

THE EU'S APPROACH TO SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AMIDST SHIFTING GEOPOLITICS

Expert roundtable co-organised by the EU Task Force on SSR and the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)

28 June 2023, 10.30-16.30, Martin's Hotel, Boulevard Charlemagne 80, 1000 Brussels

CONCEPT

The new geopolitical realities brought about by the war in Ukraine and its consequences for the security and defence of the EU, its Member States, and partner countries, call for a re-evaluation of the EU's approach to Security Sector Reform (SSR) in contexts of conflict and fragility. Good governance of, and access to, security and justice continues to provide the foundations for political, social, and economic development, and helps to tackle some of the most pressing challenges to human security, state legitimacy, and the rules-based international order. However, the effectiveness of SSR continues to raise questions, not least in view of the faltering security sector reforms in countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, Burkina Faso, and the Central African Republic, where the EU has made sizeable investments.

In the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (March 2022) the EU and its Member States reaffirmed their commitment to fortifying the EU's role as a global actor and to actively partake in the effort to uphold and maintain international peace and security. Under this purview, the Compass provides a clear direction for the EU to become a stronger and more capable military actor and reinforces the EU's commitment to strengthening the capacity of security and defence actors in partner countries through a more tailored and integrated approach. Is the current EU approach to SSR still fit for purpose and is it relevant to the objectives set out by the Strategic Compass? How can the Integrated Approach be concretely applied when supporting the security and defence sector of partner countries?

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this workshop is to reflect on the key consequences of the current geopolitical shift, the EU responses to it, and what this means for future EU support to SSR in partner countries. In so doing, it aims to inform the review process of the EU SSR Framework.

FORMAT

The meeting will be held in the format of an in-person experts and practitioner workshop. Each of three moderated sessions will open with initial interventions by 3 speakers and will be followed by a moderated exchange with the participants. The event will be held under the Chatham House Rule.

10.30-10.45 Registration and welcome coffee

10.45-11.00 **OPENING REMARKS**

Brice De Schietere, Head of Division, Integrated Approach for Peace and Security Division, EEAS

11.00-12.15 **PANEL 1: SSR TOOLS IN THE DEFENCE SECTOR**

Questions concerning the provision of support in the defence sector have notably increased in the current geopolitical setting as the numbers of competing actors presenting alternative models for security sector governance has proliferated. This trend has occurred at the same time as foundational international legal norms and values have been subject to growing contestation. The EU has a range of relevant tools at its disposal in the defence sector that could be drawn upon to help to tackle instability and insecurity while supporting the strengthening of effective, transparent, and accountable security sector institutions. In particular, the European Peace Facility (EPF) promises to offer new avenues for EU engagement as regards SSR in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Niagalé Bagayoko, Chair of the African Security Sector Network

Anne Bennett, Head of Sub-Saharan Africa Division, DCAF

Jessica Noll, Researcher, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy, University of Hamburg

Moderation: **Viola Dreikhausen**, Analyst for Conflict Research, EU Institute for Security Studies

12.15-13.15 Lunch

13.15-14.30 **PANEL 2: SHRINKING SPACES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE EU'S VALUE-BASED SUPPORT FOR SSR REFORM**

The competition over narratives is intense and democratic values are increasingly contested. The world is divided between democracies, autocracies and an intermediate of both. This has profound geopolitical consequences as well as economic and social impact for the population of Europe and partner countries. The Democratic model of security and justice governance promoted through SSG/R has demonstrated its values in many regions, starting with the reconstruction of European countries after WWII. This model, supported by SSR, generated the stability enabling a historic economic growth that has benefited democracies and beyond. The failure to adopt these models has mostly kept entire regions in underdevelopment, instability, and enduring crisis, sometimes overcome by autocratic regimes often against the respect of Human Rights.

Hans Born, Assistant Director, Head of Policy & Research Department, DCAF

Emma Ingemansson, Senior Security Sector Governance & Reform Desk Officer, FBA

Thierry Vircoulon, Independent Consultant & Research Fellow, Institut Français des Relations Internationales

Moderation: **Antoine Hanin**, Policy Officer – Thematic Expert – Security, DG INTPA, Directorate-General, European Commission

14.30-14.45 Coffee Break

14.45-16.00 **PANEL 3: STABILISATION AND LONGER-TERM APPROACHES TO TACKLE THE ROOT CAUSES OF INSECURITY – TWO FACES OF THE SAME COIN**

Reforming the security sector pre-supposes the existence of institutions responsible for providing and managing public and state security. However, there are countries where, for different reasons, the state is not able to end or prevent the resurgence of violent conflict and to create a climate where people feel reasonably safe. Stabilisation processes could help to enable essential and minimum security and justice, preparing the foundations for transitions to longer-term security sector reform.

Volker Hauck, Senior Analyst, European Centre for Development Policy Management

Simone Tholens, Associate Professor John Cabot University/Part-Time Professor European University Institute

Erwin van Veen, Senior Research Fellow, Clingendael Institute

Moderation: **Gabriele Iacovino**, Policy Officer – Security Sector Reform, EEAS

16.00-16.15 Closing Remarks