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Engaging African diasporas for peace: cornerstones for an emerging EU agenda

Judith Vorrath

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Engaging African diasporas for peace: cornerstones for an emerging EU agenda

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Summary

Over the last decade, researchers and policy-makers have paid increasing attention to diasporas. They have focused on diasporas not merely as a challenge, but as a source of largely untapped potential. Their transnational nature and peculiar position as non-state actors linking host and home countries has been identified as an important basis for engagement. Diaspora groups from sub-Saharan Africa in Europe, which according to a 2008 Council of Europe parliamentary report on immigration are roughly estimated to comprise between 3.5 and 8 million people, are not only a relevant force, but often come from homelands that have experienced or are still facing armed conflict. Against this background, this *Occasional Paper* addresses the question of what contribution diaspora communities can make to promoting peace in their homelands and how the European Union can engage with African diasporas in the field of peace and security.

The first part of the paper argues that diasporas can and should be engaged for peace, but that such engagement should take account of basic issues like the specific grievances of diasporas and not envisage their involvement as a substitution for the involvement of local actors. The specific decision on whom and how to engage can be based on an assessment of the motivation (to promote peace) and capacity (to influence homeland conflict) of diaspora components. The crucial point is that not only 'positive' forces that rank high on both aspects should be taken into consideration. Diaspora components with a low motivation to promote peace might still be difficult to ignore due to their (potential) impact on the relevant conflict and those with lower capacities might be important partners due to their strong will to contribute to a peace process. Generally, the means to engage individuals or groups need to be adapted accordingly by changing the incentive and opportunity structure.

The second part concludes that diaspora groups need to be considered as a potential force in promoting peace at the different levels of EU policy-making structures and be engaged where criteria have been met. An overview of initiatives by EU Member States, actors like the US and international organisations demonstrates that state and international actors can work with diasporas in order to promote peace in their home-

lands. Furthermore, experiences at the EU level show that despite some reservations among officials the EU can engage with diasporas, not only in the fields of development cooperation and internal security, but also in conflict management and resolution. Yet, there is a lack of a systematic involvement of diaspora groups in peace-promoting activities by the EU.

An EU agenda in this field could emerge as part of ongoing institutional changes and the stronger presence of the EU in African countries through its delegations as well as based on existing cooperation programmes and regional strategies, for example for the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, there is a general awareness inside EU structures of the issue of diaspora engagement. These various factors can be cornerstones for an EU agenda and herald a significant improvement in engaging diasporas for peace while a more profound and systematic approach could develop in the medium and long term.

Introduction

Diasporas are not at all a new phenomenon, as wars, persecution, disasters or simply the desire for a better life have led many people to leave their original home countries throughout human history. But more recently diasporas have received increasing attention as an actor group. Experts as well as policy-makers have come to realise that diasporas do not simply disappear as a distinct group by assimilation, integration or repatriation.[1] Furthermore, migration is no longer only assessed with regard to the problems that it can create, but also with regard to the opportunities that it presents,[2] as echoed in a recent cover story of *The Economist* on 'the magic of diasporas'.[3]

The growing interest in diasporas is also an expression of larger trends in research and policy-making: (a) the emphasis on transnational processes and groups in a post-national, globalised era, and (b) the shift from a state-centred view to a stronger focus on civil society as an actor, especially in the context of state fragility. Diasporas are a transnational, non-state formation defined as an (ethnic) minority group residing outside the country of origin while maintaining links and connections with the homeland.[4] But globalisation and the advancement of modern communications technology have also brought conflict in their country of origin closer to diasporas and diasporas closer to homeland conflict.[5]

This paper examines the role of African[6] diasporas in conflict and possible ways for the European Union to engage them. There are several reasons

1. Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 3.

2. See e.g. the Report of the Global Commission on International Migration, *Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action*, October 2005. Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,GCIM,,,435f81814,0.html.

3. 'The magic of diasporas: how migrant business networks are reshaping the world', *The Economist*, 19-25 November 2011.

4. See e.g. Gabriel Sheffer, op cit. in note 1, pp. 1-10; Hazel Smith, 'Diasporas in international conflict', in Hazel Smith and Paul Stares (eds.), *Diasporas in Conflict: Peace-makers or peace-wreckers?* (Tokyo/New York/Paris: United Nations University Press, 2007), pp. 3-16, p. 5. Neither the reason for leaving nor a desire to return to the homeland are conceptually relevant for the diaspora definition used here. This is different for the term 'exile' which refers to people who left their country of origin in the context of political struggles, and therefore, try to create the conditions for their return while avoiding setting up a comfortable life abroad (See Yossi Shain and Ariel I. Ahram, 'The Frontiers of Loyalty: Do They Really Change?' *Orbis*, Fall 2003, pp. 661-73, p. 663). Yet, exiles are by definition part of diaspora groups.

5. Jacob Bercovitch, 'A neglected relationship: Diasporas and conflict resolution', in Smith and Stares, op cit. in note 4, pp. 17-38, p. 20.

6. Throughout this paper Africa always refers to sub-Saharan Africa.

for approaching the topic of diaspora engagement from this angle. For a start, there has been a relative lack of systematic studies on the role of diaspora groups in the field of peace and security in the homeland. Despite a general increase in studies on diasporas since the mid-1990s there is still less research on the role of diasporas in conflict situations. In terms of existing studies, a lot has been written on diasporas fuelling or even causing conflict[7] while much less is known about their potential for positive contributions to peace processes. There has been a growing number of case studies as well as policy reports on constructive diaspora influence in their homelands in recent years.[8] Despite the very valuable insights they provide, most deal with conflict prevention and peacebuilding in their broadest sense and tend to focus more on development contributions of diasporas in post-conflict settings.

In order to gain more systematic insights this paper deals exclusively with diasporas from areas that have faced or are still facing episodes of armed conflict. Armed conflict can be defined as 'open, armed clashes between two or more centrally organised parties, with continuity between the clashes, in disputes about power over government and territory'.[9] This definition largely corresponds with the general criteria in international humanitarian law for 'non-international armed conflict' which occurs between governmental armed forces and the forces of one or more armed groups, or between such groups which need to have a certain level of organisation. Violence also needs to reach a certain intensity to distinguish armed conflict from lower-level tensions.[10] Such intra-state conflicts, not

7. This part of the literature includes studies on refugee militarisation (see e.g. Sarah K. Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries Refugee Camps, Civil War and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press., 2005), long-distance nationalism (see e.g. Zlatko Skrbis, *Long-distance Nationalism: Diasporas, Homelands and Identities*. Research in Migration and Ethnic Relations Series, Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1999) and diaspora support for armed groups (see e.g. Daniel Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau and David Brannan, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica/Arlington/Pittsburgh: RAND, 2001).

8. See for example Simon Turner and Birgitte Mossin Brønden, *From Watch-Dogs to Nation-Builders: The Dilemmas of Diaspora Engagement in Post-Conflict Burundi*, DIIS Working Paper no. 10, Copenhagen, Danish Institute for International Studies, 2011; International Crisis Group, 'Peacebuilding in Haiti: Including Haitians from abroad', *Latin America/Caribbean Report* no. 24, 14 December 2007; Cindy Horst, Rojan Ezzati, Matteo Guglielmo, Petra Mezzetti, Päivi Pirkkalainen, Valeria Saggiomo, Giulia Sinatti and Andrea Warnecke, *Participation of Diasporas in Peacebuilding and Development: A Handbook for Practitioners and Policymakers*, Peace Research Institute Oslo, PRIO Report no. 2, 2010; Partnership for Democratic Governance, *The Contribution of Diaspora Return to Post-Conflict and Fragile Countries: Key findings and recommendations*, OECD 2010.

9. Dan Smith, 'Trends and Causes of Armed Conflict', in D. Bloomfield, M. Fischer, and A. Schmerlze (eds.), *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation: Trends and Causes of Armed Conflicts*, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, August 2004, p. 3.

10. Sylvain Vité, 'Typology of armed conflicts in international humanitarian law: legal concepts and actual situations', *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 91, no. 873, March 2009, pp. 69-94, pp. 75-7.

international conflicts as such, are addressed by this paper. However, many of these conflicts[11] have transnational components or have become internationalised at some point. Such situations are included in this paper, particularly since diasporas strongly contribute to the transnational dimension of conflicts.

All phases of the conflict cycle are of interest for this paper, but it mostly concentrates on the three main pillars of peace processes: peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.[12] This focus implies a comprehensive definition of peace in terms of a constructive resolution of conflict in contrast to the minimalist understanding of peace as the absence of violence. Naturally, certain initiatives or programmes treated in this paper may diverge from this understanding and for example adhere to the negative peace paradigm. Generally, activities by diasporas labelled as 'peace-promoting' must be directed at making, keeping and/or building peace by peaceful means.

