

European External  
Action Service

PEACE  
MEDIATION  
GUIDELINES



# Acronyms

**AU:** African Union

**CSO:** Civil Society Organisation

**CSDP:** EU Common Security and Defence Policy

**DDR:** Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

**DPO:** UN Department of Peace Operations

**DPPA:** UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

**EEAS:** European External Action Service

**ERMES:** European Resources for Mediation Support

**EUGS:** EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy

**FAC:** Foreign Affairs Council

**FARC:** Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (“Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia”)

**FemWise:** Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation

**HoD:** Head of Delegation

**IA:** Integrated Approach

**PCM:** Directorate for Peace, Partnerships and Crisis Management

**MST:** Mediation Support Team

**NGO:** Non-governmental organisation

**OSCE:** Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**WB:** World Bank

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# Foreword to the 2023 EEAS Peace Mediation Guidelines:

The EEAS issued its first-ever Peace Mediation Guidelines almost three years ago to accompany the new Concept on EU Peace Mediation, welcomed by the Council on 7 December 2020. In its conclusions, the Council reaffirmed its support to peace mediation as a key tool of conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding under the Common Foreign and Security Policy when addressing risks to peace.

Since then, the return of war to Europe with the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has fundamentally challenged and reshaped European and global peace and security architectures. In the face of this enormous challenge, the EU has taken rapid actions across the whole policy spectrum, including by reinforcing its security and defence policy, as epitomised by the Strategic Compass of 2022.

Together with these efforts, the EU has continued strengthening its role as a global peace actor. Between 2021 and 2022, the EU acted as mediator or supported mediation of partners in 23 conflict contexts, with a particular focus on Africa, followed by the MENA region, Europe and Central Asia, Asia-Pacific and the Americas. More than ever, the EU upholds the conviction that a rules-based multilateral order is a prerequisite for sustainable peace.

The EEAS Peace Mediation Guidelines have been reviewed in this light, to adapt to the evolving nature of conflict, to reflect emerging topics and developments, and to contribute to constant improvement and professionalisation of the mediation practice. Seven new chapters have been included: youth, national dialogues, insider mediators, humanitarian mediation, extremist actors, elections and ceasefire mediation. These have been developed in consultation with Member States and EU's mediation partners, including the UN and the OSCE, as well as a number of experts and organisations specialised in mediation. The 2022 EU Community of Practice on Mediation, in particular, offered a very useful platform to discuss the new topics included in the revised document with the peacebuilding community. I am very thankful for all the valuable inputs received.

The EU is already today a key mediation actor. The EU can increase its effectiveness and reach as a mediator by defending universal values, and by increasing cooperation with partners. I am convinced that these revised Guidelines will greatly contribute to this objective.

**Stefano Sannino**

Secretary General of the European External Action Service

# Introduction

The original Peace Mediation Guidelines were developed in 2020 as a parallel process to the elaboration of the new **Concept on EU Peace Mediation**, which replaced the **Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities** from 2009. The 2020 Concept revised the policy foundation for EU mediation, outlining the specific features of EU mediation practice, strengths and comparative advantages. It drew on EU mediation experience and lessons learned over the previous decade. The original Guidelines of 2020 have now been updated to reflect feedback received from partners and practitioners, to introduce additional chapters on new, emerging issues and to take account of important changes in Europe and globally following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

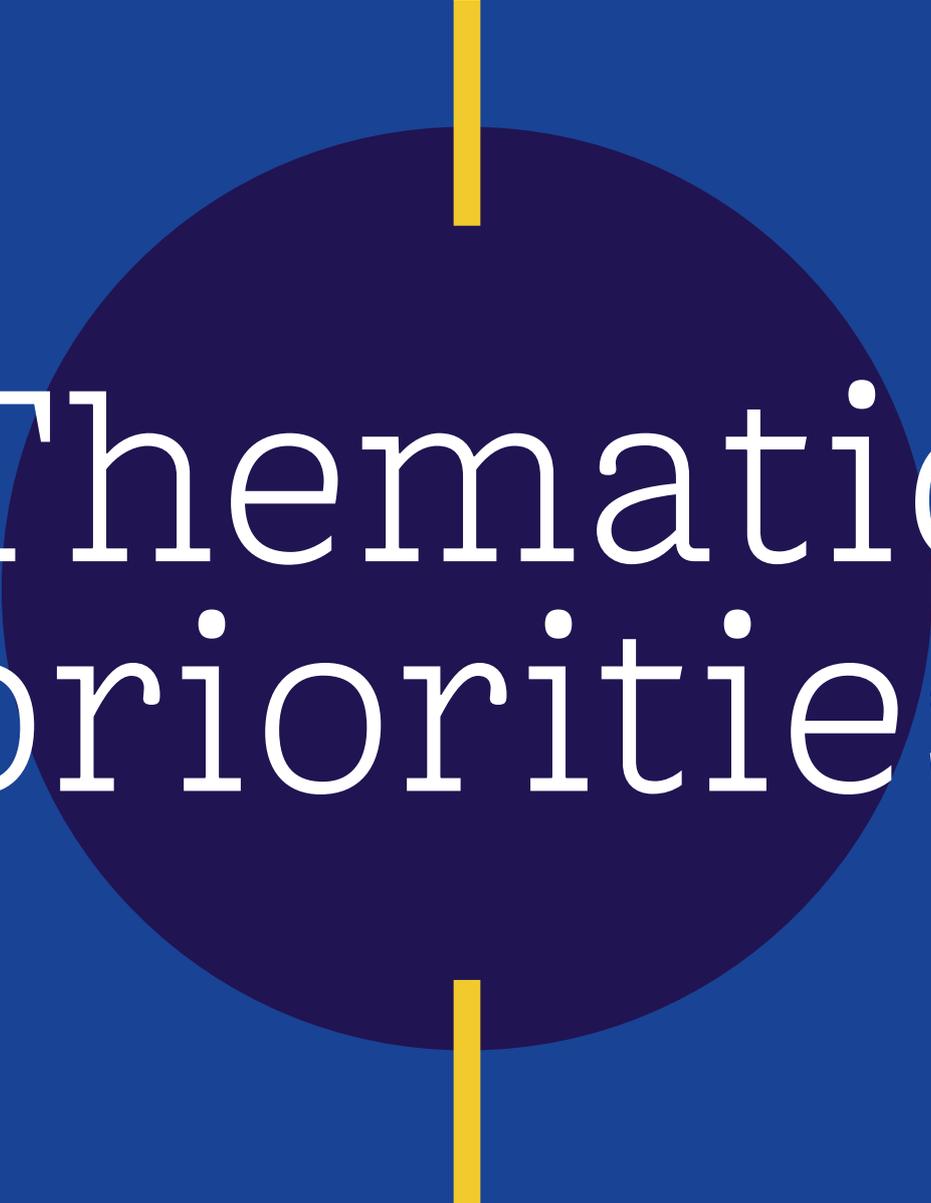
The purpose of these Guidelines is to **translate the EU Peace Mediation Concept into practice**. They provide guidance for EU mediators, such as EEAS Senior Management, EU Special Representatives, EU Heads of Delegation and the EEAS Pool of Mediators. They can also serve as a source of inspiration to the broader community of practitioners in EU peace mediation, including the EU Member States and non-governmental organisations. The Guidelines refer to EU peace mediation as defined in the 2020 Concept, widely covering mediation, facilitation, dialogue and mediation support.

The Guidelines are meant as an **EU reference document** that should be consulted as a complementary tool to other materials made available by the international community, in particular the **United Nations (UN) Guidance on Effective Mediation**<sup>1</sup> which spells out fundamental normative and operational aspects of global peace mediation practice. As an EEAS document, the Guidelines do not represent the EU Member States' views.

The Guidelines are divided into stand-alone chapters in two main sections. The **first section** compiles sixteen **separate chapters covering thematic priorities**<sup>2</sup> relevant to the EU's policies and experience and on their implications for peace mediation and mediation support. Each chapter offers a stand-alone introduction to the relevant normative frameworks, instruments and policies and includes examples, lessons learnt and best practices.

The **second section** presents EU peace mediation capacities and support options as well as practical capacity-building aspects of EU peace mediation, including training, coaching, knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.

The original Guidelines and the 2023 update were produced by the **EEAS Mediation Support Team (MST)** in the Peace, Security and Defence Partnerships Division, within the Directorate for Peace, Partnerships and Crisis Management (PCM). Several consultations took place before and during the drafting, including with the EU Member States, international organisations and the peacebuilding community. In addition, three EU Community of Practice on Peace Mediation meetings in June 2020, 2021, and 2022 have been convened, gathering hundreds of experts from around the world to discuss EU peace mediation and mediation support and to formulate recommendations.



# Thematic priorities

# 1 Integrated Approach

The 2022 Strategic Compass for Security and Defence highlighted major geopolitical shifts with heightened strategic competition and complex security threats. It also stressed the value of cooperation with partners, including the United Nations, on conflict prevention and mediation in the face of new and emerging challenges. The EU Member States pledged to redouble efforts to implement the **EU Integrated Approach**<sup>3</sup> to security, conflicts and crises and be bolder in how diplomatic and economic instruments are combined with civil and military assets to prevent conflict, respond to crises, contribute to peacebuilding and support partners. The EU Integrated requires the EU to further strengthen the way it brings together institutions, expertise and instruments on prevention, crisis response, stabilisation and peacebuilding in order to contribute to sustainable peace.

The EU Integrated Approach concerns all dimensions of a conflict by bringing together a **multi-dimensional, multiphase, multilateral** and **multilevel** approach and therefore has a number of practical implications for the EU as a peace mediator:

- The **'Multi-dimensional'** approach implies that the EU will have recourse to all available policies and instruments aimed at conflict prevention, management and resolution. An EU mediator must take into account the different EU policies and instruments implemented in a specific situation and make sure their goals are aligned with these and are mutually supportive. He/she has to understand and be fully aware of the EU's overall priorities (including political, economic and security dimensions) in a given country and the wider region and their influence on the process of mediation.
- **'Multi-phase'** means that the EU must be ready to intervene at all stages of the conflict cycle, from the pre-conflict phase throughout the conflict and in its aftermath, including during peace agreement implementation and post-conflict recovery. However, the conflict cycle is not always clear-cut and phases may overlap or recur.

- **‘Multi-level’** indicates that the EU acts at the local, national, regional and global levels. For mediators it entails, in particular, to promote working across the different peace mediation tracks<sup>4</sup> in which peace processes take place. At the same time, the EU efforts at a local level need to connect with the global level, particularly with UN actions and frameworks.
- The **‘Multilateral level’** approach means that the EU engages with the relevant international players present in a conflict and necessary for its resolution. Taking into account the realities of a particular context, an EU mediator should promote the effectiveness of multilateral engagements through fostering partnerships with the international actors, in particular the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the African Union (AU), the World Bank, NATO and other regional and sub-regional actors.

In the revised Civilian CSDP Compact of May 2023,<sup>5</sup> the Member States committed to further operationalise the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises by strengthening links between civilian CSDP and other EEAS structures, including EU Delegations, as well as with European Commission (EC) programmes, agencies and projects, and Member States’ actions and activities. The planning, design and implementation of civilian CSDP missions are to build on early warning and conflict analysis and make full use of the EU’s mediation and dialogue tools.

## In practice

While implementing the Integrated Approach in the context of a crisis, the EU needs to respect local ownership and carefully monitor **local views** of the process and integrate these in its planning of whether and how to engage in peace mediation. **Flexibility and adaptation** to changing circumstances, for example with regard to negotiation leads and partners, remain key to success.

**Sharing information** – when this does not compromise the process and in line with the approach agreed with parties – contributes to building a shared understanding of a situation and to achieving a joint, strategic vision, a true cooperative approach. Information sharing will help overcome silos, build quality partnerships and facilitate common analysis and delivery for a greater impact.

Where an EU mediator is appointed, they should be aware of and **liaise with all relevant EU actors**, including the EEAS Directorate for Peace, Partnerships and Crisis Management, EEAS geographical directorates, EU Delegations, EU Member States, Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) actors (in particular the CSDP actions that often have a mandate for confidence building, monitoring and dialogue support) and the European Commission services in charge of cooperation, humanitarian aid, peace, stability and crisis response. The EU engages in mediation where it has **comparative advantage**, namely where there are entry points for EU mediation and where the EU can make a useful contribution to sustained peace. EU actors need to be aware of the dynamic nature of the EU’s comparative advantage as shaped by the geostrategic environment.

Where another actor is better placed to effectively engage in a leading or supporting mediation role, the EU should assume a complementary role depending on the invitation of the parties and of the mediation mandate. The entry points for EU mediation should always be assessed on a case-by-case basis, informed by a conflict sensitive approach and in consultation with stakeholders. The EU can also seek to **strengthen coordination in the overall mediation support system**, facilitating complementarity and strategic coherence between the different mediation actors (in particular those funded by the EU and Member States). The EU is often well placed to “connect the tracks”, thereby contributing to more cohesive and inclusive processes.

The EU can furthermore support integrating processes, for example by ensuring that information shared at different levels reaches and is considered at the main negotiating table.

