

EARLY WARNING, EARLY RESPONSE? LEARNING LESSONS FROM THE 2010 CRISIS IN KYRGYZSTAN

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	8
INTRODUCTION	10
I. KYRGYZSTAN CONTEXT ANALYSIS	11
II. THE EU IN KYRGYZSTAN: ANTICIPATING, PREVENTING OR REACTING TO CRISES?	14
1. EU engagement in Kyrgyzstan	14
2. The EU and the 2010 crisis	15
III. LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CAPACITIES ON EARLY WARNING AND PEACEBUILDING IN KYRGYZSTAN	21
1. In-country early warning structures: a decade of trial and error	21
a. International actors	21
b. Domestic actors	23
2. Warning and response to the 2010 crisis	23
IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	25

ACRONYMS

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CPC	Conflict Prevention Centre
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DG Relex	Directorate General for External Relations
EEAS	European External Action Service
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
EUSR	EU Special Representative
FTI	Foundation for Tolerance International
HCNM	High Commissioner on National Minorities
HR for CFSP	High Representative for CFSP
IFS	Instrument for Stability
IFP EW	Initiative for Peacebuilding – Early Warning
KIC	Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSA LA	Non State Actors – Local Authorities
OCEEA	Office of the Co-coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDA	Peace and Development Analysis
PDP	Preventative Development Programme
RFOM	Representative of the Freedom of the Media
RSP	Regional Strategy Paper
SITCEN	Joint Situation Centre
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

SUMMARY

This report is one of eight case studies developed under the Initiative for Peacebuilding – Early Warning project, Improving Institutional Capacity for Early Warning cluster. It looks at the way conflict early warning, as well as other conflict-related information and analysis, was taken into account, processed and acted upon by EU actors in Kyrgyzstan during the crisis which broke out in 2010. The report draws on research and interviews conducted throughout 2011 in Kyrgyzstan and Brussels with several EU staff, as well as with key informants from the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and local civil society organisations (CSOs). It also draws on Saferworld's regular engagement with conflict-affected communities from the South since 2009. The second purpose of the report is to identify the other local, national and international actors involved in conflict analysis, early warning and peacebuilding activities in Kyrgyzstan, the kind of challenges they face and how they are trying to overcome them. In that respect, the report highlights a people-centred early warning-early response model that empowers conflict-affected communities to identify their main security threats and to respond to them in a constructive and peaceful way.

Conclusion 1: This case study of the EU's approach towards the 2010 crisis and conflict dynamics in Kyrgyzstan shows that **there is no shared understanding of, or sense of belonging to, an EU early warning chain** and, beyond that, to an EU conflict prevention agenda. EU actors are aware of the conflict dynamics with which they are confronted, but – apart from a couple of specific cases and purposes (SITCEN and IfS study) – this knowledge is not captured in a systematic way (meaning: applying a specific methodology, regularly updated and linked to a set of response options) to create a shared understanding of conflict dynamics tracked across time.

Recommendation 1: The EEAS should clarify its approach to and the purpose of early warning, procedural implications, and should communicate this among Brussels and Delegation staff.

Conclusion 2: Sharing a common understanding also implies the **need to manage expectations towards early warning – the purpose of early warning is not so much to forecast and predict but to anticipate conflicts**. Everyone acknowledges that it would have been almost impossible to predict the April revolution and, to some extent, the 10th June attacks. The question is, therefore, how to anticipate these events. This means gaining an understanding of conflict drivers and dynamics and then being prepared to act on this understanding to prevent violent outcomes and identify opportunities to settle differences. Such an understanding has to be linked to a broader awareness about conflict prevention: the rationale, added value, and practical implications.

Recommendation 2: The EEAS, together with the EC, should develop some guidance on conflict analysis, with the objective of raising awareness about the rationale, added value and practical implications of undertaking conflict analyses.

Recommendation 3: The provision of training curricula on conflict prevention and peacebuilding should be expanded and available at Delegation level to ensure that all staff share a similar understanding of these issues and their practical implications on everyone's work.

Recommendation 4: Clear management instructions need to be provided at all levels to ensure conflict-sensitive approaches are mainstreamed proactively and more systematically.

Recommendation 5: The EEAS and the EC should take advantage of the next programming cycle to test and apply these approaches and methods.

Conclusion 3: EU context analyses focus more on the broad level country situation rather than local level and conflict dynamics. The EU is proficient in assessing broad level dynamics, such as the economic, social, political, and security situation in a country. However, the Kyrgyzstan case study shows that the EU has a less systematic way of dealing with weak signals and local level dynamics, which are both the consequences and the drivers of tensions threatening state stability and social cohesion. While EU staff sometimes have a good understanding of these dynamics, this knowledge is not systematically captured to respond in a preventive way. There are different reasons for this, such as a lack of appropriate monitoring and analytical frameworks, but also a lack of clear purpose: what kind of EU process or decision making would that type of exercise inform? The Delegation saw the added value of such an analysis to inform IfS programme identification. Despite being a one-off analysis, this could be a good practice to be implemented more systematically.

Recommendation 6: The EEAS and the EC should elaborate analytical frameworks to monitor conflict dynamics at all levels, taking into account, and with a view to inform, programming decisions and political dialogue as appropriate.

Recommendation 7: The EEAS should pilot these analytical frameworks in a few selected countries.

Conclusion 4: The challenge of analysing weak signals and local level conflict is also linked to **the difficulty of addressing local level conflicts – i.e. linking early warning with early response where responses need to be provided.** The Kyrgyzstan case study shows that one way to address these conflict dynamics is by empowering people to identify their own security issues and to address them through track II mediation and community safety/security types of projects. These are the kind of activities which both international (OSCE, UNDP) and local actors (civil society organisations) are now undertaking to ensure that tensions are tackled quickly enough to prevent them from escalating into open violence at a broader level.

Recommendation 8: The EU should consider more systematic support for track II mediation and community security approaches to ensure early warning is linked with early action.

Conclusion 5: This analysis shows that the EU has also sought to **use long-term instruments to tackle conflict**, although on an ad hoc basis. When programmed in a conflict-sensitive way, it is possible to build in provisions to ensure conflict is taken into account and addressed through specific activities, risk management, monitoring and evaluation. Other **instruments like the EIDHR and NSA-LA funding have also been useful to provide a complementary response to the crisis.**

Recommendation 9: The EC should develop guidance for conflict-sensitive programming to ensure that long-term, as well as shorter-term, programmes can address conflict more proactively.

Recommendation 10: The EU should consider using the EIDHR and NSA-LA calls for proposals more systematically as complementary responses to crisis situations to support civil society activities contributing to bring about positive change.

Conclusion 6: The ongoing establishment of the EEAS and the preparation for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) provide a good opportunity to reconsider how the EU has approached and responded to conflict so far, including through early warning systems.

Recommendation 11: EU institutions should take advantage of the new political responsibilities of the EUD, of the new political reporting instructions, and of the processes undertaken in Brussels to set up a conflict-prevention group. This could ensure the EU is in a better position to anticipate and then respond to conflict in a preventive manner.

Conclusion 7: An effective early warning model in Kyrgyzstan should contribute to reinforcing state-society relations. For a state, responding to early signs of tensions or violence is also an opportunity to restore its legitimacy among its citizens. However, the government must see the act of responding to a warning as a validation of its own work and not as a concession to civil society or international organisations.

Recommendation 12: The EU, along with other international organisations, should encourage and support a people-centred approach to early warning capacities in Kyrgyzstan which contribute to strengthening inclusive and peaceful state-society relations.

INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) is the world's biggest aid donor, but has also gradually shown its willingness to become a global actor. The development of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the deployment of EU operations, the adoption of an EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts (2001) and other external action-related policy frameworks are some of the milestones that have – theoretically, at least – given the EU a stronger role in preventing and responding to conflict. However, failures to prevent violent conflicts and new countries from slipping into fragile situations have challenged the EU's – and, more generally, the international community's – ability to take into account and respond to early warnings of conflict.

Turning early warning into timely action is not straightforward. In addition to dealing with the political realities of sovereignty, security and physical access in country, adequate institutional structures and processes are critical for the EU to analyse and respond to early-warning signals. Preventing violent conflict effectively requires a robust and mainstreamed capacity to monitor and analyse conflict trends and appropriate early-warning signals; systems to communicate findings and recommendations to the relevant in-country and Brussels-based actors; a political decision to mobilise capacity and resources for a timely and effective response. Coordination between EU institutions, Member States and in-country actors is also crucial throughout these various stages of analysis, warning and response to ensure coherence and to maximise the efforts of each actor.

In the first phase of the *Initiative for Peacebuilding – Early Warning* (IfP-EW) project, Saferworld and Clingendael mapped the EU's early warning systems¹, examining how the EU gathers and analyses conflict-related information and how it anticipates, prevents and then responds to early signs of tensions or ongoing crisis. This report builds on the initial findings of those mapping exercises and looks at the way conflict early warning, as well as any conflict-related information and analysis, have been taken into account, processed and acted upon by EU actors in Kyrgyzstan. In order to do this, the research has focused on the crisis which broke out in April 2010 with the ousting of President Bakiev. This was followed by inter-ethnic clashes in the southern part of the country in June 2010. The report draws on research and interviews conducted in Kyrgyzstan and Brussels throughout 2011 with several EU staff, as well as key informants from the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and local civil society organisations (CSOs). It also draws on Saferworld's regular engagement with conflict-affected communities from the South since 2009. The second purpose of this report is to identify the other local, national and international actors involved in conflict analysis, early warning and peacebuilding activities in Kyrgyzstan, the kind of challenges they face and how they are trying to overcome them. In that respect, the report highlights a people-centred early warning-early response model which empowers conflict-affected communities to identify their main security threats and to respond to them in a constructive and peaceful way.

The first section of the report provides some context to recent historical developments, the 2010 crisis, and the remaining tensions. The second section looks at the way the EU anticipated and responded to the 2010 crisis. The third section focuses on the local, national and international actors and systems to prevent conflict and build peace in Kyrgyzstan. The final section sets out conclusions and recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the EU's own conflict-prevention activities in Kyrgyzstan and additionally support the capacity of other actors to contribute.

1 S. Babaud and N. Mirimanova (2011). *The European Commission Early Warning architecture and Crisis Response capacity*. IfP-EW: Brussels; J. Hemmer, R. Smits (2010). *The Early Warning and conflict prevention capability of the Council of the European Union*. IfP-EW: Brussels.

I. KYRGYZSTAN CONTEXT ANALYSIS

This section provides a brief overview of Kyrgyzstan's history since independence, focusing specifically on the tensions which have threatened stability and social cohesion, and which eventually led to the 2010 crisis. It also sets out the issues which still need to be considered and addressed in order to prevent a resurgence of conflict in the country.

THE BIRTH OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

When Kyrgyzstan gained independence in 1991, it faced considerable challenges to achieve stability and security. Its population, national ideology and infrastructure had all been interwoven with those of its neighbours since pre-Soviet times² and its borders had been invented by Soviet officials. Kyrgyzstan had to function as a self-contained entity and, while the country escaped civil war unlike its neighbour Tajikistan, independence gave way to major tensions over resource distribution, infrastructure, access to basic services, and regional and ethnic identity. These tensions have consistently conspired with high-level corruption to hinder peaceful development.

PAINFUL DIVISIONS

The country first got a taste of these problems as the Soviet Union moved towards collapse. The Ferghana valley is a densely populated trans-border region where Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Tajiks have traditionally lived side by side. In 1990, clashes broke out caused by a disastrous marriage of resource competition and ethnic nationalism. As it became clear that a power vacuum was developing, interest groups formed along ethnic lines. In March 1990, an Uzbek activist group called for an autonomous Soviet republic within the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic. Tensions escalated, and inter-ethnic violence in June that same year left over 600 people dead³ and numerous properties were burned down.

Kyrgyzstan's first president, Askar Akaev, took steps towards a free market and a multicultural state, but his regime was also increasingly plagued by corruption and nepotism. Anger over stagnant living standards and abuse of power contributed to Akaev's ousting in the so-called "Tulip Revolution" of 2005. His successor, Kurmanbek Bakiev, was from the Ferghana valley, a region which had traditionally played a secondary role in governance, along with the rest of the south. The region's many issues surrounding arable land, resource distribution, border management, and security tended to be pushed to one side and Bakiev presented himself as its champion. In practice, however, he continued the pattern of corruption and nepotism. He also shifted the country, and official structures in the Ferghana valley, towards a more Kyrgyz-centric national ideology. In the meantime, educational standards and employment had plummeted since the Soviet era, leaving a large, young, poorly-educated underclass with no memory or experience of Soviet cosmopolitan reality and ideology.

THE 2010 CRISIS⁴

Anger over rising energy prices and the Bakiev family's nepotism erupted in a series of opposition-led protests

2 For a survey of the challenges involved in developing a coherent national infrastructure, see International Crisis Group (2011). 'Central Asia: Decay and Decline', accessed 30th November 2011. Available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/201-central-asia-decay-and-decline.aspx>

3 According to official estimates.

4 The version of events contained in this section is based on the following investigations into the June events: KIC (2010). 'Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission', accessed 5th December 2011. Available at http://www.k-ic.org/images/stories/kic_report_english_final.pdf; Human Rights Watch (2010). "'Where is the Justice?' Ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan and its aftermath', accessed 5th December 2011. Available at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2010/08/16/where-justice-0>; International Crisis Group (2010). 'The Pogroms in Kyrgyzstan', accessed 5th December 2011. Available at [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/central-asia/kyrgyzstan/193%20The%20Pogroms%20in%20Kyrgyzstan.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/central-asia/kyrgyzstan/193%20The%20Pogroms%20in%20Kyrgyzstan.pdf). They also draw on interviews and conversations with civil society activists and international observers.

in early 2010. Bakiev fled Bishkek on 7th April in the face of mass demonstrations. Seventy-eight people died during the demonstrations in violent clashes between security forces and protesters. Many in the south were slow to recognise the weak provisional government which took over, which was mostly staffed by northerners. In the ensuing power vacuum, various interest groups sought to renegotiate their socio-political and financial positions. Demonstrations and criminal raids began to take place regularly around Osh and Jalalabad.⁵ Ethnic tensions which had simmered in the south became more apparent. Tensions were also palpable in other regions. On 19th April, seven people were killed and 28 houses set alight in a village near Bishkek, in what media reports described as a land grab. Attackers targeted Meskhetian Turks, after first marking their houses with the word “Turk”.⁶

Bakiev's home province of Jalalabad saw the bulk of May's unrest. On 13th May, Bakiev loyalists seized administrative headquarters in Osh, Batken, and Jalalabad. In Jalalabad, parties loyal to the new government (Ata Meken and Rodina), fielded armed supporters to end the standoff. Two were killed and 62 injured as a result.⁷ May's violence is thought to have killed six and injured 72 people in total.⁸

Demonstrations, acts of intimidation, criminal raids, and petty inter-ethnic fights continued periodically until 10th June.⁹ That evening, a fight between young Uzbeks and Kyrgyz gradually grew into a battle which lasted and grew throughout the night. Rumours of Uzbek atrocities spread by phone to Kyrgyz villages around Osh and prompted large groups of Kyrgyz men to converge on the city.

