BUILDING CIVIL CAPACITY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

- A Comparative Analysis -

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Introduction

In recent decades, peacekeeping missions have increasingly moved away from dealing primarily with military endeavours towards the inclusion of peacebuilding tasks. For this reason, the role of civilians in peacekeeping missions has altered from carrying out peripheral mission support functions to being at the heart of modern peacekeeping missions and peacebuilding operations, under the auspices of the UN, the OSCE, NATO and the EU. There is international recognition that effective and timely civil capacity is as necessary in post-conflict societies as is support for national peacebuilding efforts. The number of civilian functions in missions has increased dramatically due to greater demand for civilian expertise and experts specialised in specific areas.

The aim of civilian components in UN missions is to ensure peacebuilding and so bridge the gap between the cessation of hostilities and the provision of post-conflict security and developmental support. Civilian expertise therefore serves to perform functions and carry out activities for which the army is not best suited, such as post-conflict reconstruction and institutional reform. Civil capacity is thus crucial for fulfilling the broader mandates of missions today, and usually includes: strengthening the rule of law – including the judiciary, prison administration and legal reforms; security sector reform – including reform of the military and police, legal reforms and respect for human rights norms; supporting the establishment of electoral systems and the conduct of free and democratic elections; and other kinds of sectoral expertise. European Union missions are organised in a similar manner, while the use of civil capacity as a means of crisis management is now an integral part of the EU’s foreign and security policy (CFSP). Likewise, support from a wide range of civilian experts for the reconstruction of civilian institutions in post-conflict periods is a feature of OSCE and NATO missions.

The continuing deployment of troops and police officers from West Balkan states on UN, NATO, OSCE and EU-led missions clearly indicates the intention of the region’s countries to increase their involvement in peacekeeping operations. However, their contribution to peacekeeping operations has so far been largely military, and they are only just beginning to deploy civilians on international missions and with international organisations. The altered security environment has led to a significant increase in awareness among West Balkan states of the importance of building civil capacity and of the greater involvement of civilian experts in peace support. West Balkan states are faced with consequences of the current conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, as well as global security threats including the migrant and refugee crisis, terrorism etc. This has led politicians in the region to support the building of civil capacity, leading to the establishment of a legal and institutional framework for deploying civilians on peacekeeping missions. West Balkan officials, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, have expressed an interest in mobilising civil capacity and deploying it on international missions, this time in a systematically planned and coordinated way rather than in an ad hoc manner.

1 This text will use the terms international, peacebuilding missions and operations in parallel.
There is a need for further investment in building civil capacity in West Balkan states, especially in view of the European integration process, which requires improvements in this area. West Balkan states have adopted the first generation of laws permitting the participation of the army and police in peacekeeping operations. However, many states are looking at new legal solutions, with the aim of widening international engagement through civilian participation in peacekeeping operations. Thus, there is great demand for the completion of the legal and institutional framework through the amendment of existing laws and the creation of secondary legislation that would permit civilians to participate in peacekeeping operations. At the same time, there is also a need to invest in strategic communication directed at various groups in order to ensure better understanding of and support for the state’s contribution to peacekeeping operations. Finally, continued education and training for civil servants and experts is essential if the development of policy based on knowledge is to be supported.

This text aims to illustrate current practice in West Balkan states for deploying civilians on peacekeeping missions, to list the shortcomings that must be overcome if the involvement of civilians in international missions and organisations is to be increased, and to examine the potential of individual states to build civilian expertise. Comparative analysis is primarily based on analysis of the initial state of civil capacity building carried out in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia. Collaborating in this analysis were the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (Albania), the Centre for Peace Studies (Croatia), Analytica (Macedonia), Institute Alternative (Montenegro) and the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (Serbia), in cooperation with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). The results of the research were presented in an English-language academic journal, the Journal of Regional Security, Vol 9, No 2 (2014).² The comparative analysis encompasses analysis of the deployment of civilians on UN, NATO and EU missions. Although there is great potential for civilians to be deployed on OSCE missions, data on individual contributions by West Balkan states were not available to the authors at the time of writing, so will not be included in this analysis.