Applying the IA is also important for effective planning of the “**after the negotiations**” phase. This can include political support and financing to monitoring bodies, facilitating dialogue between parties over issues relevant to the implementation stage, sensitisation and outreach to create buy-in for a peace process, assisting the parties in implementing specific commitments from the peace agreements and/ or supporting structural reforms to prevent conflict recurrence.

# 2 | Conflict analysis

Conflict analysis, which requires an integrated gender perspective, forms the **departure point for effective peace mediation**, creating the necessary awareness of a conflict and its root causes. This awareness is crucial to design and steer a mediation process or to reshape it according to changing dynamics. It also allows actors to assess the results of past mediation processes. Above all, conflict analysis can offer a joint understanding of the structural causes of the conflict, as well as possible triggers, opportunities for building common ground and sources of resilience.

Conflict analysis allows peace mediation actors to:

- find mediation entry points;
- identify compatible needs and interests between conflict parties' positions;
- prepare negotiations/dialogue through capturing the conflict parties' narratives;
- elaborate consultation mechanisms in view of formal negotiations and encourage participation;
- offer the conflict parties a common understanding of the core conflict drivers;
- ensure that mediation efforts are conflict-sensitive to both maximise benefits and minimise harm (see also Chapter III on "Conflict sensitivity and 'Do No Harm'").

The EU methodology for a full-fledged conflict analysis is contained in the **'2020 EU Guidance note on the use of conflict analysis guidance in support of EU external action'**<sup>6</sup> and further elaborated in the Technical User's Guide: Conflict Analysis Screenings. From 2020 to 2023, the EEAS and the EC conducted approximately 50 EU conflict analyses in fragile and conflict-affected countries to support the 2021-2027 NDICI programming cycle. Conflict analysis has made tangible contributions to EU external action by informing policy, security planning, and election support.<sup>7</sup>

The key steps in a mediation context should include analysing recent conflict dynamics, conflict drivers and their historic context, identifying key actors and stakeholders, developing scenarios for further peace and violence, mapping relevant, already ongoing initiatives by the EU and other actors and formulating recommendations. The methodology should be flexible and adapted to each situation.

The analysis should be carried out jointly with involved Member States and key partners. Integrating local perspectives to the overall analysis is important. A shared reading of the conflict is crucial to arrive at a coordinated and integrated approach.

## In practice

Irrespective of the methodology chosen, **identifying all conflict actors and understanding their positions, power relations, interests and needs is essential**. Furthermore, it is necessary to assess the roles of the relevant regional and international actors and identify possible conflict mobilisers and key civil society groups shaping the conflict, including in their potential role as drivers of peace. Understanding past processes and agreements (for example in the form of a timeline analysis plotting the most influential events) is important. A mapping and analysis of ongoing or planned mediation efforts and consultative processes is also crucial to avoid duplication. Analysis and mapping can be done jointly with local and international actors already present in the country. Continuous analysis is necessary as situations evolve.

**Analysis of traditional and social media** can provide important insights. Setting up a regular monitoring of the local social and other media – for example, relying on local universities in the field of journalism or existing media monitoring services of CSDP missions or EU Delegations – can prove fundamental in understanding conflict dynamics. Assessing conflict related vocabulary can help to understand how the parties frame the conflict. Detecting and analysing hate speech and disinformation campaigns can be useful to understand the root causes of the conflict and to anticipate events.

In a situation where a comprehensive conflict analysis is not feasible in the time available, a mediator needs to rely on **already existing**

**analyses and reports** as well as information received from international and local experts. The information collection should include an assessment of views of conflict parties as well of the diverse stakeholders. Care should be taken that the individual views of the conflict parties are well reflected.

Irrespective of the modality chosen, a conflict analysis should always be carried out in a **gender-responsive and age-sensitive manner**, preferably via a participatory approach, taking into account the different ways conflicts affect men and women, boys and girls and the ways women and men, boys and girls contribute to conflict prevention and resolution. Integrating a gender perspective includes assessing the gender-related social norms and relations and how they are affected by the conflict, as well as identifying and addressing the gender-related aspects of the root-causes and dynamics of the conflict. It establishes the basis for addressing issues of inclusion and participation when designing the mediation process to implementation of peace agreements or other outcomes.

A specific momentum or an invitation to mediate may, however, call for rapid decision-making. In this case, reviewing any existing conflict analysis followed by a rapid update might be the preferred option, based on already available analytical resources. The exact methodology should be chosen depending on what the mediator needs in terms of information to implement his/her mandate effectively.

# 3

## Conflict sensitivity and ‘Do No Harm’

Conflict sensitivity and ‘Do No Harm’ are key elements of process design in mediation. Conflict sensitivity assumes that **any significant intervention in a fragile or conflict affected context** may **have an impact on conflict dynamics and on conflict risks**. Conflict sensitivity helps to avoid unintended negative impacts on peace and conflict dynamics, in line with the ‘Do No Harm’ principle, while ensuring the greatest positive impact in the pursuit of sustainable peace.

The objective of being conflict-sensitive in mediation is to **maximise the benefits and minimise the potential harm** of an initiative. Conflict sensitivity requires a sound understanding of conflict dynamics and of how a mediation initiative can potentially impact them. Any intervention can either increase the conflict between the different parties, deteriorate their relations or reduce tensions and strengthen the relationship between parties. Contextual changes and geopolitical rivalries have an impact on the way the conflict parties view the EU, and on the EU’s capacity to intervene. The EU’s **‘Conflict Sensitivity Guidelines’** outline the EU’s responsibility in providing practical guidance to implement conflict sensitivity throughout its external actions, including in the interventions or activities funded by it, but implemented by partner organisations.

Fragile and conflict-affected contexts are highly volatile and unpredictable. Constant change is an essential part of a conflict. **Continued analysis** of the conflict context enables a mediator to anticipate changes, adapt the intervention and remain conflict sensitive.

## In practice

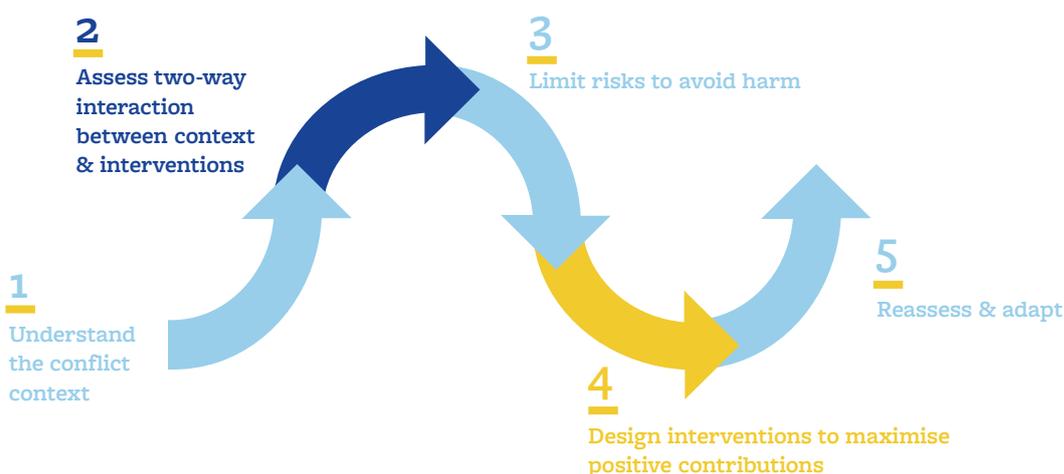
**Conflict sensitivity** should characterise the peace process from the beginning to the end, including in the composition of the mediation team. The goal should be to ensure a conflict-sensitive mediation team that is resourced with **mixed skills and backgrounds**. In practice, unity among international actors in a comprehensive effort to help the parties build peace is not always possible. EU mediators should be aware of and minimise possible intended or unintended impact of individual or collective bias on the work related, for example, to dealing with specific ethnic groups or to gender. EU mediators should also consider under a conflict sensitive lens how the inclusion or exclusion of different parties in a mediation process might impact power and conflict dynamics. Although the conflict situation at hand might accelerate fast, it is important that the mediation team takes **sufficient time to adequately prepare the participants for a negotiation or a dialogue**. This might call for capacity building ahead of the actual discussions.

**Ensuring the safety of the parties** is important. They should be adequately briefed and prepared, in particular with regard to any security risks they might face and on how they can protect themselves. The role of the mediation team is to provide a safe space for the participants. This includes designing a process in which the participants feel sufficiently comfortable to discuss issues in different formats (jointly and separately, inside meetings, etc.).

A mediator also has a responsibility to consider physical and data security risks, including those originating from online activities.<sup>8</sup>

**Conflict sensitivity also means anticipating the consequences of the intervention and ensuring these do not negatively affect the conflict dynamics at play.** When changes take place in a conflict context, a quick (re) assessment is called for. Mediators need to assess how the changes affect the mediation team, their engagement, the safety of the participants, the EU's capacity to continue engaging and possible ways to proceed, as well as stakeholders' perceptions of each of these factors. In a highly dynamic environment, even seemingly minor changes can be of importance. The analysis should be constantly updated, and EU mediators should rely on local knowledge of the conflict environment from diverse sources – including perspectives often marginalised – to enrich their analysis, and evaluate the capacity of local actors to handle any information they receive in a discreet and confidential manner.

Mediators and their teams should consider the **evolution of the relationship between participants** and with external actors, in particular with regard to hostility. A gradual approach may in some contexts be more conflict-sensitive when building a dialogue. Time, patience and modesty are of the essence.



# 4

## Multi-track coordination and inclusion

The complexity of most conflicts requires that the work of a mandated, central mediator is complemented by mediation at other tracks. **The EU is well suited for multi-track coordination** as an expression of its Integrated Approach. In fact, the EU has experience supporting a multi-track approach to peace processes and dialogue in a number of conflict arenas, in particular by “connecting the tracks”. The EU often supports and leads political processes while working with NGOs on Track 2 diplomacy. It also funds and works with dialogue design, including at the community and grassroots levels (Track 3).

A multi-track approach can create a **more resilient peace pathway**: for instance, if one of the tracks becomes fragile or comes to a halt, positive momentum can remain at another level. Multi-track approaches **strengthen inclusivity** and can build the foundation for a solid peace architecture around which the broader peace partnerships mobilise. Inclusivity is at the same time a norm and an outcome of a well-structured process design. Mediation strategies that manage to integrate the diverse perspectives of conflict parties and other stakeholders help to generate broad national ownership, improving legitimacy and the prospects of a more sustainable peace.

When applying a multi-track approach, it is important to **maximise local ownership** by prioritising support to national, local or community-based infrastructures for peace and insider mediator networks active in conflict-affected countries or regions. Approaches that focus on local people as a source of strength and as key protagonists allow them to become drivers of their own peace process. It is important to base mediation approaches on proposals emanating from the voices, experiences and perspectives of the citizens of the conflict-affected country, including diaspora. A mapping of local peace actors can be elaborated during the conflict analysis (chapter IX discusses further the role of insider mediators).<sup>9</sup>

Applying an inclusive approach can allow for better understanding of the **root causes of conflict** and addressing the needs of different segments of a society. It helps to create entry points for dialogue between conflict parties as well as build communication and trust between communities. It reduces the risk of excluded actors becoming spoilers and undermining the peace process.

The selection of participants to a process must weigh the ambition and benefits of inclusivity with the urgency to take advantage of a strategic momentum or a window of opportunity. Applying an inclusive approach does not necessarily imply that all stakeholders participate directly in the formal peace negotiations at each stage of the process, but allows for consultations and meaningful contributions to the overall process.

## In practice

Multi-track design in peace process support draws on conflict analysis, in particular actor mappings. Through conflict analysis and based on the agreed mediation objectives, mediators should assess **which actors are indispensable for brokering a deal** (power holders) and which ones should be **included in the process as stakeholders**.

It is important to **socialise negotiating parties to the principle of inclusivity** and its advantages from the very beginning of the process. In careful consideration of a conflict context, the EU can function as a **“facilitator” between tracks**, supporting vertical integration and communication between actors and tracks. Informal mediation involving decision makers or government officials through track 1,5 dialogue or consultation process can, for example, contribute to finding settlement through formal negotiations.

**Capacity-building or conflict coaching to empower civil society actors** might be needed to accompany mediation efforts. A **communication strategy** should be elaborated in view of informing and involving the different actors in a creative manner, for example using social media and mobilising opinion leaders.

Inclusion in mediation applies to **women leaders and women’s groups** (see Chapter VII), **social, demographic, religious, ethnic and regional minority groups as well as to civil society and professional organisations**. Furthermore, **traditional and religious leaders** are potentially important allies as they can play a critical role in increasing the legitimacy of a peace process. Particular attention should be given to the meaningful inclusion and participation of youth (see Chapter VIII).

**Business actors** are another important group to interact with, as they can have a profound impact on local dynamics. Like-minded international actors can be allies in reaching out to private companies, whose representatives can bring important insights on conflict actors and dynamics. It is important to also consider the role of illicit business actors benefiting from the war economy and the role they potentially play in sustaining the conflict.

Flexibility is required when **supporting local and community dialogues**. In most contexts, the EU is well placed to provide capacity-building and engage with a broad range of actors, including at the local and community levels.

At the same time, while community dialogues are important for building sustainable peace, they have limitations with regard to solving structural problems and conflicts stirred by political or armed actors external to them. **International experts** can bring lessons learned from other contexts and empower local facilitators through training.

