

Croatian Civil Capacities for Peace Missions and Operations

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Summary

This policy brief provides an overview of the current Croatian policies as well as a legal and institutional framework related to the deployment of civilians in peace mission and operations. It aims to explore the challenges and opportunities for the further development of an existing framework to support the current political interest for civilian capacities that exists in Croatia. Challenges in the mind set of decision and policy makers in understanding Croatia more as a security provider, rather than security receiver and questions to what extent, or how fast, the post-co nflict state may be transformed into an important player in the peace building arena, are discussed. The challenges are analysed through state implementation of international development cooperation as a foreign policy tool.

Introduction

On July 1, 2013 Croatia became the 28th European Union (EU) member state. Croatia is the first state with recent war experience that has joined EU. This experience could be interpreted as an advantage or potentially as an obstacle for Croatian membership. An advantage in a

sense that experience of post-war transition, institutions and state building could be transferred to more global EU foreign peace building policies and can be 'exported' in other (post)war areas. An obstacle as a perception of Croatia as an underdeveloped state with many still non-democratic burdens left from the military conflict (nationalism, corruption, war crime trials etc.). It is up to the political elites, but also up to the citizens of Croatia, to decide how to capitalise on and transform the Croatian war experience in the future development of the State. Until today, the primary lessons learned from the war were almost exclusively related to an understanding of the role of the military in a conflict. Croatia has partially built its own national identity on 'military victory'¹ and a militaristically developed identity was an essential part of Croatian sovereignty. This raises the question about the capability of a post-war, transitional state to be more self-reflective in recognition of non-military components present within its society. Although many are talking how understanding in transitional state building and war experience can be perceived as a strategic advantage in the integration of civilian capacities in peace missions, the change needed in understanding and the creation of the environment for such political decisions takes a lot of time and effort. However, with the EU accession process, Croatia has accelerated the building of a legal and institutional framework for recognition of international development cooperation (DEVCO) policies and an awareness rising on the role of civilians in peace missions and operations (PMOs).

Legal and institutional framework

In 2002 Croatian Parliament adopted the Law on Participation of Military Personnel, Police, Civil Defence and Civil Servants in Peace Mission and Other Activities Abroad.² This Law is the overall legal framework for sending primarily military personnel in PMOs. However in some parts, the law also regulates deployment of civilians. The Law gives powers to each Ministry/State agency to develop additional bylaws for efficient implementation of the Law. This is how, for example, Ministry of Justice after Croatia joined the EULEX Kosovo mission,³ has adopted the Regulation⁴ which regulates the rights and obligations of civil servants sent to work either in international organizations or in peace missions abroad.

¹ Croatia is officially celebrating controversial military action "Storm" which brought to liberation of Croatian occupied territories in 1995. At the same time, the UN peaceful integration (which was dominantly civil mission) of Eastern Slavonia occupied territories was ignored by State institutions for many years.

² Official Gazette 33/02, 92/10, 73/13.

³ Official web-site of Ministry of Justice, EU civilian missions, available in Croatian at <http://www.pravosudje.hr/eu-civilne-misije?dm=2> (26. 12. 2013).

⁴ Official Gazette 89/09.

In September 2008, due to the EU accession process, Croatia introduced the Law on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Abroad,⁵ and a few months later the National Strategy on International Development Cooperation 2009 -2014⁶. That legislation is under the full responsibility of Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA). The fact that the MFEA is responsible for the implementation of all international DEVCO policies has brought the MFEA closer to the PMOs, which was traditionally primarily under the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The MFEA has adopted a new strategic plan for 2013-2015 in which it is clearly stated that one of the goals of Croatian foreign policy is to “strengthen participation of Croatia in international peace missions and operations with a focus on the civilian component due to the specific experience of Croatia in post-conflict reconstruction.”⁷ To achieve this policy goal it is “necessary to adopt the new Law on Civilians in Peace Missions which has to include representatives of CSOs and private sector”.⁸ Those reforms are already taking places. In the last changes of the Law on Defence (June 2013), MOD has decided to separate deployment of military staff from civilians through new Law on Serving in Armed Forces of Republic of Croatia⁹ and through the revised bylaws. To decrease the gap and increase coordination between MOD and MFEA, in November 2013, the Government made the official decision on establishing Committee for International Missions and Operations.¹⁰ The Committee is chaired by the MFEA minister and the other members are the Ministers of Defence, Interior, Justice, Finance, the representative of the President of Croatia, the Prime Minister’s Foreign Affairs Adviser and the Chief of Joint Staff. The goal of the Committee is to harmonize the military and civil engagements in international peace missions and operations.