Context

The nature of conflict has fundamentally changed over the last two decades. Conflicts have become more complex and fragmented, while at the same time the international missions and organisations which are deployed in conflict zones and post-conflict areas have had to take on a wide variety of tasks, including: monitoring ceasefires; monitoring the implementation of peace agreements; re-grouping and demobilising troops and reintegrating them into civilian life as well as decommissioning their weapons; designing and implementing mine clearance programmes; the return of refugees and displaced persons; offering humanitarian assistance; oversight of existing administrative structures; establishing new police forces; verification of respect for human rights; design and oversight of constitutional, judicial and electoral reforms; observation, oversight and even the organisation and conduct of elections; coordinating support for economic recovery and social reconstruction; and reconstruction of critical infrastructure (water and electricity supply, roads, bridges, traffic, public transport rolling stock etc.). If international missions and organisations are to respond successfully to the complex security challenges faced both during conflict and after it has ended, civilian expertise which can deal with all these complex issues is necessary. Since leaders at the highest global level have become aware of the importance of civil capacity for peace support operations, their declared political will to increase the engagement of civilians and improve civil capacity in international missions has been transformed into strategic documents and policies.

In 2009, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon launched an investigation of the role of civilians in post-conflict peacebuilding. In his report, “Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict”, published in 2008, Ban stressed the importance of the role of civil capacity in post-conflict peacebuilding. In order to additionally strengthen that role, he suggested carrying out analysis of how the United Nations and the international community could expand the roster of civilian experts in order to support countries which have ended conflicts to develop state and society, and make recommendations to that end. The advisory group reported that civilian expertise would be especially necessary in five key areas – provision of basic safety and security, establishment of an inclusive political process, justice, economic recovery and basic government functions (UN CIVCAP 2014). Subsequent reports from the General Secretary mentioned that countries with a post-conflict heritage could offer the necessary civilian expertise and support. This was confirmed in 2012, when the UN General Assembly “encouraged national governments, the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organisations to broaden and deepen the pool of civilian expertise in peacebuilding in the immediate post-conflict period, including also those countries with relevant experience of post-conflict peacebuilding or democratic transition.”

² http://regionalsecurityjournal.com/index.php/JRS/issue/view/7

In stressing the need for the EU to strengthen its own capacity, the EU’s 2003 security strategy, “A Secure Europe in a Better World”, confirmed the political will at the EU level for further investment in civil capacity, particularly in crisis management missions. The new strategy for 2016 reinforces its predecessor, stressing the necessity for the EU to further improve its capacity in order to respond to security threats like migration, terrorism, cyber-crime etc. Other regional organisations, such as the African Union, hoping to compete with UN missions in providing security and peacebuilding, are developing their own strategic approaches to civil capacity in peacebuilding operations in Africa. In addition, the BRICS countries are also increasing their participation in military and civilian missions.

West Balkan states share the experience of many years of political and economic transition following the conflict on the territory of former Yugoslavia and the ethnic and civil conflicts that took place in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Having made some progress in post-conflict transition and building state institutions, it can be assumed that the region’s countries have an advantage, as their experience can be incorporated into their foreign policy and thus they can offer help or support to other states in peacebuilding in (post-)conflict zones. The region’s countries can thus move away from their longstanding status as security “importers” towards being “providers” of security on peacebuilding missions (Karlsrud and Milosevic 2014: 80).

