

Discussion Paper

COMMON EFFORT COMMUNITY¹ NETHERLANDS

*“Committed to contribute to a more safe and secure world
in which men and women live with dignity
enjoying their universal human rights”*

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Summary

- The perception, that the world and also our “Western” world could be safe and secure, has taken some severe blows in recent years. On the Eastern and Southern borders of Europe, the security situation has changed significantly. In other areas inequality and deprivation of essential human needs are potential sources for unrest, oppression and instability.
- As the actors involved use a mix of military and especially civil (media, etc.) tools (hybrid warfare/approach) in a very professional way, it is obvious that sustainable solutions for fragility and conflict can only be achieved with an integrated or comprehensive, whole-of-society approach, comprising a wide range of governmental and non-governmental actors, internationally as well as in the country at stake. Being supported by and working with constructive peace-minded local (non-) state actors is key to achieving a minimum level of stability and security in these fragile states.
- The Common Effort (CE) Community (including governmental and non-governmental, police and military organisations) is well positioned to develop itself as one of the leading and innovative networks in the world with civil, police and military organisations working in the field of peace and security.
- The CE Community proposes to develop integrated approaches along four Lines of Action, based on intensive interaction between a diversity of partners: Conflict-related Programs, Training and Exercises, Knowledge Development, Advocacy & Outreach.
- Proposed focal themes are: Crisis Management, Reconciliation and Prevention².

A process to define more in detail (in the form of a yearly action plan) the way forward for the Dutch CE Community will take place in the first quarter of 2016. This includes the choice of specific Lines of Actions, Focal Themes, (pilot) Countries/Regions, Working groups, etc.

¹¹ The Common Effort Community can be considered as an important follow-up action to the “Guidelines on the Integrated Approach; The Dutch view of coherent action for security and stability in fragile states and conflict areas”.

² with Early Warning and especially (local) Counter-Narratives as sub-themes

1. Introduction

On 20 May 2015 26 organizations, coming from government, civil society, police, military and private sector in Germany and the Netherlands launched the Common Effort Community. The founding civil and military organisations and observers of this Community, that specialise on fragile and failed states and its issues, like Protection of Civilians (PoC), Human Security and Stability, Development, Capacity Building and Humanitarian Aid, agreed in their joint Statement to contribute to a safe and secure world in which men and women live with dignity enjoying their universal human rights.

Given the different institutional set-up in Germany and the Netherlands, the organisations in each country have their own processes to model their approach to address, develop, and achieve solutions for (prevention of) fragility and conflict. To accommodate this, this discussion paper will be nation-specific for the Netherlands. However, interaction between the two CE Communities in Germany and the Netherlands is important in order to share experiences and lessons learnt. For that purpose exchange visits in meetings and working groups in both countries will be facilitated and promoted. Synchronisation will take place in bi-national coordination meetings and the Annual Stakeholders Conference(s).

This Discussion Paper is meant to contextualize, guide and focus the actions of the Dutch Common Effort Community in its first year. The Common Effort Community can be considered as an important elaboration and follow-up action not only to the “Guidelines on the Integrated Approach” of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Security and Justice, but also to EU’s and NATO’s Comprehensive Approach.

The following issues will be further elaborated in this document:

- In Chapter 2 you’ll find background information³ describing the operational context of the emerging and existing conflicts in fragile states; the main areas of operation for the CE Community. It explains the increasing role of both local and international non-state actors in efforts to stabilize a country.
- In Chapter 3 the main types of stakeholders (and their roles) in pro-active or reactive management of conflicts are presented as well as the added value of the Dutch Common Effort Community in this concept. Chapter 3 expresses the need to work in a more preventive or pro-active manner in fragile states.
- In Chapter 4 the main framing elements of an Action Plan are mentioned: vision and mission statement, objectives, main lines of actions, focal themes and focal countries.
- In Chapter 5 a proposal for the Common Effort Community structures is presented.

This draft Discussion Paper intends to give guidance to the Dutch Common Effort Community actions. The Community itself needs to decide on how to further detail this into a Yearly Action Plan with specific Lines of Actions, Focal Themes, Countries/Regions, Working groups, etc.

³ Amongst others based on the Policy Letter to Dutch Parliament on the International Security; November 2014

2. Background⁴

2.1 General

The perception that the world, and even our “Western” world, could be safe and secure has taken some severe blows in recent years. On the Eastern borders of Europe, the relation with Russia has changed significantly.