TARGETED ATTACKS

For three days, Uzbek neighbourhoods were looted and burned, and their inhabitants killed. Properties were labelled according to the ethnicity of their owners. Weapons and armoured vehicles were seized from local police stations and used in attacks on Uzbek communities. Many ethnic Kyrgyz also lost their lives. National investigations described law enforcement agencies as somewhat ineffective and demoralised; international investigations have asserted that law enforcement was at best passive and at worst saw security forces taking an active part in the violence.¹⁰

STABILISATION EFFORTS

By 13th June the violence had peaked; it spread to Jalalabad, but in a less coordinated fashion, and organised reconciliation and humanitarian efforts started to take place. Civil society networks in Osh and Jalalabad distributed aid, while respected members of Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities made joint public appearances urging peace. However, the government's stabilisation measures were widely seen as ambivalent or one sided.¹¹ The provincial government in Jalalabad enlisted civil society to distribute aid, but delayed aid delivery to Uzbek settlements of internally displaced people out of fear for their own safety.¹²

In the months after the crisis, a vicious cycle, also involving international organisations, including those offering legal assistance, developed in the south. Uzbeks fearful of the government approached them for help and the outside appearance of preferential treatment enhanced Uzbeks' vulnerability. Attacks on Uzbek communities arguably did not end in June, but continued in a quieter manner which few ordinary Kyrgyz noticed in their daily lives.¹³ As in 1990, mainstream discourse has shied away from discussions of ethnic tension. A common refrain is that the violence was caused by “outside provocation”.¹⁴

RESILIENT THREATS

Some of the central factors which stoked the violence also appear to be gaining strength. Uzbek and Kyrgyz

5 KIC (2010). *Op. Cit.*, p.24.

6 I. Pavlova. 'Маевка: год спустя [Mayevka: One year on], www.24.kg, 19th April 2011. Available at <http://89.108.120.121/reportaji/98225-maevka-god-spustya.html>

7 Human Rights Watch (2010). *Op cit.*, p.22.

8 KIC (2010). *Op. Cit.*, p.16.

9 Ibid, p.26.

10 Ibid., pp.69-70; Human Rights Watch (2010). *Op cit.*, p.5; International Crisis Group (2010). *Op .cit.*, p.1.

11 Conversation with international observer, Osh, November 2011.

12 Interview with civil society activist, Jalalabad, October 2011.

13 Conversations with residents, Osh, March-December 2011; conversations with human rights activists, Osh and Jalalabad provinces, March-December 2011; conversations with international observers, Bishkek and Osh, March-December 2011; conversations with civil society leaders, Aravan, October and November 2011.

14 Conversations with natives, Osh, March-November 2011.

communities are becoming increasingly insular. While Uzbek communities actively fear contact with official structures, some Kyrgyz communities believe they survived the violence due to the efforts of informal volunteers and anti-establishment politicians,¹⁵ not because of actions taken by the state. Along with increasing insularity comes a dangerous and paradoxical relationship with information. High-level actors' dissemination of erroneous information during the June events has undermined confidence in non-local information sources. However, word-of-mouth information from friends and relatives often echoes the alarmist warnings of impending terrorist attacks and reprisals for the June violence¹⁶ from those same official sources, heightening people's sense of insecurity.¹⁷ Meanwhile, the underlying causes of the violence – the collapse of the country's economy, rural infrastructure and education system – remain obscured by its aftermath.

Almazbek Atambaev was elected president in October 2011. His huge margin of victory, and the relative calm with which the election was received, suggests that the country's élites may be weary of open violence.¹⁸ However, some of the new president's challenges will be to restore communities' trust in the state and to foster a country-wide sense of belonging, beyond ethnic divides.

15 Conversations with civil rights and youth organisations, Osh, March-December 2011; conversations with residents, Jalalabad province, October 2011; Saferworld (2011). *Community Security Assessment in Osh, Jalalabad and Batken oblasts of Kyrgyzstan – July 2011*. London, p.4.

16 'На юге Кыргызстана проходят совместные антитеррористические учения [Joint anti-terrorism training conducted in the south of Kyrgyzstan]', *Fergana.news*, 3rd May 2011. Available at <http://174.133.201.90/news.php?id=16683&mode=snews>. Shortly before the anniversary of the June 2010 violence, Security Council head Keneshbek Dushebaev stated that up to 400 Kyrgyz citizens, most of them ethnic Uzbeks from the country's southern provinces, had left for terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan and were planning revenge attacks on southern Kyrgyzstan.

17 Conversations with residents, Osh, June 2011; conversations with a civil society leader, Aravan, October and November 2011, Saferworld (2011). *Op. cit.*, p.2.

18 Atambaev won in the first round with 61% of the vote, while his two closest opponents, Kamchibek Tashiev and Adakhan Madumarov, took just over 13% each. Both runners up claimed widespread fraud, but post-election protests were limited. (See: D. Trilling. 'Kyrgyzstan: Atambayev Declares Victory, Despite "Significant Irregularities"', *eurasianet.org*, November 12th 2011. Available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/64420>

II. THE EU IN KYRGYZSTAN: ANTICIPATING, PREVENTING OR REACTING TO CRISES?

The EU is the largest donor in Kyrgyzstan, planning to provide €118 million in grants and budgetary support between 2010 and 2013.¹⁹ This engagement has increased over the last two decades, especially since the 11th September 2001 attacks and subsequent international deployment in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries. As the previous section has highlighted, Kyrgyzstan has also faced a tense recent history, with regime changes, inter-ethnic clashes, and more general challenges relating to statebuilding processes, such as building a democratic and responsive state, an accountable governance system and strengthening state-society relations. This section will focus on EU engagement in Kyrgyzstan, judging its conflict sensitivity and reviewing how it reacted to the 2010 crisis.

1. EU ENGAGEMENT IN KYRGYZSTAN

A REGIONAL APPROACH TO SUPPORT STABILITY, SECURITY AND PROSPERITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

Current EU engagement in Kyrgyzstan is guided by a broader regional approach to Central Asia, as set out in the *EU and Central Asia: strategy for a new partnership* and the *Regional strategy paper for assistance to Central Asia 2007-2013*.²⁰ The rationale for adopting this regional approach stems from the analysis that Central Asian countries share common and trans-boundary challenges, which need to be addressed through better cooperation both among the countries of the region and also between these countries and the EU.

The EU has made clear that its interests lie in a stable and secure Central Asia for several reasons. Firstly, since the establishment of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the region and the EU are moving closer together. Secondly, because of its geographic proximity to several hotspots (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran), any strategic, political and economic developments impact directly or indirectly on EU interests. Finally, the region's energy resources can help the EU meet its supply needs. As a result, the EU's response since 2007 has been strengthened engagement on seven critical issues: democratisation, education, economic development, energy, water management, border management, and intercultural dialogue. Its strategy aims to promote Central Asian regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations; reduce poverty and increase living standards, in the context of the Millennium Development Goals; promote democratisation, human rights, good governance and economic reform. This enhanced engagement is also reflected financially, with the budget allocated for cooperation with Central Asian countries set to double compared to the previous financial framework.²¹ Finally, the appointment of an EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Central Asia as early as 2005 – still active six years later – also demonstrates the EU's growing interest in Central Asia.