**Designing and managing an inclusive mediation process is often challenging.** Broad-based inclusive processes require more multilateral diplomatic engagement, time and resources than elite bargain processes. Furthermore, it is not easy to find the balance between confidentiality and transparency. In some contexts, pragmatic support to emerging elite bargains is needed first to help deliver stability and reduce violence. But for elite bargains to hold, inclusivity must be increased over time to allow broader groups of a society to enter into the process.

## Case Study

At the UN Special Envoy's request, the EU is facilitating coordination and exchange between Track II peacebuilding actors, donors and embassy representatives and the Office of the UN Special Envoy for **Yemen** (OSESFY), to ensure a more coherent peacebuilding approach. A kick-off conference bringing together 26 of these organisations took place in Sweden in June 2022. Follow-up meetings took place in Jordan in November 2022 and in the Netherlands in May 2023. The group is preparing and relaying advice to the international community on the basis of different scenarios. The EU is also providing direct support to Track II peacebuilding actions, including youth peacebuilding networks.

# 15

## Human rights and transitional justice

The **EU is founded on the values of respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law**. The EU is committed to protecting and promoting these values worldwide in its external action, in line with Article 21 of the Treaty of the European Union.

EU mediators must rely on **international human rights and humanitarian law**, notably the UN human rights treaties and the Geneva Conventions, as a cornerstone of their engagement.

The **EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024**<sup>10</sup> promotes a more prominent role for the EU in promoting and defending human rights and democracy throughout its external action. More specifically, the EU is committed to ensuring the centrality of human rights in crisis response and conflict prevention, including mediation.

Furthermore, the **EU's framework for transitional justice**<sup>11</sup> sets out guiding principles on how the EU can engage in situations where past violations and abuses have occurred, including gross violations and abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law. This engagement should support a context-specific combination of measures promoting truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of no recurrence. This builds upon and complements the EU's existing strong policy in support of the **International Criminal Court**<sup>12</sup> and the Rome Statute, which all EU Member States have ratified.

The EU firmly believes in the principle that **there cannot be lasting peace without justice**. Therefore, the EU supports the established UN policy to oppose amnesties for serious international crimes, which comprise war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, ethnic cleansing and gross violations of human rights, including in the context of peace negotiations.



## In practice

An EU mediator needs to be thoroughly informed of international human rights and humanitarian law, the EU human rights policy and the EU transitional justice framework.<sup>13</sup> **In-depth awareness of the past and the present human rights situation at national and sub-national levels** is essential and should be acquired in the beginning of the process. An inclusive analysis that takes into account different perspectives, including those of civil society, women's associations, youth, children, victims' groups as well as marginalised people and people living in remote areas, which may historically have been overlooked and downplayed, is key.

It is important to make sure **victims' perspectives** are included in the process. Mediators must develop a thorough understanding of the different victim categories and groups and must exercise caution with regard to questions of who can legitimately represent them.

Mediators should identify, together with the local, national and international stakeholders, **a human rights-based approach for the mediation process**. This includes a meaningful participation of broad segments of civil society including women, youth, children and minority and indigenous groups.

Local civil society actors should be given a chance to speak out about human rights violations as doing so can reveal discriminatory practices and human rights violations constituting root causes and grievances behind the conflict. Giving the space for local civil society actors to express themselves is in itself a positive way to offer them recognition in a process.

Human rights constitute a frame to describe and understand the grievances behind a conflict. Social and economic rights, minority rights, rights associated with the environment or the protection of children can provide a more neutral framework and common language for engaging on more contentious issues. These perspectives can also provide systemic and institutional remedies which the parties might more readily accept because of the universality and broader acceptance of rights. It is sometimes necessary to build up the parties' understanding of human rights norms and their implications. To this end, it may prove useful to provide **human rights training** covering international human rights and humanitarian law to the conflict parties and civil society.

Mediators should be aware of the **compliance** (or lack of it) **of the conflict parties with the international and regional human rights obligations and standards.**

Aware of his/her specific role, an EU mediator should seek to **reach out to all relevant parties** in order to facilitate and encourage conflict settlement (specific guidance on contacts with extremist groups is provided in Chapter XI). Including the key stakeholders in the decisions on how, when and where human rights-related issues are best discussed is useful and builds ownership around the issues at stake. Defining and acknowledging human rights violations committed before and during a conflict can in itself form part of a truth-seeking process. EU mediators should be aware however that such a truth-seeking process might not uncover all crimes, some of which might remain unaccounted for.

In terms of process design, mediators need to think about **strategic sequencing** of the issues. While making clear that the need for accountability for the past remains, EU mediators can try to incrementally build momentum and seek **entry points and common ground through joint visioning** with the parties of a strengthened human rights-based future for the society and its institutions. A strong focus on justice dimensions, especially those focused on holding perpetrators accountable, may disrupt peacebuilding efforts in the short-term, but a more holistic understanding of transitional justice that aims at longer-term transformation of societies and institutions and focuses on victims' needs will ease some of the tensions in the long run and provide the mediators with a wider range of transitional justice tools when mediating peace.<sup>14</sup> In practice, mediators often need to balance some of the conflicting natures of peace and justice. However, with growing international normative requirements regarding justice, the question is not "whether there will be some kind of transitional justice post-conflict, but what its timing, modalities and sequencing might be".<sup>15</sup>

It is **important** to pay attention to **linkages of human rights to other areas** of the peace negotiations. Transitional justice, for example, is directly linked to areas such as justice or security

sector reform, access to land and other natural resources, economy and power sharing.

The question of **permissibility of amnesties** often arises during the negotiation of peace agreements and political transitions. Under international humanitarian law, States can grant to persons who have participated in a non-international armed conflict amnesty for such crimes as rebellion, sedition and treason. States can also grant rebels amnesty for legitimate acts of war (such as killing members of the opposing armed forces). This provisions aim at encouraging reconciliation by releasing those detained or punished for the mere fact of having participated in the hostilities. It does not, however, encompass amnesty for those having committed crimes under international law and it is important to inform the conflict parties that international **norms forbid blanket amnesties for genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes.**

The UNSC Resolution 1820 notes that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide and stresses the need for the exclusion of sexual violence crimes from amnesty provisions. Furthermore, UNSC Resolution 2143 stresses the need to exclude genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other egregious crimes perpetrated against children from amnesty laws and other similar provisions and recalls the fact that the conscription or enlistment of children under the age of 15 or using them to participate actively in hostilities in both international and non-international armed conflict constitutes a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

An EU mediator should assess and promote **long-term commitments to the promotion and the protection of human rights** in peace agreements. For example, it can be useful to foresee continuous capacity building on human rights and their monitoring as part of a peace agreement. The implementation of the commitments should be thought through from the beginning to avoid creating false expectations and overly complex or overlapping structures.

## Case Study

The **2016 Final Peace Agreement** between the Colombian government and the guerrilla group FARC-EP has a rights-based focus, which aims to guarantee human rights and victims reparation. Thereby, the Agreement not only focusses on ending decades of violent conflict but, by addressing the root causes of the conflict, it also focusses on ‘non-repetition’ and building a positive future without violence and without violations and abuses of human rights.

During the negotiations process towards the Agreement, the following key aspects were discussed and agreed upon:

- rural reform and development to address inequality and foster human security;
- inclusive civil society representation and participation, with a specific gender focus and an ethnic approach to better integrate indigenous and afro-descendant communities;
- political, economic and social reincorporation of the former guerrilla combatants who demobilise;
- tackling drug trafficking and related violence through socio-economic support for crop substitution;
- a victims-centred transitional justice approach, with restorative provisions at its core.

# 6 National dialogues

National dialogue has been defined as “**nationally owned political processes aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders in times of deep political crisis, in post-war situations or during far-reaching political transitions**”.<sup>16</sup>

Typically, it is a political process somewhat equalising power relations and serving a political function – filling a need to build inclusive dialogue outside existing institutions of government. The EU has supported national dialogues and other types of local infrastructures for peace in a wide variety of settings.<sup>17</sup>

A National Dialogue has a **wide variation in terms of specific aims, status, structure, size, scope, duration, timing, rules and outcomes**. The hallmark of such a dialogue is its breadth – that has a “national” character in the sense of being nationwide or society-wide, reaching across the range of conflict parties and beyond to include and give effective voice to all stakeholders: the broadest possible spectrum of political, social, identity, interest, and other stakeholders, including the government.

A national dialogue has a **broad agenda that goes beyond the usual Track 1, Track 2 or Track 3 processes**. It aims at addressing the root causes of complex conflicts of national scale and political, economic and social structures that sustain the conflict(s). Legitimate interests within a national dialogue could include those of the conflict parties, diasporas, neighbours, investors, intermediaries, and many others.

Some national dialogues have been driven entirely by **national actors** while others have been initiated at the suggestion of **external partners**, which may impact local ownership. Some have constituted fairly **short** (i.e. a matter of days) affirmations or legitimisations of elite-made deals while others have constituted **lengthy** (i.e. a matter of months or a series of meetings) explorations of root causes. The length of time needed to ensure a genuine process with sufficient credibility and legitimacy will depend on context.

National dialogues are typically **extra-constitutional public processes**. They are not explicitly foreseen or protected by International Law. However, International Law may offer a useful framework, especially where third party mediators, donors, regional powers, and international organisations are involved. National dialogues are typically formal and solemn in character, enjoying some relationship with recognised authority.

In an intra-state conflict context, the status of a **national dialogue is largely conferred by the consent of the conflict parties and stakeholders** in some relation with external actors. A national dialogue can be included as a commitment in a peace agreement. Some have received UN Security Council endorsements if not official mandates. In socio-political terms, national dialogues may also generate their own status as instruments of political legitimisation and mutual recognition amongst the participants if they are perceived to be credible and inclusive. In intra-state conflicts, the host state is likely to have a decisive role in deciding the terms and composition, which can determine how genuine and credible a dialogue process is. **The international community can play an important balancing role** to help ensure the inclusivity and credibility of a national dialogue.

In addition to national ownership, the **key principles** that may be invoked in designing a national dialogue include inclusion (among and within constituencies), transparency, deliberation and consensus (as opposing a majoritarian decision making), as well as respect for human rights and Rule of Law.

## In practice

National dialogues unfold usually in four distinct phases:

■ The **pre-planning phase** should include a comprehensive conflict analysis, shedding light into the interests, needs and aspirations as well as relationships among the conflict parties, factions and stakeholders. Within a broader peace process, the pre-planning phase may be performed by the instigators and/or principal conflict parties.

In an intra-state conflict, State authorities are likely to take the lead, impacting power balances. The international community may need to consider how to address these.

■ The **preparatory (planning) phase** typically entails a negotiation amongst representatives of the principal actors, and may address practical matters such as dates, duration, structure, logistics, financing, venue, etc. While pre-planning may involve few key actors, the preparatory phase is likely to be more inclusive and sufficiently representative of the conflict parties, and reach out to potential sceptics and spoilers. Representatives should be decision-makers to ensure reliability, continuity, and national

ownership from conception through implementation. Planning logistics together can help build confidence and relationships, which can be important to address substantive matters of the agenda. Similarly, any efforts to undermine the credibility of the process or limit genuine discussion/outcomes can seriously undermine trust between conflict parties and destabilise wider progress towards a political settlement.

■ The **conduct phase**, often in the format of a congress or a conference, is the most visible stage of a national dialogue. It can include solemn moments such as a shared declaration or oath, collective adoption of an agenda and rules, or an affirmation of consent (such as adoption of a final document) followed by the elements of the dialogue and deliberations. Parallel to the main conference, a smaller “strategic committee” may be constituted to organise the technical preparations, set up the agenda, come back to questions of the members of the conference, keep relations with donors, produce summaries and briefings, and address issues and misunderstanding among actors.

■ The final and the most critical phase is the **implementation phase or follow-up**. This is the phase when the outcomes are brought to bear in expected political changes – whether immediate or in the form of related processes such as constitution-making or reforms.

■ Establishing transitional arrangements is likely to take longer than the conduct of the dialogue itself, and it is often harder, as commitments and external political interest fade and funding is difficult to mobilise.

The EU can play various roles in support of national dialogues. Importantly, it can offer incentives (economic or diplomatic incentives or restrictive measures) for dialogue throughout the process, ideally through a unified position with other external actors – all whilst taking care not to undermine the key principle of national ownership. It can provide technical expertise, for example with regard to process design and management, offer thematic inputs to participants (for example on constitutional reform, transitional justice, electoral laws, inclusion of women<sup>18</sup> and youth) or share comparative examples from other contexts.

Technical support may also include training for participants in relevant aspects of the process, as well as coaching for individuals and groups. The EU can carry out coordination of international support. It can join hands with other international actors to conduct Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments<sup>19</sup> or support the conduct of conflict analysis to pave the way for a national dialogue, or provide logistical or financial support. The EU can furthermore facilitate confidence-building measures, for example by providing impartial monitoring of a national dialogue. EU support to the implementation of national dialogue recommendations is equally important, particularly when they involve addressing the underlying causes of conflict and may involve drawing on wider EU tools/support such as development aid.

**EU representatives can act as invited experts and facilitators** to a national dialogue. They would typically be distinguished from delegates and have no say over decisions, although they may carry influence. In line with the 2020 Concept on EU Peace Mediation, the EU should contribute to the upholding of those key principles of a National Dialogue grounded in international law and human rights duties.