Towards the South (MENA and Sub-Sahara Africa) an important (in) security trend is visible. Within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) the hopes that the Arab Spring would see the emergence of free and more liberal governments has not delivered the society many people hoped for.

Destabilisation is increasing in the MENA region and Sub-Sahara Africa with the rise of Jihadi Salafist movements like ISIS, Al Qaeda and affiliated terrorist groups.

These groups do not respect universal human rights and deny many people their fundamental rights. Their actions not only have a tremendous negative impact on human security and the social, economic and political situation in several countries and the region, but they have also started to directly affect societies in Europe.

The trend seems to be that extremist organisations attract and radicalise young people, mainly of Muslim background, in several MENA countries and in Europe. They not only travel to Syria, Iraq and other ME countries to fight but an increasing number comes back to countries in Europe to plan (suicide) attacks. Several incidents have made it clear that security issues in the MENA region now have internal security consequences for European countries. This notion is reflected in several broader discussions, like the EU discussions on migration.

The conflicts in the MENA have complex causes and generally result from a complicated interplay of diverse, but often interrelated factors. It is obvious that the populations in the MENA region have always greatly suffered from the very repressive regimes (Mubarak, Assad, Saddam Hussein, Qaddafi, etc.), which on itself created a feeding ground for social insecurity. In recent years we have seen many of these regimes weakened further or even toppled and at this moment the region is confronted with even more political instability, economic and social problems (food- and water shortages, unemployment), state vulnerability (high dependency on mineral resources) as well as religious and ethnic tensions. These negative trends have shown to be the cause of internal and/or regional conflicts, where chaos, lawlessness and the vanishing hope for a better future fuel organised crime, extremism and fundamentalism.

Especially large groups of young men with no prospects on jobs and income seem to be an important factor to the instability as they have no alternatives and are easily attracted to the propaganda of extremist organisations. Contrary to most other terrorist organizations, which tend to deny the atrocities they commit, these new radical groups, ISIS on the forefront, consciously portray their cruel acts as a trademark, combining its message with a modern social media information strategy (on Youtube, Twitter, etc.) to not only instil fear and to obtain obedience, but also to spread their ideology and recruit new followers from all over the world.

2.2 State and Non-State

Today the distinction between state- and non-state actors like I-NGO's, companies and local civil organisations is fading. In conflict areas (local) non-state actors are increasingly active, important and influential. This growing influence of relative new actors is underutilised.

⁴ Amongst others based on the Policy Letter to Dutch Parliament on the International Security; November 2014

Sustainable stability solutions, including those that require temporary (semi-) militarised intervention, is a long term challenge as a country should not only have a minimally functional government structure but also a local/regional civil society for checks and balances when it comes to fighting misappropriation, corruption, but also to prevent and mitigate arising tensions from groups that possibly have an undemocratic or extremist agenda.

Local non-state organisations are also important to complement the government (e.g. with regard to basic services), or by insisting on peace & reconciliation processes as well as counteract with their (more balanced) information the propaganda of extremist groups. In essence, they are key to restoring or even building the social contract between population and governance actors.

2.3 The increasing Importance of Prevention

The 'Western' international community has been accused of the tendency to underestimate situations of increasing tensions and only seeming able to react when the situation in a country has escalated into a clear-cut violent (civil) war. In recent years political leaders in EU, NATO, UN and OSCE are expressing more and more the need for a more **pro-active or preventive approach** to prevent countries from becoming a failed society, as well as the need for a tailor-made response to the hate & extreme violence propaganda of extremist/Jihadist groups. Although least visible, most opportunities for successes lie in the pre-conflict phase: Mechanisms for early-warning and early-action are therefore of the utmost importance.

