

Workshop Report “Setting Leaders Up to Succeed!” (19 May 2021)

At the Annual EAPTC Conference 2021 the European Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management (CoE) conducted the workshop “Setting Leaders Up to Succeed!”. The below report summarises the key take-aways and recommendations from the presentations and break-out room discussions and proposes possible follow-up actions.

CSDP missions operate in high-risk environments, adding significant responsibilities for mission management. As civilian CSDP missions are unique in nature, mission leaders constantly need to forge new teams from frequently rotating mission members coming from different backgrounds, adding a high burden in terms of workload and being conducive to conflicts both internally and externally.

To support the strong and inclusive leadership required in CSDP missions, recent updates in the CSDP ‘Mission Model Structure’ offer more detailed guidelines to mission managers on standards for effective management as well as clarifications of their roles and responsibilities. Mission leadership coaching programmes have become available, facilitated by the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), targeting both individual mission leaders and entire senior management teams.

The EEAS Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) recently conducted an ‘all systems check’ of human resources, which provided a range of considerations for further action, including work on enhancing the recruitment and performance evaluation of mission management based, inter alia, on updated job descriptions and selection criteria. To pursue this work further and to help implement enhanced standards cross-cuttingly, a leadership expert post within the CPCC was created. Moreover, a first ever all-mission staff survey on working environment, including workload and stress factors should guide further work in this regard.

When viewed from a mission leader perspective, the appeal of missions includes the opportunity to gain the trust to manage a culturally and organisationally diverse team, as well as providing a way to put the EU founding values into practice by implementing a mission’s mandate on the ground.

Recommendation: When preparing for a CSDP mission leadership position, a gradual exposure to EU structures, specific CSDP leadership training and adequate pre-deployment training are beneficial.

Recommendation: To support mission leadership in ensuring a gender perspective is applied in the mission context, efforts in this direction should be substantially integrated in all operational activity as well as in terms of staffing.

As most CSDP Missions are deployed in (post-) conflict situations, they could benefit from a standardised approach to ‘early warning’ systems of renewed/intensified conflict, using experience and good practice from other missions¹.

The highly dynamic and fluid mission environment cannot be effectively navigated without continuous learning and training. In terms of training design, short modules are recommended, being mindful of the continued liabilities of Heads of Missions related to their ‘Duty of Care’ during training activities.

¹ Such mission-level systems would be complementary to the existing EU Conflict Early Warning System (EWS).



To strengthen 'Leadership and Management' (L&M) training for CSDP mission leaders, a comprehensive assessment of training requirements for civilian CSDP missions was conducted in the framework of the EU Civilian Training Group (EUCTG).²

(Initial) recommendations from this assessment:

- 1. A clear and agreed concept on L&M for civilian CSDP missions is needed.***
- 2. CSDP mission-specific L&M training should be part of pre-deployment preparation for mission leaders.***
- 3. L&M training for CSDP should focus on helping future leaders / managers in CSDP missions with the transition from the national to the international context.***
- 4. Training for leaders / managers should be an ongoing process.***
- 5. The L&M training areas of particular importance (such as communication, mission work, strategy & cooperation, integrity) should be prioritised in training development and delivery.***
- 6. L&M Training needs to put more emphasis on the personal resilience of leaders / managers.***

The recruitment and training of future mission leaders could greatly benefit from the identification and articulation of mission-specific leadership requirements (leadership style matching mission life cycle, which to a high degree determine the suitability of a candidate for a position, in addition to the generic job description).

The limited numbers of incoming mission leaders make it relatively expensive to train them, which might be perceived as an obstacle. However, when considering the higher leverage leaders have in a mission, the economics of leadership-specific training (including on the transition from 'national' to 'international' leadership and other subjects recommended above) are different from regular training. An added benefit of a 'leader-centered training approach', i.e., customised training for newly selected mission leaders is that it can offer a safe space to learn in. Besides pre-mission training, leadership teams could benefit from peer-to-peer networking and coaching (both at team and individual levels) to further personal and team development.

Recommendation: Efforts should be made to clarify the mission-specific requirements for a vacant position, complementing generic ones, enabling better tailored recruitment and training of future mission leaders.

Recommendation: Include the necessary skillset and mission leadership-specific training into mandatory job requirements.

Recommendation: At the mission leadership level, specific and tailor-made training should be offered.

² This 'Training Requirements Assessment' (TRA) was conducted by a group of German training providers (Federal Police Academy, the State Office for Training Education and Personnel of the North Rhine Westphalian State Police, the Baden-Wuerttemberg State Police College, and the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF) in the lead representatives of the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), and the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for Conflict Intervention at Maynooth University as members. It is expected to be finalised after the next EUCTG meeting.



Recommendation: Strengthen leadership teams through external coaching and peer-to-peer networks for personal and professional development.

Incoming mission leaders could gain significant insights, including on crucial political matters, from a meaningful handover of strategic institutional memory with their outgoing counterparts. In a similar vein it could be valuable to utilise the experience of former mission leaders to provide advice or coaching, if requested by current mission leadership.