## Case Study

The EU provided technical support for the establishment of the coordination platform mechanism for better participation of women in the National Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue in **Chad**. This took the form of advice and guidance. It allowed Chadian women to launch a solemn appeal for the appeasement of the socio-political climate for lasting peace in Chad in the presence of the Transitional Prime Minister, for an end to violence, national reconciliation and lasting peace. It also allowed women to convince themselves of the need to adopt this mechanism as an essential tool for their effective and consensual participation in the Dialogue. Through this mechanism, women were mobilized to participate in the dialogue, make their voices heard and contribute significantly to the unfolding of the process.

# 17

## Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

The **EU continues to make a substantial contribution at a global scale in promoting and supporting the role of women** as mediators, negotiators and peacebuilders, at all levels. This is also in line with the adoption of **UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)** in 2000. The EU Global Strategy clearly recalls the EU's ambition in this respect.<sup>20</sup> The EU approach has been further developed in the 2018 Council Conclusions on WPS<sup>21</sup> and in the accompanying EU Strategic Approach to WPS and its Action Plan<sup>22</sup> as well as the Council Conclusions of November 2022.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the EU has a strong track record of implementing gender-responsive policies, including in development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, foreign and security policy, migration, climate change, employment and health.

The implementation of these political commitments needs further attention considering that **women are still more often than not excluded** from taking mediation roles at any level. This is the case despite the importance and the benefits of engaging women in peace processes.<sup>24</sup>

There is strong **evidence of a positive correlation between women's participation in peace negotiations, primarily through civil society,<sup>25</sup> and the quality and the sustainability of the agreements** reached. This is due in part because women tend to bring to the table a more inclusive approach and consideration of wider societal issues. This can increase the relevance of, buy-in to and ownership of the agreements reached, thereby increasing support for their implementation. Inclusion of women furthermore enhances public perception of the legitimacy and credibility of a peace process and also brings in a broader understanding of a conflict, its causes and consequences (including issues affecting primarily, but not only, women and girls, such as conflict-related sexual violence), which can then be reflected in the proposals for its resolution.

Women should not be perceived only as victims. Their full and diverse potential in promoting and bringing about peace, security and development in society merits being recognised and supported. It is important to enhance **women's participation** at all stages of conflict prevention and resolution. Another essential dimension consists of ensuring **that peace agreements** aim for gender equality and the protection of women's human rights. Women's role both as **negotiators and as implementers** of peace agreements should be recognised and supported throughout the peace process.

## Women remain under-represented and unrecognized for their efforts and successes in peace and political processes at all levels

### Women's representation in major peace process Between 1992 and 2019



## In practice

Applying a gender-responsive approach to mediation increases its effectiveness and capability to achieve sustainable results. This can take various forms, including:

- ensuring **active and meaningful participation** of women at different levels in preparations, at the negotiation table and throughout the peace process, including at the decision-making level;
- making sure men and women have adequate **access to professional training** and skills development to be empowered as equal contributors to peace processes;
- creating **linkages between formal and informal processes** that enhance the effective inclusion of women;
- integrating **gender-responsive analysis** throughout the different phases of a peace process;
- facilitating the incorporation of **gender provisions** in peace agreements and other outcomes.

It is important to **identify, from the planning phase, how women and women's groups should engage in a given peace process**. The analysis should be conducted with the involvement of women representing the relevant groups. It should consider both **contextual factors** (for example women's socioeconomic status or resistance to their involvement) and **process-related factors** (for example women's inclusion in preparatory talks preceding actual negotiations) that may enable or prevent the inclusion and active participation of women. The analysis should also look at the role of women in other past or ongoing peace processes and gather any **lessons that can be identified** on that basis.

It is necessary to systematically **promote consultations with the participation of women belonging to different generations** throughout the design and the implementation of the mediation process because they are often marginalised in their respective societies. Local civil society should be involved in developing the approach to the mediation process, which should include women's groups beyond those generally dealing with the international community and present in the urban centres.

The approach should recognise the **diversity of women** and perspectives and be sensitive to the inclusion of different generations of women.

EU mediators should look for entry-points to **link political leadership with women** and to actively create opportunities and propose ways to include women in mediation (e.g. supporting the creation of targeted accessible funding for women mediators to engage in peacebuilding programmes involving hard to reach communities and groups, including youth). It might furthermore be useful to promote co-mediation including women and men (for example by constituting mixed gender teams) or to build **links between women with different levels of expertise** to promote the emergence of new generations of politically empowered women leaders.

**Empowering women mediators**, deconstructing the harmful forms of masculinity in society where relevant, is important and should start early, before the formal talks, to allow women to build their agendas and prepare their engagement. Capacity building during the mediation process can enable women to move between the different mediation ‘spaces’ – from the local to national, or from national to regional and international. It can also create pathways for women mediators to access careers in regional and international mediation.

Integrating a gender perspective in mediation will have an impact on the **wider process design** and can impact aspects such as the **mediation style** chosen (definition of mediation goals and behaviours, for example between a more or less directive approach, setting the scope and determining expected outcomes), **budgeting** (aiming for gender-responsive financial decisions), **communication, protection and security, infrastructural support** and selection of **venues**. Women mediators have greater responsibilities with regard to their families, which can limit their participation in peace processes. This can be taken into account in the scheduling of activities, for example to avoid ‘peak hours’ for domestic care work. **Women mediation networks**<sup>26</sup> have emerged as an important instrument to ensure active and meaningful participation of women in peace processes and for the creation of linkages between formal and informal mediation fora. They conduct research and analysis on the involvement of women in peace processes, empower women (through capacity building and by connecting women at different levels and with diverse actors) and advocate for the inclusion of women in peace negotiations and in the implementation of an agreement. These networks represent key allies for EU mediators to advance more gender-inclusive processes.

## Case Study

The EU Ambassador for Gender and Diversity and the EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan launched the **Afghan Women Leaders Forum (AWLF)** in March 2022. The forum, facilitated by the EU, brings together over 100 Afghan Women Leaders from diverse backgrounds, to ensure women participate in the dialogue about the future of Afghanistan and the role of women in Afghanistan. The Forum includes civil society and political leaders and activists, businesswomen, lawyers, journalists and representatives from the women’s movement, both from within and outside of Afghanistan.

# 18 Youth

The EU fully supports the three successive UN Security Council Resolutions on the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda and their global implementation.<sup>27</sup> In November 2022, the EU Council Conclusions<sup>28</sup> recognised that **working for, with and by youth is key to eradicating poverty, and achieving sustainable development, prosperity and peace**. The Council committed to increasing meaningful and active youth participation and empowerment in EU external action, across the areas included in the UNSC Resolution 2250: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

With widespread interconnectivity, today's generation of youth – the largest in modern history – is increasingly affected by global affairs and plays a key role in shaping them. **Young people often form the majority of the population in countries affected by armed conflict**. Young people are not a homogenous group. They are a **diverse and intersectional representation of society** across economic, social, and political arenas, defined by a communal experience and transitional phase from childhood to adulthood. Young people take on multiple roles during conflict, from peacebuilders, community or student leaders, civil society organisation members, and conflict or political actors. It is critical to understand the challenges, perspectives and needs of different youth cohorts in order to address conflict issues appropriately. Recognising the dual role of young people as both stakeholders affected by conflict, and actors involved in it, positions the EU to channel the positive potential of youth towards sustainable peace and to prevent escalations of violence.

Promoting inclusivity is one of the core EU mediation principles. As such, **youth-inclusive practices need to be supported in all peace processes that the EU is engaged in**. Youth participation is a means to achieving broader societal ownership and representation of peace processes and the agreements reached, thereby increasing popular support for their implementation. **Youth should be involved at all levels of a multi-track mediation or dialogue process in several different ways**: as part of negotiating teams or as civil society representatives participating in the negotiations, as insider mediators that can be formally connected to the peace process structures, or in supporting functions engaging their peers and the wider public through social media or public awareness campaigns. Youth can also provide feedback mechanisms and can serve in the implementation and monitoring of process outcomes.

It is important to note the **complementarity of the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) one with the YPS own agenda**. While CAAC prioritises protection, WPS and YPS address different forms of exclusion. While both young men and women can be expected to grow out of possible age-based discrimination, young women may continue to experience other forms of marginalisation based on their gender. Treating women and young people as similar categories disregards the specifics of the discrimination that can be faced by these demographic groups.

Furthermore, the **UN CAAC agenda** recognises the rights of children affected by armed conflict as an issue of peace and security. By the nature of their vulnerability, children are disproportionately affected by conflict with long lasting and damaging impacts for their development and lives, yet they have not contributed to the conflict. The rights of children affected by armed conflict and child protection concerns should be included in the mediation talks and peace agreements, with a specific focus on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children recruited or abducted by armed forces and armed groups, trauma healing and provision of educational opportunities. Children should also have an opportunity to voice their concerns during a peace process.

## In practice

As a starting point to any mediation engagement, **conflict and political analyses** needs to be gender- and youth-sensitive (see Chapter II on the EU Conflict Analysis methodology). This should include a **thorough mapping of different youth groups, communities, and young influencers** present in a given context. When available, age and gender disaggregated data should be used to inform about the structural causes as well as the effects of the conflict on young people. In all cases of intra- and interstate wars, the younger generation should be treated as a key stakeholder in peace processes because they affect and are influenced by the conflict and because of the contributions young peacebuilders make to the peace process.

During the process design stage, potential **structural obstacles to youth inclusive peace processes** should be addressed. Youth inclusion is typically hindered by norms placing formal or informal decision making powers in the hands of elders, limiting the issues considered appropriate for youth to work on, or undervaluing the input of youth. Young people who are active in peace processes might face **repression and reprisals**.

While the responsibility to protect young people lies, first and foremost, with the state and agents of the state, all actors involved in the mediation process have the responsibility to offer safety measures to protect young people, including in the digital space.

**Intergenerational dynamics** in a society also affect the potential conflict resolution efforts and the implementation of outcomes of mediation processes. These dynamics might therefore need to be addressed in a peace process design, for example through an intergenerational dialogue on a range of conflict and security-related issues.

When specific groups of youth are identified as perpetrators of extremist violence, the pros and cons of their direct inclusion in a mediation process need to be considered from the conflict dynamics perspective (see further discussion in Chapter XI). While broad inclusivity of a peace process is advantageous to the long-term sustainability of its outcomes, it needs to be weighed against the issue of **legitimising conflict actors** through their inclusion.<sup>29</sup>

Youth **can be directly involved** as stakeholders in a peace process through targeted actions. The EU can, for example, support young leaders as participants in peace negotiations, advocate for youth inclusion in negotiating teams or create youth-inclusive advisory groups. If direct participation in the negotiations cannot be secured, youth groups or networks can be asked to develop proposals or issue papers relevant for the track 1 negotiations and EU mediators should make sure that such initiatives are considered in the process. Youth inclusion in track 2 dialogue processes is a positive starting point for youth participation in a peace process and national dialogues. A youth-sensitive risk assessment should be carried out at the start of the engagement, especially in cases of direct youth involvement in the negotiations, and dedicated resources should be foreseen to address identified risks.

The close ties with local communities may give certain young people an advantage in regards to serving as insider mediators (see chapter IX). Therefore, **networks of young mediators or peacebuilders** should be supported as an effective long-term conflict resolution mechanism. To strengthen meaningful youth participation in a peace process, the **capacity of youth negotiators**

**and mediators should be supported** as part of a process design, while noting that ‘capacity-building’ should not be a prerequisite that acts as an obstacle to their participation.

In the long-term, **local YPS civil society networks** can help to prevent conflict and violent extremism, as well as promote peace education and the culture of peace more broadly. Youth can also support a peace process through civilian protection, early warning networks and during the implementation phase to monitor ceasefires or other agreements. EU Mediators should consider youth as a specific but diverse group when communicating about a peace process.

The use of **social media** can be particularly effective with the young generation, especially for marginalised groups or youth living in remote areas, though they may also have lower rates of internet access. Focus should be on platforms where young people are already engaged. Young people can also be directly engaged in communication which would enlarge the outreach through their networks. A youth-sensitive **communication strategy** can generate more public understanding and support for peace mediation while simultaneously increasing young people’s inclusive participation in the process.

## Case Study

Within a joint EU-UNDP project, a strategy was developed to focus on young people as potential drivers of peace in **Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)**. Research concluded that dissatisfaction among youth about the sociopolitical situation in the country was widespread, but that few people were involved in volunteer activities to address their concerns. This issue was addressed by supporting the Regional Youth Forum for Western Balkans, through the European Youth Parliament (EYP). Several BiH EYP participants attended an insider mediation training in partnership with the Clingendael Academy in The Hague. Another key area of work concerned the media, with a view to supporting independent news reporting and investigation.

# 19 | Insider mediators

The complexity of conflicts has increased considerably in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Efforts to promote and sustain peace need to be **comprehensive, locally-owned, locally-led and long-term-oriented**. Insider mediators (IM) can help improve the engagement in all of these three aspects.