The paper primarily deals with African diasporas since sub-Saharan Africa has been a major theatre of armed conflict, but also of conflict settlement and resolution. Between 1960 and 1999 about 40 percent of African countries have experienced civil war at least once,[13] which also led to a growing African diaspora around the world. Yet, until quite recently most studies with a conflict focus have dealt with so-called stateless diasporas like those of Palestinian, Kurdish or Tamil origin. Only since the 1990s has research increasingly focused on African diasporas as well, particularly from the Horn. At the political level, African governments have discovered the importance of diaspora contributions,[14] just like regional organisations, particularly the African Union (AU) which has designated the African diaspora as the continent's sixth region.

11. Even though conflict simply depicts a situation in which two or more parties behave according to incompatible interests without being necessarily violent (Bercovitch , op. cit. in note 5, p. 22), the use of the term 'conflict' in this paper always refers to armed conflict.

12. Of course it has to be kept in mind that the steps in such a process do not necessarily follow one another in a linear way. Conflict prevention will only be indirectly addressed when mostly development-oriented programmes are discussed in the second chapter of the paper.

13. Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, 'Why are there so many civil wars in Africa? Understanding and preventing violent conflict', *Journal of African Economies*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2000, pp. 244-69, p. 244.

14. Several African countries like Mali and Somalia have set up Diaspora Ministries or other national institutions like the Office of the Diaspora in Sierra Leone: see Dovelyn Rannveig Agunias, 'Committed to the Diaspora: More Developing Countries Setting Up Diaspora Institutions', Migration Information Source, 2 November 2009. Available at: http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/print.cfm?ID=748.

Similarly, host countries of African diasporas, including many European states, have become interested in their potential as a group linking different cultures. The EU has also started initiatives and conducted programmes with diasporas, mostly as part of the development-migration nexus. The general goal of such activities is to use the potential of diasporas to further economic development in their homelands and maximise the benefits of their contributions, particularly of remittances. But due to the securitisation of migration policy in the EU, with a persistent emphasis on potentially destabilising effects of immigration into Europe, 'a balanced approach to migration' as promised in The Hague Programme[15] has not yet materialised. In the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding the EU still has to become a more assertive international actor, but the current institutional changes based on the Lisbon Treaty provide a window of opportunity for new inputs and strategies. Thus, there is a lot of room for the (potential) engagement of diasporas for peace by the EU: initiatives can range from very loose forms of interaction like information sharing or informal dialogue to the involvement of groups in concrete projects or formalised forums. Furthermore, the EU is also in a unique position to foster such an engagement. On the one hand, it has a broader perspective as it does not have the specific links with certain diasporas that many individual Member States have, for example based on colonial history. On the other hand, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and its Action Plans provide an inter-regional platform to address diaspora engagement.

Overall, this paper disentangles core findings from the academic as well as the more policy-oriented literature and provides a differentiated view on the influence of diasporas on conflict and peace. Its aim is not to present diaspora engagement as a panacea in conflict situations or as merely an instrument to achieve foreign policy goals. Rather, it seeks to raise the awareness of diasporas as important actors, show their potential and limitations in contributing to peace and discuss options for the EU to engage diasporas. The paper outlines general criteria for involving diaspora groups in peace-promoting activities. Furthermore, it analyses concrete experiences of EU Member States, other actors like the US and EU insti-

15. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, 'The Hague Programme: 10 priorities for the next five years. The Partnership for European renewal in the field of Freedom, Security and Justice', COM(2005) 184 final, *Official Journal* C 236, 24 September 2005.

tutions themselves with diaspora engagement. Rather than providing a comprehensive list of projects, the aim of this analysis is to address common concerns and reservations at the EU level and to highlight the potential for a more proactive and strategic engagement of African diasporas for peace. Last but not least, the cornerstones for such an emerging EU agenda are outlined with regard to the general policy framework as well as existing Africa-specific programmes. In addressing this topic the paper also seeks to contribute to the larger debate on the EU's profile and role in the field of peace and security.

1. Diasporas and homeland conflict: a conceptual assessment

Diaspora communities live outside their country of origin, sometimes acquiring the citizenship of their host country, so in what way do they matter for peace in their homeland? The following sections will discuss and refine the arguments in the academic and policy-oriented literature on diasporas to find answers to this question. Overall, the importance of diasporas as actors in homeland conflict directly derives from the two main attributes of diaspora communities, particularly the ongoing link to the homeland that for so long has been seen as either threatening (*vis-à-vis* integration into the host country's society) or as irrelevant. Yet, not all diaspora components are equally involved in homeland conflict (resolution) or have the same capacities and motivations to get engaged.

Fostering war or peace?

Diasporas groups or members can try to influence the situation in the homeland in different ways. Their activities may be of a political, economic, or socio-cultural nature and be directed mostly at the host or the home country, for example:

- fund-raising, remittance transfers, investments, trade
- information sharing and exchange e.g. via websites, knowledge transfer, training, 'social remittances', mediation
- advocacy and lobbying, promotion of public (international) opinion, campaigning, protests etc.

All of these activities have a transfer or bridging function and can be pursued either individually or collectively via informal or formal organisations. Naturally, they include exchange and interaction and thus, shape diasporas' views and activities in return. They have the potential to influence peace and security, but also development or state-building and democratisation in the homeland. Yet, they may have positive or negative effects on those goals, or none at all. In a conflict environment, for ex-

ample, financial remittances can ease conflict by securing the livelihood of family members and others in the country of origin, but they might also be invested in support for armed groups, for example in arms supply. Apart from supporting violence in the homeland some of the listed activities can also take on violent forms, particularly protests.[16]

So, the question of whether diasporas are rather 'peace-makers or peace-wreckers'[17] when they pursue their various activities has become a preoccupation in recent academic literature.[18] Earlier works tend to focus on the negative impact of diaspora groups on peace, often in relation to the concept of long-distance nationalism.[19] This entails that diasporas are not held responsible for their political aims and aspirations or, stated differently, they are relatively unaffected by ongoing violence due to their distance from the homeland while at the same time they are able to gain rewards by showing their steady commitment to a political cause.[20] Other features usually ascribed to long-distance nationalism are rather static identities and an idealised image of the homeland with a simultaneous alienation from it. Some authors simply frame the diaspora experience in a different way and identify feelings of guilt towards those they left behind, statelessness and marginalisation (in the home and/or host country) as factors facilitating the propagation of militant ideas among diasporas.[21]

The latter aspects are particularly prominent in debates on conflict-generated diasporas who are a specific category due to the source of their displacement (violent, forced migration) and the consequent nature of their ties with the homeland.[22] Generally, this sub-group which could also be labelled

16. Diaspora members are also sometimes recruited as fighters in an armed conflict. But as their status becomes somewhat unclear with a 'return' to the homeland in order to participate in military activities, this action is not listed here. However, training can certainly entail training as a militant for an armed group before such a 'return.'

17. From the title of the book by Hazel Smith and Paul Stares (eds.), op cit. in note 4.

18. Päivi Pirkkalainen and Mahdi Abdile, *The Diaspora-Conflict-Peace-Nexus: A Literature Review*, DIASPEACE Working Paper No. 1, March 2009, p. 5; Andrea Warnecke, Julia Brethfeld and Volker Franke, 'Agents of Peace or Agents of War? The Role of the African Diaspora in Conflict Processes', Concept Paper, Bonn International Center of Conversion, April 2007, p. 5.

19. Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, 'Long-Distance Nationalism: World Capitalism and the Rise of Identity Politics', The Wertheim Lecture, Centre for Asian Studies, Amsterdam, 1992.

20. Terrence Lyons, 'Diasporas and Conflict', *Global Studies Review*, vol. 2, no. 3, Fall 2006, pp. 1-3, p. 2; Päivi Pirkkalainen and Mahdi Abdile, op cit. in note 18, p. 18.

21. Päivi Pirkkalainen and Mahdi Abdile, op cit. in note 18, p. 18-20; Eva Østergaard-Nielsen, *Diasporas and Conflict Resolution: Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?*, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen: DIIS Brief, March 2006, p. 12.