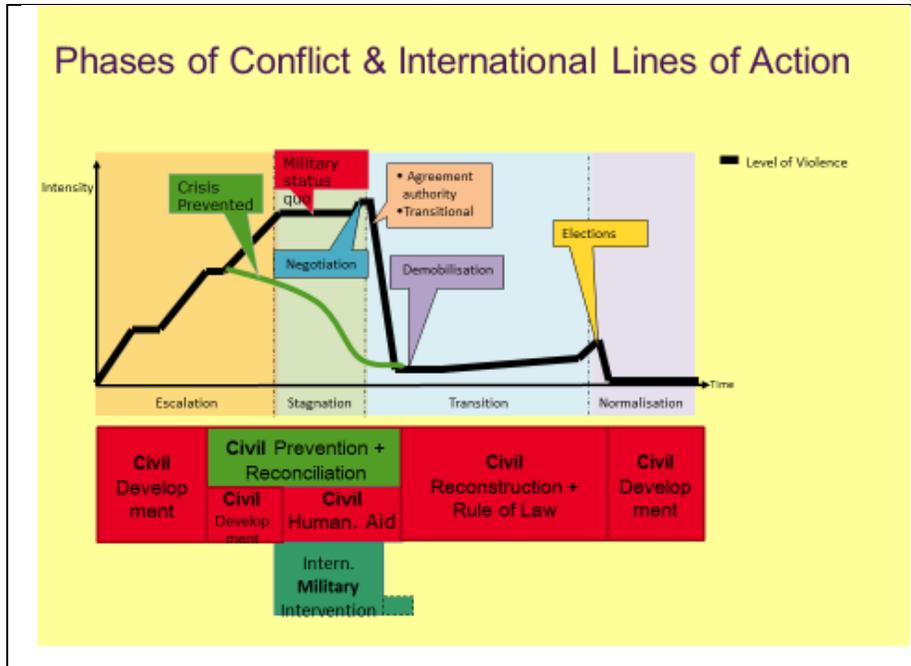
“...We need to get better in prevention, to be earlier in a place when you still have a functioning state, ..., before it turns into a failing state, or even worse, before it turns into a failing society”.
Dr Ursula von der Leyen, German Minister of Defence Key Note Speech at the launch of the Common Effort Community. 20 May 2015, Berlin.

3. Key Actors in Conflict Management

3.1 General

European countries and (civil) organisations have a keen interest in preventing conflicts in the regions to

the East and south of Europe as these conflicts nowadays have a direct impact on our own security and social-economic affairs. It is crucial to realise the importance of the preventive, middle and long term approach of tackling the underlying causes of instability through programs aimed at prevention, reconciliation, local and regional reconstruction and development while accepting that (para)military and humanitarian interventions to fight and manage conflicts is sometimes needed. It is therefore important that the Ministries of Foreign



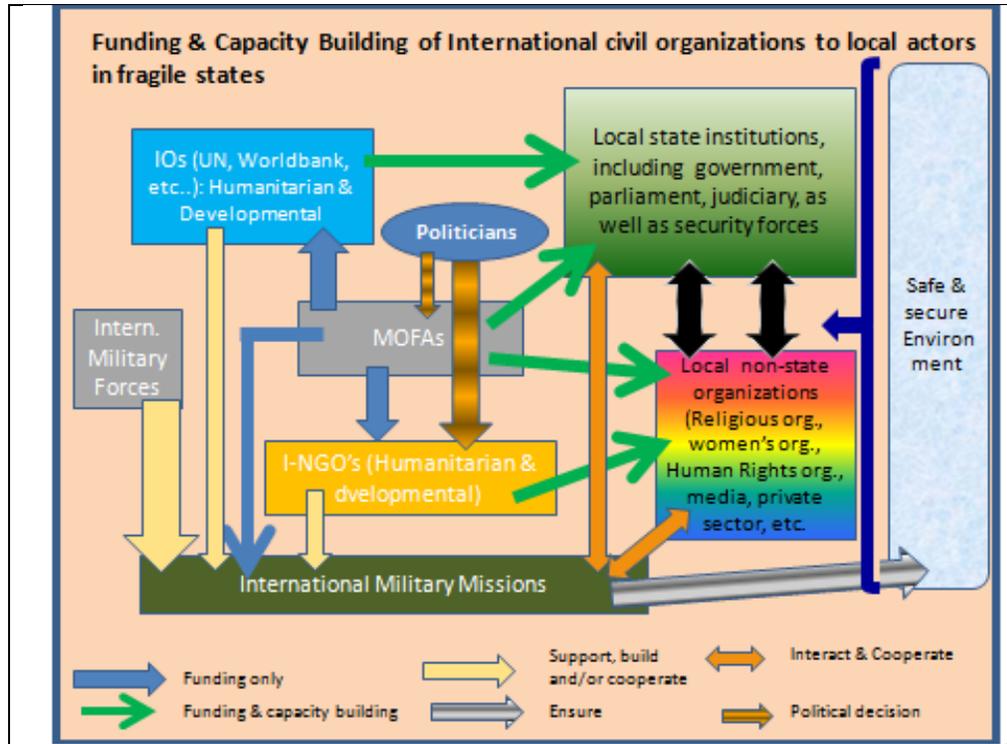
Affairs and Development Cooperation, (International) Civil Society & Police, the UN and the international military organisations, interact, while respecting each other's mandate, in an effective manner in order to address the multiple dimensions of fragility and conflict at the forefront of a possible conflict. Military interventions are more expensive, in terms of funds and cost of human life and suffering, than preventive measures.