KYRGYZSTAN COUNTRY LEVEL PRIORITIES

Drawing on this regional strategy, national level plans set out the priorities of EU bilateral cooperation with each Central Asian country, reflecting the different national contexts. In Kyrgyzstan, the EU has three main

19 Delegation of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic (2010). 'Commissioner Piebalgs's first visit to Central Asia (18/11/2010)', accessed 9th November 2011. Available at http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kyrgyzstan/press_corner/all_news/news/2010/20101118_01_en.htm

20 Council of the EU (2007). *The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership; Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007-2013*. European Community: Brussels.

21 Ibid.

areas of cooperation: social protection reform, education reform, and judicial reform and rule of law. These are complemented by support for public finance management reform.

THE EU STRATEGY: A BROAD LEVEL OF CONFLICT SENSITIVITY...

The EU's Central Asia strategy is informed by a security narrative, in line with the European Security Strategy.²² The overall goal of the EU is to promote security and stability in the region, 'by means of peaceful inter-actions', through 'the development and consolidation of stable, just and open societies', and through strengthening commitments to 'international law, the rule of law, human rights and democratic values, as well as to market economy'.²³ By setting out this theory of change, the EU has demonstrated a broad level of sensitivity to, and willingness to tackle, conflict issues hampering development in the region. The EU strategy also contains a section focusing on threats and challenges, where organised crime is described as a non-conventional threat to security which has to be addressed through border management.²⁴ Similarly, the Regional Strategy Paper (RSP)²⁵ mentions some potential conflict risks, for example over irrigated land and water resources, and recounts outbreaks of violence, including inter-clan, inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts. It also highlights the links between some cooperation areas and conflict dynamics, such as border management (especially in the Ferghana Valley), and rural community-driven schemes for poverty alleviation. The Kyrgyzstan country analysis provides a more country-specific overview of the EU analysis, mentioning some conflict-related information in terms of risks: 'the risks of violent political conflict and of a large refugee crisis remain'...'recurring cases of violence and unrest'...'concerns over long term stability' – and in terms of drivers – 'links between business activities (often with criminal connections) and politics'...'solidity of the Bakiev-Kulov partnership' [and] 'the issue of Uzbek refugees'.²⁶

...WITH NO SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO ADDRESS DRIVERS AND RISKS

However, beyond these few occurrences, the RSP does not systematically set out how EU priorities at the country level relate to conflict dynamics and, therefore, how they could be tackled further down the line. In light of these documents, the EU's overall approach to the Kyrgyz context is to address potential risks through long-term structural engagement, but it does not make reference to the need to anticipate, prevent and respond to outbreaks of violent conflict as a priority in itself, as a cross-cutting concern, or as a risk to be managed. This is particularly the case of the 2011-13 Indicative Programme drafted in 2009, which assumes that 'there will be no major changes that will adversely affect the stability of the countries or any major shifts with regard to the Governments' overall commitment to reform and policy priorities, or in their outlook towards the EU'.²⁷

2. THE EU AND THE 2010 CRISIS

As explained in Section I, the 2010 crisis consisted of two phases of unrest and violence. The first was the ousting of President Bakiev in April 2010 following street protests and popular unrest. The second centred on inter-ethnic tensions in the southern part of the country (in the cities of Osh and Jalalabad), culminating in open clashes and a refugee crisis. In order to assess the performance of EU early warning systems in Kyrgyzstan, interviews and research for this case study focused on the way the EU anticipated, prevented and responded to this two-phased crisis. This section looks at conflict monitoring and analysis capacities, methodologies and processes, and then on the different responses provided by the EU.

A. ANTICIPATING CONFLICT THROUGH MONITORING AND ANALYSIS

BEFORE THE APRIL REVOLUTION: SEVERAL PARALLEL MONITORING ACTIVITIES, BUT NO WARNING

It is usually acknowledged that the April 2010 revolution, which ousted President Bakiev, took most of the country's observers, stakeholders and the international community by surprise. Frustration and anger had been rising, but nobody had predicted the extent of demonstrations or their outcome. Similarly, according to

²² European Security Strategy (2003). *A secure Europe in a better world*. Brussels.

²³ Council of the EU (2007). *Op. cit.*, pp.2-5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.47.

²⁷ European Commission (2009). *Central Asia DCI Indicative programme 2011-2013*. DG Relex: Brussels, p.62.

interviewees, at the EU level, no early warning was exchanged despite context monitoring by different parts of the EU for different purposes. The EC Delegation (hereafter Delegation), although lacking a political section at that time, was reporting to the Brussels-based Desk (sitting within the EC Directorate General for External Relations – DG Relex) on developments within the country at least once a month, and more if required. The EUSR was carrying out its usual monitoring activity on any political and security developments and conducting high level political dialogue with Kyrgyz officials. The Council of the EU Situation Centre (SITCEN) was undertaking enhanced monitoring of the political, economic and environmental situation, internal security, terrorist threats, among others.

FOLLOWING THE APRIL REVOLUTION: STRENGTHENED MOBILISATION ON ALL SIDES

The April events, and the changes they brought, led the EU to enhance its monitoring activities in and on Kyrgyzstan in the following days and weeks. First of all, to the benefit of the Delegation, the Regional Crisis Response Planning Officer based in Astana, Kazakhstan, was seconded to Bishkek in order to support the political reporting capacity, but also in anticipation of potential Instrument for Stability (IfS) programme identification. SITCEN also deployed one of its staff in the Delegation to ensure regular, first-hand reporting to Brussels. Finally, the EUSR also stepped up its monitoring and political dialogue activities. Despite this enhanced engagement from all parts to closely monitor developments on the ground, synergies between these different monitoring activities had not been an explicit requirement. As a result, little information was exchanged, analysis was not developed jointly, and reports were not systematically shared (for example, internal procedures prevented SITCEN and EUSR reports being shared with the Delegation). This hampered the potential to build a shared understanding of the context and the challenges to tackle.

As the situation deteriorated from the end of April to the mid-June inter-ethnic clashes, interviewees stated that developments were closely followed and reported. This is reflected in statements made by the High Representative (HR) for the CFSP, Catherine Ashton, and the Spanish presidency of the EU to the OSCE Permanent Council.²⁸

AFTER THE JUNE CLASHES: STEADY MONITORING ACTIVITY FOR A FEW MONTHS

In addition to existing capacity, the Delegation recruited a consultant to assist in the identification and preparation of IfS funding and to follow financial decisions. As the consultant was not bound by travel restrictions affecting other Delegation staff (preventing them from travelling on a regular basis to the regions where inter-ethnic clashes took place), his assignment also included the development of a conflict analysis focusing on southern Kyrgyzstan, in order to deepen the Delegation's analysis of the region and to inform potential additional IfS funding. The EUSR also deployed political advisers in Bishkek (four from August-October and then two until January) to monitor political, security and human rights developments and provide first-hand reporting to the HR and Member States. The EUSR was also considered to be the only European stakeholder with such high-level political contacts (at presidential and governmental levels) and therefore in a good position to convey messages and provide influential support. As the situation stabilised, monitoring systems returned to normal with the Delegation reporting to the DG Relex (and then EEAS) Desk, and the EUSR and SITCEN monitoring the situation according to their usual remote procedures. The October 2011 presidential elections were closely monitored through the usual political reporting, with a specific emphasis on the human rights situation. It was anticipated that the elections would be an important step on the road to stabilisation with no likely return of violence; this proved to be the case.

28 C. Ashton. 'Speech to the European parliament on the situation in Kyrgyzstan', Strasbourg, 20th April 2010; C. Ashton. 'Statement...on Kyrgyzstan', Brussels, 14th May 2010; Spanish Presidency of the European Union. 'EU statement on the situation in Kyrgyzstan', OSCE Permanent Council No. 806 Vienna, 22nd April 2010.

