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Croatian Civil Capacities for Peace Operations

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Abstract: This article gives an overview of the current Croatian policies as well as the legal and institutional framework related to the deployment of civilians in peace operations. It aims to explore the challenges and opportunities for further development of the existing framework to support the current political interest for civilian capacities that exists in Croatia. The article argues that most of the present state activities related to deployment of civilians in peace operations are a result of EU and NATO accession processes. It also explores the challenges in the mindset 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-conflict state may be transformed into an important player in the peace building arena. The challenges are analysed through state implementation of international development cooperation as a foreign policy tool.

Keywords: Civilian capacity, peace operations, peacebuilding, Croatia, development cooperation

Introduction¹

On July 1, 2013 Croatia became the 28th European Union (EU) member state. Croatia is the first new EU member state with a very recent war experience. This experience could be interpreted as an advantage or potentially an obstacle for the Croatian membership. It could be an advantage in the sense that experience of post-war transition, institutions and statebuilding could be transferred to more global EU foreign peace building policies and can be “exported” to other (post)war areas. An obstacle, though, would be the 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. The key lessons learned from the war to date were almost exclusively related to an understanding of the role of the military in a conflict. Croatia has partially built its

¹ This article is based on findings from the project “Building Civilian Capacities from the Western Balkans in Peace Support Operations”, supported by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, project No SRB-13/0021. Policy brief based on this article was published in October 2014.

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own national identity on “military victory”² and a militaristically developed identity was an essential part of Croatian sovereignty. Not much room was left for the recognition of non-military (civilian) engagements in recent conflicts. However, in a last few years, with the war period becoming more a part of the past and due to the integration of Croatia into international organizations such as the EU and NATO, Croatia is increasingly starting to recognise the role of civilian capacities³ in conflict and post-conflict settings.⁴

Although Croatia started to take a more active role in different peace operations since 1999⁵, it was not until 2005 that civilians were deployed, when two officials from the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) and three police officers were sent with military personnel into the NATO/ISAF mission in Afghanistan.⁶ One of MFEA officials was appointed Deputy Head of Civil Affairs in German led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), situated in Feyzbad. At that time Croatia was present in Afghanistan with 54 military personnel and a total approved number of 150 military troops.⁷

Croatia joined NATO in 2008 despite being partially criticized by civil society organizations (CSOs) that it did not use and recognize numerous non-military initiatives and experts which contributed to statebuilding, democratization, protection of human rights and reconciliation.⁸ 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. Is it too ambitious to expect for a post-war country to be able to recognize and promote non-military/civilian achievements? Although many are saying that understanding in transitional statebuilding and war experience can be perceived as strategic advantage in the integration of civilian capacities in peace operations, the change

2 Croatia is officially celebrating military action “Storm” which brought liberated the Croatian occupied territories in 1995. At the same time, the UN peaceful integration (which was a dominantly civil mission) of the occupied territories in Eastern Slavonia was ignored by State institutions for many years.

3 For the purpose of this article, civilian capacities are defined as civilian expertise coming either from the public (state institutions) or private sector (business, civil society) in peace operations, including the police.

4 Civilian contribution to peace operations is under researched topic as elaborated by Savkovic and Karlsrud (2012), assuming that this practice is widespread across the Western Balkans. Building up on that expertise, the case of six Western Balkan countries was elaborated under previously agreed dimensions and indicators that would enable a comparative study. More information on the theoretical background and methods used in this research can be found in the introduction article by Karlsrud and Milosevic (2014).

5 UNAMSIL mission in Sierra Leone.

6 Police officers have been participating in peace operations since 2000, but this was the first time that the MFEA representative was sent to the mission as a civilian.

7 The official Government report on the participation of Croatian Military Forces in ISAF peace operations in Afghanistan for the period 16 August 2005 – 1 March 2006.

8 Centre for Peace Studies 2007.

needed for the understanding and the creation of the environment for such political decisions takes a lot of time and effort. Merely being aware of domestic civilian capacities is not enough. The state must recognise and support the role of civilians in the (post-) conflict times, regardless of the military contribution in the conflict.

