



Ålands fredsinstitut

The Åland Islands Peace Institute

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The Åland Islands Peace Institute believes that there is a great potential in Europe for further engagement in global peace efforts. The European starting point should of course be that we need to make full and effective use of non-military avenues in supporting democratic processes and peace efforts in Europe and beyond within the common foreign and security policy framework. We are therefore convinced that European experiences in minority protection, diversity accommodation and promotion, self-government and regionalisation, empowerment of individuals and of civil society as well as experiences of demilitarisation and neutralisation offer excellent concrete examples of European 'good practices'. In addition, we believe that there is in Europe currently a need for multi-level meetings where government representatives, high-level officials, academics, NGO-representatives, minorities, media representatives meet and discuss concrete potential or on-going conflicts, experiences of past conflicts or tensions as well as of good practices and successful steps in conflict management and resolution. The European Union could take the lead in facilitating this type of exchanges, not only through high-level mediation and as acute crisis management but above all as preventive and confidence building steps before the outbreak of a crisis. Grass-root contacts should always be included in such endeavours. Such efforts, combining theoretical knowledge and practical experiences, are needed both within and outside the European Union and its neighborhood regions. In this respect, the Åland Islands and the Åland Islands Peace Institute offer an excellent focal point where many of these conceptual starting points and concrete experiences co-exist.

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