For sure, the military is a key actor in the field of military interventions from international crisis management and peace-keeping missions to more kinetic operations. However, apart from missions and operations the military is not really in the position to intervene with tailor-made actions or even develop direct contacts with all these local civil actors in all (potential) fragile countries. Also the donors (MoFAs/MoDevCo) cannot do it themselves as they as well lack long-term direct contacts with these local non-state actors.

However, the I-NGO's and (some of) the UN-Agencies work already in these fragile/ states with these local state and non-state organizations for 10, 20, 30 years and bring their own resources, deep knowledge, and commitment to peace, reconciliation, humanitarian aid, reconstruction and development processes. Within these, especially the I-NGO's play or can play a crucial role in developing not only the knowledge regarding local security dynamics and civilian perceptions, but also in developing and implementing programs supporting local civil non-state organisations to increase their capacities i.a. to counteract the propaganda of extremist organisations. This is an important element of their present work that consists also development & reconstruction programs, humanitarian aid and reconciliation.

Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation (in the Netherlands also the Ministry for Security & Justice) could fund (part of) the programs of these I-NGO's and the UN to assist non-extremist stakeholders in fragile states to promote their cause, their norms and values amongst their populations.

Finally we need to assist the political leadership (parliaments, but also the EU, UN and NATO) and the public at large here in the Western World to be better informed about what is happening in fragile states and what could be done to halt the wave of extremist groups. Parliaments are important as they decide on the policies, priorities and budgets with respect to international security and fragile states.



3.2 Strengths of the Dutch Common Effort Community

In the Dutch Common Effort Community we have NGO's, think-tanks, universities and other civil organisations that have a rich knowledge, understanding and experience concerning many of the fragile and states of today, including the issues at stake like reconciliation, humanitarian aid, gender, development & reconstruction and crisis management. They have also vast networks with civil non-state organisations in these countries. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a huge network of embassies and consulates in especially the fragile/ countries. It is renowned for its capacity to adapt its funding to the needs, opportunities and threats of today. Together with other ministries (Defence, Security & Justice, etc.) the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is an active promoter of the Integrated or Comprehensive Approach. What is even more important is that compared to other countries, the Dutch stakeholders have learned to cooperate with each other in a very pragmatic manner.

The Common Effort Community is therefore well positioned to develop itself as one of the leading and innovative partners in the world in the field of peace and security.

4. Plan

4.1 General

Each of the signatories of the Common Effort Community together with their local partners conduct already a wide range of activities ranging from development, reconstruction, humanitarian aid, reconciliation and private sector development, contributing to a more safe and secure world. Of

course, the signatories will continue to do so within their own mandate and capacity. The added value of this Community is its function as a tool for exchange of information, discussion and increased joint action. Furthermore, with their signature on the Statement, their intentions are now visible. This Discussion Paper intends to elaborate further on how the intentions of the signatories to intensify their work could become more concrete.

It is obvious that sustainable solutions for fragility and conflict can only be achieved with a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach, comprising a wide range of governmental and non-governmental actors, internationally as well as in the country at stake. In this, supporting and working with constructive peace-minded local (non-) state actors is key to achieve a minimum level of stability in these fragile states.

As is mentioned before, it becomes more and more obvious that reacting to a full-fledged crisis is not only extremely costly, but also in many cases very complex. Many of these countries where violence was stopped by an international (military) mission and peace agreements were signed, fall back to violence and war after some years.