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 rising of the awareness regarding the role of civilians in peace operations (PO). The purpose of this article is to present capacities, opportunities and current state of deployment of civilians in peace operations by Croatia. The article describes developments in public policies related to engagement of civilians in PO, at the same time analysing legal, institutional and political obstacles for better implementation of those policies. Article starts with the description of current legal and institutional framework followed by short description on history of deployments of civilians in PO by Croatia. Later it analyses the potential of use of new international development cooperation policies for deployment of civilians abroad. At the end, the article gives an overview of Croatian civilian expertise which can be used in PO and presents some concrete steps which can be done to improve the level of deployment of civilians in PO.

Legal and Institutional Framework

In 2002 the Croatian Parliament adopted the Law on Participation of Military Personnel, Police, Civil Defence and Civil Servants in Peace Mission and Other Activities Abroad.⁹ This law represents the overall legal framework for sending primarily military personnel to peace operations (POs). However in some parts, the Law also regulates the deployment of civilians. It regulates, in a general manner, the decision making process for the Croatian military to participate in POs abroad. Decisions on participation are made by the Croatian Parliament at the proposal of the Government and with the approval of the President of Croatia. The decision on sending civilians is, on the other hand, made by the Government at the proposal of the competent Minister or Head of the competent State agency. This decision requires the approval of the MFEA. The law has also introduced reporting mechanisms; the President of Croatia and the Government are obliged to submit a yearly report to the Parliament on the participation of military forces and civilians in peace operations. It provides a very general obligation for the training of personnel before entering a mission, includes compensation measures in cases of injuries or death, and in a general article explains the financing of preparations, equipment, deployment as well as participation of the members in the missions (military or civilian). This article obliges that the expenses incurred by the missions should be covered by the state budget. Finally the Law gives power to each Ministry/State agency to develop additional bylaws for the efficient implementation of the Law. This is how, for example, the Ministry of Justice has adopted the *Regulation on Sending Judicial Servants and State Servants to International*

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

*Organizations and Peace Missions Abroad.*¹⁰ This regulation has been adopted after Croatia joined the EULEX Kosovo mission,¹¹ regulating in detail the rights and obligations of civil servants sent to work either in international organizations or in peace operations abroad.

In September 2008, due to the EU accession process, Croatia introduced additional legislation relevant to the role of civilians in the aftermath of a conflict. The Law on Development of Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Abroad,¹² and a few months later the National Strategy on International Development Cooperation 2009–2014¹³ were adopted. That legislation is fully under the jurisdiction of MFEA which has also established an Intra-Sectorial Working Group for International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid. The group is chaired by the MFEA Minister and has twenty-nine members representing different ministries (on the level of Assistant Minister), some state agencies and government offices (Office for Civil Society, Office for Croatian Diaspora, etc.), the Croatian National Bank, the Croatian Bank for Development and the Croatian Economic Chamber. The Inter-sectorial working group is, among others, responsible for the coherence of policy development and for coordination of different international development projects.¹⁴ Moreover, in May 2012 the government appointed MFEA to establish the Council for Transitional Processes (also called Centre of Excellence) – which should work as a potential pool of civil servants and other experts in the field of EU and NATO accession. The goal of the Centre is to share Croatian experience gained in Euro-Atlantic integration processes with other NATO/EU candidate states. The head of the Council is Mrs Vesna Pusić, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs. The Centre currently employs two persons and it is planned to extend the number of its staff to four. The Centre is focused on Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania, but has also signed cooperation agreements with Moldova and Georgia.¹⁵

Every year the MFEA designs the Operational Plan for Implementation of International Development Cooperation Policies and reports the results of implementation to the Parliament. The fact that the MFEA is responsible for the implementation of all international development cooperation policies has brought the MFEA closer to the PO, which was traditionally primarily under the Ministry of Defense (MOD). This has made competition possible between the MOD and the MFEA over the ownership of POs. This soft competition has brought in changes to legislation related to the involvement of civilians in peace operations.

10 Official Gazette 89/09.

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

12 Official Gazette 146/08.

13 Official Gazette 24/09.

14 Government decision on the establishment of *Intra-sectorial working group for international development cooperation and humanitarian aid*, 55th Government session held on 4 October 2012.

15 Interview with Mirna Vlašić Feketija, Head of the Centre of Excellence, MFEA.

MFEA-MOD: Competition over Ownership of Peace Operations?

