



# PEACE MEDIATION GUIDELINES

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# Acronyms

<b>AU:</b>	African Union
<b>CSO:</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>CSDP:</b>	EU Common Security and Defence Policy
<b>DDR:</b>	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
<b>DPO:</b>	UN Department of Peace Operations
<b>DPPA:</b>	UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
<b>EEAS:</b>	European External Action Service
<b>ERMES:</b>	European Resources for Mediation Support
<b>EUGS:</b>	EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy
<b>FAC:</b>	Foreign Affairs Council
<b>FemWise:</b>	Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation
<b>HoD:</b>	Head of Delegation
<b>IA:</b>	Integrated Approach
<b>ISPD:</b>	Integrated Approach for Security and Peace Directorate
<b>MST:</b>	Mediation Support Team
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>OSCE:</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>WB:</b>	World Bank

# Foreword to the EEAS Peace Mediation Guidelines:

Dear EU Peace Mediation practitioners,

These Peace Mediation Guidelines accompany the new Concept on EU Peace Mediation, [welcomed by the Council on 7 December 2020](#). Together, they set out an ambitious stance for EU Peace Mediation in the years to come.

It is indeed time to step up EU Peace Mediation. We must remain steadfast, patient and determined in supporting conflict prevention and resolution, while adapting to the evolving context and challenges.

The EU's role as a peace mediator is enshrined in our strong commitment to the rules-based multilateral order. Promoting international peace and security is part of the EU's DNA, and the EU is uniquely placed to do so. We are seen as a credible actor, an honest-broker and a "smart power" that can deliver on its commitments in a comprehensive, sustainable and inclusive way.

Mediation is therefore a top priority for the EEAS. With a strong Mediation Concept and the Peace Mediation Guidelines, I am confident that we can match our goals and ambitions with effective action on the ground.

Complementary to the UN Guidance on Effective Mediation, these Guidelines -prepared by the EEAS Mediation Support Team and consulted with key mediation partners -translate in practice the EU's core principles in peace mediation, and accompany EU peace mediators and implementing partners in designing and managing mediation processes.

I hope that you will find them useful for your important work, which reflects the EU's strong commitment for peace in the world.

Helga Schmid,  
Secretary General of the European External Action Service

# Introduction

The present Guidelines on Peace Mediation were developed in 2020 as a parallel process to the elaboration of the new [Concept on EU Peace Mediation](#), which replaces the Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities from 2009. The new Concept revises the policy foundation for EU mediation, outlining the specific features of EU mediation practice, strengths and comparative advantages. It draws on EU mediation experience and lessons learned over the past decade.

These Guidelines aim at **translating the EU mediation policy into practice**. They provide guidance for implementers and partners of EEAS mediation and mediation support, such as EU Special Envoys and 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 regional and non-governmental organisations. The Guidelines refer to EU peace mediation as defined in the new Concept, covering mediation, facilitation, dialogue and mediation support.

The Guidelines are meant as an **EU-specific reference document** that should be consulted as a complementary tool to already existing materials, 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 necessarily represent the EU Member States' views.

The Guidelines are divided into two main sections. The **first section** provides guidance on **nine thematic priorities**<sup>2</sup> relevant to the EU's core values, policies and experience and on their implications for mediation and

mediation support. The section introduces the relevant normative frameworks, instruments and policies and includes examples, lessons learnt and best practices.

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

The Guidelines were produced by the **Mediation Support Team (MST)** of the [EEAS Integrated Approach for Security and Peace Directorate \(ISPD\)](#). Several consultations took place before and during the drafting, including a virtual community of practice meeting in June 2020 that gathered more than 700 experts around the world to discuss EU mediation and mediation support.

## THEMATIC PRIORITIES

# I. Integrated Approach

The 2016 EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy<sup>3</sup> introduced the concept of an ‘Integrated Approach (IA) to conflicts and crises’ as one of the priorities for the EU external action.

The IA calls for a politically and operationally coherent EU response based on shared analysis. It requires the EU to strengthen the way it brings together institutions, expertise and instruments and the way it works with Member States in prevention, crisis response, stabilisation and peacebuilding in order to contribute to sustainable peace.

