

## **EU holds conference on improving its response to crisis situations**

**Brussels—12 November** The European Union held a conference to make early warning capabilities lead to timely response. The aim of the meeting held at the European Commission (EC) was to improve the ability of the EU and its partners to react to crises and conflicts.

The two-day meeting, entitled “From early warning to early action: developing the EU’s response to crisis and longer-term threats,” brought together nearly 800 participants from governments, international organizations, NGOs, advocacy groups and think tanks. The EU presented to participants its recent developments in conflict prevention, crisis management and crisis preparedness in an attempt to solicit comments on how to improve its response.

In the last two years, the EU has been putting in place a new financing mechanism to better react to crises and conflicts. This Instrument for Stability, in the words of European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner, “enables us [the EU] to fund a wider range of activities than ever before: on one hand in a range of areas under the broad heading of crisis response and preparedness...and we can now respond more flexibly and rapidly to a major new political crisis or natural disaster.” As a result, the financial assistance from the EU has jumped from €30 million to €140 million this year alone.

A component of the Stability Instrument is the web-based Peacebuilding Partnership portal, which is a consolidated database of non-state actors, international organizations and EU member state authorities working in the areas of conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding. The portal is operational and has just launched the first call for registration to mobilize entities to report their relevant areas of activity.

This element especially aims at strengthening and consolidating EU’s partnerships with national aid agencies, the UN, and other relevant organizations. In a roundtable on creating partnerships in peacebuilding, the ILO was able to present its mandate and role in conflict and post-conflict settings. In addition, ILO highlighted some of its activities in this realm, namely its collaboration with the UNDP on the UN-wide policy paper on post-conflict employment creation, income generation and reintegration.

This roundtable was held within the first session of discussions on preparedness and capacity in crisis response. Through cooperation with external entities, the EU could use warning information to react early. The ILO pointed out its capacity to consolidate the peace agreement in post-conflict situations using its expertise on socio-economic interventions, such as local economic recovery and development, employment-intensive reconstruction works, and policies and regulations. Harnessing the expertise of entities through partnerships, the EU will be prepared to respond better and quicker to crises.