As the representative of MFEA claims:

When we are talking about the role of civilians in development cooperation, MFEA differentiates between the involvement of civilians in development projects embedded in peace missions and other development projects not related to peace missions. MFEA wants to have a more proactive role not only in classical international development projects but also in the ones where the military is present.¹⁶

The intention of MFEA to be more present and involved in peace operations has been noticeable for the last two years after the new Minister, Mrs Vesna Pusić, took over the Ministry. She has adopted a new strategic plan of MFEA for 2013–2015 in which it is clearly stated that one of the goals of Croatian foreign policy is to “strengthen the participation of Croatia in international peace operations with a focus on the civilian component due to the specific experience of Croatia in post-conflict reconstruction”.¹⁷ To achieve this policy goal it is “necessary to improve the legal framework” and to adopt the new “Law on Civilians in Peace Missions which has to include representatives of CSOs and the private sector”.¹⁸ Those reforms are already under way. In the recent changes of the Law on Defense (June 2013), MOD has excluded the military staff from the Law on Participation of Military Personnel, Police, Civil Defense and Civil Servants in Peace Missions and Other Activities Abroad.¹⁹ MOD has decided to regulate the participation of military and representatives of the MOD in peace operations through the new Law on Serving in Armed Forces of Republic of Croatia²⁰ and through the revised Bylaw on Participation of Armed Forces and representatives of MOD in peace operations and other activities abroad. At the same time, in November 2013, the Government made the official decision to establish the Committee for International Missions and Operations.²¹ The Committee is chaired by the MFEA Minister while 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 Joint Chief of Staff. The goal of the Committee is to harmonize the military and civil engagements in international peace operations. This new body serves as evidence that Croatia wants to centralize more PO activities within the MFEA. This is why one should not be surprised by the answer received from the MOD after a request for an interview on the role of civilians in peace operations for the purpose of this paper. The MOD officially replied that they cannot provide “a person for the interview since the MOD is sending only military staff in peace operations.” They suggested “to contact the member of the MFEA who is responsible for the nomination

16 Interview with an MFEA representative.

17 MFEA strategic plan for 2013–2015, point 1.3.2.

18 Interview with a representative of MFEA.

19 Official Gazette 73/13.

20 *Ibid.*

21 126th Government session, 28 November 2013.

of civilians in EU, UN and NATO peace missions and operations.”²² Independent defence analyst Igor Tabak claims:

It is questionable to what extent the MFEA has the capacities and knowledge to take over the overall coordination of peace missions and operations. This new framework of coordination may inadvertently lead to an increase in the level of risks undertaken with joining any future missions and operations, without bringing any noticeable benefits to the efficiency of performance in such activities.²³

This shows the existence of political competition between two key institutions responsible for implementation of policies related to peace operations – MEFA and MOD, since traditionally MOD had monopoly over PO in the past. This was the result of military dominance over the civilians deployed to PO in the past. In the next session I will present rare cases of deployment of civilians in PO.

Croatian Civilian Participation in Peace Operations

The Republic of Croatia has been participating in international peace operations since 1999 when it was for the first time involved in UNAMSIL mission in Sierra Leone. The first police officers were deployed in PO in 2000.²⁴ 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 occurred in 2005 when two MFEA diplomats were deployed (together with three police officers) to the NATO/ISAF mission in Afghanistan as civilian representatives. At the beginning one diplomat and two police officers were active within the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in the Badakhshan province that was under German leadership.²⁵ Moreover, in the last two years, civilians have been involved in the implementation of several development projects supported by the Croatian state. Mr Miljenko Ugarković, the current civilian representative and a senior MFEA official who also serves as Political Adviser to the Office of the Senior Civilian Representative at Regional Command North in Marmal camp claims:

Apart from my advisory role in the Office of the Senior Civilian Representative, I am also responsible for the implementation of development projects of Croatia in Afghanistan, more precisely in Mazar-e Sharif and its surroundings. Those development projects represent the contribution of Croatia in the overall efforts of the international community in the field of development of cooperation policies and also serve to express our wishes to help Afghanistan. In the field of education and health care Croatia has financially supported around forty

22 Official reply from MOD on a request for interview related to the role of civilians in peace operations, 15 December 2013.