The main obstacle to the idea that civilians should engage in regions of conflict is the legacy of militarisation in West Balkan states and the general perception that the armed forces, or rather the army, have a big advantage over civilian organisations in conflict resolution (Bosanac 2016). It is also believed, therefore, that the armed forces can solve conflicts more effectively and efficiently, meaning that civilian capacity and what it can achieve are disregarded. States will certainly send one or two civilians on a peacekeeping mission somewhere, but it is unlikely that they will decide to send a contingent of one hundred civilians to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan for example. However, it is very easy to send a contingent consisting of the same number of troops on the mission. Until a change in thinking occurs, not only among those who work in state administration but also among political decision makers, civil capacity will not be realised, as it does not enjoy trust (ibid.). At the moment, there is insufficient support for engaging civil capacity in missions both at the level of political decision making and discourse and, consequently, on the financial side. Taking current political decisions and the state budget into consideration, there is a huge discrepancy between the financing of members of the armed forces who participate in peacekeeping missions and civilians. In some states, as much as forty times more money is set aside to pay for military personnel on missions compared to that allocated to the participation of civilians. A similar trend can be seen worldwide, with the dominant tendency still being to resolve conflicts through military means, accompanied by increasing defence budgets across the globe. Advocating greater involvement by civilians in missions does not imply that the military is carrying out its work badly and must be replaced by civilians. The military component of missions is essential for ending armed conflict and guaranteeing the personal safety of the population, as well as for creating a secure environment, one of the preconditions for building society and establishing institutions following conflict. However, the civilian component of the work of peacekeeping missions must be given greater legitimacy, while West Balkan states could do far more than they have done to date to improve the current situation. Given that this is a highly politically sensitive subject, the message must be communicated to the public in the correct manner. For now, local politicians lack the knowledge and skills to manage civilian skills and capacity.

Elections and changes of government have recently led to significant changes linked to specific priorities in domestic and foreign policy. The last few years have seen a radical change in political power in the Western Balkans, which has led to changes in how institutions work, alterations of strategic thinking, the redrafting of action plans and the refusal to adopt some legislation. The new political authorities in many states have marginalised the subject of civilian participation in missions and shaken up the existing strategic guidelines, even where there was a national consensus over which missions to participate in. All this represents a major challenge to building civil capacity in the future.

Overview of Civil Capacity Building in the Western Balkans

Deployment Practice for Civilians from West Balkan States on Peacebuilding Missions

The following conclusions can be drawn from prior practice for the deployment of civilians from the Western Balkan states on peacekeeping missions. All the region’s states have experience of deploying police officers on UN, EU and NATO missions (see Table 1). Thus, civilians were police officers in civilian dress, engaged in civilian tasks and duties. From this it can be concluded that the thinking about
which civilians can be sent on missions is still narrow, and exclusively linked to the security sector. Croatia has sent the largest number of civilians on international missions, and it is the only state to have broken with prior practice by sending a diplomat from the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs to ISAF in Afghanistan, as well as three representatives of the judiciary to the EULEX mission in Kosovo. It is necessary to take a further functional step forward in the upcoming period and allow civil servants other than police officers to participate in missions.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Actors</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
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<td>2007-2008</td>
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Table 1. Overview of the deployment of civilians from the Western Balkans on international missions (data from 2014)

Secondly, the foreign policy priorities of the region’s countries and the influence of various international organisations have contributed to the development of civil capacity. The development of civilian and non-military capacity for peacekeeping operations is an obligation which derives from NATO membership criteria. Thus, for most states, the wish to be accepted into NATO was a major incentive for developing civil capacity, and it is not surprising that civilians have been deployed on NATO missions through civilian-military cooperation (CIMIC) and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). It must be stressed that NATO standards are more rapidly and easily attained than EU standards, a fact which has contributed greatly to the direction taken by states. In the case of Croatia, engagement in ISAF was a pragmatic priority due to the higher aim of NATO membership. Once Croatia had joined NATO and was politically committed to EU membership, the number of military and civilian personnel sent on UN missions fell in favour of the EU and its own missions. In contrast, Serbia’s political commitment to EU membership and military neutrality means that the trend in that country is one of increasing engagement in UN and EU missions. The same is true of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Alongside Euro-Atlantic integration, an important influence on the deployment of civilians on peacekeeping missions is developmental cooperation. Following EU accession, Croatia became a donor state for the first time, offering developmental assistance and civilian expertise both to other states in the region and to Middle Eastern, Asian and African countries where Croatia was either present through international military missions or had an interest in being so. Analysis of spending on developmental assistance in 2012 gives the impression that one of Croatia’s foreign policy goals was to maintain a presence in the Western Balkans and send assistance, including civilians, primarily to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo, and subsequently to countries where it was mil-
The total number of civilians who have taken part in missions is disproportionately small compared to the total number of professional soldiers and officers who have been sent on missions. To illustrate, in 2016 Serbia deployed 643 troops on various peacekeeping missions under UN mandates, or 60 times the total number of civilians sent. Given their level of involvement, a significantly smaller budget is set aside for the deployment of civilians than for members of the military. Based on information available for 2012, the Croatian Ministry of Defence approved spending of 325,546,802 kuna (around 43,342,682 euros) for military cooperation on peacekeeping missions. Comparing this amount with the total spent on international developmental cooperation, it can easily be seen that Croatia spent 2.6 times more on military than on developmental activities (Bosanac 2014: 3). If we take Afghanistan as an example, according to the official response of the Ministry of Defence, participation in NATO/ISAF cost Croatia 255,969,083.00 kuna in 2012, while the total amount spent on developmental projects in Afghanistan was 5,275,767.16 kuna. Thus, Croatia spent 48.5 times more on military participation than on developmental projects (ibid.).

