

Belgian Civilian Crisis Management Strategy

Introduction

The Belgian Civilian Crisis Management Strategy¹ refers to the Belgian vision, priorities and ambition to contribute to the efforts of the international community to prevent or deal with foreign crises by means of non-military actions. This strategy is approved at policy level by the Council of Ministers.

Security-related threats at international level are becoming increasingly complex. An appropriate and effective response to these threats requires a coherent multilateral security policy underpinned by an efficient mix of military and/or civilian actions with a short- and long-term impact. Civilian Crisis Management can make a substantial contribution to achieving this.

The areas of internal and external security are becoming increasingly interconnected. Implementing the mandates for civilian crisis management missions and dealing with internal security (police, justice) often require the same expertise. The recent increase in terrorist threats has confirmed this link. Our internal security depends on the promotion of peace, security and stability beyond our borders and at the same time will also have an impact on priority setting for civilian crisis management, for instance by the increased focus on the fight against terrorism, on the prevention of violent extremism or the fight against organised crime or irregular migration flows in fragile states. The added value of an integrated approach is more than evident.

Because of the rapidly changing international environment, also in crisis management, this strategy will continue to evolve. In this regard, the realisation and implementation of the *Global Strategy on European Foreign and Security Policy* at European level will be further developed in the course of 2017. A reflection on 3D-RL (*diplomacy, defence development, rule of law*) was launched at national level which will also affect the Belgian vision on civilian crisis management.

¹ This document builds on the National Civilian Crisis Management Strategy, as approved by the Council of Ministers of 20 July 2012, and takes into account new developments in civilian crisis management and related Belgian policy.

Civilian crisis management

Civilian crisis management means the stabilisation and/or the prevented escalation of a conflict or crisis situation by means of non-military actions. This usually occurs in synergy with a form of military action (peacekeeping, etc.). Civilian crisis management complements or is an alternative to military action that in itself is not sufficient to ensure lasting peace and international security.

Civilian crisis management paves the way to state building and economic development. State building requires the input of various forms of expertise in the rule of law, public administration and security sector reform (SSR). Economic development shall also take place through the use of a wide range of resources and instruments. The interaction between resources and instruments is a guarantee to be effective.

Civilian crisis management puts the emphasis on *early recovery*, reconstruction of state structures and the provision of assistance to the affected country in order for it to perform its basic functions correctly according to the international legal order in which the principle of 'human security' is central. In the medium term, the aim is to make partner states more resilient in the face of future crises (prevention).

Civilian crisis management can indeed take place during the whole life cycle of the crisis or conflict. In addition to *early warning* and preventive action, it is possible to act at a later stage, for example as a crisis response, stabilization or *post-conflict peace-building*.

In addition to the need to intervene in the different phases of a crisis or conflict, the many facets of security and stability require an integrated and multidimensional approach. The content of civilian crisis management takes on different forms. The critical components of civilian crisis management are, in particular, the strengthening of the rule of law, the transformation and strengthening of the civil security sector and other state functions, the preservation and promotion of fundamental human rights and the recognition of the role of women in peace talks and post-conflict reconstruction (UNSC 1325), the fight against terrorism and prevention of violent extremism and the approach to irregular migration.

In addition to assistance and capacity building truce monitoring will be part of civilian crisis management. The information and intelligence that is obtained via a monitoring mission can feed into the conciliation and mediation mechanisms in order to find a solution to the crisis.

Belgian vision

The Government Declaration of October 2014 highlights the value of civilian crisis management. Belgium has taken its responsibility and made contributions in 2016 to about fifteen international efforts in civilian crisis management.

Belgium favours a multilateral approach as it offers more opportunities for synergies and greater impact.

Belgium also prefers an integrated approach to crisis management. This is in line with the Comprehensive Approach² that exists within the EU and brings together the various EU foreign policy instruments. This vision is also in line with the Belgian interdepartmental 3D-RL vision on foreign policy³.

Belgium considers a multilateral and integrated approach, good coordination and local ownership as being essential for the mandate's success.

Belgium also wants to contribute to improving the efficiency of missions both through participating in the crisis management structures of the European External Action Service (EEAS), including the security aspects adopted by the EU Delegations (EUDEL) and special representatives (EUSR) and through providing the right expertise in a rapid way to the missions. This also implies that attention is paid to preparing and training the experts before deployment in a mission.

Belgium considers the EU to be the first security provider and particular attention is given to missions in the framework of European civilian crisis management and further development of the Common Security and Defence Policy. The implementation of the EU Global Strategy will play an important role in this regard.

Civilian crisis management within the OSCE framework, the UN or NATO also meets the Belgian vision when operations within these organisations are better suited or complementary to address or manage a crisis in a region that is priority for Belgium, or when Belgium has expertise in a specific niche that is useful to these missions.

Finally, the expertise can be made available to ad hoc coalitions, bilateral initiatives or initiatives of non-governmental actors working in the field of stabilization and restoring the rule of law and security.

² Joint communication on EU's comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises – 11.12.2013.

³ This vision is being developed under the coordination of the FPS Foreign Affairs.

Belgian priorities

Belgium's priorities in civilian crisis management result from, inter alia, an inter-departmental analysis of the international security environment. Since the expertise of internal security actors such as the police and justice are frequently used, the vision of these departments is a real added value in setting the priorities.