23 Interview with independent military analyst and journalist Igor Tabak, December 19 2013.

24 Official MOI website.

25 Hrvatski vojniki 2005.

different projects in Afghanistan in the amount higher than 3.5 million USD. Croatian aid is directed towards the reproductive health of women, empowerment of women in their political, economic and social participation and education of young girls.²⁶

Apart from the MFEA civilian representative in Afghanistan, in December 2013 the Ministry of Interior (MOI) had police staff in five different peace operations. The first one is EUPOL (EU Police Mission in Afghanistan) where nine police officers participated. Second is EULEX, EU rule of law mission on Kosovo, with total of 16 police officers. The third is UNFICYP on Cyprus with total of 30 police officers and the fourth MINUSTAH on Haiti where in total 12 police officers were deployed. NATO/ISAF is the fifth mission where at the beginning of 2013 first advisory team was deployed to the Headquarters of the Afghan national police in Kabul.²⁷ In total, Croatia (at the beginning of April 2013) was present in 12 different international organizations in the UN, EU and NATO POs, with the total of 258 military personnel, 20 police officers and one diplomat.²⁸

It is important to mention that in the period between 2009 and 2011 Croatia also deployed three judicial representatives in the EULEX mission in Kosovo. They were: a judge from the District Court of civil jurisdiction, the head of the State Attorney Directorate at Penal Department of County State Attorney in Zagreb and the head of security at the District State Attorney Office in Zagreb. That was the first time that the Croatian state has recognised the expertise of civilians outside the MOD, MFEA and MOI staff. This trend could be continued through the future development of international development cooperation policies which will be presented in the next section.

Development Cooperation Policies

In February 2011 Croatia was officially removed from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) list of official development assistance (ODA) recipients and has become a donor with the long-term goal on investing of 0.33 percent of GDP in development cooperation by the year 2015. This “overnight” administrative decision of becoming a donor instead of a recipient country was not sufficient to create efficient and sustainable political and administrative systems within the state institutions to implement development cooperation (DEVCO) policies. At the proposal of the MFEA, the Croatian Parliament has accepted the necessary legal framework, including strategic documents needed for successful implementation, but the understanding of the meaning of development cooperation is still pending not only within different state institutions, but also within the civil society in Croatia.

26 Hrvatski vojnici 2013.

27 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 (30 December 2013).

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

For the year 2013, Croatia has defined its strategic thematic and geographic objectives related to the development cooperation. Geographically, Croatia wants to be present primarily in South-East Europe (with a focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina), South Mediterranean (Morocco, Tunisia and Syria) and Afghanistan, but also in several states with (post) conflict backgrounds: Burma/Myanmar, Sudan, Palestine and Angola.²⁹ Thematically, Croatia intends to focus on: education, public health, tourism and the development of civil society.³⁰ However, reality is very different from the stated political objectives and strategies. Croatia has significantly reduced the budget for DEVCO comparing to previous years, reaching only 0,03 percent of GDP in 2012 (around 16.4 million Euro). Even more problematic is the fact that 35,44 percent (Table 1) of the DEVCO budget is dedicated to Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), or more accurately to the Croats in B&H.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Amount (HRK)</i>	<i>%</i>
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 the Croatian development cooperation budget for the year 2012³¹(*)(states) where Croatia's military was present in 2013.*

29 Implementation program of the National Development Cooperation Strategy for 2013 proposed by MFEA, January 2013.

30 *Ibid.*

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

As Table 1 explains, more than one-third of the DEVCO budget is spent on international and regional organizations and multilateral cooperation. This budget includes regular membership fees in different international organizations and does not cover concrete development projects. It means that Croatia has a rather passive role in different international organizations, without proactive projects. Excluding the support to B&H and expenses related to membership in international organizations, approximately only one-third of the overall DEVCO budget has been left for projects abroad.

It is also interesting to note the differentiation between the Croatian military POs and development projects. The Croatian military was present in 2013 in POs in Afghanistan, Syria (withdrawal of troops in June 2013), India, Pakistan, Western Sahara, Cyprus, Liberia, Lebanon and Kosovo.³² In four (Afghanistan, Syria, Kosovo and Lebanon) out of eight countries Croatia was also present through facilitating development cooperation projects.³³ A closer picture of those projects gives us a better insight into the projects' structures.