OBSERVATIONS ON CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND MONITORING

Methodologies: information flows rather than conflict analysis

Most of the analyses and reports which were produced consist of qualitative assessments of the context. Apart from the SITCEN enhanced monitoring methods and procedures, and to a certain extent the Delegation analysis of conflict dynamics in the South (to inform IfS programming), analysis and conflict-related information exchanged between EU actors do not comply with a specific methodology or protocol. Instead they are driven by ongoing developments, forthcoming important events, by Member States' interest, or by a specific request from the hierarchy. These qualitative analyses are based on a wide array of open-source information and on individual staff knowledge of a country's political, social and economic situation. Despite the fact that analyses and reports are produced on a fairly regular basis, the absence of a shared methodology prevents EU actors from tracking conflict dynamics across time. The EC checklist for root causes of conflict, a tool that was designed for such a purpose,²⁹ was not known or used by any interviewees. As a result, the types of analyses conducted around the 2010 crises helped maintain information flows, which are critical in a phase of crisis management, but did not develop a systematic analysis fostering a shared understanding among all EU actors of the conflict drivers and dynamics to be addressed.

Close collaboration with the OSCE and the UN

In country, in addition to the close collaboration between the EUSR and the OSCE and UN envoys, coordination with other actors, especially with the OSCE and UN, through the framework of the donors' Peace and Development Coordination Group, was usually seen positively. This collaboration involved regular meetings based around information exchange. During the 2010 crisis, information provided by the OSCE was particularly useful in bringing field level dynamics to the EU and others who did not have that kind of presence on the ground. Interviewees also acknowledged that these meetings helped build a shared understanding of the context among donors, an important step towards more effective engagement through harmonised approaches.

The challenge of taking “weak signals” into account

Interviewees demonstrated an accurate understanding of the context and a good knowledge of events occurring within the country. These are often referred to as “weak signals” of upcoming tensions and even conflicts. Taking these weak signals into account, and raising awareness about their significance and potential consequences, is critical in the field of early warning and conflict prevention. It is usually relatively easy to look back and identify all the weak (and even stronger) signals which paved the way for the outbreak of a crisis, but more difficult to draw the attention of decision makers to the risks which these events entail at the time they occur. In Kyrgyzstan this was certainly the case for EU actors throughout the month of May, when inflammatory statements were made in the media and incidents targeting certain ethnic groups took place in the southern region. These contributed to inter-ethnic tensions and culminated in the June clashes, a refugee and humanitarian crisis, and the more profound destabilisation of an already fragile social equilibrium.

The lack of a shared understanding of early warning

Most of the interviewees did not consider themselves part of a clearly defined early warning system. Even if they acknowledged having a role in alerting their services and hierarchy to a deteriorating situation, there did not seem to be a clear and shared awareness of the procedures to do so, nor an understanding of what early warning means and implies. The relationship between usual reporting activities and early warning is not clear either, given that some information could be considered early warning, for example highlighting the weak signals of a deteriorating situation. As a result, interviewees could not refer to any early warning communicated among EU actors, but they acknowledged exchanging information on the 2010 crisis as it unfolded. OSCE spot reports and the UNDP Peace and Development Analysis project have been considered by interviewees as relevant ways and processes to monitor conflict trends and provide formal early warnings.



29 S. Babaud and N. Mirimanova (2011). *Op. cit.*

Challenges and opportunities to more systematic analysis and early warning

Interviewees usually recognised the added value of applying more systematic methods of context monitoring and analysis, including conflict trends, at different levels and for different purposes, such as political reporting and programming. However, capacity shortages and time constraints within the Delegation, and more generally the lack of knowledge, guidance and instructions, were identified as the main obstacles. The institutional changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, which granted EU Delegations a political role and more capacity to undertake those types of responsibilities, were also seen as an opportunity to overcome these challenges. Moreover, new instructions on political reporting aim to bring more consistency to the types of information and analysis sent by delegations. There will now be different types of reports for different purposes, one of which is to alert relevant individuals and services about the outbreak of a crisis. It remains to be seen whether this will help build an enhanced awareness among decision makers of conflict dynamics and risks (based on a framework to capture local level conflicts and weak signals), and provide timely responses in a preventive way. The possible gathering of a conflict-prevention group in Brussels to monitor developments on a set of countries could be a way to build shared analysis, mobilise political attention, and identify early response options.

B. RESPONDING TO CONFLICT DYNAMICS AND THE 2010 CRISIS

The EU has provided different types of response to the 2010 crisis, and more generally to conflict dynamics, through political dialogue, public diplomacy and EC-led programmes.

STRONG POLITICAL MOBILISATION IN SUPPORT OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

The April revolution and the subsequent risk of a power vacuum triggered stronger political engagement by several EU stakeholders. Being one of the only EU stakeholders with high level political contacts, the EUSR for Central Asia, Pierre Morel, travelled regularly to Kyrgyzstan, meeting President Otunbayeva, the provisional government, civil society, as well as other international stakeholders. In addition to travels in country, the EUSR was in daily contact with President Otunbayeva and other high level political personalities for consultations on key decisions relating to the establishment of the provisional government and the first parliamentary democracy in Central Asia. EU support, especially through the EUSR's activities, was critical in lending the provisional government the legitimacy it required during a troubled and very fragile period.

Constant contact with OSCE and UN envoys was also critical to build a unified front and provide the sense that the world was watching and ready to support a genuine and relevant roadmap towards a stable democratic state. In that respect, the three Special Envoys' joint statements and other joint activities were critical to influence developments in country. In order to back and guide these initiatives, the HR Catherine Ashton made several statements throughout the crisis demonstrating regular follow up from Brussels as well. The Spanish Presidency of the EU made regular statements to the OSCE Permanent Council expressing concerns over the deteriorating situation and supporting the efforts of the OSCE to address the situation. Finally, Council Conclusions setting out EU positions on Kyrgyzstan were adopted by the 27 EU Member States in April, June and July, demonstrating, once again, the political interest in the crisis and more particularly in its resolution.³⁰ Along with humanitarian assistance,³¹ this set of public diplomacy, political dialogue and consultation activities was the most immediate response of the EU to the 2010 crisis. It demonstrated the ability of the EU to be at the front of political action, and more importantly to influence changes in a very short and tense timeframe. This engagement at the political level also provided a framework for, and has been supplemented by, some of the assistance measures adopted under the Instrument for Stability (see below).

BEYOND THE 2010 CRISIS: FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS IN COUNTRY

The EU continued to monitor political developments such as the constitutional referendum which took place on 28th June 2010, the parliamentary elections in October 2010, the work of the independent international commission of inquiry into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan, and the presidential elections in October 2011. Despite the fact that political attention in Brussels had shifted to other pressing events, such as the Arab Spring, the establishment of a political section in the newly called "EU Delegation" (EUD), now attached to the EEAS, provides more capacity and leadership to remain engaged and follow developments in country.

³⁰ Foreign Affairs Council (2010). Council Conclusions on Kyrgyzstan: 26th April; 14th June; 26th July. Brussels.

³¹ Following the June clashes and the subsequent refugee crisis, the EC allocated €5 million for urgent humanitarian assistance through ECHO.

