Ministerial Council in Kyiv, the Decision on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings was agreed upon. Serious attention was also paid to the electoral process, where compromise was reached on renewed cooperation between the ODIHR and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in the elections’ observation sphere. Media freedom and reform, including creating conditions for the reappointment of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and organization of several conferences of media freedom in Kazakhstan, Hungary, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Germany were also considered.

In the framework of its Chairmanship, Ukraine demonstrated some progress in issues pertaining to national minorities, Roma and Sinti rights, and combating discrimination and xenophobia. In particular, at the Ministerial Council in Kyiv, decisions on human dimension were adopted for the first time in three years. These decisions included: the Decision on Freedom of Thought, Conscience, Religion or Belief; and the Decision on Enhancing OSCE Efforts to Implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, with a Particular Focus on Roma and Sinti Women, Youth and Children. In April 2013 at the OSCE’s Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on the Freedom of Movement and Facilitation of the Greater Human Contacts, held in Vienna, for the first time not only questions on the rights for leaving countries were raised, but also for entering them, which was considered a breakthrough in addressing states’ visa barriers.

SHORTCOMINGS AND ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Despite certain achievements in the sphere of human rights, however, it was quite controversial that Ukraine did not take a position towards the cases of political rights violations in the OSCE’s participating states, for example, on the crackdown of the peaceful demonstrations in Azerbaijan in May 2013. Also, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media condemned attacks against journalists in November-December 2013 in Ukraine, which was quite a unique to criticize the Chairing state itself.

Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship could be considered rather successful, but such, which did not necessarily demonstrate all of its existing potential and fulfil certain expectations. For example, the concentration on some issues, such as the Transnistrian settlement, did not allow focusing on other priorities, including the conflicts in the territory of the South Caucasus states. Moreover, a lack of ambition, experience, and international weight disabled the Chairmanship to promote certain OSCE reforms, cybersecurity, disarmament, and a coordination of activities with other international organizations. The Ukrainian Chairmanship demonstrated that the state was able to fulfil serious tasks, but, at the same time, was not ready for greater responsibility and initiatives in the international arena.
EPILOGUE

EMPOWERING EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

KATI LEPÖJÄRVI
STTE SECRETARY GENERAL

The Euro-Mediterranean Civil Society Forum took place in Marseilles, France, from 4-7 April 2013. In the closing words of the Marseilles Forum, André Azoulay, President of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, wrapped up, in my opinion, the spirit of the Forum: “The potential of the region’s abundant youthful energy and dynamism, coupled with its entrepreneurial and innovative spirit, is enormous. We need to address the issues, which have undermined previous attempts at building a union for the peoples of the Mediterranean. Top-down solutions will not work. Mediterranean partnership must be for the citizens, from the citizens and to the citizens.”

In this article, I aim to raise the main points of discussions concerning strengthening parliamentary cooperation and empowerment of civil society in EU-North Africa cooperation, in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, also known as the Union for the Mediterranean – previously known as the Barcelona Process.

STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) is not a new institution inside the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership framework. The Euro-Mediterranean ministers of foreign affairs established the EMPA in Naples on 3 December 2003. It has four permanent committees on political affairs, security, and human rights; economic, financial, and social affairs and education; promotion of the quality of life, human exchanges, and culture; women’s rights in Euro-Mediterranean countries; as well as an ad hoc committee on energy and the environment. Since the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the EMPA’s role has been strengthened, for it is considered the "legitimate parliamentary expression of the Union".

The people of the Euro-Mediterranean countries were represented in Marseilles at different levels. On the same occasion of the civil society meeting, the first Summit of the speakers of parliaments of the UfM member countries took place. The Summit was held in Marseilles from 6-7 April 2013. The Summit convened at the initiative of the President of the European Parliament and President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, Martin Schulz, and was the first high-level meeting since the Summit of the heads of state and government of the UfM held in Paris in 2008, as well as the first regional meeting since the Arab Spring. In particular, President Schultz underlined that, “This summit will be an opportunity to
show that parliaments are ready to fill the political leadership gap from which the UfM has suffered from in recent years... If the challenge of democratic transition which is under way in some Mediterranean countries is successfully to be met, we will need strong and effective parliaments which listen to their citizens.”

The support and guidance that the “old democracies” can provide for their new and emerging counterparts in North Africa should stem from civil society. Both the representatives of civil society and international organisations affirmed this in the Marseilles Forum. Just as President Schultz explained, parliaments and parliamentarians also have an important role to play in today’s Euro-Mediterranean cooperation field. As an example of a cooperation initiative in this field, the Finnish Committee for European Security – STETE – an organization led by members of the Finnish parliament, organized in late 2011 an international conference bringing together women decision-makers and changemakers from North Africa and Finland to discuss and learn from one another. The conference was supported by the Anna Lindh Foundation. The initiative received praise and the participants hoped for continuation of the project and more permanent fora for dialogue. At the time, however, funding was not available for such cooperation. Fortunately, it seems that the tables have now turned. Both the Anna Lindh Foundation and the EU have pledged their support also for also smaller scale projects that could be handled by smaller or emerging CSOs, as well as their long-term support for successful projects – not concentrating solely on funding initiatives.

