



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 16 May 2022
(OR. en)

8829/22

COPS 194
CIVCOM 77
CFSP/PESC 613
CSDP/PSDC 251
RELEX 602
JAI 603

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	8718/22
Subject:	Council Conclusions on an EU Strategic Approach in support of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Former Combatants (DDR)

Delegations will find in the Annex the Council Conclusions on an EU Strategic Approach in support of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Former Combatants (DDR), as approved by the Council at its meeting held on 16 May 2022.

**Council Conclusions on an EU Strategic Approach in support of
Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Former Combatants (DDR)**

1. Recalling the ambitions set by the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy, the Council Conclusions on the EU Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises and on Security and Defence as well as the Strategic Compass, the Council endorses the Joint Communication "An EU strategic approach in support of Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration of former combatants (DDR)", updating the 2006 Concept for Support to DDR.
2. The Council acknowledges that DDR refers to a voluntary process through which male and female members and associates of armed forces and groups lay down their weapons, break away from command and control structures, transition to civilian life and sustainably reintegrate in local communities. Nationally and locally owned, people-centred, context-specific DDR processes are political in nature and constitute a central component in transitions from armed conflict to political engagement and inclusive governance in the EU's close neighbourhood and beyond and contribute to stabilisation, sustainable peace and development.

3. The Council recognises that DDR processes are multifaceted, and often call for support at all stages of the conflict cycle. Regarding the support to former combatants, their associates, and communities in which they reintegrate, it should be policy driven, conflict sensitive and rights-based when addressing their social and psychosocial, economic, political, legal, security-related, and health needs. The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context. Having that in mind, the EU reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The EU further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services.

4. The Council remains cognisant of the different, specific and non-homogenous needs of men, women, boys, and girls of different ages, including those belonging to national or ethnic, religious, linguistic and political minorities and indigenous peoples as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as well as of the importance of their full, equal and meaningful participation in DDR processes. The Council stresses the importance of age and gender responsive DDR engagements, including with regards to eligibility criteria.

5. The Council acknowledges that embedding support for DDR processes and their components into nationally owned strategies can help engender enduring political ownership of all actors involved. The Council underlines the important linkages between DDR and other processes that support stabilisation and transition from violent conflict to sustainable peace, noting the interconnected nature of the underlying challenges and their gendered impacts. Initiatives of support to: mediation, security sector governance and reform, transitional justice, reduction of violence at the community level; prevention of radicalisation, violent extremism and of sexual and gender-based violence; protection of conflict-affected children; combatting the illegal exploitation of natural resources, and organised crime, including human trafficking; protection and preservation of cultural heritage; management of flows of weapons and ammunition are important in this regard.

6. The Council stresses the importance of coordination between swift action and medium- and long-term engagements when making use of the entirety of the EU Integrated Approach toolbox, building on joint, coordinated assessments and conflict and context analysis. In this light, the Council welcomes contributions to DDR processes through e.g. initiatives of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and mediation, including local- and community-led initiatives, capacity building, long-term development assistance and promotion of alternative livelihoods, financed under NDICI-Global Europe. The EU could also contribute to DDR through military and civilian CSDP missions and operations, the latter in line with the Civilian CSDP Compact.

7. The Council highlights the importance of realistic, flexible, conflict sensitive and age and gender responsive DDR engagements, guided by the principles set in the Joint Communication, and in line with the women, peace and security and youth, peace and security, children and armed conflict agendas as well as international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international criminal law. In this vein, the Council underlines the centrality of the unconditional and immediate protection, release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups, at all times, in line with international standards on children's rights and the EU agenda on children and armed conflict, with its dedicated guidelines. The Council furthermore acknowledges the specific needs, opportunities and expectations of young men and women in DDR settings and stresses the importance of addressing these across DDR processes through active consultation, engagement and participation, and commits to applying a youth perspective in DDR processes, in line with 2020 Council conclusions on youth in external action.

8. The Council stresses the importance of the EU and Member States supporting DDR processes in close collaboration and coordination with partners, including in the field. The United Nations, the World Bank, the African Union and other international or regional organisations, with due respect to the EU institutional framework, host state authorities, neighbouring and regional actors, and third states that share EU values and objectives, and civil society, including youth organisations, are of key importance in this regard. The Council also encourages the European External Action Service and the European Commission to build on the compatibility of the EU's DDR engagements with the UN Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS). The Council furthermore stresses the need for strengthening and making available necessary expertise in the EEAS and Commission services, in EU Delegations and in CSDP missions and operations, as in mediation and negotiation contexts, through appropriate training and awareness raising measures.

9. The Council invites the European External Action Service and the Commission, in close coordination with Member States, to:

- ensure the implementation of the Joint Communication to leverage the full potential of the EU’s DDR engagements and place these in the wider context of the EU’s overall engagement with partner countries and regions, including the partnerships and political dialogues, in line with the EU Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises;
 - provide financial resources and personnel to support DDR, in particular by allocating sufficient funding within NDICI Global Europe;
 - enable the recollection of experiences, including from implementing partners, host state authorities and civil society, and recalls the need for regular monitoring and evaluation of, and learning from, the implementation of the EU’s DDR engagements;
 - enhance coordination, cooperation and partnerships on DDR with the UN, international and regional organisations, donor partners and civil society;
 - foster the effectiveness of DDR processes as part of transitions from violent conflict to stability and sustainable peace.
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