DIRECT RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS THROUGH THE INSTRUMENT FOR STABILITY

Following the crisis, the EU proposed a set of IfS programmes spanning a few weeks up to 18 months to support stabilisation and democratisation processes in three phases. The first phase (€1.9 million, approved in July 2010) consisted of five projects to build and strengthen the capacity of the authorities to conduct the forthcoming elections and electoral legislation reforms, to support the new political leadership, and to set up an international independent inquiry commission. The second phase (€5.35 million, approved in October 2010) included five projects to support the new institutions (Parliament, Ministry of Justice, Chamber of Audit) and the political leadership, but also to address some of the conflict dynamics of the June crisis by working with the media on conflict-sensitive reporting, supporting human rights monitoring activities in the southern region, and addressing housing for refugees. It is worth noting that the Delegation and the Brussels-based Crisis Response Planners tried to link these short-term projects with longer-term funding opportunities to avoid funding gaps following the crisis response timeframe. The third phase of IfS support (€8 million, approved in September 2011) focuses on a set of projects addressing other drivers of the conflict (border demarcation in the Ferghana Valley, minority rights, access to justice issues) as well as some of the responses to the crisis (OSCE Community Security Initiative, early warning, early response and confidence building through a NGO consortium).

OTHER TYPES OF PROGRAMMING RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS

Beyond the IfS, the Delegation used the potential of other instruments – especially the 2011 round of Calls for Proposals of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and Non-State Actors (NSA) – to develop a broader set of responses to the crisis. According to interviewees, although these instruments were not meant to be used for crisis response purposes, they were still considered useful to support civil society-led projects and initiatives aiming to address the root causes of the conflict and, as such, to seek complementarity with IfS projects.

LONGER-TERM INSTRUMENTS: NOT FIT TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT?

The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) is the geographical instrument used by the EC to implement its cooperation strategy with Kyrgyzstan. It is usually acknowledged that this instrument is not fit for conflict or volatile contexts because of its lack of flexibility (once a contract is signed, it is impossible to amend it) and the lengthy approval and disbursement procedures, which span several years. However, if designed in a conflict-sensitive way from the outset, a DCI programme has the potential to address some root causes of conflicts, prevent new conflict, and build peace through structural changes. One example in Kyrgyzstan is an irrigation project in the Ferghana Valley (DCI, 2008). The project documentation acknowledges that water management can be affected by, but also help address, cross-border and inter-community tensions. As a result, it builds in provisions throughout the project phases to ensure this is taken into account and tackled.³² However, other DCI projects rarely spell out how they will avoid doing harm or help ease tensions, even when mentioning the sensitive nature of the thematic area (good governance and democratic space) or the context of implementation (Ferghana Valley).³³

SUPPORT TO OSCE OPERATIONS

Although EU Member States discussed the appropriateness of deploying a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission in Kyrgyzstan following the June crisis, this possibility was ruled out quite quickly, with a decision to leave that type of operation to the OSCE. The EU constantly expressed its support for OSCE activities in Kyrgyzstan and particularly for an OSCE-led operation in the south of the country. This reflects the impression of several EU interviewees that the OSCE, along with UNDP, was considered a primary stakeholder in early warning and conflict prevention.

³² European Commission (2008). *Annual Action Programme in favour of the Kyrgyz Republic, Annex 3: Action Fiche N°3 - Support to Infrastructural Development in rural areas (irrigation)*. Brussels.

³³ This is for instance the case of a road infrastructure rehabilitation in the Ferghana Valley (DCI, 2009) and a governance project (DCI, 2009). European Commission (2009). *Annual Action Programme in favour of the Kyrgyz Republic, Annex 2: operationalizing good governance for social justice; Annex 3: Rural infrastructure development and social reintegration (Ferghana Valley)*. Brussels.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS AND CONFLICT DYNAMICS:

Swift and prominent engagement at the political level

Through the EUSR, who had been able to build high level political contacts in previous years, the EU enjoyed direct access to the provisional government at a critical and fragile period for the state. Kyrgyzstan not only had to establish a parliamentary democracy, but even more importantly restore its legitimacy and credibility. The EU was able to provide direct political support at presidential and governmental levels on a regular basis. This helped to influence developments to secure stability and unity, and to put in place the building blocks of a democratisation process. The IfS has been key in supporting these political initiatives and addressing the urgent needs that were expressed.

The challenge to shift towards a more preventive approach

Despite an effective mobilisation in support of critical needs following the crisis, the Kyrgyzstan case study shows that IfS mobilisation depends a lot on political attention, which rose once the crisis broke out. Other tools such as the EIDHR and the NSA LA call for proposals could be used to support civil society-led initiatives to deal with different conflict causes and consequences when there is less political attention, and should be explored further. Using long-term geographic instruments such as the DCI in a conflict-sensitive way can also make a meaningful contribution to prevent conflict and build peace in the country. As the EU prepares for the next programming cycle, it should give more consideration to the opportunities to undertake such good practice more systematically.

The need for awareness raising and stricter instructions

A shift towards more preventive approaches or towards more systematic mainstreaming of conflict-related issues into programming processes should be encouraged through both awareness raising and instructions. The research for this case study shows that acquaintance with issues including early warning, conflict analysis, and their purpose and added value, varies from one person to another, partly because of a lack of institutional knowledge and related guidance. The other key factor is the absence of formal instructions to address these issues more proactively and consistently within a programming process.

Defining an EU role and comparative advantage in conflict prevention

Whether the EU is best placed to be more active on early warning, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding is a question worth posing, given that organisations like the OSCE and UNDP are often identified as leaders on these issues. Nevertheless, non-EU interviewees supported more proactive EU engagement to maximise the potential impact of its important financial support and other political leverage. In that respect, it will be critical for EU actors to also consider the other local, national and international initiatives and resources that can help anticipate, prevent and respond to conflicts.

A transitional period for the EU with opportunities to seize

The 2010 crisis broke out at a time when the EU was going through a lot of changes resulting from the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty. The EEAS was created in December 2010 and new responsibilities for the EU Delegations (which in Kyrgyzstan had only been a fully-fledged delegation since December 2009), such as political and diplomatic representation, were established only a few months afterwards. As a result, the EU was not considered to be a key actor on conflict prevention in the country at that time, in the way that international organisations like the OSCE or UN were. However, the new setup of the EUD and its enhanced political responsibility, such as the coordination of the positions of EU member states' representations, allow for enhanced engagement on these issues. There is also potential to explore synergies between the political and operation sections so that context analysis informs the programming process on a more systematic basis.

III. LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CAPACITIES ON EARLY WARNING AND PEACEBUILDING IN KYRGYZSTAN

Identifying sources of tensions, and preventing them from slipping into open violence is one of the first and foremost responsibilities of any state. In Kyrgyzstan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) is the primary organ responsible for safety, overseeing the State Committee for National Security and city, district, and local police divisions. These cooperate with local, district, city, provincial and national administrators – including those responsible for inter-ethnic, economic, and social affairs – to identify, intercept and react to conflict. However, public confidence in these organs is very low, especially since the 2010 crisis, when some of them were reported to be involved in perpetrating the violence.³⁴ In parallel, and sometimes in reaction to this distrust, several international and civil society organisations have filled the security vacuum and established early warning-early response systems in the past decade and since the crisis.

This section looks at domestic and international early warning mechanisms which were active prior to and during the 2010 crisis in Kyrgyzstan. It then examines post-2010 measures to address new realities and revelations, highlighting the challenges involved in making conflict prevention more responsive to communities' needs and concerns and thereby more effective.