Recommendation: To ensure continuity of a mission and the passing on of vital knowledge, a sufficient handover from outgoing to incoming mission leaders should be promoted.

Recommendation: Digital tools should be leveraged in leaders' pre-mission preparation, including to foster exchange between outgoing and incoming mission leaders. In line with this, mission leadership should be required/trained to be competent in the use of technology.

Evaluation could be an important constructive tool to empower, strengthen and encourage leaders, although a transformation might be needed for evaluation to be seen as a tool to improve personal, team and mission effectiveness, not as a constraint or even a “beating stick”. Moreover, it is important to evaluate not only the leader but the leadership team and to include a forward-looking approach. A leadership ‘dashboard’, linked to a wider mission evaluation framework could be developed as a support tool for self-evaluation or to provide objective management information. Evaluation of leadership performance could assist in articulating mission-specific requirements, enabling a better comparison of future candidates and strengthening merit-based secondment to leadership positions.

In practice, variations exist in MS ‘connectivity’ with their personnel deployed to missions. Informal contacts usually exist, but a structural approach and formalised systems which could more sustainably support mission leaders are still lacking.

Engaging a mission’s host nation into an evaluation process might also add value (despite this being a potentially politically loaded endeavour), by revealing opportunities to strengthen mission leadership.

Recommendation: Performance evaluation should be further developed to support and empower leadership teams, including through a ‘results-based management’ approach and with linkages to the seconding MS.

Recommendation: Seconding agencies should support merit-based secondment to leadership positions through evaluation of their seconded staff. Based on such efforts, mechanisms could be built that identify which national leaders are best suited to become high-quality mission leaders, against the backdrop of national political interests.

In conclusion, ideally, successful deployment of mission leaders would follow a structured cycle (similar to the one suggested in Figure 1 below). However, in practice the different stages do not always occur in this order or connections between them do not (yet) exist. The recommendations in this paper can hopefully serve as a guide to point to possible improvements in this area.

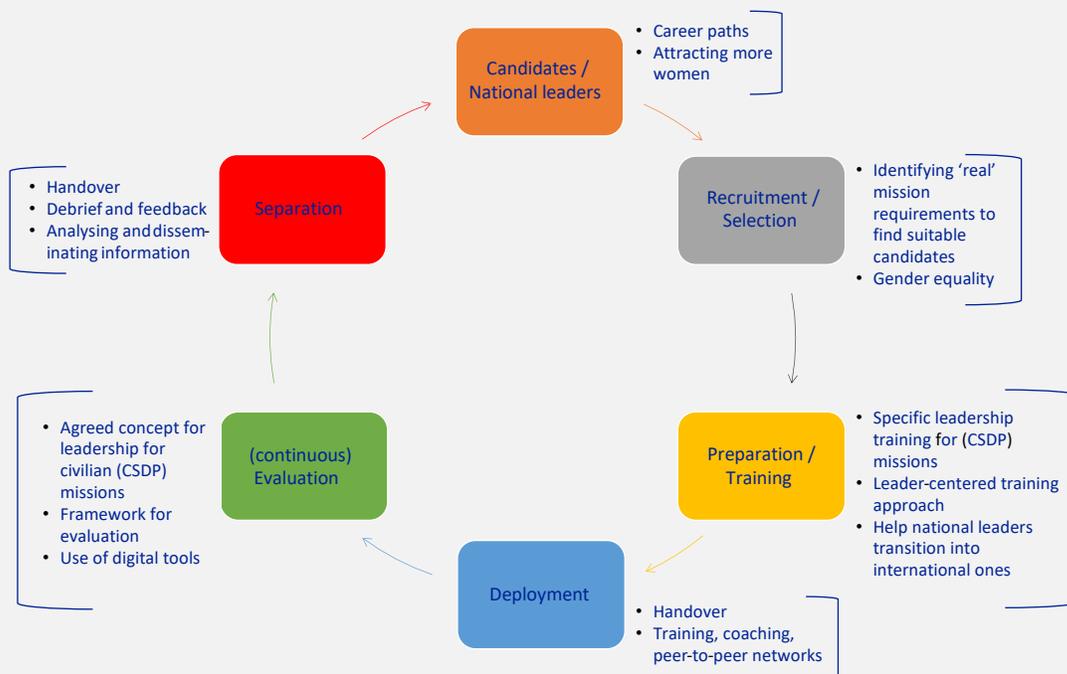


Figure 1. Leader deployment lifecycle graphic

Follow-up

Many of the recommendations that came up during the workshop are outside of the direct mandate of the CoE. However, the CoE stands ready to play its part in furthering implementation of these recommendations by facilitating dialogue, forging partnerships, offering a platform for discussion and follow-up and to implement what it can itself.

Mission-specific leadership training requires a corresponding concept. The CoE intends to support the further development of such a concept, building on the work done by national training providers in the framework of the EUCTG. Finally, the CoE will explore opportunities for an integrated leader-centered training approach for CSDP mission leaders – in collaboration with CPCC and interested (established) training providers.