4.2 Societal Vision

As mentioned in the signed Statement, the signatories of the Common Effort Community commit themselves to contribute to

A more safe and secure world in which men and women live with dignity enjoying their universal human rights.

4.3 Mission Statement

It is a proven fact that interaction between people from different backgrounds in an open and positive setting reduces presumptions and enriches awareness of the diversity of perspectives. Therefore,

- (a) To realise the Common Effort Community objectives we bring people together from the CE Community and other interested⁵ stakeholders to arrive at an appropriate mix from multiple levels of government, civil society, the military, academia, and private sector;
- (b) Bringing these perspectives together using a varied set of interaction and learning settings, we build productive deliberations and, possibly, cooperation to address the major challenges we are confronted with. In doing so we always take each other's strengths and weaknesses, as well as principles, mandates and capacities into account.
- (c) We will build on and involve existing fora and platforms and aim to integrate multiple domains and sectors, which will add value to the participants' efforts and interests to achieve a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach towards fragility and conflict.

4.4 Action Objectives

The CE-Community aims

- (a) to achieve productive and intensive interaction between government, civil society, the military, academia, and private partners, nationally and internationally;

⁵ Interested parties are welcome to participate and be informed in what the Common Effort Community is doing. However, they should be willing to explain why they want to be part of it (become a signatory) and what they see as the added value of the Community.

- (b) to produce useful results and products, such as reports and programs, that contribute to innovative responses to the new threats.

4.5 Main Lines Of Action

In the institutional context of the Dutch organisations, that signed to the Common Effort Community, different Lines (Themes) of Action (LoA) will be developed, some of which are more civil-led, while other LoA's could be more military-led or have a combined civil/military approach. It is obvious that even military-led operations/missions work in a civil context.

Four lines of action are proposed to develop conflict-related programs, produce content and generate action:

- (a) Conflict-related Programs (proposing and preparing common actions to effectively and efficiently enhance prevention of conflicts, improve stability or manage existing conflicts);
- (b) Training and exercises (building and evaluating inter-organisational interaction and cooperation; developing tailor-made (civil/civil and civil/military) exercises and or enriching existing training modules) in order to be prepared for civil/military operations and missions for humanitarian and/or military crises;
- (c) Knowledge development (analysis on root causes of conflicts and instability as well as prospective studies, providing a solid basis for and input to future actions);
- (d) Advocacy & Outreach (promoting the importance of contributing to a more safe and secure world and the necessity to develop actions comprehensively to other stakeholders and target groups, like our political leadership, the EU, UN, NATO and the public at large).

These lines of Action will ideally contribute to each other. For example, knowledge development provides inputs to the other Lines of Actions. Training and exercises may raise questions and ideas that fuel program development toward specific support for actions in selected nations. And programs will again generate experiences, issues, questions to be picked up by knowledge development, but also to inform political and public stakeholders on progress and hopefully successes.

The Common Effort Community will organise network events (from working groups to seminars and conferences) in order to connect people within a specific Line of Action and/or between Lines of Action; reflecting on progress and trends, developing new directions; promoting ideas, concepts, approaches and concrete actions. The annual Common Effort Stakeholders Conferences will be a main event, but also more thematic conferences will address a broad representation, and should regularly include higher leadership, from government, civil society, the military, academia, and private sector to enhance and reconfirm organisational commitment and joint learning.

In the Netherlands some of the LoAs are already (somehow) operational like civil/military exercises (b.: 1GNC's exercises and CCOE's training) and knowledge development (c.: i.a. Platform for Security and Rule of Law), while others are still underdeveloped or even not existing (a. and d.).

4.6 Focal themes

Although stabilizing a fragile country requires a set of sustainable long term solutions and approaches, including working on development, recovery and reconstruction for dozens of years and millions if not billions of Dollars/Euros, the CE Community prefers to focus its cooperation programs to the following themes :