22. Terrence Lyons, op cit. in note 20, p. 2.

'exiles' tends to feel strongly linked to a symbolically valuable territory and thus aspires to return once the political or security situation in the homeland allows for it.[23] Furthermore, diasporas from conflict-affected areas are likely to reflect the divisions underlying armed violence in the homeland.[24]

These features of conflict-generated diasporas seem to indicate that their influence on peace is rather negative as they are expected to compromise less and, therefore, foster and exacerbate conflict.[25] But the validity of this assessment is far from evident, as the '... experience of violence might radicalise a person and create militant supporters of armed struggle, or it might create people who abhor violence and promote peace'.[26] Moreover, the same groups that initially exacerbated and prolonged conflict can later on turn into drivers for peace.[27]

Some authors have fundamentally challenged the view that (conflict-generated) diasporas are more radical and have a negative influence on peace and security in the country of origin. They estimate that, on the contrary, the majority of diaspora members pursue moderate activities and that while extremism might be more visible it is not representative of the wider group.[28] From this point of view diasporas, or large components of them, have the potential to be peace-makers. The literature provides different reasons for a mostly positive assessment of the role diasporas can play in homeland conflict, referring to opportunities and learning in the host country and the transnational nature of the actor group. Diasporas are exposed to new ideas and experiences, for example in an urban, democratic environment and acquire new social capital in the host country. Furthermore, they often have better access to education, but also to host governments, donor agencies, international organisations and the media.[29] In combination with their transnational ties, this can result in a

23. Nadje S. Al-Ali, 'Gender, diasporas and post-Cold war conflict', in Hazel Smith and Paul Stares, op cit. in note 4, pp. 39-61, p. 41.

24. Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, 'Introduction to Part I: Diasporas' Response to Homeland Conflict', in Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff (ed.), *Diasporas and Development: Exploring the Potential* (Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner, 2008), pp. 19-27, p. 19.

25. Terrence Lyons, 'Diasporas and Transnational Politics in Ethiopia', in Ashok Swain (ed.), *Diasporas, Armed Conflict and Peacebuilding in their Homelands*, Uppsala Universitet, Report no. 79, Uppsala, 2007, pp. 32-9, p. 32.

26. Nadje S. Al-Ali, op cit. in note 23, p. 41.

27. Terrence Lyons, op cit. in note 20, p. 1; Zlatko Skrbis, 'The mobilized Croatian diaspora: Its role in homeland politics', in Hazel Smith and Paul Stares, op cit. in note 4, p. 234.

28. Gabriel Sheffer, op cit. in note 1, p. 25; Abdullah A. Mohamoud, 'African Diaspora and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Africa', Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen: DIIS Brief, February 2006, p. 5.

29. Päivi Pirkkalainen and Mahdi Abdile, op cit. in note 18, p. 28-9; Jacob Bercovitch, op. cit. in note 5, p. 21.

special kind of expertise and knowledge and the potential to act as mediators and transmitters of values like pluralism.[30]

The problem with this debate is that many arguments can work in both directions, for example the distance from the conflict theatre just as well as the experience of violence can induce a peace-promoting or -perpetuating attitude among diasporas. The difficulties of coming to general conclusions on the impact of diaspora groups on conflict are illustrated by the contributions of Paul Collier and different co-authors. The first finding whereby large diasporas substantially increase the risk of renewed conflict[31] was subsequently revised by new results showing, on the contrary, that they significantly reduce post-conflict risks.[32]

Generalisations are simply difficult because diasporas are heterogeneous groups residing in different host countries. But what does this mean for international actors who seek to engage diasporas? Some straightforward solutions have been proposed, for example: 'Diaspora organisations and leadership that promote peace should be included in policy-making processes and those that support military activities [by fund-raising and propaganda] should be penalised'.[33] While at first sight this seems to be an almost logical choice, a closer look reveals serious shortcomings. On the one hand, clear-cut divisions between 'positive' and 'negative' forces or even objective criteria for those labels rarely exist and one and the same group's role can fundamentally change over time. On the other hand, organisations and individuals among diasporas that have the goal to promote peace might not always be in the best position to do so. Other criteria commonly cited in the policy-oriented literature like the representativeness of a member or group for the larger diaspora community can be called into question as well.[34] It might make sense to cooperate with non-representative diaspora groups as long as the interlocutor knows

30. Natalie Brender, 'Toward Diaspora Engagement in Foreign Policymaking: An Overview of Current Thought and Practice', in The Mosaic Institute and The Walter & Duncan Gordon Foundation (eds.), *Tapping our Potential: Diaspora Communities and Canadian Foreign Policy*, Toronto, July 2011, pp. 11-28, p. 11; Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth, 'Diasporas and International Relations Theory', *International Organization*, vol. 57, no. 3, 2003, pp. 449-79, p. 450.

31. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Greed and grievance in civil war', *Oxford Economic Papers*, no. 56, 2004, pp. 563-95, p. 588.

32. Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Måns Soderbom, 'Post-conflict Risks', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 45, 2008, pp. 461–77, p. 472.

33. Hazel Smith, op cit. in note 4, p. 13.

34. For a discussion of the issue of representativeness see Eva Østergaard-Nielsen, op cit. in note 21, p. 11.

that they cannot speak for a larger community. The following section will argue that it is of overriding importance to understand a group's motivation and capacity to influence homeland conflict.

Whom and how to engage?

Diaspora groups comprise very different actors and sub-groups. Governments-in-exile, political opposition figures or parties, and components of armed groups can just as well be part of them as advocacy groups, digital communities or transnational umbrella organisations. And in the same way that diasporas tend to be diverse, each armed conflict is different as well. Therefore, a proper conflict analysis including the historical background and the configuration of the actors involved should always be the starting point for an assessment of diaspora engagement.

However, there are some general points to keep in mind when engaging with diasporas. First of all, dealing with diasporas often means dealing with people who have undergone traumatic experiences not only linked to often severe conditions in the home country, but also to their actual flight from the home country and arrival in the host country. The resulting grievances and fears are often handed on to following generations and need to be taken into account by policy-makers and activists in host countries. Second, diasporas should not be overburdened with unrealistic expectations as their influence on the situation in the homeland is naturally limited. Even those groups among diasporas with strong ties and influence in the country of origin cannot resolve an armed conflict alone. This leads to a third crucial point: diaspora engagement cannot be a substitute for dealing with local actors; they are an actor group in and by themselves. As such, diasporas have to be seen as part of the host as well as the home country, irrespective of their citizenship. When a positive image of diaspora groups prevails, there sometimes have been competing attempts by states or organisations to claim 'ownership' of them; for example there has been some disagreement between African officials and EU representatives on whether the diaspora they talk about in the framework of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy is African in the sense of a sixth African region or European due to European citizenship that many have

acquired.[35] Rather diasporas 'belong' to multiple places which is the very reason why they can act as intermediaries.

Beyond these overriding principles that need to be borne in mind when dealing with diasporas, some basic criteria for identifying groups to engage with can be specified. The fundamental assumption is that in a given situation, the engagement of a specific diaspora group might not only be helpful, but necessary. As one expert has emphasised, in a conflict context, 'tapping the diaspora may at once be necessary and unavoidable, given the drive among some diaspora members to insert themselves into the rebuilding process'.[36] However it is not only the motivation of diasporas to get engaged and their specific skills that matter, but also their ability to actually influence the homeland conflict. The latter point is key as too often the focus has been on the capabilities diasporas have acquired without taking their actual impact on the ground into account. Diaspora groups can be quite removed from local realities or lack the necessary legitimacy in the homeland. Even divisions between diasporas and those remaining in the country of origin are not uncommon.[37] These insights need to be integrated into the assessment of diaspora engagement.

The most useful basis for such an integrated approach are the three factors driving diaspora mobilisation according to Milton J. Esman: ability, motivation, and an enabling environment.[38] In an elaboration of these factors, this paper proposes that the two relevant criteria for diaspora engagement should be: (i) their capacity to influence the homeland conflict, and (ii) their motivation for promoting peace. The first has a lot to do with power and skills, the second with interests and goals. Both points are shaped by incentive and opportunity structures defined by host and home countries and the international sphere as diagram 1 shows. What ultimately matters is the combination of the levels of capacity and motivation (high or low respectively at a given point in time). Furthermore, for those diaspora components that should or could be engaged, their location in the diagram is also a good indication of useful ways to engage them.

35. Interview, European Commission official, formerly in DG Development, 2 February 2012; Interview, European Commission official, DG Devco, 10 February 2012.

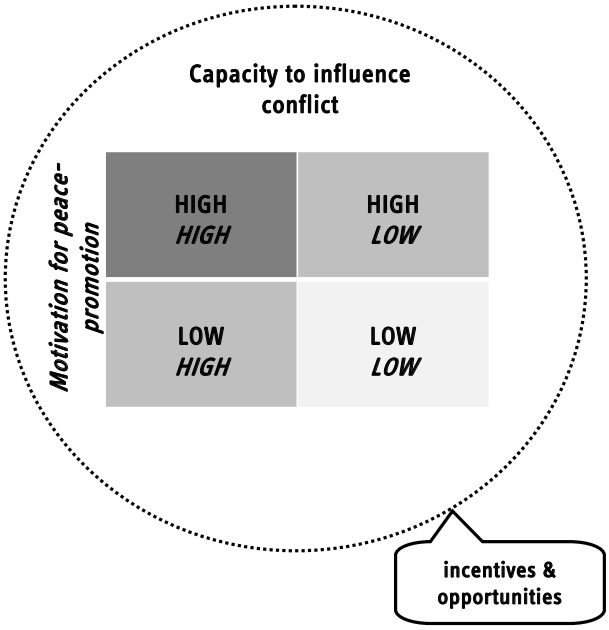
36. Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, , op cit. in note 24, p. 20.

