

**German Government – Action Plan:
"Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building"**

On May 12th 2004, the German Government published a comprehensive *Action Plan* on "Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building". It points to causes and forms of present-day conflicts, gives an overview of existing instruments within German institutions to address them, and projects further capabilities in this field, enumerating 161 concrete action points to be taken over the next years.

The plan has received scarce attention from the media. Yet, it has been welcomed by all German non-state actors and scholars in the field of Conflict Transformation, and by experts in Foreign and Security Policies at large. The main accomplishments of the paper are:

- Conflict Transformation is no longer seen as an exclusive issue of Foreign Policy, but also related to Development, the Economy, Ecology, Home Affairs, Defence, and Education... All Ministries of the German Red-Green government co-operated in the writing and will participated in the implementation.
- Never before has an official document concerning Foreign Relations been so outspoken in acknowledging the importance of non-state actors, in arousing as well as in resolving conflicts, and correspondingly in its will to co-operate with civil society organisations, both peace-building organisations in Germany and in conflict areas. German NGOs have also co-operated in writing redacting the document and will participate in an advisory body to oversee the implementation.
- The paper emphasises the priority of prevention with regard to crisis management or post-conflict reconstruction.
- There is a clear option for multilateralism, in the context of UN, OSCE, EU, Council of Europe and NATO (redefined politically), and support for similar (sub)regional organisations in multilateral conflict resolution in other continents.
- The plan provides for institutional innovations, mainly an inter-ministerial clearing committee under the presidency of the newly-created post of a Commissioner for Conflict Prevention in the Foreign Ministry. The person appointed to this post is Ambassador Ortwin Hennig. The committee has taken up its work and started defining priorities for implementation.

Some frequently mentioned points of critique to the plan refer to:

- Lack of additional staff and funding that jeopardize the prospects of implementing even some of the 161 action points
- Lack of sensitivity towards gender issues, which appear only as a problem of female empowerment, not as a crucial aspect in any conflict analysis
- Lack of awareness towards the imbalance between civilian and military capabilities that belies the proclaimed priority for prevention; and towards the conceptual difference between the two forms of intervention. Rather, the document sees them simply "complementing" each other.
- The well-intended propositions of this plan contrast with a number of elements of German "Realpolitik" in the fields of security, trade, development etc.

Finally, the chances of implementing of the plan is susceptible to changing coalitions in Germany, the first test being the general *Bundestag* elections in 2006.

Text available to download,

German: http://www.auswaertigesamt.de/www/de/aussenpolitik/friedenspolitik/ziv_km/aktionsplan_html
English: http://www.auswaertigesamt.de/www/en/aussenpolitik/friedenspolitik/ziv_km/aktionsplan_html