An insider mediator is an **individual or group of individuals who derive their legitimacy, credibility, and influence from a sociocultural, religious or personal closeness to the conflict parties**, endowing them with strong bonds of trust that help foster the necessary attitudinal changes amongst key protagonists which, over time, prevent conflict and contribute to sustaining peace.<sup>30</sup>

Insider mediators have a particularly vital role to play in preventing conflict, facilitating dialogue, mediating between parties, and sustaining peace. Importantly, they may possess **locally rooted networks**, enabling them to work at various levels and to consolidate collaborative capacities for peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Through their outreach capacity, influence, legitimacy, religious or cultural proximity to parties, as well as thanks to the trust these have in them, insider mediators can be well-placed to mediate differences before tensions erupt into violence. They may help de-escalation and support the implementation of local and national accords reached.

The EU can and does support, leverage, fund and promote insider mediation, acknowledging that:

1. **Insider mediators have a decisive comparative advantage particularly when it comes to informal processes.** Insider mediators have in-depth knowledge of the situation and close relationships to the parties. They can influence the parties' behaviour and bring about attitudinal changes.
2. Insider mediators play many different roles that can generally be referred to as peacebuilding. A **key role is supporting parties in negotiations.**
3. Insider mediators are rooted in the areas where conflict is taking place and their ongoing **commitment will likely last years**, which is a key element to contribute to long-term societal resilience to conflicts.

4. Insider mediators can be **diverse** (religious, traditional, women, and youth leaders) and can engage in diverse thematic areas (natural resource conflicts, local community inter-ethnic disputes, violent extremism, or gender issues).

There are sometimes **considerable risks for insider mediators** – including to their personal safety and security. External support may risk undermining the insider mediators' perceived legitimacy and credibility and put them at risk. The EU must take this into account when providing support.

## In practice

Concerning the EU support and engagement with insider mediators, it is key to anchor the approach in a robust and participatory conflict analysis, to apply a conflict-sensitive lens and to respect the do no harm principle. Although processes do not happen in a linear sequence, together with UNDP, the EU has developed an **eight-point strategy for engaging effectively with insider mediators**:

1. **Analyse the context:** The objective of conflict analysis is to ensure that the insider mediation engagement is based on a full understanding of the context, conflict dynamics and gender dynamics, as well as political affiliation and general perception of potential insider mediators.
2. **Develop a risk management strategy:** Developing a risk management strategy entails assessing potential risks for the individuals and the mediation processes, and putting in place a action plan to mitigate their probability and effects. Insider mediators invariably move in extremely sensitive contexts, on sensitive issues, often exposing themselves and their families to threats and retaliations. Potential security issues need to be acknowledged and discussed, and risk mitigation measures must be jointly designed and precisely managed.
3. **Explore options and make strategic choices:** Identifying the entry points for supporting peace and mediation processes may involve different actions and access at different levels. The unique ability of insider mediators to foster horizontal and vertical connections, understand the context and communicate truthfully with actors out of reach for the international community make them key mediation players.
4. **Foster consultative processes to identify relevant insider mediators:** The EU should ensure that the diverse views of women, youth and other typically marginalised groups are heard, without jeopardising their safety or their ability to express themselves freely. Consideration during such processes must be given to gender and generational dynamics.
5. **Identify, acknowledge and understand the needs of insider mediators:** Before engaging in support of insider mediators or involving them into EU-led processes, it is crucial to identify their precise needs in terms of security and resources. In some contexts, the most effective role can consist of creating spaces for insider mediators' engagement, without getting involved in the design, content and outcomes of the process.

6. **Co-develop an engagement strategy:** Any engagement strategy should be built together with insider mediators and in accordance with the needs expressed locally. Ensuring the participation of a variety of actors might require the support of different types of insider mediators. While it is often assumed that insider mediators need capacity-building, the reality is that they often already possess good facilitation skills and long years of experience in fostering dialogue within their communities. It is key to determine jointly with them which kind of support they need, whether it is: recognition or secrecy; political support to the process from the international community; technical capacities on strategy design and analysis; support to intra-group dynamics; or financial resources.
7. **Evaluate the impact of the joint engagement strategy:** Evaluating engagement in the mediation support space is challenging, and this applies to engagement on insider mediation. A sound evaluation mechanism can provide the opportunity for a continued and fact-based dialogue and the assessment of the efficacy of the strategy.
8. **Explore options for sustainability:** The sustainability of the engagement and of the solutions identified through mediation and dialogue processes depends on the local ownership, which must be taken into consideration when developing the intervention. Any engagement with international actors will impact the conflict. One approach to sustainability may involve the development of “infrastructures for peace”, as a dynamic and fluid approach to fostering sustainability (see the case study on Togo for a concrete example).

## Case Study

In **Togo**, the EU-UNDP project supported an infrastructure for peace, with a Peace and Development Advisor conducting national consultations, and working with women’s groups and other civil society organisations to build conflict prevention capacities. In particular, the project supported the establishment of **Local Peace Committees (LPC)**, through workshops and training sessions. LPC members, many of whom were trained in insider mediation, included religious leaders, women’s rights activists, NGO leaders as well as local officials (prefects).

For more detailed guidance on engagement with insider mediators, please see the UN Guidance Note on Engaging with Insider Mediators that captures key lessons from a wide variety of cases, including those supported through the EU-UN partnership.<sup>31</sup>

# 10

## Security confidence building measures and ceasefire mediation

There is not a single template or path leading conflict parties to cease hostilities and/or agree on a preliminary ceasefire. **Each party's trajectory and evolution towards a negotiated settlement is unique and highly context-specific**, depending i.a. on the military situation, on the wider political and geopolitical context impacting the conflict and on each party's incentives for continuing the fight.

The realisation that there is not a military solution to the conflict is usually necessary for the situation to be ripe for the parties to start seriously exploring non-military options. This can happen, for example, when the front stabilises and it becomes clear that a protracted conflict and a stalemate are the most likely scenarios or when a weaker party sees negotiation as a better alternative than continued warfare.

It is important to understand that **cessafires are not peace agreements**. As a key principle, they seek to reduce violence. Without sufficient political will and an overall political process to resolve underlying issues, a ceasefire is unlikely to hold. There are numerous cases where a ceasefire agreement has not led to a more solid conflict resolution process. However, even if there is no peace process as a follow-up to a negotiated ceasefire, cessafires offer potential for pausing and reducing violence.

A **certain level of detail in a ceasefire agreement is necessary**, as mere broad political declarations generate mistrust and often remain unimplemented. Alternatively, too broad agreements can lead to months of subsequent negotiations to clarify the modalities of their implementation.

**The risks of ceasefires need to be carefully considered.** In many cases, the fighting increases between a ceasefire agreement and its implementation, because parties seek to achieve military advances before an agreed pause. Furthermore, ceasefires can be used for regrouping, re-armament and preparation for the next level of escalation. In light of this, as a mediator, it is important to underline the need for broader political solutions to armed conflicts and play a critical role in initiating and supporting peace processes.

## In practice

In situations of armed conflict, when the conflict parties focus exclusively on military options, the **EU should promote confidence building measures as a series of mutually agreed and reciprocal actions**, which could lead to a ceasefire and expand in scope over time to a wider political process in the future. Sequencing is particularly challenging as, in line with the need for inclusive processes, the strategic goal will be for non-armed civilian actors to become primary participants in a peace process whereas they will per definition play a secondary role in a ceasefire negotiation. This transition, and the accompanying shift in power from armed actors to wider groups in society, is likely to be resisted. **Effective security system reform with the building of consensus around who can legitimately hold arms is a long-term goal** but needs to be considered early in the process.

**Confidence building measures (CBMs) before a ceasefire** can include initiatives in areas such as conduct of the armed conflict, economy, humanitarian, society, communication, security and politics. The aims and types of CBMs will vary depending on the stage of the negotiating cycle, and the type of conflict (e.g. inter or intra-state conflict). In the initial phases, they will have more chance of succeeding if they focus on a sequence of specific, verifiable, and mutual actions to build up trust. CBMs can comprise agreeing on a more general reduction of hostilities, reduction in targeted killings (e.g. particular groups or individuals), restrictions on certain

kind of hostilities (e.g. attacks on civilian targets, hospitals, refugee camps), refraining from hostile rhetoric, release of political prisoners and prisoners of war, release of children associated with conflict parties, ensuring safe passage for family members of fighters, ensuring unfettered humanitarian access, guaranteeing transparency and access for independent reporters or restoring disrupted services.

In situations of escalating armed conflict, when the conflict parties focus exclusively on military options, **mediators should promote confidence building, which could lead to a ceasefire process in the future.** Existence of informal communication channels between conflict parties is an essential minimum element enabling some form of confidence building to take place. The EU can assist the communication between the parties by a number of ways, including leading or co-leading mediation efforts, facilitating mediation and dialogue spaces, accompanying or coordinating mediation or supporting it in other ways, including through political leverage, funding, technical support and capacity building of negotiators. This stage may well also involve informal bridge builders and insider mediators.

**The preparation of a ceasefire can be a lengthy process**, starting from building knowledge and understanding of the evolution of the conflict, the thinking of the parties (including on whether it is the right moment for a ceasefire or not), and technical aspects of fighting.

There cannot be a ceasefire without a **minimum level of trust**, which will often need to be built through wider (including security) CBMs. While fighting is ongoing, such steps can include creation of days of tranquillity, creation of humanitarian corridors, humanitarian pauses (to consolidate humanitarian corridors) or building up to a temporary or geographical cessation of hostilities.

The possibility of a **short-term battlefield truce** can be explored. It can be achieved by convincing the parties of a conflict to declare a truce for a limited and well-defined period of time or in specific geographical zones, either by agreeing to a joint declaration; unilaterally; or de facto suspending hostilities without declaration. There have been many examples of battlefield truces in various contexts to enable collection and burial, prisoner exchanges, religious celebrations or delivery of humanitarian aid. Such battlefield truces may last for a few hours or a few days. They are not usually verified or even formally signed, but parties may make declarations confirming their adherence. Unilateral ceasefires should be approached with caution in terms of CBMs as they are often driven by specific underlying motivations that may not be related to a genuine desire to explore a negotiated settlement in the longer time (e.g. one party feels militarily disadvantaged and wants to secure space to address this).

It is nevertheless important to **avoid referring to a “ceasefire” too early**, as the word carries a strong political meaning with far-reaching implications. Conflict parties can perceive a possible ceasefire as referring to a conquest or a capitulation. This is why external parties should carefully reflect on the opportunity and timing of publicly calling for a ceasefire. Since there is not a general shared understanding of the term “ceasefire”, it might be helpful to consider alternatives, which might be more acceptable to conflicting parties, like “cessation of hostilities”. It is also more likely to be successful as part of a series of mutually negotiated and agreed actions undertaken by the parties that can be verified.

It is important to **exercise caution with regards to premature ceasefires**, which may hold for some time, but create further issues in the longer run (e.g. when one side under strong attack agrees to a ceasefire to gain time to redeploy and prepare for combat). In all situations, the pertinence of a ceasefire should be carefully assessed.

A declaration of intent, declaration of principles or other form of **public commitment** to a peace process can be one of the most important public steps taken by the conflict parties on the road to ceasefire negotiations (often this will have been preceded by negotiations on a range of wider CBMs to generate the necessary confidence between the conflict parties to move towards this goal). One or both parties can issue such declarations jointly or unilaterally during the pre-negotiation phase to prepare ground for negotiations, which includes preparing supporters for the prospect of negotiations. It is likely that there needs to be the prospect of a credible political process to encourage conflict parties to agree to a durable ceasefire.

The EU can play a variety of roles in supporting the implementation of a ceasefire agreement. **Witness** or **observer** roles are a lighter expression of engagement. A **guarantor** role can be legally engaging, depending on the final agreement. The EU can also provide **security guarantees**, for example, through **deployment of military or civilian personnel**. It can deploy **observer missions**, engage in monitoring and verification of ceasefire agreements or support setting up dispute resolution mechanisms. Furthermore, training of monitoring teams, technical advisory support to the parties, support to Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes, integration of the gender dimensions, or engagement in Security Sector Reform (SSR) processes, etc. are potential fields for EU involvement.

However, to increase the chances of a ceasefire lasting, it is important to also ensure that there is equal focus on addressing the underlying causes of the conflict in a timely manner. This can involve bringing the EU's wider tools to bear, including political, economic and development support, to avoid a relapse into the conflict cycle.

# 11

## Engaging with violent extremist actors

The EU Council Conclusions on counter-terrorism, adopted on 20 June 2022,<sup>32</sup> underline that defeating terrorism and violent extremism requires a **consistent, comprehensive global effort that cannot only rely on military action**, but also encompasses a civilian-led, whole-of-society response aiming at tackling the root causes of the threat, including socioeconomic inequalities, lack of good governance, as well as the impact of organised crime activities and climate change. Protecting cultural heritage can also play a key role in promoting peace, democracy, sustainable development and prevention of terrorism by fostering tolerance, dialogue and mutual understanding.

**Violent conflicts involve a diverse range of non-state actors driven by different motivations and deploying diverse methods of operation to pursue these.** When considering engaging with these actors, it is important to conduct a thorough conflict analysis, considering which actors represent significant local constituencies and could claim a degree of legitimacy in front of them. It is also important to be aware who is applying the label ‘extremist’ or ‘radical’ as perceptions can differ. For example, some actors may wish to label certain groups in such a manner for political reasons and/or to seek to delegitimise and isolate them.