37. Päivi Pirkkalainen and Mahdi Abdile, op cit. in note 18, p. 26.

38. Milton J. Esman, 'Diasporas and International Relations', in Gabriel Sheffer (ed.), *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986), pp. 333-49.

Naturally, such a scheme has its limitations in giving guidance on each case due to the individual trajectories of armed conflicts and respective diasporas. However, it can provide insights on core aspects that should be taken into account when deciding on whom and how to engage.

Diagram 1 – Criteria for diaspora engagement



Individuals or groups that score high on both aspects – capacity and motivation – are central to peace-related efforts. A good example here is the current President of Liberia and recent Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, whose role in peacebuilding in Liberia's immediate (post) transition period – despite criticism of her initial support for Charles Taylor's rebellion in 1989 and her governance style – has been assessed as positive. There are actors with a lower profile operating also at the subnational level such as the New Sudan Organizations Network of the Sudanese Diaspora (NSON) in the Netherlands that, among other things, organised peace talks and a peace caravan in Sudan.[39]

39. For details, see http://www.sudan-forall.org/sections/ihtiram/pages/ihtiram_issue5/pdf_files/NSON-Peace-Caravan-Eng.pdf

In contrast to such groups, the engagement of those diasporas scoring low on both points seems rather pointless. Of course, it can be argued that no component should be excluded *ex ante*. But it is difficult to see how a peace process would profit from approaching those diaspora groups or individuals who neither have the means nor the interest to get involved in promoting peace.

The decision on whether to engage with a diaspora group or not is more complicated with regard to the two intermediary categories: (i) low capacity – high motivation, and (ii) high capacity – low motivation. In both cases, changes in the incentive and opportunity structure are necessary in order to enable a positive contribution of respective diaspora components.

For this paper, the capacity of a diaspora group or member to influence the homeland conflict is defined by (a) a relevant position or function, and (b) specific skills, resources and experiences. The former point is largely determined in relation to the country of origin while the latter often depends on the host country environment. The two aspects can strongly overlap, but also be distributed very unevenly within a diaspora. In order to score high on capacity, a group would have to be strong on both. So, a low score means that the respective diaspora component could still be relatively strong on (a) or (b), just not on both.

Since diasporas of the first intermediary category have a high motivation to contribute to peace, the deficiencies on the capacity side deserve closer assessment. On the one hand, there might be groups that are hard to ignore as they are part of the conflict complex or command local support, but lack important skills. This could, for example, be the case with exile leaders or movements with strong local constituencies who are willing to negotiate, but lack the ability to do so effectively. These are cases where capacity-building is a useful strategy to help such diaspora elements to contribute, as in the case of a conflict-management skills workshop for the Haitian diaspora held at the US Institute of Peace in 2007.

It has occasionally been proposed to select partners primarily based on such criteria as transparency, inclusiveness or accountability.[40] Even though this might be useful when selecting diaspora organisations as

40. Giulia Sinatti, 'Key criteria of "good practice" for constructive diaspora engagement in peacebuilding', African Diaspora Policy Centre, The Hague, June 2010, pp. 17-8.

direct partners in peacebuilding projects, for peace-promoting efforts in general the approach involves the risk of choosing only groups that function like their Western counterparts, and consequently missing others that might have important legitimacy or influence on the ground.

In cases where diaspora actors have relatively strong skills, but not the necessary local influence, engagement can still be relevant. This is particularly obvious when considering the role of diaspora women who usually have important knowledge and experience, but lack power since public life in the homeland is often still dominated by men. This category of actors can also comprise successful businessmen from the diaspora or well-organised NGOs without strong local ties. In order to ensure their engagement on the ground has some impact, inclusive dialogue processes with diaspora and local actors and support for knowledge transfer as well as community empowerment can be useful starting points. Individuals belonging to this group might be in a good position to function as peace brokers, advisors or mediators as they are not seen as a crucial part of the homeland power structure. If diaspora components are weak on both aspects of the capacity to influence the conflict, their engagement is at least not a priority, although they might have an impact in the social sphere that indirectly affects conflict.

For the second intermediary category the situation is quite different. The main problem here is that such diaspora groups have a strong capacity, but a low motivation to contribute to peace. Again, there are two relevant sub-categories: (a) those who ultimately want the conflict to continue and (b) those who are indifferent to the conflict and its resolution. The former group can contain individuals and groups that are directly involved in the conflict structure like parts of armed movements, indirectly involved like actors that economically profit from the conflict without really participating and others who are ideological hardliners but do not have direct stakes in the conflict itself. Generally, the engagement of such diaspora components is often seen as very problematic, as they can turn out to be 'spoilers' in peace processes.[41] Yet, in this scenario they also have a high capacity and, especially when they are armed, there might sometimes be no other choice but to include them. Moreover, the position towards negotiations

41. Terrorist groups could also be part of this category, but are not examined in this paper. Of course, in reality categories can be fluid, particularly as the label of 'terrorist' is not always applied in a coherent way and is even used by state actors to delegitimise opponents.

and a conflict settlement can change over time. For example, different Burundian rebel movements with exile leadership or components entered negotiations at different points in time between 1997/8 and 2003. In such cases, it is crucial to incentivise the willingness to work for peace as far as possible, for example by diplomatic means, informal contacts or dialogue platforms. But follow-up activities like the Burundian Leadership Training Programme, a series of capacity-building workshops for leaders including elites from the diaspora, are also important. Programmes for building trust and neutralising spoilers can also bring different diaspora communities together, as in the case of the Darfur diaspora engagement programme set up by the Public International Law & Policy Group.[42]

As regards the diaspora elements that are rather indifferent and prefer to stay away from the whole issue of conflict resolution, it may be worth trying to engage them; however such attempts should not be based on pressure, but remain restricted to consultation and awareness raising.

This scheme only provides a starting point for thinking about diaspora engagement. For example, it assumes that the respective diaspora groups want to get engaged by actors such as (Western) governments or international organisations. In reality, this might not be the case as diasporas naturally have their own selection criteria and might prefer to cooperate with non-state instead of state actors. But as the diagram on page 19 shows, there generally is room and reason to engage certain diaspora components for peace. The general task for policy-makers is to tap into the existing potential among diasporas to promote peace, try to influence the capacity or motivation of certain groups in favour of conflict resolution, but also to decide where a definite threshold for engagement lies.

Apart from the general question of whom and how to engage among diasporas, there are several aspects and concerns relating to the EU as an actor in the field of peace and security that need to be addressed in greater detail. The next section highlights common positions *vis-à-vis* diaspora groups at the EU level, lessons learnt from experiences of EU Member States and other actors as well as the EU itself and the potential for a more proactive and systematic engagement of diasporas by the EU.

42. Public International Law & Policy Group, *Engaging Diaspora Communities in Peace Processes*, Assessment Report & Program Strategy, March 2009.

2. African diasporas in Europe: why and how the EU should get involved

Following the first chapter which has dealt with diaspora engagement for peace from a more general, theoretical perspective, this chapter looks at the peace-promoting engagement of African diasporas in Europe from an empirical perspective. There are between 3.5 and 8 million people from sub-Saharan Africa living in Europe, mostly in Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.[43] The total amount of officially recorded remittances from the diaspora (worldwide) to sub-Saharan Africa increased from US$ 3.2 billion in 1995 to about US$ 21.5 billion in 2010.[44] Therefore it comes as no surprise that diasporas, including communities from conflict-affected countries like Somalia, Ethiopia/Eritrea, DR Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, or Zimbabwe, have been identified as relevant actors over the last decade. But which players have engaged diaspora groups and in what way? What lessons can be learned for conflict management, resolution and transformation, particularly by the EU?

The following sections provide some answers to these questions by examining the reservations sometimes expressed by EU actors with regard to engaging diasporas and by assessing the concrete experiences of EU Member States, other international actors and the EU itself.

More obstacles than opportunities? An EU view on diaspora engagement for peace

There are several reservations regarding diaspora engagement by the EU that are frequently voiced by EU officials and experts. The three most common concerns relate (a) to the suitability of diasporas as a (poten-

43. This estimate can be found in a report of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 2008 that points out that real numbers are likely to be higher due to e.g. illegal migration. See: http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc08/EDOC11526.htm (14 March 2012).