Croatian Civilian Participation in Peace Missions

Croatia has been participating in international peace missions since 1999 when it got involved in UNAMSIL mission in Sierra Leone. The first police officers were deployed in in 2000. Since then, the police have participated in several different UN missions (UNMIK in Kosovo, UNFICYP in Cyprus and in the NATO/ISAF mission in Afghanistan). An important turning point happened in 2005 when first MFEA diplomats were deployed to the NATO/ISAF mission in Afghanistan. At the beginning one diplomat and two police officers

⁵ Official Gazette 146/08.

⁶ Official Gazette 24/09.

⁷ MFEA strategic plan for 2013-2015, point 1.3.2

⁸ Interview with representative of MFEA

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ 126th Government session, November 28 2013

were active within the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in the Badakhshan province¹¹ and, in the last two years, civilians have been involved in the implementation of several development projects supported by the Croatian state.

Apart from the MFEA civilian representative in Afghanistan, the MOI in December 2013 had police staff in five different peace missions: EUPOL (EU Police Mission in Afghanistan), EULEX (in total 16 police officers participated), UNFICYP – Cyprus (in total 30 police officers participated), MINUSTAH – Haiti (in total 12 police officers participated) and NATO/ISAF (at the beginning of year 2013 first advisory team in Head command of Afghan national police in Kabul was deployed).¹² In total, Croatia (at the beginning of April 2013) was present in 12 different international organizations in the UN, EU and NATO PMOs, with a total of 258 military personnel, 20 police officers and one diplomat.¹³ In the period 2009-2011 Croatia also deployed three judicial representatives in the EULEX mission in Kosovo. That was the first time that the Croatian state has recognised expertise of civilians outside the MOD, MFEA and MOI staff. This trend could be continued through the future development of international development cooperation policies.

Development Cooperation as Potential Initiator for the Inclusion of Civilians in the Aftermath of Conflict

In February 2011 Croatia was officially removed from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development list of official development assistance recipients and has become a donor with the long term goal on investing of 0.33% of GDP to development cooperation until 2015. This ‘overnight’, administrative decision of becoming a donor country was not enough to create efficient and sustainable political and administrative systems within the state institutions to implement DEVCO policies. The Croatian parliament, based on the proposals from the MFEA has accepted necessary legal and strategic framework needed for successful policy implementation. However, the understanding of the meaning of development cooperation is still pending not only within different state institutions, but also within civil society in Croatia.

¹¹ Hrvatski vojnik, no. 38, June 2005. Interview with Dražen Hrastić – former MFEA diplomat in Afghanistan and deputy of the head of civilian affairs.

¹² Ministry of Interior, department for peace mission, <http://www.mup.hr/main.aspx?id=108774> . Also official reply from MOI on the question on number of active missions in which police officers are involved (Dec 30 2013)

¹³ Official data from MFEA web-site <http://www.mvep.hr/hr/vanjska-politika/multilateralni-odnosi0/mir-i-sigurnost/mirovne-misije/hrvatska-u-mirovnim-misijama-i-operacijama/>

For 2013 Croatia has defined its strategic thematic and geographic goals related to the development cooperation. Geographically, Croatia wanted to be present primarily in South-East Europe, South Mediterranean and Afghanistan, but also with several states with (post) conflict backgrounds: Burma/Myanmar, Sudan, Palestine and Angola.¹⁴ Thematically, Croatia wants to focus on: education, public health, tourism and development of civil society.¹⁵ However, reality is very different from the stated political objectives and strategies. Croatia has significantly reduced the budget for DEVCO, reaching only 0,03% of GDP in 2012 (around 16,4 million euros). Even more problematic is the fact that 35,44% (Table 1) of the DEVCO budget is dedicated to Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), or more accurately to Croats in B&H.

| Country | Amount (HRK) | % |
|--|-----------------------|-------------|
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 44.277.219,08 | 35,44 |
| International and regional organizations | 39.983.770,15 | 32,00 |
| Administrative costs | 15.846.827,77 | 12,78 |
| Montenegro | 10.011.143,88 | 8,01 |
| Multilateral cooperation | 5.454.266,64 | 4,37 |
| Afghanistan* | 5.275.767,16 | 4,22 |
| Syria* | 1.996.500,00 | 1,6 |
| Kosovo* | 839.124,40 | 0,67 |
| Palestine | 550.000,00 | 0,44 |
| Myanmar | 340.316,00 | 0,27 |
| Namibia | 84.964,00 | 0,07 |
| Serbia | 77.330,50 | 0,06 |
| Mauritius | 49.021,00 | 0,04 |
| FYR Macedonia | 39.144,00 | 0,03 |
| Kenya | 38.092,00 | 0,03 |
| Iraq | 35.230,91 | 0,03 |
| Tajikistan | 25.105,50 | 0,02 |
| Lebanon* | 14.280,00 | 0,01 |
| Zimbabwe | 1.973,00 | 0,00 |
| Total | 124.940.075,99 | 100% |

Table 1. Distribution of Croatian development cooperation budget for the year 2012¹⁶. *states where Croatia was present with the military in 2013.