**It may not always be desirable or possible to engage directly with violent extremist actors.** Instead, **other actors can be supported to do this**, ranging from ‘insider mediators’ within civil society to specialised mediation organisations with experience of such engagement. The abovementioned EU Council conclusions stress the importance of local ownership, in particular of the governments directly concerned.

Whereas the 2020 Concept on EU Peace Mediation “safeguards space for civil society liaison with proscribed actors”, it is always **essential to mitigate possible unintended side effects of engagement**. These can include a risk of conferring legitimacy to violent groups, marginalisation or weakening of moderate elements or allowing parties to use talks to strengthen themselves militarily. As discussed in Chapter III, the Do No Harm approach, including constant analysis of costs and benefits, is particularly necessary before and during engagement with such actors.

Any peace agreement that does not include all the main conflict parties and actors is unlikely to hold, and **groups that have the power to spoil a peace process should be part of conflict resolution** in one way or another. Similarly, if a violent extremist group has a strong legitimacy derived from large political support, as well as the power to continue fighting, engaging in a dialogue can be desirable to understand and address the underlying drivers of conflict. Otherwise grievances become more vulnerable to exploitation by groups pursuing an even more radical or extremist agenda.

**Isolation can lead to further radicalisation of a violent group** because of a perceived lack of alternatives. Conversely, offering credible alternatives to engage can convince such groups that it is possible to achieve their objectives politically. Extremist groups that are rooted in local grievances and objectives are more likely to be open to political compromises. However, local grievances that are not resolved can be exploited by radical and extremist pursuing other agendas.

As in any peacebuilding engagement, it is important to have an integrated, holistic and analytical approach, taking into consideration dialogue avenues but also **law enforcement and the fight against impunity**. Chapter V discusses how to move beyond a simple dichotomy of either peace or justice with a more holistic transitional justice approach grounded in human rights.

## In practice

Engagement with violent extremist actors needs to be guided by **clear objectives**, rooted in a desire to address the underlying causes of a conflict. The overall **underlying logic of an engagement needs to be defined**, including appropriate sequencing and preconditions that are required to be in place to progress from one stage of engagement to another, in order to mitigate the risks of unintended effects (e.g. risks of splintering or strengthening of an armed group by certain types of confidence-building measures). Furthermore, timing is of essence, since there can be an important cost to non-engagement when windows of opportunity for meaningful engagement are open, giving violent extremist groups time to strengthen their positions.

Engagement with violent extremist actors can take place in many different ways:

- 1. Discrete informal outreach**, aiming at establishing lines of communication and gathering initial information over the motivations and possible demands of violent extremist groups;
- 2. Small, localised CBMs**, such as local ceasefires, local humanitarian access, local measures addressing drought or other climate-related situations, demonstrating that mutually beneficial cooperation is possible;

**3. Broad confidence building measures** applying to the whole territory under the conflict parties control. These can include reduction of violence, pauses in fighting, truces, cessation of hostilities, de-escalation in rhetoric or ensuring safe travel for family members of fighters;

**4. Informal discrete negotiations** on a variety of issues such as political participation and inclusion or the role of religion in public life;

**5. Formal negotiation.**

A careful risk assessment and planning for mitigation measures is necessary in each case. Also, conflict parties may require capacity building to participate effectively and to analyse different alternatives of political action to reduce the recourse to violence.

## Case Study

Organisations specialised in mediation have supported reaching local level humanitarian agreements between violent extremist actors and local authorities in the **Sahel** with the goal of an immediate reduction in violence and in the impact of conflict on communities. With a mandate from the parties to the conflict and the affected communities, a series of local, non-political and essentially humanitarian mediations have taken place. The agreements reached have supported positive community dynamics with parties showing their willingness to cooperate and live peacefully. In particular, they have made it possible to test the capacity of communities to manage public goods and to obtain consensus. They also have had a wider impact in opening up space for the deployment or redeployment of the State in certain geographical areas, in particular through reopening of schools. The agreements reached do not replace peace agreements between states and extremist actors. For longer term credibility and sustainability, it is crucial to ensure continuation of dialogue with inclusion of the local authorities. A key concern is to ensure such processes do not result in the legitimisation of violent extremist groups.

# 12

## Religion

**The majority of today's armed conflicts have a religious dimension by virtue of the fact that the vast majority of people worldwide consider religion an important factor in their lives.**<sup>33</sup> Religious beliefs and faith-based actors can intersect with conflict in ways which aggravate or alleviate conflict dynamics.

Religion can aggravate conflict by reinforcing identity cleavages and by constituting seemingly opposing worldviews (shared understandings of reality orienting social and political life) of conflict actors. Just as any worldviews, religious perspectives can shape the issues of a dispute. Where religion constitutes the core of a person's or a group's identity, it can be mobilised to exploit tensions and polarise societies along fundamentalist or extremist agendas (see Chapter XI on dealing with violent extremist groups).

Conversely, **religious actors** also have the potential to mitigate conflict or reconcile parties within their own communities or between religious communities. Religious literacy – knowledge and an understanding of the vision, motivations and precepts of a religion, of the role it plays in conflict-affected societies and of the values and perspectives shared across religious communities – can thereby provide an entry point for conflict resolution.

Mediation strategies that integrate religious beliefs and faith-based actors into conflict reconciliation can bring three sets of assets to mediation and dialogue:

- 1. Social assets:** religious communities are trusted institutions that impact people's lives throughout all stages of peace and conflict;
- 2. Moral assets:** a faith-based value system can guide behavioural transformation and can be drawn upon to rehumanise situations. Moral assets can also facilitate finding common ground in certain interfaith situations or across inter-community conflict within a shared religious context;
- 3. Spiritual assets:** religious vocabulary and symbols can provide access to the spiritual and emotional base of a party's behaviour.

## In practice

An EU mediator should take into account and assess the role played by religious beliefs and religious actors in a conflict. In order to ensure this, adequate support and conflict analysis must be provided by experts that understand how faith-based actors work, what motivates them and how they operate within a specific religio-cultural context.

As a **secular foreign policy actor**, the EU cannot be perceived as choosing to engage with one faith over another. It must stringently apply a **human rights-based approach** throughout its actions and peace mediation support. As religion and faith-based actors can play an intricate role in conflict dynamics and represent entry-points for a transition to peace, engaging with these actors can be of paramount importance when building pathways to peace. The EU should engage with religious actors when the context calls for it and always informed by its own policy stances of impartiality vis-à-vis different faiths and the primacy of human rights.

A religious leader can hold **a multitude of identity markers simultaneously**, for instance being, or claiming to be, a political or military leader as well as a religious leader.

Religious leaders often have a strong influence on political decision-makers, whose convictions they shape, and faith-based peacebuilding organisations or actors may place different levels of emphasis on their confessional attachment.

Formal religious leaders are not necessarily representative of a wider religious community (especially as regards age and gender). In particular, these leaders may not be the most influential voices when it comes to more marginalised demographics. Ensuring **diverse engagement of influential religious actors** is therefore important.

An EU mediator also needs to be aware of the potential **limitations of faith-based mediation**. These can include structural limitations (faith-based mediation may be more useful at Track 2 and Track 3 levels), political limitations (religious fundamentalism presenting non-negotiable positions) and gender limitations (patriarchal religious systems that delineate limited roles for women). The potential of working with faith-based actors on peace and reconciliation rests on stable engagement at the local level and conflicts grounded in differing worldviews require a particularly long-term approach.

# 13

## Environment and climate change

Demographic changes, new patterns of scarcity and economic mismanagement have exacerbated environmental, natural resource, land use and water disputes as drivers of insecurity. According to some estimations, **between 40-60% of all civil wars over the past sixty years have been associated with natural resources.**<sup>34</sup> A number of persistent insurgencies have been driven and funded by illegal exploitation of natural resources or intensified by migration patterns caused by climate change. Security risks posed by climate change can exacerbate conflicts to unprecedented levels.

Climate change presents an **immediate threat multiplier** to international peace and security. Consequently, **mediators find themselves increasingly occupied with conflicts involving natural resource disputes.** This means that mediators must have access to the necessary technical expertise to engage on environmental and climate change issues. This can be achieved by training and equipping a mediator or arranging appropriate technical support.

On the other side, **natural resources can offer opportunities for mediation and become entry points** to initiate cooperation and to resolve conflict. This is because the issues of environmental degradation are common concerns and solutions to them are often tangible, local and quantifiable. Addressing them can serve as a confidence-building measure and have a spill-over effect on mediation over other conflict-related issues. Water-sharing issues, for example, due to their basic life-support role, can be as much a cooperation incentive as a conflict driver. Consideration must also be given to actors that have environmental priorities and the extent to which they can serve and facilitate mediation efforts.

The **EU Global Strategy** recognises the link between climate and security. This was reiterated in the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of February 2019, which noted the serious implications of climate change for peace and security across the globe. In December 2019, the European Parliament approved a resolution declaring a climate and environmental emergency in Europe and globally. Consequently, the European Commission's Green Deal and the January 2020 Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on climate have increased the EU's ambition for external climate action, including in the field of conflict prevention and resolution. The 'Concept for an Integrated Approach on Climate Change and Security', the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap, the Joint Communication on the Climate-Security Nexus or the Strategic Compass, are setting ambitious goals for the EU's external and climate action for years to come.

## In practice

It is key to assess how climate or natural resources relate to the **root causes of a given conflict**. Underlying causes linked to climate change or environmental degradation may present themselves, for example, in the form of disputes over benefits from the use of a specific natural resource. Direct dialogue with the communities affected and the civil society and local expertise is essential to understand such root causes.

To understand the role natural resource dimensions play in the conflict, it is important to assess the **benefits** that arise from them, the **livelihoods** that depend upon them and the **negative impacts** of their exploitation. It is important to engage both men and women in resolving natural resource-related conflict, recognising that **men and women often have different concerns about natural resources** and their use.

Furthermore, conflict analysis should identify the main **environmental stakeholders** (for example, farmers, herders, exploiters and businesses, indigenous populations) and possible entry points for dialogue. Even in conflicts not directly driven by natural resources or climate change, environmental challenges and shared resources can serve as **entry points for dialogue and confidence building** between divided communities.

Many environment and climate change-related disputes call for **specific expertise and technical solutions**, involving issues such as defining water corridors for livestock, demarcating dry and wet grazing areas or agreeing access to water.<sup>35</sup> Mediators need to build bridges between peace process experts and the technical experts that understand the underlying environmental, climate change and resource issues that may exacerbate conflicts.

These can include hydrologists, agronomists or political scientists specialised in climate security.

Natural resources need to be negotiated with a **mutual gains perspective**, which requires skilled mediators who know how to achieve trade-offs and upgrading of resources and how to complement agreements with confidence building measures. Local experts understanding customary as well as statutory law on land and water can make an important contribution. Also, traditional chiefs, elders and other local leaders can have pertinent experience of finding equitable solutions to land and water rights disputes. The experts may need to be sensitised to mediation practices in order to effectively translate technical knowledge and language into workable proposals, supporting mediators with regard to understanding the technical and legal parts of the peace agreements, for example concerning natural resource sharing.

A **peace agreement should have sufficient room for manoeuvre to ensure their viability even as the climate shifts**. This involves including benefit-sharing and community development measures, taking into account environmental degradation and supporting local communities to become climate resilient through sustainable and equitable sharing of natural resources and support systems to enhance the efficiency of usage.

Factoring in environmental and climate-related aspects **can make peace agreements more sustainable**. Peace agreements and their implementation offer opportunities for endorsing and leveraging efficient use of natural resources in post conflict contexts. This can reduce the risk for further conflict and also support climate adaptation in the concerned societies.

# 14

## Psychosocial dimension

Mediators and conflict parties are subject to many and varied **psychological and neurological influences** during a mediation process. A mediator should recognise that conflict parties have likely been exposed to traumatic experiences and substantial psychological pressure and have been or are parties to violence. A mediator should be understanding of and adaptive to how these experiences can impact conflict parties' decision-making and perception of the issues at hand.

Engaging with conflict parties requires awareness of the impact of trauma, knowledge and ability to reflect and reveal such impacts and a substantial **ability to empathise and to relate to the experiences of the parties**. Emotions often form the core of conflict and mediation dynamics. That is why it is essential that mediators understand the emotional and psychological aspects of a conflict and the impact of trauma before and during a mediation process.

To enhance healing, trust and confidence of the parties, mediation process design should enable trust building, dialogue, listening and adapting the speed of a peace process to the needs of the participants. Long-term conflict and violence **deeply affect trust, human relations** and the social fabric governing relationships and enabling recovery. Reconciliation is a mechanism that may in some cases, but not always, enable healing and transformation. Both reconciliation and healing require contextually and culturally sensitive psychosocial support mechanisms.

Recognising and addressing grievances is a prerequisite for enabling individuals and communities to engage in creating peace. Best practice suggests that **mental health and psychosocial aspects should be given structural attention throughout peacebuilding**, including in the deliberation and implementation of peace agreements.

Whilst recognising the unique nature of each experience, **success stories from other contexts can provide conflict parties with hope** and create new visions for peace.

Peace processes that have taken a human-centred approach to reconciliation and peace, such as in **South Africa** and **Colombia**, have become the key examples of peacemaking in the world and can inform approaches to peace processes elsewhere. However, every community should be given a chance to design its own process.