44. World Bank, *Migration and Remittances: Factbook 2011* (Washington D.C.: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, second edition 2011), p. 34.

tial) partner, (b) to the EU's position and capacities, and (c) to the field of peace and security as a particularly sensitive one.

It has already been mentioned that diasporas are often seen as difficult partners due to issues of legitimacy and representativeness and their fragmentation and politicisation, particularly in a conflict context in the homeland. European officials' views are no exception in this regard. They point out the diversity, informality and non-state nature of diasporas and the general difficulty in selecting interlocutors in these communities.[45]

The second concern stresses the EU's difficulties in engaging diasporas, partly due to its position as a supranational organisation. On the one hand, there is the challenge of cooperating with non-state actors in general as there is a certain distance between EU policies and structures, especially the bureaucracy in Brussels, and civil society of which diasporas are a part. Different EU bodies regularly interact with NGOs and establish specific programmes, but they still primarily maintain relations with governments, not with the opposition or political groups outside their home country.[46] The EU-Africa Partnership, for example, primarily rests on high-level meetings between European and African officials. More specifically, it is difficult for the European Commission to fund diaspora organisations or engage with them without an umbrella organisation or an intermediary Western partner.[47] On the other hand, the usually triangular relationship between diasporas, their homelands and host countries becomes more complicated when the EU as a supranational actor enters the scene. Most importantly, the cooperation of the EU and diasporas affects the interest of EU Member States where the respective diaspora groups live. For all these reasons, the capacities of the EU to engage diasporas are seen as rather limited.

Last but not least, reservations have been voiced with regard to the field of activity this paper focuses on: peace processes. In the literature, it has been acknowledged that peacebuilding is a highly political project and, therefore, diaspora engagement is particularly challenging, for example due to

45. Interview, EEAS officials, 9 November 2011 and 21 December 2011; Interview, European Commission official (DG Devco), 10 February 2012.

46. Interview, EEAS official, 9 November 2011.

47. Interview, NGO representative, 20 December 2011; Interview, European Commission official (DG Devco), 10 February 2012.

internal divisions within diaspora communities.[48] EU officials' statements reflect this assessment. Diaspora engagement for peace is seen as delicate as such groups are often politically active or take on political roles.[49] Thus, there is certainly a strong preference for classic diplomatic means. But there also is the problem that conflict-generated diasporas might have little trust in government structures and the EU as a funding institution. Moreover the conflict setting in the homeland makes the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects much more difficult.[50]

The following sections will address these concerns and show that there is enough room for the EU to engage with diaspora groups in order to promote peace. In fact, the EU's involvement can have an added value, particularly if it builds on existing experiences.

Initiatives by EU Member States and non-European international actors

Despite the above-mentioned reservations, over the last decade Western governments and NGOs have undertaken initiatives and programmes with diasporas, and diasporas have increasingly been included in foreign policy debates.[51] Such initiatives have a longer history and are more far-reaching in EU Member States than at the EU level itself. Among those countries engaging very actively with diasporas residing on their territory are two main groups: those with a history as colonial powers on the African continent, particularly the UK and France, but also Belgium, Italy and to a much lesser degree Germany, and smaller, Northern member states with a track record in development and peacebuilding like the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland or Denmark. Naturally, countries tend to focus on diasporas with a strong presence on their territory or with particular (historical) links; two factors that usually correlate strongly as in the case of Zimbabweans in the UK or Congolese in Belgium.

48. Cindy Horst at al., op cit. in note 8, p. 19.

49. Interview, EEAS official, 9 November 2011; Interview, DG External Relations, European Parliament, 13 January 2012.

50. Cindy Horst et al., op cit. in note 8, p. 20; Interview, NGO representative, 20 December 2011.

51. Brigitte Fahrenhorst, Christian Arndt, Murtaza Jaffer, Raphael Pfautsch and Frank Zelazny, *Beitrag der Diasporas zu Konfliktminderung und Konfliktlösung in den Herkunftsländern*, Discussion Paper, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), Eschborn 2009, p. 11.

There are, however, important differences in the orientation of EU Member States' policies and the role they attribute to migrants and diasporas. There are also different expectations and roles ascribed to diasporas; for example, the Dutch government stresses the initiative and direct responsibility of migrants themselves more than other countries.[52]

Overall, many activities and programmes with diasporas take place in the field of development cooperation. These can comprise national strategies or conceptual work, the establishment of forums and mechanisms to engage diasporas as well as actual development projects. Western organisations, mostly NGOs, have also employed diaspora members to enhance the quality of their work on the ground by tapping into their specific knowledge and experiences.[53] The following is not a comprehensive overview, but a selection of relevant initiatives and prominent examples from the literature to illustrate the scope and focus of activities.

The Netherlands have a particularly strong track record in the migration-development nexus based on a government policy memorandum. The Division for Sub-Saharan Africa of the Foreign Ministry includes diaspora groups in policy and programme debates concerning their home countries.[54] Similarly in the UK, the Department for International Development (DfID) has involved African diaspora organisations for a long time and consulted them for example in the Commission for Africa process.[55] But EU Member States with a weaker profile in the field are also becoming increasingly aware of diasporas as relevant actors in development. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded a programme that engaged Ghanaian and Senegalese migrants residing in Italy in 18 local development initiatives in their villages of origin between 2002 and 2007 and another one managed by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to mobilise Somali women's diaspora associations for development projects in Somaliland.[56] In 2007, the German GTZ established a Project on Migration and Development under the aegis of the Ministry

52. Hein de Haas, 'Engaging Diasporas: How governments and development agencies can support diaspora involvement in the development of origin countries', International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, June 2006, pp. 40, 60.

53. Interview, NGO representative, 21 December 2011.

54. The Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'International Migration and Development 2008', Policy Memorandum, The Hague, October 2008, p. 55.

55. Hein de Haas, op cit. in note 52. p. 62.

56. Cindy Horst et al., op cit. in note 8, pp. 20, 40.

for Economic Cooperation and Development which produced guidelines for cooperating with diaspora communities and ran pilot projects, among others in Guinea, Rwanda, Senegal, Nigeria and Somalia.[57]

Some EU Member States[58] have also frequently cooperated in their activities among themselves or with international organisations, for example when DfID and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a workshop with IOM on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Policy Agendas in February 2005.[59] The Program for the Great Lakes Region of Africa as part of the 'Migration for Development in Africa' (MIDA) programme is implemented by the IOM, but also receives financial support from Belgium.

These programmes linking migration and development often have peace-relevant components or effects. This is most obvious when they relate to (post-)conflict countries like in the case of the Finnish Somalia Network which has received funding from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and brings together Somali and native-Finnish NGOs working on development in Somalia.[60]

Furthermore, those European countries with diaspora strategies and programmes in development cooperation also tend to engage with diasporas in activities that explicitly serve the purpose to promote peace. This includes formal or informal contacts as in the case of the Dutch Foreign Ministry cooperating with the African Diaspora Policy Centre or the Italian Foreign Ministry which has developed contacts with the Somali diaspora and key individuals in order to be better informed on the conflict dynamics.[61] But there are more concrete projects like joint training programmes in peacebuilding offering tools targeted at diasporas in the Netherlands and the establishment of the Multicultural Women Peacemakers Network.[62] In, 2006, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs en-

57. For more information, see: http://www.gtz.de/en/themen/wirtschaft-beschaeftigung/28697.htm .

58. Non-EU countries like Switzerland or Norway are also running specific programmes or have even established specific structures like the new Department for Migration and Development in the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Fahrenhorst et al., op cit. in note 51, p. 8).

59. Hein de Haas, op cit. in note 52, p. 18.

60. Cindy Horst et al., op cit. in note 8, p. 32.

61. Ibid., p. 51.

62. Giulia Sinatti, Rojan Ezzati, Matteo Guglielmo, Cindy Horst, Petra Mezzetti, Päivi Pirkkalainen, Valeria Saggiomo and Andrea Warnecke, *Diasporas as Partners in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding*, African Diaspora Policy Centre: The Hague, 2010, p. 21; Cindy Horst et al., op cit. in note 8, pp. 31-2.

gaged the Somali diaspora in a project on gender and peace in Somalia while the Finnish Foreign Ministry finances a project by Finn Church Aid to support traditional and religious leaders in peace processes in Somalia through the direct engagement of qualified and experienced Finnish Somalis. The German Foreign Ministry offers assistance to diasporas in pursuing peace-relevant projects in their homelands through the zivik programme.[63] Zivik focuses exclusively on civilian conflict resolution and works with NGOs, but only a small number of projects so far have involved diaspora groups.