The Integrated Approach brings about a number of practical implications for the EU as a peace mediator. Notably, it requires that EU mediators pay specific attention to the role EU Member States play in a given context and seek regular engagement with their representatives at the local and HQ levels to enhance synergy and the sharing of responsibilities and tasks.

The IA concerns all policy dimensions of a conflict by bringing together a **multi-dimensional**, **multi-phase**, **multi-lateral** and **multi-level** approach.

- ◆ 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. It is useful, however, to keep in mind that the conflict cycle is often messy and phases may overlap or recur.
- ◆ The ‘*Multilateral level*’ approach means that the EU pursues engagement with all the relevant 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 most relevant actors, in particular the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the African Union (AU), the World Bank, NATO and other regional and sub-regional actors.
- ◆ ‘*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 norms.



## In practice

While implementing the IA in the context of a crisis, an EU mediator needs to carefully monitor **local views and ownership** of the process and integrate these in his/her planning and actions throughout the process. **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. Information sharing will help overcome silos, build quality partnerships and facilitate common analysis and delivery for a greater impact.

An EU mediator should be aware of and **liaise with all relevant EU actors**, including the EEAS ISPD, EEAS geographical directorates, the EU Delegations, the EU Member States, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) actors and the European Commission services in charge of cooperation, humanitarian aid, peace, stability and crisis response. It is important, furthermore, to reach out to key partner organisations, depending on the context and their effective presence on the ground.

The EU engages in mediation where it has **comparative advantage**, where there are entry points for EU mediation and where the EU can make a useful contribution to sustained peace. 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. The EU is also well placed to “connect the tracks”, thereby contributing to a more

cohesive and inclusive process. 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.

### CASE STUDY:

**A Political Framework for Crisis Approach in the Central African Republic** was drafted in 2018 by the EEAS which shaped the strategic approach for the EU in CAR, in particular on how to support the peace process. The document listed the various tools and instruments which can contribute to delivering on the set objectives. All relevant services within the EEAS were consulted as well as FPI and DEVCO. This shared approach then guided these services to plan, design and implement their instruments in a coordinated way, making CAR one of the countries where the Integrated Approach is indeed being applied in practice. A joint **UN-AU-EU peace process analysis** for the Central African Republic with an integrated gender perspective was finalized in 2020. Different actors from the EEAS, the Commission, the EU Delegation, CSDP missions and EUMS were involved in this process facilitated by the Mediation Support Team.



## II. Conflict analysis

Conflict analysis, which requires an integrated gender perspective based on gender analysis and a rights-based approach, 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 offers 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 with seemingly diverging positions;
- ◆ prepare negotiations/dialogue through capturing the conflict parties' narratives;
- ◆ elaborate consultation mechanisms in view of formal negotiations and encourage participation;
- ◆ empower the conflict parties by seeking a common understanding of the core conflict drivers;
- ◆ ensure that mediation efforts are conflict-sensitive to both maximise benefits and minimise harm (see also section III "Conflict sensitivity and 'Do No Harm'").

The EU methodology for a full-fledged conflict analysis is contained in the '*EU Guidance note on the use of conflict analysis guidance in support of EU external action*'.<sup>5</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.

A specific momentum or an invitation to mediate may, however, call for rapid decision making. In this case, a lighter "conflict analysis screening" 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.

Ideally, 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 other 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.

The **Actors, Content, Context, Process Conflict Analysis Framework**<sup>6</sup> is one useful mapping tool to understand conflict for the purpose of peace mediation and is well suited to inform process design. It provides both a comprehensive conflict overview and a flexible structure with which mediation practitioners can address the dynamic, complex nature of conflicts and mediation processes.

**Media analysis** 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 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 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 manner**, preferably via a participatory approach, taking into account the different ways conflicts affect men and women and the ways women and men contribute to conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction. 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 through to implementation of peace agreements or other outcomes.

