



**Civil-Military Co-operation
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Report on Civil-Military interaction meeting.

1.

The intent of the Civil-Military interaction meeting was to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of civil-military interaction with stakeholders from the civilian and military domain in order to identify opportunities and mitigate weaknesses. Main objective was to distinguish whether there were possibilities to commonly come to the development of short term practical deliverables that would enhance improvement of the current level and quality of civil-military interaction.

2.

In order to reach the aim of this meeting a number (28) of organizations were invited to attend and contribute to this meeting. The invitees' were:

- Intergovernmental organizations (14);
- Non-governmental organizations, both umbrella organizations and independent NGOs (11);
- Military organizations, both intergovernmental as national (3).

Aim was to have a balanced participation; the target audience was field practitioners and planners from the operational level. The scope and expertise of all participants would help develop a common understanding of the problems faced by all parties involved and subsequently aid in the development of best practice and other practical products.

Response to the invitation was moderate. This was probably the result of several factors.

- 1) There were difficulties with respect to making contact with the suitable person at the various organizations. It was a challenge to identify the one responsible for dealing with this specific topic.
- 2) There exist already a number of initiatives dealing with this topic, initiated by a multitude of organizations. When analyzing these other initiatives we see that most efforts are aimed at policy developing. This meeting was focused at implementation at the field level. However, it still is rather difficult to convince the recipients of the added value of this initiative when they have X number of invitations for other conferences and workshops pending.
- 3) Due to budget cuts and other resource compulsions, organizations have to prioritize their efforts and activities. Participation in cross-organizational meetings might not have priority.

3.

These factors certainly influenced the attendance of this meeting. It also showed once more the challenges that exist with trying to convene with stakeholders in a cross-organizational setting.

Eventually, 13 organizations confirmed their interest in this meeting and its outcome. Only 6 were able to be present during the meeting. Despite the low number of participants the expected attendance was a relatively fair representation of actors active in the field. Although somewhat military skewed this crowd could contribute to a balanced discussion on civil-military interaction. Unfortunately, due to last-minute cancellations - because of operational reasons- none of the civilian organizations were able to attend the meeting.

4.

The agenda of the meeting was altered because of the last minute changes. Due to a lack of civilian organizations in attendance, the occasion was used to discuss the possibilities for a subsequent meeting and how to enhance civilian participation. There was a consensus that a next meeting on this topic - focusing on the working level- would be desirable. Initiatives like this, to improve alignment of activities avoid duplications of efforts, are needed because stakeholders from the civil and military domain are obliged to share their working environment with each other.

The military participants see this meeting as an opportunity to discuss their current practices with the civilian partners and to hear what concerns they have with regard to for instance NATO's policy. They acknowledged that there is a discrepancy between experience and policy which needs to be addressed. This meeting is a chance to discuss this gap and for the civilian partners to have an influence on policy making.

All participants agreed that they would like to further engage with civilian organizations in order to hear what their practical requirements are for future co-ordination of civil-military activities which could enhance a fruitful alignment of efforts and in the future perhaps lead to something such as pre-deployment training.

The meeting established that there is no unity of purpose within the civil-military domain since the principles and mandates diverge extensively. However, there is a sort of singularity of purpose as all stakeholders try to contribute to disaster relief efforts and crisis management. This could be a binding principle upon which further developments could be based.

One of the main conclusions of this meeting was that an increased interaction within the civil-military domain is desired to enhance the feeling of ownership which is required to ensure the sustainability of conflict resolution. A positive outcome of this process and the subsequent meeting would be to establish some sort of common training to increase mutual awareness and understanding.

5.

The following conclusions were derived from this meeting:

- This meeting is an opportunity for civilian organizations to express their concerns and influence military policy, more specifically NATO's contribution to civil-military interaction;
- The possibilities to organize a subsequent meeting will be investigated as well as strategies to attract a larger attendance from civilian organizations;
- The scope should be widened to include NGOs and IOs from outside the Euro-Atlantic zone;
- The focus of the subsequent meeting will, again, be on the field/operational level and try to identify possibilities for quick wins and practical solutions;
- This subsequent meeting could be organized in co-ordination with the International Transformation Chairs Network Conference (**22-23 June 2011, Rome**) and serve as a preparatory meeting.