The effect such peace-promoting programmes have is not quite clear. Generally, contributions at the local level in homelands seem to show rather positive outcomes, and the role of diasporas in early warning in host countries can be seen as promising, while projects aiming at bringing about a change in behaviour in conflict zones are difficult to evaluate.[64] Naturally, activities at the national level of homelands involving diasporas like negotiation and dialogue processes are similarly difficult to assess and often take place over extensive time periods.

Beyond European activities, the US policy towards diasporas deserves closer examination due to its high-level and strategic nature as well as the inclusion of peace as a main goal. A Global Diaspora Forum organised in May 2011 by the Secretary of State in collaboration with the Migration Policy Institute led to the establishment of the International diaspora Engagement Alliance (IdEA). Against the background of its history of (im)migration the US seeks to forge diaspora-centered partnerships so as to be able to tap into their development, but also into their diplomatic, potential. A recent USAID paper focuses on 'Technical Guidance on Diasporas in Crisis Settings' assessing (positive and negative) contributions of diasporas in conflict-affected societies. While it notes a persistent lack of knowledge and experience in the field, it clearly indicates an increased awareness for the (potential) influence of diasporas on conflict and peace.[65]

International organisations have also been active in engaging with diasporas. The World Bank's African Diaspora Program (ADP) was established

63. Cindy Horst et al., op cit. in note 8, pp. 18-20.

64. Brigitte Fahrenhorst et al., op cit. in note 51, p. 40.

65. USAID, 'Technical Guidance on Diasporas in Crisis Settings', prepared by Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, Washington D.C., December 2011.

in September 2007 to formulate and implement diaspora policies, e.g. by providing grants to the African Union Commission (AUC), and several African governments including in post-conflict countries like Sierra Leone, Uganda and Liberia. Furthermore, the ADP focuses on the leveraging of remittances for development and human capital utilisation.[66] As already mentioned, the African Union considers the diaspora as the sixth African region and has established the African Citizens Directorate (CIDO) with the help of the World Bank in order to facilitate links to diaspora groups. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the IOM launched an initiative in 2009 which supports capacity-building in institutions across Somalia by facilitating the temporary return of highly educated and experienced Somalis from the diaspora.[67] These initiatives demonstrate that international organisations, despite their supranational or inter-governmental character, can run programmes with and for diasporas.

There are some more important lessons to be learnt from the review of different strategies and programmes to engage African diasporas within and beyond Europe. There is a lack of knowledge on the effect of many activities, particularly those directed at promoting peace in diasporas' homelands. Furthermore, there are still many shortcomings, for example the separation of administrative competences relating to immigration/integration and development cooperation/foreign policy often are an obstacle to engage and empower diasporas.[68] But the increasing practice and policy of cooperating with diasporas matters as cases like the Netherlands and UK have demonstrated with their high number of initiatives.[69] Such initiatives also show that diasporas can be engaged despite all the issues raised at the beginning of this chapter. Issues like legitimacy and representativeness also arise with regard to other civil society actors, but they can be resolved or at least minimised. The activities specifically focusing on promoting or sustaining peace have proven that even in such a sensitive and political field diaspora engagement is possible. And finally, even if certain strategies or programmes have failed or only shown very

66. See the Program's website for further details: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:22141991~menuPK:34480~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html (28 February 2012).

67. Cindy Horst et al., op cit. in note 8, p. 44.

68. Ibid., p. 17.

69. Brigitte Fahrenhorst et al., op cit. in note 51, p. 35.

limited success, they might have been worth trying and be worth pursuing since most successful peace processes have usually undergone longer phases of unsuccessful or incomplete initiatives, whether with or without diaspora engagement. In some cases, (more) systematic diaspora engagement might simply be inevitable in order to arrive at a lasting, sustainable peace as in the case of Somalia as its diaspora has a high impact on the situation in the country, mostly due to large financial flows (remittances are estimated to support 40 percent of urban households and have supported investments in many fields[70]) and by direct involvement in higher politics.[71]

This section has also shown that diaspora involvement varies in intensity across Europe, just as the strategies and interests that characterise such involvement also vary. Naturally, states also tend to focus on groups that reside on their own territory and constitute a relevant migrant group in terms of numbers and political impact. The variety and fragmentation of initiatives and projects already indicate where the EU's contribution could be particularly useful. Its potential role, however, needs to be assessed in the light of experiences the EU has already had with engaging diasporas.

EU experiences with engaging African diasporas

Despite the experiences presented in the last section, it might still be argued that the EU is in a difficult position to engage diasporas due to its particular institutional set-up. Yet, the EU itself has undertaken a number of initiatives for engaging diasporas, especially from Africa, though these rarely focus primarily on peace and security. There are mostly two policy areas which have produced these kinds of programmes: development cooperation and internal security.

As in the case of actors discussed in the previous section, the EU has pursued different activities as part of the migration-development nexus. The Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI) of the European Commission and UNDP, for example, focuses on remittances, migrant rights, migrant capacities and migrant communities. Funding has been

70. USAID (Brinkerhoff), op cit. in note 65, p. 5.

71. Abdirashid A. Ismail, 'Diaspora and Post-War Political Leadership in Somalia', *Nordic Journal of African Studies,* vol. 20, no. 1, 2011, pp. 28-47.

going to migrant associations, but all projects need to have partners in the homeland. At the start of the programme, there was a dialogue with governments of diasporas' home countries as well as EU Member States without any strong resistance to the project.[72]

More importantly, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) adopted at the Lisbon Summit in December 2007 contains a section on migration and development. It identifies diaspora/migrant communities as agents of development and aims at facilitating their involvement.[73] This general reference is elaborated in the Second JAES Action Plan for 2011-2013 as part of the Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment (MME) which is one of eight partnerships. A Diaspora Outreach Initiative has been envisaged 'with the objective of engaging the Diaspora in the development of Africa and to build capacity and transfer skills, knowledge and technologies from the Diaspora to the African continent.'[74] The major concrete project has been the establishment of a European-wide African Diaspora Platform for Development implemented by five agencies, among others the African Diaspora Policy Center. The platform deals with all of Africa, but Morocco, Senegal, Ethiopia, Angola and Cameroon are specific focus countries.[75] So far, both a policy monitoring and a mapping exercise have been launched to identify African diaspora organisations in Europe (co-funded by Switzerland as well as the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the German GIZ). The other components of the Outreach Initiative are the global mapping of African diasporas by the AUC and the World Bank and a capacity-building project for diaspora ministries in Africa led by the Netherlands.[76]

The reasons why diaspora engagement has been included in the Action Plan were the special interest of the African Union as well as the EU global approach to migration which contains the development of benefits of migration as one pillar in addition to furthering legal and reducing

72. Interview, NGO representative, 9 November 2011.

73. European Commission, 'The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, A Joint Africa-EU Strategy', 2007, pp. 15-16+66. See: http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/EAS2007_joint_strategy_en.pdf .

74. European Commission, 'Joint Africa-EU Strategy, Action Plan 2011-2013', 2010, p. 63. See: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/118211.pdf .

75. Interview, NGO representative, 20 December 2011.

76. See 'Joint Africa-EU Strategy, Action Plan 2011-2013', op cit. in note 74, p. 63; also Interview, NGO representative, 20 December 2011 and Interview, European Commission (DG Devco), 10 February 2012.

illegal migration.[77] But the other JAES partnerships do not comprise any diaspora components, for example the political dialogue as part of the first partnership on peace and security focuses on structural and systematic linkages between EU and AU decision-making bodies.

Generally, civil society involvement in the JAES framework is mostly limited to the Steering Group ahead of the ministerial meetings and to expert meetings.[78] Beyond the Action Plan, the EU tries to support a transparent and easier transfer of financial remittances by contributing to the establishment of an African Institute for Remittances (AIR) in the AUC.[79] This project, run by the World Bank in partnership with the African Development Bank and IOM, is still in its early stages.

Another entry point for an agenda of diaspora engagement is the newly-adopted Horn of Africa strategy.[80] The strategy states that the EU will seek to involve the diaspora from the region, 'where possible, as a potential positive resource in achieving its objective.'[81] Special reference is made to the large diaspora in Europe and its economic role as well as socio-political links with the region. The EEAS has commissioned a study on the potential engagement of diasporas in the Horn of Africa by the EU which has a development focus, but also makes reference to the peace and security dimension. Yet, the concrete implementation of diaspora engagement foreseen in the strategy is still unclear.[82]

For the Africa-specific programmes of the EU involving diasporas it can be concluded that the activities are still in an early stage, meaning consultations on implementation and planning are ongoing. Furthermore, an explicit conflict focus is missing here. At the level of EU Member States and other international actors, there is a significant number of initiatives to promote peace, and issues of conflict and peace have increasingly been addressed in the context of development cooperation. At the EU level, there still seems to be a tendency within the EEAS to see development

77. Interview, European Commission (DG Home), 2 February 2012.

78. Interview, EEAS officials, 20 December 2011.

79. E-mail correspondence, European Commission official, (DG Home), 7 February 2012.

80. The 'Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel' published in March 2011 by the EEAS does not refer to diasporas despite the great relevance of migration within, throughout and beyond the region.