The thematic priorities for civilian crisis management can be summarized under a number of headings:

- The respect for human rights, including UNSC 1325 on women, peace and security, is a first priority. The implementation of National Action Plan 1325 serves as a reference. UNSC 1612 on children and armed conflict also fits into this framework.
- The promotion of the rule of law and increased accountability, the fight against impunity, mediation and reconciliation, are other important priorities.
- The fight against terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism as well as irregular migration have been added to the priority list.

Geographical priority areas are the immediate neighbouring regions of the EU (Balkans, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa, with particular attention to Central Africa and the Sahel). Civilian crisis management complements other European instruments such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The geographical priorities will be weighed up against the international commitments that were entered into by Belgium or the added value that Belgium's participation could bring to Belgium's own interests on the one hand and the mission on the other.

The presence in a geographical area of other Belgian actors such as Development Cooperation, Defence or Justice may also be a reason for considering a civilian crisis management intervention. The objective is to achieve as coherently an action as possible on the part of Belgium while taking into account the Comprehensive Approach that exists within the EU and 3D-RL vision.

Belgium's level of ambition

Civilian crisis management succeeds or fails with the deployment of human resources. It is essentially about capacity building, monitoring and advising via *peer-to-peer* relationships and the exchange of *best practices*. These resources or the use of experts shall be laid down in an annual planning that reflects the political and strategic objectives underlying a participation in civilian crisis management.

In order to fulfil the specific mandate, a mission needs sufficient expertise at the right time. For missions that are identified as a priority, Belgium engages itself to propose appropriate candidates that represent a right mix of high level or other key functions.

Even before the mission starts, it is preferable to be present in the planning structures of the various multilateral and international organizations that are active in civilian crisis management. In this way, we can influence the elaboration of the mandate.

As far as the EU is concerned, Belgium aims to contribute to the civilian crisis management missions, as a minimum, in accordance with its population share within the total EU population. This means that the target within the civilian CSDP missions (including preparation and planning structures) will be approximately 2.3% of the seconded staff.

We strive to ensure substantially and appropriately participation in other multilateral missions in order to have an impact on the mandate and to take our responsibilities in the implementation thereof.

Coordination and control

The Security Policy Department within the FPS Foreign Affairs ensures the operational follow up and coordination of Belgian civilian crisis management. Periodic meetings shape management at political and strategic level. This is the so-called PolCiv consultation, chaired by a representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and with the participation of the various departments involved in civilian crisis management (police, justice, defence, finance, customs, etc.), as well as members of the Belgian delegation to the Political and Security Committee of the EU and, where appropriate, the desk officers for the EU, NATO, the OSCE and UN civilian crisis management missions (FPS Foreign Affairs) ⁴.

In the third quarter of the previous year the PolCiv consultation finalises the annual indicative planning in which the available resources are determined. The PolCiv also focuses on the Belgian Civilian Crisis Management Strategy.

Resources and implementation

The success of a civilian crisis management mission starts with good preparation of and good support to the experts.

⁴ The Policy Planning, Peace Building and Support to Mediation service as well as the DG for Development Cooperation develop activities within the framework of crisis management. Their advice can also be sought.

Preparation takes place through, inter alia, *Basic Generic Training (BGT) on Civilian Crisis Management*. In the first place, Belgium looks to personnel from the national administration working in the field of civil security and the *Rule of Law*. To be able to respond to the increasing diversity in required expertise, Belgium is actively looking for candidates in disciplines such as finance, border control, customs, irregular migration, fight against terrorism, monitoring and support functions. The experts who attended the BGT may qualify for a longer term deployment (minimum 12 months) in a civilian crisis management mission. The maximum time limit depends on the importance of the function for Belgium, the requirements of the mission and the status of the deployed expert. In principle deployment is on a voluntary basis and in accordance with the hierarchical framework within which the expert is employed.

In its role as coordinator and considering the fact that federal departments that provide staff can continue to manage their own staff, the FPS Foreign Affairs remains in control of the staff that can be potentially deployed by the different FPS's. This also includes the non-government personnel that the FPS Foreign Affairs has selected. Actual number of deployable experts are determined in the annual indicative planning.

Prior to each participation in a civilian crisis management mission, the Council of Ministers gives its formal permission. Every proposal to participate in a new mission will be laid down in a specific request to the Council of Ministers.

Belgium will ensure that the deployment takes places quickly and that both long- and short-term missions are completed.

Budgetary

The basic principle is that the costs and allowances related to the presence on the ground (including *per diems*) are borne by the international organisation (EU, OSCE, UN) under whose auspices the mission is performed. The other costs are borne by the participating/seconding countries.

The national budget must be sufficient to cover the costs for preparing the experts on the one hand and for developing and ensuring their effective functioning on the other.

The budgetary needs are covered by an interdepartmental provision within programme 14-53-5 of the Law on the General Expenditures Budget for the current year. Based on the appreciation of their actual needs, the credit distribution to the relevant federal agencies is done on the basis of two Royal Decrees.

Communication strategy

To get sufficient support for this strategy and to fulfil the desired level of ambition, greater visibility and awareness are necessary both internally within the departments concerned, and externally.

The press and communication services of the various participating departments have an important role to play in this regard. They must coordinate among themselves in order to get a coherent picture. Coordination is also needed between the Belgian actors and the press and communication services of the missions and organisations to which Belgium contributes.

The press and communication services of the various participating departments can report proactively through press statements, social media and newsletters about all aspects of civilian crisis management: the indicative planning and annual Belgian priorities, the preparatory training (BGT), the assignment of experts or when Belgium takes up the lead of a mission.

The Federal Parliament will be informed on the implementation of this civilian crisis management policy through the relevant parliamentary committees.