# III. Conflict sensitivity and ‘Do No Harm’

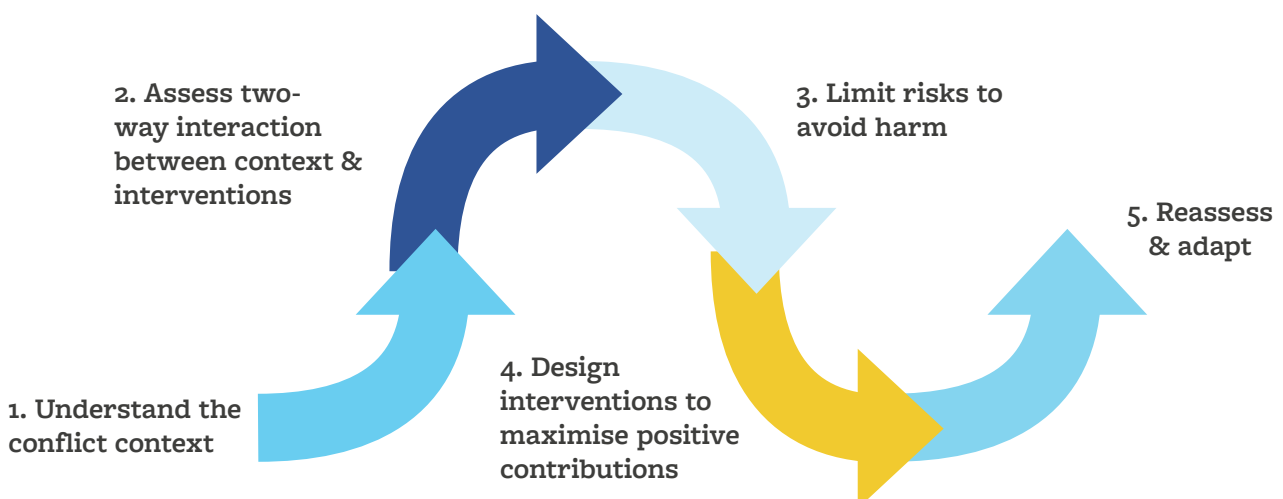


Conflict sensitivity and ‘Do No Harm’ are key elements of process design in mediation. Conflict sensitivity is based on the assumption that **any significant intervention in a fragile or conflict affected context may have an impact on conflict dynamics and on conflict risks**. Conflict sensitivity helps 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, before, during and after its completion. Any intervention can either increase the conflict between the different

parties, deteriorate their relations or reduce tensions and strengthen the relationship between parties. A contextual change can have a positive or a negative 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. A conflict sensitive mediation team is resourced with **mixed skills and backgrounds**. 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 take **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, in side meetings, etc.).

Conflict sensitivity also means anticipating the consequences of the intervention and ensuring these do not affect negatively 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 a change that seems minor at the first glance, 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 — especially from sources whose perspectives are 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, in particular with regard to **increasing or decreasing levels of hostility**. A gradual approach may in some contexts be more conflict-sensitive when building a dialogue. Time, patience and modesty are of the essence.



## IV. Multi-track coordination and inclusion

The complexity of most conflicts requires that the work of a mandated, central mediator is complemented by mediation at the level of the other tracks. **The EU is well suited for multi-track coordination** (see also endnote 4) 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 at the same time working with NGOs on Track 2 diplomacy. It also funds and works with dialogue design, including at the community and grassroots level (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 peace infrastructures and 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. This should include insider mediators<sup>7</sup>, who, through their local connections and credibility, can enhance the reach of EU mediation support in contexts where external mediation is more difficult. The EU can provide financial support and capacity-building to insider mediators and can also work in a coordinating role with insider mediators in contexts where such approaches add most value. EU mediators should support already existing spaces that foster social cohesion and constructive engagement in peace processes.

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 can allow 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 the set mediation objective, 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.

**Capacity building or conflict coaching to empower civil society** 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, 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 children and youth<sup>8</sup>,

considering the long-term impact of the decisions made and the creative peacebuilding roles that young people often take on. Youth often are a demographic majority in countries with ongoing conflict and/or peace negotiations, but are often excluded from political, economic and social decision-making. Girls and young women are particularly disadvantaged in this regard. In such contexts, in the absence of meaningful inclusion of young people, power and influence often shifts ‘outside the room’ due to young people’s activism, on- and off-line. An integrated framework for strengthening youth inclusive peace processes<sup>9</sup> provides a practical channel for recognising and engaging the positive contributions young people make to build and sustain peace.

**Business actors** are another important group to interact with, as they can have a profound impact on local dynamics. The Member States present in the country of concern can be useful 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**. It requires more 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.<sup>10</sup>

### **CASE STUDY:**

The EU is working to help ensure positive momentum for an intra-Afghan peace process that is Afghan-owned and Afghan-led and that enjoys the support of the international community.