81. Council of the European Union, Council Conclusions on the Horn of Africa, Annex, 16858/11, Brussels, 14 November 2011, p. 13.

82. Interview, EEAS official, 9 November 2011.

cooperation as a rather technical and apolitical affair despite its oversight function in the field. Clearly, the High Representative, who is also Vice-President of the European Commission, needs to guarantee unity of strategy and action with the responsible Commission Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation.

But diaspora engagement has also started to occur beyond EU development cooperation, namely in the field of internal security and de-radicalisation. In the framework of the 2010 EU Internal Security Strategy,[83] diasporas have been identified as an important actor. One indication is the launch of an EU Radicalisation Awareness Network in September 2011 which comprises representatives from civil society including from various diasporas.[84] The official aim is to connect key groups across the EU for exchanging ideas and best practices in order to raise awareness of radicalisation and encourage 'credible opinion leaders to voice positive messages that offer alternatives to terrorist narratives.'[85] Until now, there was a working session of the network with initial members, representatives of the Member States, Norway and the EU institutions. Apart from the platform, a Secretariat will be set up and more than 20 million euros are dedicated to the programme over four years.[86]

In the larger field of countering violent extremism (CVE) two workshops have recently been held by the European Commission and the US, one on Somalia and the role of the Somali diaspora in CVE in January 2011 and another one on Pakistan and the Pakistani diaspora in January 2012. The aim of these meetings organised by the US-EU Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Steering Committee was to look at the support diasporas can provide due to the link with their homeland, for example in the field of social integration, cooperation with local governments, building resilience in persons targeted by violent extremists and outreach activities

83. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, 'The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe', COM(2010) 673 final, Brussels, 22 November 2010, http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/malmstrom/archive/internal_security_strategy_in_action_en.pdf.

84. E-mail correspondence, European Commission official (DG Home), 6 February 2012.

85. See website of DG Home Affairs, European Commission, at: http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/terrorism/terrorism_radicalisation_en.htm.

86. European Commission, *European Commission boosts efforts to counter violent extremism*, Press Release, Reference: IP/11/1011, 09/09/2011. Available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1011&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.

among diasporas.[87] Such attempts at interacting with diaspora communities to address issues of CVE are of course not only directed at African diasporas. However, now that the activities of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram in Nigeria and Islamist groups in the Horn of Africa, particularly al-Shabaab in Somalia, are attracting so much attention, the focus on Africa will inevitably increase and, consequently, the interest in respective African diasporas.

CVE activities with regard to diasporas might be assessed as rather limited; however, they inevitably have a political dimension and are certainly sensitive. Thus, they call into question the assessment that peace processes are too political to engage diasporas. While EU engagement of diasporas for development has often avoided situations of intense violence or immediate post-conflict periods, the internal security programmes refer to exactly these contexts. Therefore, a more thorough assessment of starting points and potential for EU initiatives in the field of peace and security is necessary.

The EU and Africa: potential for promoting peace by diaspora engagement

The first chapter has already presented general arguments on why diasporas can and should be engaged for peace. On the one hand, many alleged obstacles to constructive engagement are actually not at all specific to diasporas. Peace processes are always sensitive, the identification and selection of interlocutors is generally difficult, and unintended side-effects of peace-promoting activities tend to occur at some point. Diasporas do not act as a united, coordinated force, but that holds true for most other actors in a conflict environment. On the other hand, it might simply be hard to ignore at least certain elements of diasporas as they seek an active role in their home country, particularly the exiled leadership of armed groups, movements or political parties.

But there are also good reasons why the EU can and should engage with diasporas for peace:

87. E-mail correspondence, European Commission official (DG Home), 7 February 2012; Fact Sheet on the United States' Relationship with the European Union: *An Enduring Partnership*, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 1 December 2011.

(a) EU institutions already have some experience in the field despite a lack of a systematic strategy and (b) the EU has the potential to enhance its role in diaspora engagement as well as peacebuilding more generally.

The first point is largely a matter of labelling and awareness as there are activities of EU institutions that do not have the diaspora 'label' and do not explicitly target this group, but in fact are very much about engaging diasporas in peace processes. The Acehnese peace process is one of the alleged success cases of European external activities in the field of peace and security. Even if the extent of EU influence on the final outcome might be questioned there can be no doubt that the EU played a constructive role by supporting the negotiation process leading to the Helsinki Accord in 2005 and subsequently by deploying the Aceh Monitoring Mission to oversee demobilisation. In these as well as the follow-up activities by the EU under the Instrument for Stability the engagement and interaction with the Acehnese diaspora was practically inevitable. The main leaders of the rebellion had been in Swedish exile for decades and sustained their position as a government-in-exile and 'armchair warriors'[88] over the course of the conflict. Therefore, the mediation under former Finnish President Ahtisaari (Crisis Management Initiative-CMI) could hardly ignore them.[89] But apart from this core group it is more than likely that EU programmes after the peace settlement including advisory assistance on police and public administration reform as well as support for conciliation and trust-building mechanisms comprised a fair amount of interaction with (former) diaspora members.[90] The same holds true for the EU support to the dialogue between the Hmong diaspora (which is mostly based outside Europe) and the government of Laos[91] – and possibly for more projects in the framework of the Instrument for Stability and beyond. EU institutions have, for example, also worked with (returning) diaspora members and communities in post-conflict situations as recently happened

88. Antje Missbach, 'The Acehnese Diaspora: Hawks and Doves? Conflict-Support, Peace-Finding and Political Opportunity Structures', *Journal of Human Security*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2009, pp. 22-43, p. 26.

89. Claudia Hofmann and Judith Vorrath, *The Effects of Exile Rebel Leadership in Armed Conflicts*, paper presented at the Third Convention of the International Politics Section of the German Association for Political Science, Munich, 6-7 October 2011.

90. For a more detailed description of the activities, see: European Commission, Commission Staff Working Paper, Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *2010 Annual Report on the Instrument for Stability Part I*, COM(2011) 494 final, Brussels, 16 August 2011, pp. 47-48.

91. European Commission, COM(2011) 494 final, op cit. in note 90, pp. 58-59.

in Libya.[92] Sometimes diasporas are also included in civil society forums like the dialogue component of the Peacebuilding Partnership which included meetings on specific conflicts (Bosnia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Somalia) with the participation of diaspora members and organisations.[93] In contrast, pressure and judicial means, rather than dialogue, were used by the EU Special Representative for the African Great Lakes Region, Roeland van de Geer, in approaching the issue of the European structures of a Rwandan rebel group (FDLR) operating in the DR Congo. Here the strategy mostly focused on reducing the link between the FDLR movement in DRC and the leaders in Europe and to bring these leaders and genocide suspects to trial.[94] This is a good example of a decision to not engage a diaspora component, but acknowledge its relevance and the necessity to deal with it.

For African diasporas specifically, the framework of the Cotonou Agreement signed on 23 June 2000 and revised in 2005 and 2010 is relevant as it foresees political dialogue and civil society engagement which in certain cases like Eritrea can better take place outside than inside the country.[95] Most units and desks at the EEAS approached for this paper stated that there are political contacts with diaspora organisations and individuals, though not in a formal, organised way.[96] Usually, diaspora groups approach the service or other EU institutions, but there is no (systematic) outreach to diasporas. EU officials participate in meetings and conferences organised by diaspora groups, engage in *ad hoc* talks or are occasionally invited to travel to the home countries.[97] In the European Parliament contacts can be formalised by groups ('Friends of...' or Inter-groups), but informal contacts can be very effective as well as in the case of the large Congolese diaspora in Brussels.[98] Parliamentarians have also been engaged as part of forums like 'European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA)' which organised several dialogue conferences

92. E-mail correspondence, European Commission official (IfS), 14 December 2011.

93. Diaspora participants were either selected by EPLO partner organisations or approached these organisations themselves (Interview, NGO representative, 21 December 2011).

94. Roeland van de Geer, 'The curse of resources and challenges for state capacity building in the conflict-prone Great Lakes Region: What role international and national actors could and should play', Keynote Speech, Conference held by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Hanns Seidel Stiftung, 5 October 2009, p. 5.