## In practice

**Psychosocial and peacebuilding expertise is necessary** in the planning and implementation of a peace process. Mediators should integrate psychosocial support and trauma perspectives into their approach, based on an understanding of the local grievances and suffering caused and experienced by each party prior and during the conflict.

Applying a psychosocial approach to mediation takes into account that selective perception, biases, cognitive dissonance and attributional bias affect the way conflict parties process information. It recognises and takes into consideration that any **external stimuli can activate negative or positive misperceptions of reality**. The mediation process needs carried out in a sensitive manner.

Mediators should pay attention to identity and group belongings, adhere to strict standards in terms of fairness, respect autonomy in decision-making and seek a deep connection with the issues and people at stake. Such an approach **enables a mediator to understand the drivers of conflict** and guide the process in a more effective manner. Mediators should be aware of these dimensions prior, during and following negotiations.

The tools and methods to analyse and deal with emotional, psychological and social dimensions of peace processes need to be made available to the conflict parties but also to the **affected communities and individuals**.

**Mediators also require sufficient psychological support** to be able to process the stress and the burden they take on with their tasks. This includes peer counselling, regular support in form of coaching and careful support to ensure maintenance of psychological and physical health.

**Local facilitators or insider mediators** in particular are often exposed to and affected by the same, potentially traumatising events as the dialogue participants. Their role needs to be recognised, but they also need to be protected and carefully monitored when working in and with war-torn societies. Insider mediators can act as insider reconcilers by, for example, using culturally sensitive healing practices. However, they might also require specialised mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), coaching and guidance to be able to shoulder the responsibility of assisting other parties to resolve conflict.



Finally, it is important to **create physical and psychological safe spaces** for negotiations. This includes paying attention to the security of the setting, inviting experts to support the mediation team and taking care with personal details.

It is useful to ensure sufficient time for breaks in difficult conversations. Furthermore, instead of threats or pressure, which can lead into resistance, mediators should privilege positive encouragement.

## Case Study

Since the 1994 genocide, **Rwanda** has navigated its post-conflict phase without the return of mass violence, despite victims and perpetrators often living side by side. According to the 2018 Rwanda Mental Health Survey, a nationwide population-based survey, the prevalence of several mental disorders is higher than the global average and is particularly elevated among survivors of the 1994 genocide<sup>36</sup>. Globally, studies have found that traumatised and anxious individuals find it difficult to stay focused in pursuing sustainable livelihoods, thus undermining prospects for community reconciliation and development.

The EU is supporting a project to reinforce community capacity for social cohesion and reconciliation through trauma healing in the Bugesera District. The project aims to develop and implement a standardised approach for community-based group therapy and life skills development, as well as supporting group-based socioeconomic initiatives as an action-oriented approach to promoting reconciliation and social cohesion. Additionally, through research and experience-sharing between local and international experts, the project aims to generate key evidence-based and context-sensitive data to inform Rwanda's policy on mental health and social cohesion policy and practices.

# 15

## Humanitarian negotiations and mediation

Over the past years, humanitarian crises have become increasingly complex, characterised by serious violations of international humanitarian law (IHL), multiplication of actors, including non-State armed actors, access restrictions and compounded protection risks, which cause great suffering of civilians and heavily impact the EU's and other actors efforts to meet the humanitarian needs of the affected people.

EU humanitarian aid and humanitarian mediation is guided by the humanitarian principles. Securing rapid and safe humanitarian access by impartial humanitarian actors is key for providing assistance to those most in need. **When humanitarian access negotiations become too difficult or reach an impasse, humanitarian mediation may be required.** Engaging or supporting such humanitarian mediation efforts is fully in line with the Concept on EU Peace Mediation. Mediation addressing humanitarian concerns in emergency contexts can entail practices at all stages of the conflict, even when a full-scale peace agreement is still far out of sight.

### Humanitarian negotiations

Humanitarian negotiations can be defined<sup>37</sup> as the interaction between humanitarian actors and their counterparts, including the conflict parties, pursued with a view to:

- **Establishing and maintaining the presence of humanitarian organisations in crisis environments;**
- **Ensuring humanitarian access to people in need;**
- **Delivering humanitarian aid and implement protection activities.**

IHL provides the legal framework for armed conflicts, stipulating that the parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need. This relief must be impartial in character and conducted without any adverse distinction in line with the principle of non-discrimination, subject to the right of control that a party of the conflict may exercise over the relief action. To ensure humanitarian space and the right conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, **negotiations may be required at all stages of humanitarian action.** Hence, humanitarian actors, be they local or international, require specific negotiation skills, but also knowledge of the political and security context as well as the legal and policy frameworks. A set of core universal principles and common objectives ensures that humanitarian action is provided solely based on needs and not influenced by political, strategic, military or economic objectives. These principles are humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

Humanitarian access negotiations should be designed in a way that enables accountability to affected populations and facilitates the access of crisis-affected communities to protection services and support.

Humanitarian actors are guided by the humanitarian principles and their (non-) compliance can affect their acceptance, and their ability to engage with State or non-State actors. Displays and perceptions of serving political or military objectives may impede the scope for negotiations, restrict humanitarian access or limit the safety and security of the negotiator or other humanitarian actors. Reaching a compromise with the counterparts may entail difficult balancing between respect for humanitarian principles and interests to fulfil the humanitarian mission.

Diplomatic practice in support of humanitarian principles includes and goes further than humanitarian negotiations, and the term **“humanitarian diplomacy” is often used as a chapeau for higher-level discussions on humanitarian questions.** Humanitarian diplomacy is an instrument designed to create humanitarian space, to secure the resources needed for humanitarian action, to mediate between humanitarian principles and pragmatic realities at the field level, and to build the partnerships needed for humanitarian action. Humanitarian diplomacy implicitly acknowledges that humanitarian work goes beyond humanitarian operations, just as humanitarian diplomatic practices include and go beyond humanitarian negotiation.

## Humanitarian mediation

**Humanitarian mediation is defined as an inclusive and voluntary process addressing humanitarian concerns in emergency contexts** in which a neutral and impartial humanitarian actor facilitates the communication and the collaboration between stakeholders involved in and/or affected by conflicts, in order to assist them find, by themselves, a mutually acceptable solution.<sup>38</sup>

**Humanitarian mediation comes into play when dialogue may be difficult or impossible,** and when humanitarian efforts and diplomacy fall short of connecting with counterparts such as armed groups and communities in conflict areas. It supports humanitarian actors in establishing these links and facilitates a dialogue and space for the identification of common interests and agreements.

In its **Communication on Humanitarian Action** (2021),<sup>39</sup> the EU recognises the potential of humanitarian action and mediation for peacebuilding and commits to building synergies with EU peace mediation and conflict prevention alongside strengthening compliance with IHL and effective humanitarian civil-military coordination. As the biggest humanitarian donor worldwide, the EU and its Member States are committed to addressing both urgent needs as well as root causes of conflicts and crises, with mediation as tool for integrating humanitarian, development and peace objectives.

## In practice

Whether local actors or international mediators take up the role of the humanitarian mediator, it is vital for the success of the mediation process that a humanitarian mediator is aware of the characteristics and the principles of humanitarian action and humanitarian negotiations. **Humanitarian mediation differs from political mediation in several ways.** Participants are not prominent national political/armed group leaders, the issues at stake are not political, and the process of mediation is purely facilitative, meaning that it is in line with the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence.<sup>40</sup>

Particularly in this field, **local actors with different backgrounds and expertise often take up the role of humanitarian mediator** (i.e. insider mediators), either naturally or when asked to mediate about humanitarian assistance due to their position and role in, or relation with, a specific community, authority, group and/or its members. They thus play an essential part in the ability of humanitarian organisations to provide services and assistance to people in need.

Whilst distinct, **humanitarian mediation has the potential to complement and support wider peace efforts** by engaging with actors difficult to reach or actors that would not be part of the overall peace process, and by opening or maintaining a channel of communication that helps building trust. It supports or can even trigger dialogue on conflict resolution and may also promote the inclusion of adequate humanitarian safeguards in peace processes.

**It is important to ensure that humanitarians do not become proxy channels for attainment of political interests** in situations where negotiations are blocked, or non-existent. As in any mediation engagement, a risk assessment and plan for mitigation measures should be in place when engaging in humanitarian mediation. This is particularly important when discussing humanitarian relief, in order not to compromise the humanitarian principles. Politicisation and abuse of the humanitarian efforts to gain legitimacy or spread propaganda are some of the risks to take into consideration. It is also necessary to consider the neutrality trap, whereby state actors seek battlefield advantage over their adversaries and weaponise assistance through negotiating conditions on the delivery of humanitarian aid.

# 16

## Electoral dispute resolution

Elections play an essential role as building blocks of liberal democracies by providing state legitimacy and space for public opinion and participation. Democracy, its processes and institutions are however being severely weakened and even attacked in different parts of the world. It is estimated that around **20% of elections in the world turn violent**. While elections can be a major catalyst for democratic change and sustainable peace and allow for peacefully resolving differences, they can also exacerbate tensions, reveal underlying conflicts, trigger violence and accentuate risks to political stability and peace in fragile or conflict-affected countries.

**Tensions and conflict may arise through the whole electoral cycle** with potential flashpoints including appointment of the Electoral Monitoring Body, voter registration, submission of candidatures, electoral campaigns, Election-Day, transmission or collation of results, communication or acceptance of results, legal process or post-election grievances. Elections and their governance are properly regulated by the constitutional order of sovereign entities. Developing the capacity of national mechanisms and infrastructures (such as Electoral Management Bodies) in mediation and dialogue over electoral differences, should be the first step. In specific cases, at request of national authorities, the EU may complement national processes in coordination coordinated with other regional bodies and the UN. Entry points include:

- a. Prevention of electoral disputes**, through preventive mediation, dialogue facilitation and support can help prepare the ground for peaceful elections through building the adequate political and social climate, breaking deadlocks and reducing the likelihood of violence and election outcomes that are perceived as illegitimate.
- b. Mitigation of electoral conflicts and violence** positions mediation efforts as an important tool for electoral conflict management if tensions arise and in case violence breaks out.
- c. Post-election follow-up** mobilises mediation and dialogue as important tools in the post-election period, in case the results of elections are disputed but also to address remaining tensions and complaints and strengthen trust in the democratic process.

Mediation and dialogue can support the electoral process at different levels, ranging from formal processes, such as constitutional or legislative processes, to more informal ones, such as political party or multi-stakeholder forums, non-court dispute settlement mechanisms,

monitoring and censure of divisive/hate speech and prosecution in certain cases. This can range between direct high-level mediation and dialogue efforts (Track 1 communication between the contestants) and more indirect roles such as supporting, promoting, leveraging or funding mediation by electoral or peace bodies.

## In practice

EU mediators should build up their understanding and expertise of electoral processes and take a **comprehensive and long-term approach to elections**. This means combining short-term mediation and dialogue measures to manage electoral conflict with long term efforts to address root causes of electoral violence and conflict.

An **electoral violence risk assessment** enables mediators to identify entry points and act in a timely manner, based on structural drivers and specific risks related to political cleavages, competition and mobilisation, high stakes elections, unfit electoral systems, (perceived) lack of level playing field and electoral authorities' independence and capacities.<sup>41</sup> **Common triggers of electoral violence** need to be carefully monitored, for example through hot-spots mapping or Early Warning analysis, focusing for example on hate speech and incitement to violence off and online, as well as to decisions and constitutional or legal amendments that skew the level playing field. Assessments should pay special attention to gender sensitivity and provide recommendations based on different scenarios.

It is useful to assess early on how to **integrate mediation and dialogue support throughout the electoral cycle**. In the long-term lead up to elections, mediators may be in a position to support the preparation of common agendas for the electoral process, assist in reaching agreements on the integrity of the elections and help mitigate the risks caused by potential triggers for violence such as hate speech. EU mediators may assist electoral stakeholders, in particular political parties or media representatives, to agree on **codes of conduct** to be respected by all parties and independently monitored. Ideally, such codes should cover social media and online activities, include sanction and monitoring mechanisms and be widely disseminated.

Mediation, dialogue and consultations can help to secure public input and support to the electoral process. EU mediators have a range of options to help ensure that women, youth and minorities are actively involved in these processes (see Chapters VII and VIII). Fostering conducive environments characterised by tolerance is often as important as mediating agreements on technical matters. **Trust-building measures** can include setting up or strengthening institutional and ad hoc fora for dialogue at national or sub-national levels, bringing together the main electoral stakeholders, i.e. Electoral Management Bodies, political parties, security actors and civil society.

In the case of contested results, primacy should be given to legal and constitutional avenues to resolve allegations of irregularities. However, there may also be a complementary role to be played by discrete high-level mediation between parties. Furthermore, mediation may be designed as a measure of last resort for recourse in case legitimate reservations regarding the capacity or impartiality of court systems and other bodies remain. Mediation and dialogue can help **restoring trust and confidence in democratic structures after electoral violence**, for example by strengthening local dialogue. It can address electoral shortcomings by providing a forum in which all stakeholders are able to discuss and agree on recommendations for future election planning. Mediation and dialogue can also contribute to dealing with past violence and with justice issues. The EU can fund, support governance and local mediation efforts or act as facilitator or observer of a dialogue. Mediation and dialogue efforts should thus not end with the Election Day or with the signing of a political settlement of the parties to the dispute.