- **Crisis management**. Preparing for and implementing adequate, comprehensive, responses (humanitarian, military, diplomatic/political, etc.) to full-fledged crisis situations that necessitate the immediate Protection of Civilians (PoC).
- **Reconciliation**. One essential element in developing longer-term solutions is to bring the conflicting parties together, preferably via home grown reconciliation methods. This element is important in all the phases before, during and after a full-fledged crisis (Escalation-Stagnation-Crisis-Transition-Normalisation)
- **Prevention**. Preventing the escalation of tensions into real conflicts is of course the preferred option and has received explicit political support. This is still a very broad theme. Therefore, the Community likes to focus even further to the following 2 sub-themes:
 - **Early detection** of deteriorating fragile situations. Developing and using early detection systems, with simple to use indicators, is of course a very important starting point in our work.
 - **Balanced information**. Especially in recent years the world has seen the issue of 'propaganda' has emerged over recent years sometimes called 'messaging' or **balanced information or counter-narratives**. Information provision has always been used to influence the perceptions of people. However, in recent year we see that especially extremist groups and movements have developed professional information and propaganda tools to achieve their goals. Due to the penetration of targeted use (hate speech, picturing posture of force, etc..) in social and other media, the Community sees this as an important, additional theme. In this respect, it is obvious that in fragile states, the 'balanced' information approach should be developed by local stakeholders. Our role is to assist these local (non-extremist) stakeholders in optimizing and expanding their 'narrative', their norms and values amongst their respective populations. Our role could be the one of financial support and tailor-made enhancing their capacities and capabilities. This process of developing and improving local 'balanced' information will also enhance our own knowledge and performance if we have to intervene in these countries.

The selection of Lines of Action, focal themes and countries/regions will be discussed in and decided by the Community. For now we suggest that Crisis Management, Reconciliation and Prevention⁶ are the themes that need to be developed further in possibly all Lines of Action. In future, the Community can decide to choose and/or add other themes.

5. The Common Effort Community Structures

To manage and drive the Common Effort Community, the following structures are being proposed:

- **An annual Common Effort Stakeholders Conference** will take place (organisation with Bi-National Secretariat), including workshops, exercises and seminars around relevant and timely themes and/or develop new insights and dilemma's that are relevant for the community. Also the Country groups will report on their work in the past 12 months as well as present their Action Plan for the year to come. At the end of the Common Effort Stakeholders Conference a **Signing Ceremony** for

⁶ with Early Warning and especially (local) Counter-Narratives as sub-themes

(new members of) the Common Effort Community will take place. Signing should be done by preferably the highest official of the respective organizations (ministers, General Directors, Chairs, etc.).

- The **Bi-National General Secretariat** coordinates the planning towards the Stakeholders Conferences:
 - Assures that Country groups report on their work in the past year and present their annual Action Plan for the coming year.
 - Assures the organisation of exchange-meetings between the 2 Country Groups
 - Assures the organisation of the workshops, exercises and seminars in the Common Effort Stakeholders Conference

The practical organization of the Common Effort Stakeholders Conference (funding, venue, program, etc.) could be left to one organization, for example 1GNC.

It is proposed that the following organisations are part of the **Bi-National General Secretariat** : TNO (NL), Haus Rissen Hamburg (DEU), NL-MOFA, DEU-MOFA and 1(German/Netherlands) Corps (as Secretary).

- **NL Country Coordination Group** Task/responsibility is to:
 - Discuss the plans, processes, events, reporting from Task Forces and Working Groups.
 - Steer the development of short exercises with scenario's or vignettes with proper training objectives,
 - Coach/guide the process in establishing working groups or task forces to further develop concepts, (sub-) themes: CE for a specific existing fragile state, a specific issue like corruption, SSR, DDR or humanitarian aid, or a combination of all of them.
 - Coach/guide and coordinate the use of internet and social media. Jointly run (maybe by setting up by independent organization/firm); Common Effort in the Cloud.
 - Coach/guide and coordinate specific tools to test the concepts: case studies, workshops, seminars, conferences, etc..
 - Coordinate and assist in the planning towards the annual Stakeholders Conference, that includes again a signing ceremony.

It is proposed that the following organisations are part of the **National Coordination Group**: NL-MOFA, Ministry for Security and Justice, THIFGJ, one or 2 of the group PAX/Cordaid/GPPAC, 1(German/Netherlands) Corps, CCOE and TNO (as Secretary).

- **Task Forces, Platforms, Working Groups for specific Lines of Action** (meeting as often as needed) can be formed to address specific themes, or study specific questions relevant to the Common Effort Community like real life situations in existing countries (Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, South Sudan, Mali, Afghanistan, etc..) or develop tailor-made short exercises with scenario's or vignettes with proper training objectives.

Structures Common Effort Community