In June 2019, the EU Afghanistan Peace Support Mechanism was established to support the EU's multi-track role, including through forming a well-established partnership with a range of Afghan civil society organisations engaged in peace efforts at Track 2 and 3. The EU also funds and supports the Afghanistan Mechanism for Inclusive Peace (AMIP) as an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led mechanism operating at Track 1 and a half. The AMIP is recognised by both the government and a broad range of civil society actors as the main platform for contributing inclusive perspectives to the negotiations.



## V. Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

As a leading priority among its fundamental principles, 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, from the grassroots and community level to the highest political level, as well as in all EU diplomatic practice. 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 recalls clearly the EU's ambition in this respect.<sup>11</sup> The EU approach has been further developed in the 2018 Council Conclusions on WPS<sup>12</sup> and in the accompanying EU Strategic Approach to WPS and its Action Plan.<sup>13</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 or becoming part of Track 1 mediation processes. This is the case despite the importance and the benefits of engaging women in peace processes.<sup>14</sup>

There is strong **evidence of a positive correlation between women's participation in peace negotiations, primarily through civil society, 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 can enhance 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.

It is misleading to perceive women only as victims. Instead, 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 challenge attitudes that exclude women from mediation and peacebuilding roles and 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.



## 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.

In developing an EU mediation strategy, it is important to **identify, from the planning phase onwards, 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 socio-economic 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. Sometimes women do not feel comfortable voicing their opinion in front of men. 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 and 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 role of hierarchy and 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**. In many cases women mediators have responsibilities with regard to their families and communities, which can restrict their participation in peace processes. This can impact on the scheduling of activities, for example to avoid ‘peak hours’ for women’s domestic tasks. The mediator will need to take into account the role of women in all phases of a conflict, including post-agreement implementation and reconstruction transitions.

Women mediation networks<sup>15</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. Women mediation networks 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 can advocate to decision-makers for the inclusion of women during negotiations, in the context of a peace process and in the implementation of an agreement.

## CASE STUDY:

Within the framework of the EU’s support to the WPS Agenda, the EU and Canada launched a joint initiative in support of **Syrian** women on 29 January 2019 in Gaziantep. Two capacity building workshops were held to prepare Syrian women to play an active role in the political sphere, both at local and national level, and in the peace process, including discussions related to a gender-sensitive constitution. Through the project, 35 political and civil society representatives from outside and inside Syria, including members of the negotiation team in the UN-led Geneva peace talks, benefited from the training. The joint initiative built upon previous efforts by the EU in support of Syrian women, in particular the High-Level Dialogue on Advancing Women’s Role in Peace Processes, held in Brussels in December 2018 and bringing together Yemeni and Syrian Women, and EU support to the Gaziantep Women Platform.



## VI. Human rights

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 2 of the Treaty of the European Union.

EU mediators must rely on **international human rights and humanitarian law**, notably the UN core 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>16</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>17</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. According to this framework the EU should support a context-specific combination of measures promoting truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence, i.e. ensuring transitional justice. This builds upon and complements the EU's strong policy in support of the **International Criminal Court**<sup>18</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 should be thoroughly informed of international human rights and humanitarian law, the EU human rights policy and the EU transitional justice framework. **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 should be carried out that takes into account different perspectives, including those of civil society, women's associations, victims' groups as well as marginalised people and people living in remote areas, which may historically have been overlooked and downplayed.

A forgotten victim in today's peace agreement may turn out to be a highly motivated instigator of a new conflict. This is why 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 who can legitimately represent them.

EU Mediators should identify, together with the local, national and international stakeholders, **a human rights-based approach for the mediation process**. This entails a meaningful participation of broad segments of civil society including women, youth and minority and indigenous groups. Local civil society 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 can itself be a positive way to offer them recognition in a process.

Human rights can constitute a frame to describe and understand the grievances behind a conflict. Social and economic rights, minority rights and rights associated

with the environment can provide a more neutral framework and common language for engaging on more contentious issues. These frameworks 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 education** 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 commitments**. Aware of his/her specific role, an EU mediator should seek to **reach out equally to all parties** (paying attention to safety and any restrictions in this respect decided upon by the EU) in order to facilitate and encourage conflict settlement. 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. Adopting an incremental approach on human rights with the parties is sometimes recommended. While making clear that the need for accountability for the past remains, EU mediators can try to 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.