Finally, deploying civilians on mission is still a novelty for all states, as it was only after 2000 that they deployed their first police officers, and from 2005 other civil servants outside the security sector.

The Legal and Institutional Framework for Deploying Civilians on Peacekeeping Missions

Legal and Strategic Framework

Deployment of the military, police and civilians occurred prior to the completion of the strategic and legal framework in this area, and was possible primarily on the basis of the constitution and/or basic laws dealing with defence, the army/armed forces or the police. In addition, all West Balkan states have adopted specific laws in the last ten years dealing with deployment of the army/armed forces, police officers, civil servants and employees on peacekeeping missions abroad. Although these laws do not explicitly provide for the deployment of civilians on missions, they nonetheless implicitly permit it. In 2014, Croatia, the state with the most experience of deploying civilians, developed a draft Law on the Participation of Civilian Experts in International Missions and Operations, with the aim of overcoming the legal shortcomings that have emerged in the meantime. Although this law has not been adopted due to changes in the new government’s priorities following elections, Croatia is the only state in the region to have decided to create a special law concerned exclusively with the status of civilians on international missions.

The employment status of those deployed on missions is regulated in detail by secondary legislation. Exercise of the right to insurance, salary and other remuneration, the determination of risk coefficients etc. is regulated by rules and regulations on the deployment of police officers, soldiers, civil protection officers, members of the judiciary and civil servants to international organisations and on peacekeeping missions abroad. However, in most of the region’s countries, there is a lack of secondary legislation regulating the participation of civilian experts in international civilian missions and organisations, with the exception of police officers. The next key step is the creation of a framework of secondary legislation in this area.

Strategic thinking and the translation of official statements from political leaders into strategic goals and directives has not taken place in parallel to the development of legislation. The shaping of foreign policy strategy and action plans which foresee the deployment of civilians on civilian missions has begun relatively recently compared to the development of security and defence strategy. Deployment of the army, other defence forces and civil servants belongs primarily to security policy, and only in some states is it an integral part of foreign policy strategy, foreign policy guidelines and action plans, particularly in the context of European integration. Security documents which foresee the state’s participation in international missions and activities include national security strategies, defence strategies and the doctrine of civilian-military cooperation between NATO and individual states, otherwise known as the NATO “Partnership for Peace”. As Serbia lacks both a foreign policy strategy and an action plan for its foreign ministry, deployment of military and other defence forces are dealt with for now by the Defence Strategy and the National Security Strategy from 2009. Given that in most other states these documents have become obsolete, it is necessary to update them and harmonise them with current trends and changes in the security environment. This is an opportunity to define the role of civilians in conflict

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7 In 2012 Croatia spent a total of 124,940,075.99 kuna on international developmental cooperation.

8 Analysis of the draft law can be found at: http://www.cms.hr/system/publication/pdf/66/Analiza_prijedloga_Zakona_o_sudjelovanju_civilnih_strucnjaka_u_medjunarodnim_misijama_i_operacijama.pdf
resolution and peacebuilding. In contrast, in Croatia and Montenegro the participation of civilian experts and the secondment of diplomats to international missions and operations (of the UN, NATO, the EU, the OSCE and other international organisations) is envisaged by a strategic plan issued by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and other government documents. In addition, in 2014 Croatia developed a Strategy for the Participation of the Republic of Croatia in International Missions and Operations. Civilians and civilian missions are also mentioned in agreements with the European Union. In 2012, Albania and Macedonia signed an agreement with the EU which, among other things, provides for their participation in EU crisis management missions.

