

"Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities"

Madariaga– College of Europe Foundation and the Folke Bernadotte Academy
12-13 May 2011 Brussels, Belgium Within the framework of the Programme "Building Coherence, Skills and Synergies in Conflict Prevention", the Madariaga – College of Europe Foundation and the Folke Bernadotte Academy, with the support of the Hungarian Presidency of the EU and in close cooperation with the EU and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office held a conference to promote the cause of genocide prevention. During the two-day event over 80 participants focused on sharing experiences, lessons learned and best practices on how to narrow the gap between early warning and timely action on genocide prevention, and discussed the ways to create further cooperation within the international community.

Conference speakers included Ragnar Angeby of the Folke Bernadotte Academy, Véronique Arnault of the European External Action Service, Andrea Bartoli of George Mason University, Mô Bleeker of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Simona Cruciani of the Office of the United Nations Special Advisor on Genocide Prevention, Károly Gruber of the Hungarian Permanent Representation to the European Union, Thordis Ingadottir of Reykjavik University, Jan Jařab of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Luis Peral of the European Union Institute for Security Studies, Jonathan Prentice of the International Crisis Group, Michael Sahlin of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, James Smith of Aegis Trust, Olivia Swaak-Goldman of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Gyorgy Tatar of the Council of the European Union, Catherine Woollard of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, Richard Wright of the European External Action Service and ICRtoP Deputy Director Sapna Chhatpar Considine.

The May 2011 workshop also follows on from other events on prevention of genocide and mass atrocities that have taken place in Europe. On 15 November 2010 in Paris, France, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Mémorial de la Shoah organised a symposium entitled "Preventing Genocide and Mass Atrocities: Goals and Challenges of International Cooperation". The key themes discussed at the event centred on the need for effective implementation rather than the normative consensus on genocide and humanitarian intervention. Recommendations from the symposium suggested that the EU should take a high-level panel approach to the prevention of mass atrocities in order to build Europe-wide support, the creation in each government of a senior level "focal point" on prevention and the need for an international network for genocide prevention comprised of governments, regional organisations and NGOs. (...)

Sapna Chhatpar, Deputy Director - International Coalition for Responsibility to Protect, stated that if the EU and international partners are serious about preventing genocide and mass atrocities then greater efforts need to be made in encouraging, assisting and pressuring states to change their behaviour on the protection of civilians through the application of RtoP. Chhatpar acknowledged

that the EU has begun a mapping exercise of its existing capacities to prevent genocide and mass atrocities, but insisted on placing emphasis on the need to understand when and how these tools can and should be utilised. Citing the examples of Bosnia, Rwanda and Sudan it was highlighted that there are arguments to suggest that conflict prevention strategies may not necessarily be suited to preventing mass atrocities. The question here then is what formula of measures is needed and when they should be used. Chhatpar stated that the response would depend from case to case but it is clear that consistency of response is required if RtoP is to be effective.

To this end, Chhatpar remarked how it would be a good idea for the EU to facilitate regional dialogue along with civil society on the meaning of the RtoP and the tools and measures needed for its implementation. The EU, the audience learned, could continue to advance RtoP through region to region meetings and informal reflections on case studies. Acknowledging that the EU is a leading regional body that supports the RtoP principle, Chhatpar then remarked how given the EU's early warning infrastructure and field presence it could do more to share information with the UN Joint Office of the Special Advisors. Chhatpar also commented on the role of the EU in responding to eminent atrocities and emergencies, and stated that the EU should continue to play a crucial role in implementing tailor-made responses to crises through the deployment of envoys, mediation and assisting in UN peacekeeping operations.

Taking a regional perspective to the EU's support of RtoP, Chhatpar highlighted a useful entry-point for increased cooperation with Africa in the form of the EU-Africa Joint Strategy. Chhatpar outlined how the EU- Africa Strategy 2011-2013 Action Plan refers to conflict prevention, democratisation, protection of civilians during conflict and the protection of women and how this would be a good opportunity to hold dialogues with the AU on RtoP. While ASEAN has not formally accepted RtoP, she continued, there is an EU-ASEAN plan of action for preventing conflict, civilian crisis and human rights. These entry points, Chhatpar concluded, could be the basis for further EU dialogue with these regions on RtoP, dialogues which could be facilitated by civil society either in New York, Addis Ababa and in Asia. (...)

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