<i>Type of Project</i>	<i>Implementer</i>	<i>Amount (HRK)</i>
Work of police officers within EUPOL, NATO/ISAF missions	Ministry of Interior	3,013,796.8
Reconstruction of a high school in the Camp Sakhi village	Croatian private company Birotehna d.o.o.	875,491.10
Building the water towers	MFEA through the Office of the Senior Civilian Representative at Regional Command North, MOD	87,420.38
Empowering women's entrepreneurship	MFEA through the Office of the Senior Civilian Representative at Regional Command North	210,000.00
Financial support to the UN WFP development program „School Meals“	UN agency	244,400.00
Reconstruction of eight water pumps	MOD	3,176.25
Purchase of tents for schools	MOD	1,376.25
Building of the library in a high school for girls	Croatian private company Birotehna d.o.o.	840,106.38
Total		5,275,767.16

Table 2: *Croatian development projects in Afghanistan in 2012*³⁴

Table 2 shows a visible diversity of different development projects implemented in Afghanistan in 2012. The majority of the budget was spent on police officers' work within

32 Official data from MOD upon request, October 2013.

33 One can claim that the project implemented in Lebanon was symbolic in financial terms. The state has invested less than 2,000 EUR in that project.

34 Government Report on Implementation of Official International Development Cooperation of Republic of Croatia for the year 2012, adopted by the Croatian Parliament in November 2013.

the mission. Croatia has reported two larger reconstruction projects – the building of a school and a school library. Implementation of those projects was assigned, through public procurement process, to the Croatian company Birotehna d.o.o.³⁵ Other projects were implemented through UN agencies and through the Office of the Senior Civilian Representative at Regional Command North (OSCR) where Croatia has one civil representative. However, there is still opportunity for Croatia to deploy more civilians who can work on the direct implementation of development projects. One example could be the empowering of women's entrepreneurship – a project which was implemented through OSCR since there are many women's CSOs in Croatia that have significant experience in the protection and promotion of women's rights. Moreover, Croatia has two state institutions working on gender equality (Ombudsperson for Gender Equality and the Government Office for Gender Equality) which could become more involved in development projects. This is just an example of how the state could use more of its own civilian capacities. Finally, it is interesting to note that the MOD has implemented two smaller purchase/reconstruction projects. This example shows how the military is still involved in projects that should be civilian development projects. There is a need for greater awareness regarding civil military coordination and division of responsibilities in the field of development projects and policies.

Areas of Expertise

After an official visit of Sarah Cliffe, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Civilian Capacities, to Croatia in May 2013, Croatia joined the United Nation CAPMATCH initiative – “a self-service platform (...) whose purpose is to better match the demand and supply of specialized civilian capacities for countries emerging from conflict”.³⁶ According to MFEA, the Croatian goals of joining CAPMATCH are:

being more present with civil component in POs, engaged in the field of post-conflict development cooperation and support transition processes in post-conflict and non-stable environments, development of own data base of experts for post-conflict reconstruction and development as a part of Centre of Excellence at MFEA, and finally, affirmation of Croatia at the international level.³⁷

The Ministry of Justice has reported that it had uploaded eleven CVs of experts on the development of prison systems to the CAPMATCH database. The Ministry has also recognised that it has potential for providing expertise in regards to the prosecution of

35 It is interesting to note that Birotehna d.o.o. is registered as a furniture and computer equipment distribution company and has no experience in construction works. In 2012 the company had 19 staff and it ended the financial year with a deficit of HRK 2.39 million. It should further investigated what was the exact role of said company in those development projects.

36 NUPI 2012.

37 This statement is available on the official Ministry of Justice web-site: <http://www.mprh.hr/un-misije>

war crimes, establishing independent judiciary, establishing a training centre for judges and state attorneys (judicial academy), combating organized crime and corruption, and working on regional collaboration in the field of prosecuting war crimes and organized crime.³⁸ Moreover in January 2014, the Croatian Government made a decision on the participation of up to five public servants from the Croatian prison system in UN peace missions through the CAPMATCH database.³⁹