What is lacking at the strategic level is a conceptualisation and a clear assessment of how states can contribute to peace and stability through civilian rather than solely military means. The result is that participation by states in peacekeeping missions is underutilised in public diplomacy, i.e. it is not used as a foreign policy tool. Thus, when drafting strategic foreign policy documents, it is necessary for political leaders to reach a consensus over which military and non-military missions it is necessary to participate in. This should be preceded by analysis of the benefits and consequences that can be expected from engaging in the given missions, which should be clearly communicated to citizens.

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Table 2. Overview of the Legal Framework

Institutional Framework and Key Actors

West Balkan states have resorted to similar legal and institutional solutions in conjunction with the authorities responsible for deciding whether to deploy the army and police on peacekeeping missions (see Table 3). While there is some variation, the key actors in launching initiatives and deciding to deploy the military and police are: defence and interior ministries, the president/presidency, the government/cabinet and parliament.
In order to deploy civilians on missions, most states have set up separate organisational units within existing ministries or intersectoral government bodies tasked with improving civil capacity. Thus, in March 2016, within the framework of the Negotiating Group for Chapter 31 (Foreign, Security and Defence Policy), Serbia’s minister of defence set up a subgroup of the Ministry of Defence of Serbia and the Serbian Armed Forces to provide a legal framework and strengthen institutional capacity for participation by the Republic of Serbia in European Union civilian missions. In April 2013, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s council of ministers began the process of creating the conditions for deploying civilians on peacebuilding missions worldwide by forming an expert team\(^9\) for submitting proposals related to implementation of the partnership objective “Stabilisation and Reconstruction – Interdepartmental Collaboration”, aimed at encouraging cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO. Within the framework of the Partnership for Peace and with the same goal in mind, building civilian expertise in Montenegro is the responsibility of the Directorate for NATO and Security Policy within the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. Croatia established the Commission for International Missions and Operations in 2013\(^10\), also within the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, while in Macedonia the Unit for Humanitarian and Developmental Assistance has been set up.

While West Balkan political elites have recognised the role of civilians in peacebuilding missions, most states unfortunately lack sufficiently developed institutional mechanisms for engaging civilians in such missions. Foreign ministries should have the most important role in deploying civilians on missions in accordance with foreign policy strategy. However, their role is limited, as in all states this ministry lacks sufficient knowledge, experience and resources – human, organisational and financial – to fulfil its allocated tasks in this area. In addition, in some states, such as Serbia, institutional development is conditioned by the development of a legal framework which fails to recognise the Foreign Ministry’s jurisdiction over the engagement of civilians in missions. In the case of Croatia, institutional capacity works for NATO missions rather than  

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\(^9\) Included in the work of the expert team are the ministries of foreign affairs, defence, justice, finance, security and civil affairs, as well as the border police, the State Investigation and Protection Agency, the Indirect Taxation Authority, the Intelligence-Security Agency, the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Government of the Republika Srpska and the Government of Brčko District.

\(^10\) The Commission is chaired by the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, while its other members are the ministers of defence, interior, justice and finance, a representative of the President of Croatia, a foreign affairs advisor to the Prime Minister and the Chief of General Staff.
those of the EU (Bosanac 2016). The Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs lacks sufficient staff who could deal with civilian missions, despite the declaration that EU missions are a foreign policy priority (ibid.). This confirms the discrepancy between the declared intentions of politicians and institutional practice, and as the benefits of civilian participation in missions are not understood, their engagement does not form part of foreign policy. In accordance with the practice of sending troops and police officers on missions, it is unsurprising that defence and interior ministries have greater capacity and a dominant role in deciding the priorities for international engagement in peacebuilding missions. It is realistic to expect foreign ministries to be fully engaged and have a greater (leading) role as their capacity improve. The current way of doing things means that a major obstacle to building civil capacity is posed by the lack of a whole-of-government approach, or rather the lack of coordination at the national level between relevant ministries which de facto already participate in the selection, training and deployment of police forces and potential actors in the engagement of civilians in peacebuilding operations. Thus, in the coming period it is necessary to improve coordination and develop a cross-sectoral approach to building civil capacity which should involve many civilian ministries and bodies rather than solely security institutions.

