



Draft Concept Note

Workshop and Dialogue Forum on

“Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities”

Date: Thursday 12 May 2011 (Workshop) and Friday 13 May 2011 (Dialogue Forum)

Venue: Hungarian Permanent Representation to the EU
92-98 Rue de Trèves, B-1040, Brussels

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide approved by the UN in 1948 describes genocide as a crime under international law which "Member States undertake to prevent and to punish". Despite the efforts and the progress made in this field the international community has not been able to prevent the occurrence of genocide in every case. Humanity has regrettably witnessed the perpetration of genocide numerous times over the last six decades, and the plea "never again" has largely remained wishful thinking.

It is well known that genocide and other mass atrocities are rarely spontaneous. The relatively long process leading from human rights violations to genocide provides ample time to predict it and to implement actions to address the threats. The fact that genocide is preventable should further encourage the international community to continue systematic and consistent endeavours to build up the capacities and capabilities necessary to prevent the occurrence of genocidal violence. To this end, it is necessary to have the right organizational structures, strategies and partnerships.

At the UN Summit in 2005 the Member States again committed to the principle of preventing genocide and mass atrocities. The United Nations, some regional organizations and other major international players, as well as non-governmental organizations, enhanced their capacities to protect populations from preventing genocide. The Responsibility to Protect includes genocide as one of four crimes that should be prevented or halted. Although not uncontroversial, significant progress has been made since 2005 on the elaboration and to some extent implementation of this norm.

The Member States of the European Union repeated their commitment to preventing genocide in the *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy* of December 2008 by stating that "we hold a shared responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."

The establishment of the European External Action Service in 2010 provides new opportunities for the EU institutions and Member States to live up to their commitment, strengthen their efforts to pool their wide array of instruments and to contribute to international cooperation in this domain.

There is also new impetus at the international level due to the work of the UN's Office of The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, and the preparation for the UN General Assembly Interactive Dialogue on Responsibility to Protect to be held on 12 July 2011. There are expectations that the EU will play a key role in the debate.

Within the framework of the Programme "Building coherence, skills and synergies in conflict prevention", the Madariaga – College of Europe Foundation and the Folke Bernadotte Academy, with the support of the Hungarian Presidency of the European Union and in close cooperation with the European External Action Service and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) make a new effort to promote the cause of genocide prevention. According to the spirit of the three-semester Programme, the organizers intend to turn the attention of policymakers, scholars and experts to the need to further develop tools and enhance international cooperation and partnerships in this domain too.

During the two-day event the participants will focus on sharing experiences, lessons learned and best practices how to narrow the gap between early warning and timely action on genocide prevention and discuss the ways to create further synergies within the international community.

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