In the implementation program of DEVCO projects for 2013, Croatia has partially detected and prioritised areas of expertise in which it seeks to be active in the implementation of DEVCO. Apart of the promotion and protection of women's rights, the Croatian state wishes to be more proactive in sharing the experience gained from EU accession process. This experience will be shared with current and potential EU candidate countries. The second area of expertise is the understanding the judiciary reform in transforming the judiciary system from a conflict to a post-conflict environment. The Croatian National Bank, the Croatian Development Bank and the Croatian Chamber of Commerce are also mentioned as potential resources of knowledge transfer in the field of stimulating exports of domestic products. They also wish to be proactive in projects related to the promotion of sustainable economy and social development. The program also contains an entire chapter on peace building and security expertise focusing on the security sector reform with a particular desire to share expertise in de-mining. Other recognised areas are education (different scholarships and study visits available for citizens coming from [post] conflict areas) and health. In the health system Croatia recognises the need for creating health infrastructure in partner countries as well as using its own experience in combating the HIV epidemic. Finally, the MFEA wants to rely more on the expertise of Croatian CSOs in recognizing the importance of sustainable civil society in post-war areas.

Croatian CSOs are also expanding their work towards DEVCO projects. Most of the CSOs in Croatia were founded during the war and post-war period as a direct reaction to broad violations of human rights and generously supported by numerous international donors. Today there are strong independent CSOs focusing mostly on the Croatian transition process. However, the skills and knowledge gained through this process particularly in the field of peace building and democratization provide an enormous potential for Croatian CSOs within DEVCO. Recent research on the capacities of Croatian CSOs to implement DEVCO projects⁴⁰ has shown that approximately one third of all CSOs already have experience in the implementation of DEVCO projects mostly in areas of governance, human rights and human development in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, where the language barrier is negligible. From the same report one can see that Croatian CSOs have a broad experience in post-conflict transition processes which can also be used by

38 *Ibid.*

39 139 Government session, 30 January 2014, http://vlada.hr/hr/naslovnica/sjednice_i_odluke_vlade_rh/2014/139_sjednica_vlade_republike_hrvatske

40 Majetić 2013.

the state in POs. It is up to the state to recognize achievements done through the CSO projects and cooperate with them to create a stronger foreign policy tool in post conflict societies.

From this section it is visible that Croatia has various expertise within different state and social actors which can be used for POs. In the next section I will show that the expertise is not enough if there are no political will, resources and good education for engagement of civilians in POs.

Preconditions for Efficient Policy: Political Will, Resources and Education

Throughout the research performed for this paper, three independent preconditions necessary for the successful integration of civilians in POs kept constantly appearing: 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 that would embrace civilians in POs. Croatia, being a post conflict state with an important role of the military in the creation of state identity, has started to recognise the role of civilians in a conflict and in the aftermath of a conflict. The change of thinking that military is not the key element necessary for building lasting and stable institutions and can also be the cause of prolonging the conflict is a challenge for state officials. This is particularly demanding in the social environment where military contribution in recent conflict is much more celebrated than that of civilians.⁴¹ However, for the last couple of years, as the Croatian society is moving away from the years of war and being integrated within different international organization and facing new post conflict and transitional challenges, the role of civilians in POs is becoming ever more appreciated. International framework and activities within different international organizations, primarily the UN and the EU, are helping the state to focus more on peacebuilding activities. This is why Croatia has been active in the UN Peacebuilding Commission for so many years. Today this UN body is chaired by Mr Vladimir Drobniak, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations in New York. Since Croatia became a full member of the EU, it is also obliged to participate to EU's Common Security and Defence Policy and its missions in which civilians play a crucial role. However, it is not enough to just be active in different international bodies; it is also important to foster this approach in the domestic arena. The overall impression is that there exists a discrepancy between the official statements delivered by high level representatives within different international bodies relating to civilians in POs and the actual actions — or lack thereof — of the national institutions in charge of implementing these policies. This also means that the state has to ensure the financial resources for the civilians enrolled in POs. As a source from MFEA claims, “today, the entire budget for

41 One obvious example of such approach is the state celebration of military action Storm (which is also a national holiday), while the reintegration of occupied territories through UN mission in 1998 is ignored by state institutions.

peace missions is with the MOD. MFEA has to make a lot of effort to ensure the money for civilians.”⁴²