**Developing Civilian Expertise**

Considering their experience of deploying police officers on civilian missions, it is reasonable to assume that West Balkan states have expertise in police reform, with particular focus on the creation of a multi-ethnic police force and the peaceful reintegration of police officers into service following conflict.

There is a large gap in practice between the specialised civilian expertise which states are currently offering to others and the unrealised potential of West Balkan states. The region’s states have experience of intrastate conflict, post-conflict reconstruction of state and societal institutions and the process of political and economic transition. All this experience can be converted into expertise which can be offered to a variety of international organisations and states with similar experience. For example, Bosnia and Herzegovina considers that due to the decades-long presence of missions on its territory and the involvement of local experts in the reconstruction of state and society it can offer a wide variety of experts in various fields to other missions and organisations. These fields include: security sector reform, judicial reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), election monitoring, the fields of diplomacy, state administration and medicine, construction and energy, civil society expertise, human rights and gender equality, media reform, health sector reform and assistance for civilian victims and victims of sexual violence, forensic medicine and monitoring the implementation of agreements. Macedonia, meanwhile, recognises its own potential for stabilisation, post-conflict reconstruction, security sector reform, democratisation, disarmament, the reintegration of war veterans and the adoption of measures and mechanisms for building trust between the parties to a conflict. In contrast, Croatia has designated education, public health, tourism and civil society development as strategic areas of development policy. Emergency protection and rescue as well as the prosecution of war crimes are experiences which Montenegro is recognised as possessing. The relevant actors in Serbia consider that the state has both medical expertise and experience of mediation, crisis management (the refugee and migrant crisis), forensic medicine, election monitoring, construction of an electoral system, documentation and prosecution of war crimes and security sector reform.

In cases when the state is unable to offer the necessary expertise, the market may be able to fill the gap. The civilian expertise possessed by civil society is often sought by international organisations (the OSCE, the Red Cross, the UN), and civilian experts become involved on the basis of individual agreements, in which case they do not go on missions as state representatives. Civil society in the Western Balkans has significant expertise in security sector reform, establishing standards for the protection of human and minority rights, documenting war crimes, monitoring elections etc. However, the existence of expertise outside state institutions is ignored or insufficiently acknowledged. In order for the state to make better use of the involvement of experts in civil society, it is necessary to improve cooperation between the state and civil society and permit civil society to take part and involve its experts in missions as state representatives. On the other hand, the influence of the market can be seen in the provision of medical care, given that doctors and medical staff are necessary on many missions. For example, Serbia has proved that it possesses knowledge and experience in the field of military medicine which can be shared through the involvement of civilian doctors from the private as well as the state sector. As well as the question of knowledge and experience in particular fields, the lack of knowledge of specific languages is a complicating factor for states who wish to supply experts in certain fields. For example, there is a shortage of teachers who speak French in many post-conflict countries in Africa (Karlsrud and Milosevic 2014: 89).
Box 1. Building Civilian Expertise

West Balkan states can take two approaches to building civilian expertise. The first would be to develop expertise according to the needs of international missions and organisations. This requires a state to be up to date, following trends and analysing the current needs of international organisations for civilian expertise, while also being able to offer a wide variety of expertise. The second approach would be for each state to specialise in particular areas, exporting its "brand" to various parts of the world. Regardless of which of these two approaches a state takes, they are not mutually exclusive. It is important for states to make a good assessment of which of its experiences can be converted into practical knowledge to be offered on the market.