The EU supporting North African civil society

The Marseilles Forum brought forward some high-ranking EU policymakers to provide the latest information and answer questions and critiques from civil society representatives. Hugues Mingarelli from the European External Action Service affirmed that it is in the EU’s best interest to offer assistance and guidance to help stabilize its EuroMed partners. Mingarelli felt that the EU’s role in supporting its southern partners should focus on:

- Employing the EU’s experience with democratic transformation;
- Providing free trade agreements and economic support favoring the economic development of partner countries, lifting restrictions and barriers to exchanges, and providing assistance for partners to develop their own acquis communautaire;
- Offering the EU’s various instruments on, e.g., handling migratory flows, to its Maghreb and Mashrek partners; and
- Pushing for regional integration and cooperation, which, at the moment, hardly exists. To solve existing problems, they need to be considered in a regional context.

A member of the European Parliament, Isabelle Durant, had a somewhat different idea about supporting trade. She emphasized that short-term solutions were needed in the first place, not free trade agreements. She felt that small and medium enterprises’ actions are
the most significant to be able to tackle the problems of corruption that restrain short-term political development.

Commissioner Stefan Füle also listed similar objectives: what the EU wants to offer to civil society, and what the EU wants to strengthen. His answer to these questions was: a legal framework for good conditions for civil society organisations (CSOs), freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, building the capacity of CSOs (to organize themselves, to promote their ideas and to defend themselves, if needed) as well as increasing the capability of civil society to hold authorities accountable. Commissioner Füle promised stronger EU support through a new instrument, the European Endowment for Democracy, initially used in the EU’s neighbourhood. He also underlined the importance of conditionality (based on universal values and shared interest) and differentiation (EU instruments being applied to partners in different, appropriate ways). The Commissioner also introduced a new ‘more for more’ principle the EU implements that applies the carrot but not the stick: the more a country invests in (sometimes even in costly and demanding reforms), the more it gets in return from the EU. Füle’s main suggestion came with the proposition to establish a Civil Society Forum with the EU and its Mediterranean partners, to follow the successful example of the EU and its six Eastern partners. According to Füle, the EU could facilitate dialogue between CSOs themselves and between authorities and the CSOs, as well as encourage dialogue at the regional level in order to help the CSOs produce a road map.

**North African viewpoints to EU support and cooperation**

The EU’s actions in North Africa also received well-founded criticism – starting with the bad blood remaining from the times some western countries, EU countries included – used to support the autocracies of the region. Not only was the EU’s “fatherly” role criticized by many North African counterparts, but also by some European NGO representatives, who felt the EU tried to maintain too decisive a role in the civil society incentives it helped build. Catherine Woollard from the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office called for the Eastern Partnership’s Civil Society Forum and its planned southern counterpart to be under civil society control, rather than under the European Commission’s supervision. When the Commissioner was asked how the ownership of the civil society of this forum and projects could be strengthened and the Commission’s influence diminished, he did not have a solution. However, he tossed the ball to civil society: “I have no clue at this time what this platform could look like to be more inclusive. I just feel we should have this platform... Structural dialogue is a reflection of the first stage to facilitate dialogue between civil society and authorities. The EU won't have a role to stay included forever. We don't run the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, the civil society runs it on a democratic basis.”

In the Marseilles Forum many of the North African civil society representatives were criticizing the funding offered by the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) to be too bureaucratic and unsuitable for the new NGOs born in the midst or in the aftermath of the Arab revolutions. According to Hesham Youssef of the League of Arab States, it is
difficult for civil society to achieve its objectives because of restrictions by governments. He added that the League of Arab States has proposed framework changes to facilitate the cooperation framework, but the EU has been reluctant to change existing structures. Yet, in order to strengthen their civil societies, many countries feel that they do need help from the EU. Hesham Youssef’s wish was that the EU could help in providing the Arab countries with a model of its own development: “[The] EU succeeded in reducing the gap between the rich and the poor. We have failed in this.”

Omnia Taha, also from the League of Arab States, was concerned about great resistance developing against freedom and democracy, and the emerging debate asking if democracy is at all compatible with Islamic states. She said it has become impossible to realize civil society empowerment in countries such as Tunisia, Libya, and Morocco. According to Taha, the League put civil society cooperation on top of priorities of cooperation with the EU, but this was rejected by most Arab states. In addition, the countries tried to limit the actions of civil society to concentrate on, for instance, the environment, instead of human rights or the roles of women. And finally, she lamented the facts that there has not been a change in the Arab regimes and that the revolution is not reflected in the constitutions or the laws of these countries. Taha noted that the idea of civil society and the Arab League opening its doors to civil society is a new concept. However, there are high expectations on the freedom of civil society and freedom of expression, and the League has, for instance, included Arab civil society observers in its own economic and social council. When Taha turned to the relations with the EU, she stated clearly: “We don't want a teacher-student relationship with the EU, nor do we want the attitude implying: this is the policy – take it or leave it. “ She saw an important role for the Arab League in supporting human rights in the region and appreciated the EU’s support in spreading the culture of human rights. Nevertheless, Taha ended with highlighting, that “The priorities of the Arab world are not those of the West. The EU needs to understand our culture better. We need transparency, and no hidden agenda as some donors have on some civil society funding.“