¹⁴ Implementation program of National development cooperation strategy for 2013, MFEA, January 2013.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Government report on the implementation of official international development cooperation of Croatia for 2012, report adopted by Croatian Parliament in November 2013.

It is interesting to spot the differentiation between Croatian military PMOs and development projects. The Croatian military was present in 2013 in Afghanistan, Syria (withdrawal of troops in June 2013), India, Pakistan, Western Sahara, Cyprus, Liberia, Lebanon and Kosovo.¹⁷ In four (Afghanistan, Syria, Kosovo and Lebanon) out of nine countries Croatia was also present through facilitating development cooperation projects.¹⁸ From the analyses of the state budget for 2012 it is clear that civilian deployment in PMOs is still not the priority, regardless of the policy documents that are calling for their stronger inclusion. For example, for 2012 the Croatian MOD has approved military budget for peace missions in amount of 325.546.802 HRK. Comparing this number with the total amount spent for DEVCO projects from Table 1, it is easy to conclude that Croatia was spending 2.6 times more on military than on the development activities. Or looking only at Afghanistan, Croatia has spent 48.5 times more on military than on development projects¹⁹.

Conclusions

Three independent preconditions necessary for successful integration of civilians in PMOs are needed; political will, resources and education. Without the political will and true understanding that civilians can significantly contribute to conflict resolution and peace, it is impossible to develop foreign policies which would embrace civilians in PMOs. Croatia, being a post conflict state, with the important role of the military in the creation of state identity, has started to recognise the role of civilians in the conflict and in the aftermath of the conflict. However, for the last couple of years the role of civilians in PMOs is more and more appreciated. Because Croatia became a full member of the EU, it is also obliged to be more proactive in development cooperation policies and participate to EU Common Security and Defence Policy in which role of civilians play a crucial role in CSDP missions. It is not enough to just be active in different international bodies but it is also important to foster this approach in the domestic arena. The overall impression is that there exists a discrepancy between official statements, delivered by high level representatives within different international bodies relating to civilians in PMOs, and the actual actions — or lack thereof — of the national institutions in charge of implementing these policies. This also means that the

¹⁷ Official data from MOD on request, October 2013.

¹⁸ One can claim that project implemented in Lebanon was symbolic in financial terms. The state has invested less than 2.000 eur in development cooperation project.

¹⁹ According from official reply of MOD, Croatian participation in NATO/ISAF in 2012 costs were 255.969.083,00 HRK.

state has to ensure the financial resources for the civilians enrolled in PMOs. Finally, before sending the civilians into (post)conflict it is essential to prepare them for the diverse challenges they will face on the ground. Moreover, it is essential that they do not do more harm than good to the local population. The organized education system for civilians basically still does not exist. The biggest achievement has been done by the MOI which has organized a certified United Nations Police Officers Course (UNPOC) for police officers deployed in the peace missions since 2006. The training centre is based in Valbandon and the program has strong support by UNDP Croatia with whom the MOI has signed memorandum of understanding related to the implementation of education. However this training centre is only open for police and occasionally for military staff.

Recommendations

The Government of Croatia:

1. Continue with development of legal and institutional framework which will define more precisely rights and obligations related to deployment of civilians in PMOs. This can be done through introduction of separate Law on civilians in PMOs.
2. Avoid possible institutional conflicts on ownership over PMOs. New coordination body has to recognise importance of MOD in PMOs. MOD has to recognise development cooperation as a foreign tool policy.
3. Decrease the current bias between DEVCO and military budget in PMOs.

The MFEA:

4. Detect partner countries with experience in engagement of civilians in PMO and use their experience through bilateral projects.
5. Start with the construction of an expert database and mapping of expertise within state and CSOs within Centre of excellence. Use capacities of Intra-sectorial working group for international development cooperation and humanitarian for collecting those data.
6. Map and rely more on expertise within CSOs in developing and implementing foreign policies by initiating open calls for development cooperation projects.

7. Based on the results of mapping of expertise and experience within state institutions and CSOs, promote Croatia to international organizations as a post-conflict state with significant experience in civilian post conflict state building. Recognize the role of civilians in conflict and post-conflict period in Croatia.
8. Start with development of education centre for preparation of deployment of civilians to PMO. Use the experience of MOI in this field.
9. Promote in collaboration with CSOs the importance of DEVCO in PMO to public through campaigns and media. Report to the public current achievements done in the field of development cooperation.
10. Be more pro-active in EU defence and security policy to use this framework to build own capacities for engaging the civilians in post conflict environments. Deploy diplomat in EEAS to work on those policies.

For MOD:

11. Increase coordination with MFEA in preparation and implementation of PMO through newly established Committee for International Missions and Operations.

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