Before deploying civilians in (post-)conflict zones, it is of exceptional importance that they are prepared for the various challenges they will face in the field. Moreover, it is very important that deployed civilians do not do more harm than good to the local population. Thus, establishing a system for training civilians is essential for building civil capacity. It would be desirable for states to develop a regional model for exchanging knowledge and experience, as well as to train civilians and improve their own civilian capabilities through regional cooperation. The area where it is currently possible to achieve the best cooperation is the training of civilians and the establishment of a roster of civilian experts. The existing training centres in Serbia, Croatia and BiH offer courses to participants from across the region, while the lecturers at these centres are likewise drawn from across the region (Karlsrud and Milosevic 2014: 88). States could use these centres more intensively for training civilians, while additional expertise could be obtained by sending representatives to other international centres such as the Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF) in Berlin. These centres could likewise be used to develop a regional list of civilian experts in particular fields (ibid.). A regional approach will allow West Balkan states to train civilian personnel at less cost than by independently developing national systems for recruiting, selecting and training civilians. This can be an incentive for further cooperation in the areas of civil protection and emergency management, rule of law and other related fields. Cooperation over the preparation of civilians and their deployment on peace support operations could contribute to the creation of a community of civilian experts, who by sharing their knowledge and experience with West Balkan policy makers could improve policymaking in this area. In the long term, regional cooperation could lead to the creation of a security community in the Western Balkans with the vision of developing a model of cooperation and planning, as is the case with the Scandinavian countries. It is therefore necessary to begin a regional dialogue about training and establishing a roster of civilian experts for peace support operations, which will encourage regional cooperation (Karlsrud and Milosevic 2014: 89).

Conclusion

Civilians are engaged in international peacebuilding operations in a variety of functions and roles, including police advisors with UNFICYP in Cyprus, engineers with ISAF in Afghanistan and judges with EULEX in Kosovo. However, it is notable that West Balkan states have not taken the next step of deploying civilian experts from outside the security sector on missions. Civilians, largely police officers, began to be sent only after 2000, but in the last few years states have begun to construct a legal and strategic framework and a system for selecting and training civilians and deploying them on missions. Although much progress has been made, the deployment of civilians on peacebuilding missions and to international organisations remains a political, financial and operational challenge. The overall impression is that there is no consistency between official statements from top government officials about the involvement of civilians in peacebuilding missions and the practical realisation of that aim. This inconsistency is reflected in the lack of a strategic and/or legal framework as well as in the insufficient capacity of the national institutions responsible for carrying out official policies. This also means that states allocate insufficient or no funds for engaging civilians in international operations. Without political will or a genuine understanding that civilians can contribute meaningfully to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, it is impossible to develop a foreign policy that can include a civilian component in international engagement in missions abroad. Building civil capacity depends on numerous other factors. The influence of international organisations which seek civilians with specialised knowledge and expertise has been crucial in building civil capacity in the Western Balkans. In the cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia this was the EU and the UN, while for Albania, Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro, NATO was the main stimulus for developing civil capacity, followed by the EU. International organisations’ need for civilian expertise can encourage the region’s states to convert their experience and the lessons they have learned in particular areas into practical knowledge that they can offer on the market. For now, a system for training civilians represents the best opportunity for regional networking and the exchange of knowledge and experience among West Balkan states, and potentially also for the creation of a database of civilian experts.
Recommendations

The goal of developing and adopting a model in West Balkan states for selecting and training civil capacity for participation in peacebuilding operations is to make the predictable, efficient and effective engagement of civilians possible. It is thus necessary to:

1) build civil capacity into foreign policy at a strategic level and include this in foreign policy documents;

2) compete the legal framework, primarily by adopting the missing secondary legislation or by amending existing laws and/or adopting separate laws which exclusively regulate the status of civilian experts on international missions or with international organisations;

3) map out the available civil capacity in all three sectors – public, private and civil society, and thus

4) identify “niches” or areas of specialised knowledge and experience where states have something to offer to receiving states, international missions and international organisations;

5) widen the deployment of civilians beyond the traditional security institutions;

6) establish a comprehensive (whole-of-government) intersectoral approach to building civil capacity as well as strengthening the organisational units or bodies that deal with this area;

7) establish a system (roster) aimed at attracting, verifying, recruiting, training and mediating with civilians deployed on operations;

8) communicate with the public about the need for and importance of civil capacity;

9) establish a regional model for exchanging knowledge and experience and for training civilians.


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ABOUT PROJECT

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