A Tunisian civil society representative Anis Boufrikha noted that Europe could help their counterparts employ the mechanisms they offer without intervening. He underlined the need of EU support in the legislative development of Tunisia to create legislation that is more open to civil society, because, until now, society has never been included in the drafting of the country’s legislation. Nabila Hamza from the Tunisian NGO Foundation for the Future made a comprehensive list of recommendations to ameliorate EU-North Africa exchanges from a civil society point of view. She claimed that the EU has to take the lead in civil society development in the awakening of the Arab region. She recounted that huge qualitative and quantitative development of North African civil society is underway. In two years, 5 000 new NGOs have been created in Tunisia and 1 000 in Libya. Hamza continued that there is a new generation of CSOs that are emerging and tackling formerly taboo issues, such as gender, elections, etc. Civil society actors are younger, more educated, and more women are investing in civil society development. CSOs have also developed a strong role in the fields of monitoring elections and fighting corruption – both important building blocks of democracy. What Hamza wanted from the EU was support crafted according to each
country separately. A Lebanese representative added to Hamza’s account that EU project funding should be aimed at other activities than just workshops. She also pinpointed that what North African civil society needs most of all is capacity building, including training for students and professionals on how to run an NGO.

Syria was also a frequent topic in the Forum discussions. The dire needs of Syrian civil society, Syrian citizens, refugees, as well as the contenders for politics and government need to be acknowledged. More outside aid is urgently needed to help the suffering nation. The international community cannot wait for the Geneva II talks to conclude before making these decisions. The resolution of the civil war/conflict is admittedly a historically difficult task, and that is exactly why the aid effort from outside should be coherent and concentrate on supporting and funding civil society organisations and citizen initiatives that are currently struggling with little outside funding and less inside resources. To give an example, as the media coverage of the country has been dominated by two outside media conglomerates, CNN and Al Jazeera, the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (that has supported several media projects in the Euromed region) could pair up with the European Commission and other donors to help Syrians build up alternative, local media outlets inside Syria. Independent media are needed to allow more objective and multifaceted information to spread both inside Syria (between citizens divided from each other by areas of fighting), as well as outside Syria’s borders. After 40 years of almost no civil society activity, the country desperately needs advice on how to mobilize.

**WOMEN AND YOUTH WORKING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

EEAS representative Hugues Mingarelli spoke about the cooperation issue and responded to some of the critiques raised by participants and speakers. He agreed that civil society in Arab countries needs a new and strong role, and that the forces of the revolution (the youth and women in particular) should be given means to express themselves and to register their organisations without government restrictions. As avenues to help them achieve this, Mingarelli proposed the help of the European Endowment for Democracy; the creation of a civil society forum equivalent to the EU Eastern Neighbourhood Forum; and financial aid for these organisations to help them function outside the government.

Civil society could play an important role in changing society and its sometimes detrimental traditions (for example with respect to women’s rights). It is also crucial to guarantee the involvement of youth and women in these efforts. According to Stavros Lambrinidis, the EU’s Special Representative on Human Rights, the biggest obstacle to international cooperation on protecting universal human rights is tradition. Also, religion is often used as an excuse in sidelining human rights. The laws of most governments often imply that women and men are equal, as do most religions, but traditions can contradict such laws. Lambrinidis spoke strongly for the conditionality of aid in such situations. When some partners say they support human rights, but ask for the EU to put human rights issues aside and first provide for their direst needs, the need to stick to the conditionality becomes even
clearer. The Special Representative also spoke about the law on violence against women being developed. In the case of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), a country’s law often forbids the practice, but if people refrain from getting their daughters circumcised, they will be ostracized within their communities. Here, Lambrindis emphasized, lies the importance of the role civil society plays, since the EU is not the right actor in terms of changing a society and its traditions.

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The Finnish Committee for European Security (STETE) was established 11 June 1970 to promote European security, and, in particular, to support the process forging the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE): a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation between East and West.

STETE's long-standing aim is to enhance informal and open discussion between different actors in society. For four decades now, our organisation has actively promoted debate and knowledge on security policy issues in Finland and its neighbouring regions. We have done so by organizing seminars and other events on broad security matters, by producing publications on topical themes and by cooperating with various actors and instances from civil society to government.

You now have before your eyes the fifth yearbook of the Finnish Committee for European Security. The yearbook covers the themes and issues reflected in STETE's work during 2013. It consists of reports and articles from STETE staff and collaborators as well as a collection of expert articles.

STETE wishes to use this yearbook to offer You, our reader, an overview of our activities in 2013 and also to objectively and broadly present perspectives on European security from the grassroots to the decision-making levels.