From the analyses of the state budget for 2012 it is more than clear that civilian deployment in POs is still not the priority, regardless of the policy documents that are calling for their stronger inclusion. For example, in 2012 the Croatian MOD has approved the budget for peace operations in the amount of HRK 325,546,802.⁴³ Comparing this number with the total amount spent on development cooperation projects from Table 1, it is easy to conclude that Croatia was spending 2.6 times more on military than on development activities. Or looking just at Afghanistan, Croatia has spent 48.5 times more on military than on development projects.⁴⁴ This enormous financial bias was criticized by CSOs calling for stronger development rather than military engagement in conflict and post conflict areas.⁴⁵ For any future development of policies on the deployment of civilians in PO it will be crucial to ensure significantly higher allocation of funding.

Finally, before sending the civilians into (post) conflict situations it is essential to prepare them for diverse challenges they will be facing 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. Military runs International Military Operations Training Centre⁴⁶ which is dominantly focused on trainings for military personnel although training for media was also organised. However, although the trainings for military and civilians deployed to PO may have common topics, military needs particular skills which are not of use for deployed civilians. It is not to be expected that this centre will be possible future education centre for civilians as well. The biggest achievement has been made by the MOI which organizes a certified United Nations Police Officers Course (UNPOC) for police officers deployed in the peace operations since 2006. The training centre is based in Valbandon and the program has strong support by UNDP Croatia with whom the MOI has signed a memorandum of understanding related to the implementation of education. Apart from Croatian police officers, the education program also recorded an attendance of police officers from Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Iraq, Norway, Sweden, Slovakia, Slovenia, Uganda and Yemen. However this training centre is only open for police and occasionally for military staff. Moreover, when the representatives of the Ministry of Justice were sent to a peace mission on Kosovo, they had not been trained in Valdabon; instead, they attended several lectures at the Judicial Academy and those who were interested had the opportunity to participate

42 Interview with MFEA representative.

43 <http://obris.org/hrvatska/proracun-2013-medunarodne-misije/>. The state budget data are also available at <http://www.mfin.hr/hr/drzavni-proracun-2012-godina>

44 According to the official reply of MOD, the cost of Croatian participation in NATO/ISAF in 2012 was HRK 255,969,083.00.

45 Platform 112, requests 87–91.

46 Seemore on http://w2.osrh.hr/smvo/Index_en.asp

in RACVIAC programs.⁴⁷ The Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC) was established under the Working Table III of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, with the aim to provide arms control training, promote confidence and security building measures and broaden the cooperation in South Eastern Europe.⁴⁸ However, RACVIAC is sporadically dealing with the topics of civilian capacities in PO and has no intention to become a central training centre.⁴⁹ The third possible resource for a future training centre could be the above mentioned Centre for Excellence at the MFEA. However, in this early phase of work, for the time being the primary goal of the Centre is to establish the potential experts' database and maybe later take on other activities.⁵⁰

Conclusions

The Republic of Croatia has made some progress in the recognition and inclusion of civilians in PO. As a post-conflict state with significant experience in civilian post conflict state building, Croatia should politically recognize the role of civilians in the conflict and post-conflict period in Croatia. Today, military enrolment in PO is still dominant over the civilian. With the development of international DEVCO policies, Croatia has met the legal preconditions for further development of policies on civilian capacities in PO. During the following period Croatia should continue to develop the legal and institutional framework that will define more precisely the rights and obligations related to deployment of civilians in PO. In so doing, it is important that it avoids possible institutional conflicts on ownership over PO policies and ensures a budget which corresponds to the enrolment of civilians in PO. The challenge is also to raise internal civilian capacities for PO, which can be achieved with the help of partner countries with experience in engagement of civilians in PO. Croatia has to start with the construction of an expert database and mapping of expertise present in the state institutions and CSOs. Centre of Excellence, as a newly established department within MEFA, can take those roles. In sum Croatia could and should make a better use of existing expertise within the CSOs in the field of foreign, security development policies for the purpose of PO.

47 Press statement of the Ministry of Justice related to peace operations, available in Croatian at <http://www.mprh.hr/eu-civilne-misije>

48 For more on RACVIAC see www.racviac.org.

49 Interview with an anonymous representative of RACVIAC.

50 Interview with Mirna Vlašić, Head of the Centre of Excellence, MFEA.

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