95. Interview, EEAS official, 9 November 2011

96. See e.g. Interviews, EEAS officials, 9 November 2011: Interview, EEAS official, 21 November 2011.

97. Interview, EEAS official, 11 January 2012; Interview, European Commission official (Home) 2 February 2012.

98. Interview, DG External Relations, European Parliament, 13 January 2012.

in 2008 and 2009 between Burundian MPs and officials and the Burundian diaspora in Europe.[99]

This list of activities might seem limited but it is much more extensive than might be expected in the light of the scepticism with regard to EU engagement of diasporas described earlier in this chapter. In addition, there is a potential for a much more systematic and comprehensive engagement of diasporas for peace. This point mostly refers to the larger policy framework and views among EU officials on the issue. As part of the cooperation of the EU with Africa in the JAES framework, there is much more room for softer security measures as part of the Partnership on Peace and Security. The MME partnership has a relevant diaspora component, but the field of peace and security still functions mostly along the classic lines of state diplomacy.[100] Therefore, there are missed opportunities to better support civilian peace work including diaspora engagement in the JAES framework.[101] This is all the more regrettable as the EU's work in certain regions like the Horn of Africa has become more political in recent years after its previous predominantly technical development focus.[102] Furthermore, EU delegations can have an important impact beyond interaction with local authorities and populations by the strategic engagement of other actors including diaspora components and the coordination with EU Member States on the ground. Thus, there is a need for a more general, strategic reorientation in order to strengthen the impact of the EU's political initiatives in conflict contexts. The recent strategies for the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region have commonly been assessed as a positive contribution in this regard, but their implementation as well as the adaptation of financial instruments remains unclear.

Furthermore, the continuing perception of development cooperation as a rather apolitical, technical tool needs to be adjusted leading to a more active role of the EEAS in the programming process together with the Directorate General Development and Cooperation.[103] Much also depends on the further evolution of civil society engagement by the EU in peace-

99. See AWEPA, *Programme de soutien des activités de la Diaspora du Burundi 2008-2009*, August 2008.

100. Interview, DG External Relations, European Parliament, 13 January 2012.

101. Interview, NGO representative, 21 December 2011.

102. Interview, EEAS official, 9 November 2011.

103. Interview, EEAS official, 9 November 2011; Interview, DG External Relations, European Parliament, 13 January 2012.

building more generally. If this pillar were to be strengthened in the delegations, the EEAS in Brussels and as part of CSDP missions there would also be more room for the engagement of African diasporas – whether these are based inside or outside of Europe.

Another crucial point is the awareness and opinion at the level of EU officials. Interestingly, many of those interviewed for this paper saw a potential for more diaspora engagement, e.g. by the inclusion of diasporas in the debate on and the implementation of JAES and the regional strategies, or the engagement of diaspora members in missions or as experts in mediation and peacebuilding initiatives.[104] A general necessity to reach out to groups that are not classic counterparts of EU institutions and to engage them before actual decision-making has also been voiced.[105] Others have identified a theoretical potential for diaspora engagement, but remain sceptical as to concrete steps because existing initiatives like those outlined in the MME framework have not become really operational due to limited capacities on the African, but also the European, side in this continental cooperation framework.[106] Others who did not see a real potential for diaspora engagement cited case-specific reasons, for example that there is no larger diaspora from the specific region (in Europe) or that it is rather unorganised.[107] But these reservations relate to the general question of when and how to engage diaspora groups than to EU-specific concerns. Thus, there is not only an awareness of the relevance of the topic, but also the recognition of a potential on the EU side to launch or extend activities.

It can be concluded that there are various ways in which the EU can facilitate the increased involvement of African diasporas in the promotion of peace. In particular, the current strategic and institutional re-orientation in the EU should lead to a better use of this potential.

104. Interview, EEAS official, 9 November 2011; Interview, EEAS officials, 20 December 2011.

105. Interview, EEAS official, 21 December 2011; Interview DG External Relations, European Parliament, 13 January, 2012.

106. Interview, European Commission official (DG Devco), 10 February 2012.

107. Interview, EEAS official, 9 November 2011; Interview, EEAS official, 11 January 2012.

Conclusion

This paper has made the case that there is the scope as well as the need for the EU to engage African diasporas for peace in a systematic way. Several criteria, activities of EU Members States and other international actors as well as the EU's own concrete experiences in this field, have been discussed to demonstrate this argument's relevance. Furthermore, some potential for a more conceptualised and coherent engagement within the existing EU structures has been outlined.

The first chapter, based on a discussion of academic insights, has argued that, first, diasporas can and should be engaged for peace. Such engagement should take account of basic issues like the specific grievances of diasporas and not envisage their involvement as a substitution for the involvement of local actors. Second, the decision on whom and how to engage should be based on an assessment of the motivation (to promote peace) and capacity (to influence homeland conflict) of specific diaspora components. The crucial point is that not only so-called 'positive' forces that rank high on both aspects should be taken into consideration. Diaspora components with a low motivation to promote peace might still be difficult to ignore due to their (potential) impact on the conflict and those with lower capacities might be important partners due to their strong will to contribute. Generally, the means to engage individuals or groups need to be adapted accordingly by changing the incentive and opportunity structure.

The second chapter essentially concluded that diaspora groups need to be considered as a potential force in promoting peace and be involved where criteria are met by the different levels and bodies of EU policy-making. Initiatives by EU Member States and actors like the US as well as experiences at the EU level itself have demonstrated the general feasibility of this undertaking. But where exactly are the cornerstones for an emerging EU agenda in this field?

This paper does not want to overemphasise the importance of one actor group at the expense of others. In the light of limited resources and the multitude of challenges, the elaboration of a comprehensive EU strategy for diaspora engagement in (post-)conflict environments might be

an unrealistic expectation; moreover, it might not even be necessary. If demands for general improvements in the field of peace and security like better coordination within EU structures and with EU Member States are at least partly met, this could open up new opportunities for diaspora engagement as well. For example, enhanced links between the Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Security Policy of the EEAS, the Council Working Groups and crisis management structures[108] as well as better implementation of all four aspects of the Integrated Approach to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding[109] could lead to a more coherent conflict analysis and the mainstreaming of rising issues like diaspora engagement.

Beyond improvements in the general framework, existing potential for diaspora engagement needs to be used to adapt policies in the field of peace and security. Established bases for cooperation like the Peace and Security Partnership of the JAES can provide a framework to address the role of diasporas just as well as more recent formats like the regional strategies for the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, the development of such strategies and their implementation should be accompanied by a stronger involvement of civil society actors, including diaspora groups.

The stronger presence of the EU in African countries with EU delegations also opens up important opportunities. On the one hand, the delegations can contribute to a better coordination of EU Member States' and EU activities on the ground and strengthen the cooperation with non-state actors like African diasporas in Africa. On the other hand, delegations as well as Special Representatives can stimulate a changing perspective on emerging issues like diaspora engagement for peace in a 'bottom-up' manner.[110] If the potential of the ongoing institutional change in the EU, as well as that within existing programmes and initiatives, was exploited, this would already be a big step from a small-scale and *ad hoc* kind of engagement to a more extensive and conscious inclusion of African diasporas in efforts to promote peace in their homelands. Beyond these

108. EPLO, 'Conflict prevention and peacebuilding inside the EEAS', 2011, p. 3; see: http://www.eplo.org/assets/files/2.%20Activities/Working%20Groups/EEAS/EPLO_Statement_EEAS_Feb2011.pdf.

109. ADE-Analysis for Economic Decisions, *Thematic Evaluation of European Commission Support to Conflict Prevention and Peace-building*, Final Report, Ref.: EuropeAid/122888/C/SER/Multi, Request for Service: EVA 2007/main-pol+strat LOT 5, October 2011, pp. 107-9.

110. Damien Helly, 'Why Africa matters', EUISS *Chaillot Paper* (forthcoming), p. 84.

cornerstones for an emerging EU agenda a more profound and systematic approach could develop in the medium and long term, but a better use of existing opportunities will be the first crucial step.

Annex

Abbreviations

ADP	African Diaspora Program of the World Bank
AIR	African Institute for Remittances
AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AWEPA	European Parliamentarians for Africa
CIDO	African Citizens Directorate
CMI	Crisis Management Initiative
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CVE	Countering violent extremism
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DG	Directorate-General
DG Devco	Directorate-General Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid (formerly separated into DG Development and DG EuropeAid)
DG Home	Directorate-General Home Affairs
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of Congo
EEAS	European External Action Service
EPLO	European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
FDLR	Forces démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda/Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit/German International Cooperation, formerly GTZ
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit/German Technical Cooperation, today GIZ
IdEA	International diaspora Engagement Alliance
IfS	Instrument for Stability
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JAES	Joint Africa-EU Strategy
JMDI	Joint Migration and Development Initiative
MIDA	Migration for Development in Africa
MME	Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
zivik	Programm zivile Konfliktbearbeitung/civil conflict resolution programme

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