1. IN-COUNTRY EARLY WARNING STRUCTURES: A DECADE OF TRIAL AND ERROR

A. INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

The OSCE's Centre in Kyrgyzstan was established in 1998 in a Permanent Council decision citing the organisation's 'role as a primary instrument for early warning and conflict prevention'.³⁵ Its primary contribution to early warning has been through event-specific spot reports, produced jointly by staff stationed in Osh and Bishkek. Reports are based on interaction with local officials, official press releases, analysis of local media and attendance at some political rallies and demonstrations. International observers have commented that the OSCE's eagerness to avoid friction with host country authorities,³⁶ in this case Kyrgyzstan, has historically led to a non-controversial approach to gathering and communicating pertinent early warning information. While spot reports provide a reasonable overview of the political climate, some interviewees thought they were weak on grassroots detail and contained little information which could easily be accessed from outside the country.³⁷ Since the 2010 violence, the OSCE has sought to incorporate grassroots-level engagement into its early warning activities.

34 Saferworld (2011), *Op. cit.*, p.2; KIC (2010). *Op. cit.*, pp.69-70; Human Rights Watch (2010). *Op. cit.*, p.5; International Crisis Group (2010) *Op. cit.*, p.1.

35 The OSCE decision is available at <http://www.osce.org/bishkek>. The Centre was established by the OSCE Permanent Council on 23rd July 1998 'to encourage Kyrgyzstan's further integration into the OSCE community'.

36 Conversation with international analyst, Osh, November 2011

37 Conversations with international official and international analyst, Bishkek, November 2011; in December 2011 an OSCE official remarked that it was time to stop treating spot reports like "intelligence," as 'the quality [was] just too low.'

Along with field operations such as the Bishkek centre and other field offices, several OSCE institutions have an early warning mandate. These include the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), the Representative of the Freedom of the Media (RFOM), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and the Office of the Co-coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA). The situation in Kyrgyzstan was closely monitored by the HCNM, Knut Vollebaek, who travelled regularly to the country and kept OSCE states informed about developments on the ground.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

The UNDP's early warning system in Kyrgyzstan is currently in its second incarnation. The first attempt, the Preventative Development Programme (PDP), began in Batken province³⁸ in 2000 and was countrywide by 2004. It involved UN specialists and, later, local monitors, collecting and compiling qualitative and quantitative information into semi-annual and annual reports. When it failed to predict the 2005 overthrow of Akaev, the project was shelved and re-evaluated.³⁹

It was then reworked into the current Peace and Development Analysis (PDA) project. PDA methodology⁴⁰ involves three stages – research, analysis and action – during which a collective strategy is formulated through a single set of provincial level and national reports. While officials had been loath to read or respond to PDP-generated reports and recommendations,⁴¹ the PDA sought to overcome government scepticism by giving them partial ownership of the process. After two years of lobbying, the UNDP convinced the Bakiev administration to enter into a PDA partnership in 2008⁴². A national steering board, chaired by the presidential administration and consisting of seven state actors and two civil society actors, was established. It presided over *Oblast'* (province-level) Advisory Councils and Local Advisory Councils with a 1:1 ratio of state actors to civil society representatives.

Advisory councils carried out a participatory investigation through workshops, polling and parallel research. Focal points included youth issues, the role of governance in conflict, resource distribution and food security, and demographics and migration issues. FTI specialists (see following section) analysed the findings in cooperation with the council members, producing reports for all seven provinces as well as a separate report on youth issues.

Between 2008 and the first half of 2010, the PDA managed to involve officials in investigating the causes of conflict, but this process did not give them the capacity to respond to conflict. The PDA's only national report was released in early 2011, marking the end of the analysis stage. Now into its action stage, the PDA is helping to develop the official capacity for response, through the "infrastructure for peace" initiative which aims to bring several actors to the table and to support authorities at all levels to establish structures and mechanisms to build consensus and settle disputes.⁴³ Meanwhile, other organisations have taken up the PDA model of combining grassroots work and cooperation with officials in their post-June early warning activities, especially within civil society.

38 Kyrgyzstan's southernmost province. Sharing borders with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and containing Uzbek and Tajik enclaves, Batken is known for its susceptibility to land and resource disputes.

39 Conversation with UNDP staff, Bishkek, December 2010.

40 For more information please refer to *PDA: Background and Use*. Available at http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/prevention/integrate/indonesia/5_01-booklet-4_.pdf

41 Please refer to footnote 4.

42 Please refer to footnote 4.

43 UNDP (2010). 'UNDP presented the concept of "Infrastructure for peace" in Kyrgyzstan', accessed 5th December 2011. Available at <http://www.undp.kg/en/media-room/news/article/3-news-list/1374-undp-presented-the-concept-of-infrastructure-for-peace-in-kyrgyzstan>

B. DOMESTIC ACTORS

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY: THE EXAMPLE OF THE FOUNDATION FOR TOLERANCE INTERNATIONAL (FTI)⁴⁴

The FTI, a locally run conflict-mitigation group, has been a key partner in the UNDP's early warning activities. Its staff facilitate PDA workshops and prepare its reports, while the PDA's *Oblast'* Advisory Committees and National Steering Committee approve them.

The FTI also has its own early warning project, functioning since 2005. Unlike the UNDP's PDA, the FTI's early warning focuses solely on the three southern provinces of Osh, Jalalabad, and Batken. From 2007 to 2008, local monitors stationed throughout the southern provinces sent weekly qualitative reports on various sources of tension, based on personal observations and ad hoc interviews. Reports were consolidated into weekly briefings, complete with recommendations for possible official responses to developing problems. Briefings were sent to the State Security Service, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the presidential administration. According to local civil society, officials would often respond to the reports with scepticism, denying the issues raised or citing a lack of financial resources with which to address them.⁴⁵

A switch to longer, more focused reports in 2009 brought some possible success. A 2009 report on pasture disputes in Batken spurred the government to pass a decree on the formation of pasture committees at the village level. Upon receiving the FTI's report on gang activity in schools that same year, the Education Ministry initially denied the problem existed.⁴⁶ However, in June 2011 the ministry announced the formation of an agency which will work directly with students to address the issue. Civil society representatives are only cautiously optimistic, however, saying that the government may yet announce it cannot see the project through, due to financial limitations.⁴⁷

WARNING AND RESPONSE TO THE 2010 CRISIS:

The period between April and June 2010 solidified a sense of futility within the early warning community. As CSOs' paper trails from the period testify, considerable time and resources were devoted to assessing and developing risks and producing appropriate recommendations.⁴⁸ Once violence broke out, early warning actors were forced to switch to crisis response, and many became convinced that this should in fact be their long-term focus.

The FTI issued seven sets of recommendations between 13th April and 31st May, all of which addressed tensions which ended up playing key roles in the June violence. The UNDP also issued recommendations to the provisional government on managing ethnic tensions and resource competition after the 17th April pogrom in Mayevka. Despite individual officials' genuine efforts to address issues raised during this period,⁴⁹ no concrete steps were taken.⁵⁰

Early warning also took place on a more local level. Immediately following the overthrow of Bakiev, civil society leaders in the southern provinces formed rapid response teams to address what they feared was growing unrest. The rapid response group in Jalalabad held a series of workshops with numerous interest groups which had taken to the streets of the city. Their concerns proved to be representative of the southern provinces and were again exhibited in the violence of May and June. The testimony of a Jalalabad civil society activist suggests that their appeals to local officials failed for the same reasons that early warnings had been going unheeded for the last decade: new leaders had little sense of the tensions lurking beneath the province's daily routines. Eager

44 Saferworld acknowledges that many local and national civil society organisations played a critical role in mitigating and responding to the 2010 violence. The decision to highlight the activities of FTI is linked to their longstanding involvement in the field of early warning, and their explicit engagement on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

45 Conversation with local civil society staff, Bishkek, November 2011.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 For example, see the list of (Russian-language) recommendations at www.fti.org/kg/en/publications/recommendations

49 Conversation with FTI staff, Bishkek, November 2011.

50 Please refer to footnote 4.

to prove their own competence, they also had little motivation to act on a set of warnings produced through a process of which they had no ownership.⁵¹

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the OSCE's HCNM, Knut Vollebaek, kept member states informed about the deteriorating situations throughout May, and then issued a formal early warning on 12th June. This formal warning is a last resort mechanism to draw the attention of OSCE countries to an imminent crisis, when preventive measures have been exhausted and there is no longer a chance of averting crisis by means of quiet diplomacy. Activated only once before in 1999 in Macedonia, this mechanism is mostly a political tool to highlight risks and threats, as well as possible responses to a situation. His call for action did not receive an immediate response, but it helped make the case for an OSCE operation (first designed as a Police Advisory mission, then as a Community Security Initiative).

LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH OTHER ACTORS' EARLY WARNING AND PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES:

Early warning without early response is ineffective

Non-state actors involved in the early warning process became mediators and distributors of humanitarian aid after violence erupted. As a superficial stability took hold – the superficial stability which lasts to this day – they began to adjust their work to respond to new realisations and realities. A key realisation was the futility of any early warning unaccompanied by early response, coupled with the revelation that the presence of a government which is out of touch with conditions on the ground and without a vested interest in validating the early warning process guarantees a lack of response.

Grassroots programmes and initiatives: rewarding and effective approaches

The FTI, OSCE, UNDP and various local actors have sought to meet the challenge of linking early warning with early response through programmes which combine processes like grassroots mediation and community safety with early warning, engaging officials at every stage of the process. These initiatives include the FTI's community safety project, the UN-Women-founded Women's Peace Committee and the OSCE-coordinated public-private mediator project. The grassroots component, which employs both formal and informal community leaders as conflict monitors and mediators, has yielded numerous stories of local solutions to potential political and cross-border conflicts.

Local level processes need to be strengthened with appropriate responses and support from central government

Despite community members' reluctance to share their concerns, these processes serve to reinforce the importance of trust building at the local level. However, attempts undertaken within these initiatives to provide early warning to the central government have been less successful: when a problem requires more than a local solution, government fails to respond. For example, a May 2011 national report of the Women's Peace Committee appealed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to simplify the process for obtaining documentation for stateless women in the country's border regions. These women's prospective deportation threatened to break up families and spark serious cross-border conflict, yet months later some stateless women had already given up on what is still a convoluted bureaucratic process.

51 Interview with civil society activist, Bishkek, October 2011.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion 1: This case study of the EU's approach towards the 2010 crisis and conflict dynamics in Kyrgyzstan shows that **there is no shared understanding of, or sense of belonging to, an EU early warning chain** and, beyond that, to an EU conflict-prevention agenda. EU actors are aware of the conflict dynamics with which they are confronted, but – apart from a couple of specific cases and purposes (SITCEN and IfS study) – this knowledge is not captured in a systematic way (meaning: applying a specific methodology, regularly updated and linked to a set of response options) to create a shared understanding of conflict dynamics tracked across time.

Recommendation 1: The EEAS should clarify its approach to and the purpose of early warning, the procedural implications, and should communicate this among Brussels and Delegation staff.

Conclusion 2: Sharing a common understanding also implies the **need to manage expectations towards early warning – the purpose of early warning is not so much to forecast and predict but to anticipate conflicts**. Everyone acknowledges that it would have been almost impossible to predict the April revolution and, to some extent, the 10th June attacks. The question is, therefore, how to anticipate these events. That means gaining an understanding of conflict drivers and dynamics and then being prepared to act on this understanding to prevent violent outcomes and identify opportunities to settle differences. Such an understanding has to be linked to a broader awareness about conflict prevention: the rationale, added value and practical implications.

Recommendation 2: The EEAS, together with the EC, should develop some guidance on conflict analysis, with the objective of raising awareness about the rationale, added value and practical implications of undertaking conflict analyses.

Recommendation 3: Training on conflict prevention and peacebuilding should be expanded and available at Delegation level to ensure all staff share a similar understanding of these issues and their practical implications at all levels.

Recommendation 4: Clear management instructions need to be provided at all levels to ensure conflict-sensitive approaches are mainstreamed proactively and more systematically.

Recommendation 5: The EEAS and the EC should take advantage of the next programming cycle to test and apply these approaches and methods.

Conclusion 3: EU context analyses focus more on the broad level country situation rather than local level and conflict dynamics. The EU is proficient in assessing broad level dynamics, such as the economic, social, political and security situation in a country. However, the Kyrgyzstan case study shows that the EU has a less systematic way of dealing with weak signals and local level dynamics, which are both the consequences and the drivers of tensions threatening state stability and social cohesion. While EU staff sometimes have a good understanding of these dynamics, this knowledge is not systematically captured to respond in a preventive way. There are different reasons for this, such as a lack of appropriate monitoring and analytical frameworks, but also a lack of clear purpose: what kind of EU process or decision making would that type of exercise inform? The Delegation saw the added value of such an analysis to inform IfS programme identification. Despite being a one-off analysis, this could be a good practice to be implemented more systematically.

Recommendation 6: The EEAS and the EC should elaborate analytical frameworks to monitor conflict dynamics at all levels, taking into account, and with a view to inform, programming decisions and political dialogue as appropriate.

Recommendation 7: The EEAS should pilot these analytical frameworks in a few selected countries.

Conclusion 4: The challenge of analysing weak signals and local level conflict is also linked to **the difficulty of addressing local level conflicts – i.e. linking early warning with early response where responses need to be provided.** The Kyrgyzstan case study shows that one way to address these conflict dynamics is by empowering people to identify their own security issues and to address them through track II mediation and community safety/security types of projects. These are the kind of activities that both international (OSCE, UNDP) and local actors (civil society organisations) are now undertaking to ensure that tensions are tackled quickly enough to prevent them from escalating into open violence at a broader level.

Recommendation 8: The EU should consider more systematic support for track II mediation and community security approaches to ensure that early warning is linked with early action.

Conclusion 5: This analysis shows that the EU has also sought to **use long-term instruments to tackle conflict**, although on an ad hoc basis. When programmed in a conflict-sensitive way, it is possible to build in provisions to ensure conflict is taken into account and addressed through specific activities, risk management, monitoring and evaluation. Other **instruments like the EIDHR and NSA LA funding has also been useful to provide a complementary response to the crisis.**

Recommendation 9: The EC should develop guidance for conflict-sensitive programming to ensure that long-term, as well as shorter-term, programmes can address conflict more proactively.

Recommendation 10: The EU should consider using the EIDHR and NSA-LA calls for proposals more systematically as complementary responses to crisis situations to support civil society activities contributing to bring about positive change.

Conclusion 6: **The ongoing establishment of the EEAS and the preparation for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) provide a good opportunity to reconsider how the EU has approached and responded to conflict so far**, including through early warning systems.

Recommendation 11: EU institutions should take advantage of the new political responsibilities of the EUD, of the new political reporting instructions, as well as the processes undertaken in Brussels to set up a conflict-prevention group. This could ensure that the EU is in a better position to anticipate and then respond to conflict in a preventive manner.

Conclusion 7: **An effective early warning model in Kyrgyzstan should contribute to reinforce state-society relations.** For a state, responding to early signs of tensions or violence is also an opportunity to restore its legitimacy among its citizens. However, the government must see the act of responding to a warning as a validation of its own work and not as a concession to civil society or international organisations.

Recommendation 12: The EU, along with other international organisations should encourage and support a people-centred approach to early warning capacities in Kyrgyzstan which contribute to strengthening inclusive and peaceful state-society relations.

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