# Mediation Capacities and Actors

# 1

# Professional approaches in peace mediation

The field of **Peace Mediation has gradually professionalised** over the last two decades to become a distinguishable area of practice and expertise within the wider sector of conflict resolution and conflict prevention.

This chapter aims at providing **six key elements of a professional approach to Peace Mediation**, namely 1) Training, 2) Mediation support, 3) Team effort, 4) Lessons learned, and 5) Communication and the digital technologies. Its objective is to allow current and future EU mediators to position themselves within the quickly evolving mediation community and develop an understanding of the different resources available to them.

## 1. Training

The UN Guidance for effective mediation<sup>42</sup> stresses the importance of **thorough preparation of a mediator and his/her team, including adequate training**. Today, most training providers in this field consider a minimum training of 24 hours (often carried out over 3 days) as a basic requisite for engaging in a mediation assignment.

Many contemporary peace mediation professionals hold an academic degree in the field. Peace mediation is an evolving discipline and many courses and seminars are available to learn the basic approaches and more advanced skills or practices. More experienced professionals often benefit more from one-to-one or peer coaching. The **EEAS Mediation Support Team (MST)** regularly offers such coaching and can be solicited for it.

A number of agencies and organisations in EU Member States and beyond offer Peace Mediation courses with varying content. As a general rule, a course should enable participants to analyse a conflict, distinguish between different types of mediation, understand the normative elements of mediation, know the basics of process design and communication techniques and understand the principles of interest-based negotiations.

## 2. Mediation Support

**Support to a mediation engagement encompasses a wide range of actions**, with potentially unlimited scope. Such actions can include training and coaching to conflict parties, organising safe spaces for negotiations and dialogues, hosting and convening working groups or provision of technical expertise on subjects such as transitional justice, power sharing, process

design, security arrangements, inclusion, digital technologies or environmental degradation. The exact support to be provided should be tailor-made to correspond to the requirements of a specific situation.<sup>43</sup>

EU actions in the field of mediation support include providing funds to international or regional organisations (such as the UN Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers,<sup>44</sup> the Economic Community of West African States and the AU), support to specialised NGOs (for example to prepare conflict parties to mediation or to accompany official mediators) and engaging relevant expertise.

### 3. Team Effort

Coordinating mediation requires specific skills and experience. It is important that different actors taking part in a peace mediation process, from the official level to the level of Track 2 practice (steered by civil society), **work towards a common goal**. Within a mediation team, it is essential to define a **clear division of tasks**. The team leader/chief mediator leading the process and the roles of the other members of the team need to be clearly spelled out. It can be useful to resort to specific **process design expertise** concerning issues such as sequencing, methods, agenda setting and type of engagement with the parties, in addition to other experts.

### 4. Lessons learned

To enhance mediation knowledge, it is important to look back after completing a mediation process and record **lessons to enable further fine-tuning and learning**. Identifying lessons learned informs future practice and allows mediators to take corrective steps based on past experience.

Reflective practice includes regular dialogues and feedback with mediation professionals or peers. Peer learning and coaching is part of a reflective practice in which practitioners, with the help of a facilitator, can learn from each other. The collection of feedback from parties to a mediation process can also provide valuable insights.

## 5. Communication and digital technologies

Self-awareness is a fundamental skill of an effective mediator. The presence and psychological make-up of a mediator has a decisive impact on the success of any process. A mediator must know his/her own limits to be able to practice effective mediation. He/ she needs to cultivate empathy and humility to value professional practice as a learning exercise. This self-awareness can be cultivated through supervisory techniques, peer exchanges and continuous training and skills development.

The way a mediator communicates has a direct impact on the parties and the process. His/ her **language and communication should be in line with the key principles of mediation**, in particular impartiality, as well as the acknowledgement that the parties remain the owners of their process. It is important to adhere to non-violent and non-antagonistic behaviour. Listening skills are essential. Messages passed on social media and through public channels need to be carefully elaborated. Often, mediators choose to communicate as little as possible to protect a process.

In this regard, it is important to note that digital technologies play an increasingly important role in mediation, both in modifying the context in which mediation takes place and in providing new tools for mediation. They form an **increasingly important part of the political landscape of conflicts**. Cyber incidents can escalate into political crises. Digital activism and cyberattacks are on the rise and the internet is used to initiate and drive popular movements. The ability to influence perspectives and mobilise citizens through social media is a very important factor that must be taken into account in mediation efforts. **The spread of disinformation threatens to polarise societies and fuel tensions that can lead to conflict**. Digital technologies are also used as tools to wage wars. The use of artificial intelligence can further exacerbate their influence. It is thus important that in addition to the larger context, mediators understand the digital and cyber ecosystem surrounding the mediation and its potential, including it in their preparatory work, analysis and recommendations.

Bilateral and regional cyber security architectures support **confidence-building between governments on their use of information and communication technology (ICT)**. Communication and mediation can help avert conflict as a result of serious ICT-related incidents. International law and norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace provide “guard rails” that promote restraint in cyber space, also for non-state and third actors.

At the same time, digital technologies such as social media, geographic information systems and data analytics can provide analytical support to better understand and monitor conflicts. Artificial intelligence/machine learning methods allow the processing of large amounts of data at an unprecedented speed, thus providing **valuable input into conflict analysis** (examples include discourse analysis of ongoing debates within a conflict context, sentiment analysis capturing wider popular support to dialogue, event data tracking intensity of interactions among various conflict actors or levels of protest or violence, etc.). Big data also improves early warning capacities allowing mediators to monitor trends and anticipate and immediately react to an emerging crisis or a sudden change of conflict dynamics.

**Digital technologies can also provide platforms for dialogue and mediation**, in particular when it is not possible to organise physical meetings or in preparation to those. However, the digital format can lead to **potential loss of confidentiality**. To succeed, online meetings need a firm structure, jointly agreed meeting guidelines and effective follow-up. To ensure impartiality, it is important to make sure that the participants benefit from equal speaking time and that the agenda reflects the parties’ needs equally. Great care needs to be taken for effective online translation.

**Digital tools can increase inclusivity**. However, mediators should keep in mind that disadvantaged actors – including women – may not have access to internet. Age may also affect access to digital technologies, potentially disadvantaging older segments of the population.

Access issues, including availability of phones and/or computers, critical Internet and electricity, should therefore receive **specific attention in the planning phase of a digital mediation process**. For example, in remote, war-ravaged or rebel-controlled areas, connectivity could be very low.

The **UN toolkit for mediation**<sup>45</sup> assesses opportunities and risks related to the use of digital technologies in mediation. It provides concrete examples and advice from practitioners and experts.

## Case Study

In 2020, the EEAS conducted a digital open space meeting to allow for an inclusive approach to consult on its policy process regarding the EU Mediation Concept and Guidelines. With support from technical experts and the advice of a civil society Steering Committee, the meeting employed a platform that allowed for a structured engagement with 740 individuals in 32 sessions. The results of the conversation were compiled in a digital mapping and can be found at [www.eupeacemediation.info](http://www.eupeacemediation.info)

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## EU mediation actors

Since 2009, the EU has enhanced its institutional capacity in the field of mediation and now utilises a broad set of actors with thematic-geographical expertise to lead EU mediation efforts.

The EEAS **Mediation Support Team (MST)** is operational since 2011. With a global reach, it provides advice on mediation process design and technical expertise on the key aspects of mediation and dialogue. The MST assesses possible mediation engagements through scoping missions and by identifying opportunities for dialogue. It may support existing mediation processes through strategic or process design advice.

Drawing on the MST for advice and support, the **EEAS geographic departments, EU Special Representatives (EUSR), EU Special Envoys** and **EU Delegations** (Heads of Delegation and Political and Cooperation Sections) also assess mediation opportunities and contribute to existing mediation efforts. They represent key actors for building up effective EU mediation capacity in the field.

The **EEAS Pool of Mediators**, established in June 2020, strengthens the EU's mediation outreach and operational capacity. Nominated jointly by the EEAS geographic Managing Directorates and the Directorate for Peace, Partnerships and Crisis Management, its members combine geographic and thematic expertise. They operate as assets to be quickly deployed when opportunities for mediation and dialogue arise.

The **EEAS Mediation Task Force**, established in September 2020, ensures the political steer of EEAS mediation activities. Meeting annually, it invites EEAS senior management and EUSRs to reflect on EU involvement in mediation processes and identify priorities.

Several **EU Member States** have in recent years set up or strengthened their own, specific structures for peace mediation. The Member States also actively participate in the relevant EU coordination in the EU Council.

As an essential part of the EU's Integrated Approach to external conflict and crises, **CSDP missions and operations** can work with EU mediation actors and support mediation, according to their mandates. The reviewed Civilian CSDP Compact, adopted in May 2023, allows for reinforced approach to dialogue and mediation in civilian CSDP missions. In particular, it commits to making full use of the EU's mediation and dialogue tools, in line with the 2020 Concept on EU Peace Mediation.

The above-mentioned EU mediation actors help to reduce the EU's reliance on external expertise, while ensuring that the EU has full steering and control over specific EU mediation activities. However, external mediation support is available to the EU through its EEAS **Framework Contract on conflict prevention and mediation** and the **European Resources for Mediation Support (ERMES)** project.

The Framework Contract brings together specialised partner organisations with almost 100 mediation experts. Its overall objective is to provide high-quality, timely and tailored external expertise and technical assistance to the MST.

ERMES contributes capacity building for third parties, actors and organisations in need of mediation expertise. It is managed by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments and funded through NDICI.

The EEAS launched the **EU Community of Practice on Peace Mediation** (CoP) in 2019 as an annual event to further develop and professionalise EU peace mediation. The event connects EU actors to the mediation practitioners' community, cultivating existing networks and creating new partnerships.

## Case Study

The diversity of EU actors has provided the EU with a competitive advantage in **Yemen**, where the EU supports peace mediation activities in complement to the efforts of the UN Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Yemen (OSESGY). A number of EU actors are involved, including the EEAS (Mediation Support Team and the Middle East and North Africa Managing Directorate), the EU Delegation to Yemen and the European Commission. The EU also finances peace mediation support through civil society and chairs a regular working group on cessation of hostilities with the participation of the UN, EU member states and likeminded partners. It furthermore provides technical support to the Government of Yemen through the ERMES facility.

# Endnotes

- 1 The United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation (2012) introduces preparedness, consent, impartiality, inclusivity, national ownership, international law, coherence and quality as key mediation fundamentals: <https://peacemaker.un.org/guidance-effective-mediation>
- 2 These are: Integrated approach; Conflict analysis for peace mediation; Conflict sensitivity and ‘Do No Harm’; Multi-track coordination and Inclusion; National Dialogues; Engaging with Radical & Extremist Groups; Women Peace and Security; Youth; Human rights; Insider Mediators; Religion, Environment and climate change; Psychosocial support; Humanitarian Mediation; Security Confidence Building measures and Ceasefires; Elections.
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- 4 According to Jean Paul Lederach’s Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies (1997) the different tracks can be defined as follows:
  - Track 1 includes top leadership. These are key political, military and religious leaders in a conflict that act as primary representatives of their constituencies. By virtue of their high profile, they are often locked into positions regarding the conflict’s substantive issues.
  - Track 2 includes middle-range leadership. These are leaders of mid-level NGOs and government organisations, as well as leaders in sectors such as education, business, agriculture and health whose status and influence derive from their relationship with others. They serve as an important connection between the top and grassroots levels and tend to have more freedom to manoeuvre.
  - Track 3 includes grassroots leadership. These include those involved in local communities, members of indigenous NGOs carrying out relief projects, health officials and refugee camp leaders. They represent the masses and those most affected by the impact of the conflict.
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- 9 The UN Development Programme’s guide “Engaging with Insider Mediators - Sustaining peace in an age of turbulence” defines insider mediator(s) as “an individual or group of individuals who derive their legitimacy, credibility and influence from a socio-cultural and/or religious – and, indeed, personal - ‘closeness’ to the parties of the conflict, endowing them with strong bonds of trust that help foster the necessary attitudinal changes amongst key protagonists which, over time, prevent conflict and contribute to sustaining peace”.
- 10 “EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024” (2020): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN:2020:5:FIN>
- 11 “EU’s Policy Framework on support to transitional justice” (2015): [http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\\_stories/pdf/the\\_eus\\_policy\\_framework\\_on\\_support\\_to\\_transitional\\_justice.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/the_eus_policy_framework_on_support_to_transitional_justice.pdf)

- 12 “Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP of 21 March 2011 on the International Criminal Court” (2011):  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32011D0168>
- 13 “EEAS Factsheet - Transitional Justice in the Context of Peace Mediation” (2013):  
[https://ecdpm.org/download\\_file/688/1662](https://ecdpm.org/download_file/688/1662)
- 14 Bloomfield, David, “Justice for the Past, Justice for the Future: Towards Broadening the Transitional Justice Agenda in Peace Processes”, Discussion Paper, mediatEUR (2012): [https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/mediateur\\_bloomfield\\_tj\\_peaceprocesses\\_sep12.pdf](https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/mediateur_bloomfield_tj_peaceprocesses_sep12.pdf).
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