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 amnesty to persons who have participated in a non-international armed conflict amnesty for crimes such 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 provision aims 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.

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 human rights 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 **Colombia** peace process adopted a human rights approach where negotiators used a human rights framework to guide the design and implementation of the agreement. With this approach, the process aimed not just to end 50 years of violent conflict but also to build a positive human rights future that would prevent future violations. There were five major elements to this approach:

- rural development, providing education, livelihoods, and incorporating the sustainable development goals, aiming not just to achieve equality but also security;
- civil society participation to ensure that policies were not designed only in the urban centres but through consultations with a cross-section of the poorest and most vulnerable or victimised people;
- demobilising, disarmament and reintegration, with involvement of the military in crafting these aspects;
- tackling drug trafficking and related violence through socio-economic support for crop substitution;
- a victim-centred approach to transitional justice, providing for prosecution and sanctioning through restriction of civil liberties for several years rather than imprisonment.



## VII. 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**. 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 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.

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 daily 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 re-humanise situations. Moral assets can also facilitate finding common ground in certain inter-faith 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 analysis must be provided by experts that understand how faith-based actors work, what motivates them and how they operate.

As a **secular foreign policy actor**, the EU cannot be perceived as arbitrarily 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 often 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. As such, 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.

An EU mediator needs to be alert to the fact that 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.

An EU mediator should bear in mind that there is often a bias towards focusing on formal religious leaders, who are often not 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 radicalism) and gender limitations (patriarchal religious systems that delineate limited roles for women). EU mediators also need to acknowledge that the potential of working with faith-based actors on peace and reconciliation rests on their long-term engagement at the local level and that conflicts grounded in differing worldviews require a particularly longer-term approach.





# VIII. 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>19</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. Unless managed carefully, security risks posed by climate change can exacerbate conflicts to unprecedented levels.

Besides representing an existential challenge facing humankind, climate change presents an **immediate threat multiplier** to international peace and security. Consequently, mediators find themselves increasingly occupied with conflicts involving natural resource disputes.

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. 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.

## In practice

An EU mediator should 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 which are 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. 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. 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 need to be sensitised to mediation 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. Natural resource related issues 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.

Mediators should acknowledge that a **peace agreement should be ‘climate-proof’** – i.e. having 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.

## CASE STUDY:

The EU conducted a comprehensive analysis of climate and environment related factors in the conflict in **Somalia** in 2020. During its review of the conflict landscape, structural conflict drivers and patterns of resilience, the EU looked at the impact of extreme weather conditions induced by climate change, which are leading to recurring droughts, floods, sandstorms and environmental degradation. The resulting scarcity of usable land and water presents a major conflict multiplier that will become more pronounced in the future. The insights presented by the EU analysis are fundamental when guiding its consequent mediation efforts in the region and will need to be taken into account when identifying key root causes and stakeholders, as well as to bring relevant expertise into dialogue initiatives.





## IX. 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 trauma-awareness and a substantial **ability to empathise and to relate to the experiences of the parties**. Whereas emotions are often relegated to a side-topic in diplomatic and multilateral negotiations, they 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 before and during a mediation process.

To **enhance healing, trust and confidence** of the parties, mediation process design should enable trust building, human contact, dialogue, deep listening and adapting the speed of a peace process to the needs of the participants.

Long-term conflict and violence **destroy trust and human relations** and affect the social fabric governing relationships and enabling recovery. Reconciliation is a mechanism that can enable healing and transformation. Both reconciliation and healing require contextually and culturally sensitive psychosocial support including

community-based mechanisms.

Recognising and addressing grievances is a prerequisite for enabling individuals and communities to engage in creating a peaceful future. 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.

The EU, based on its own experience in post-World War II and post-Cold War reconciliation, is well placed to advance ideas on confidence building measures and trust building. 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 most memorable examples of peace-making 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. EU mediators should integrate psychosocial support and trauma-informed 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**. If not carried out in a sensitive manner, the mediation process itself can provoke fear and anxiety, impairing negotiations.

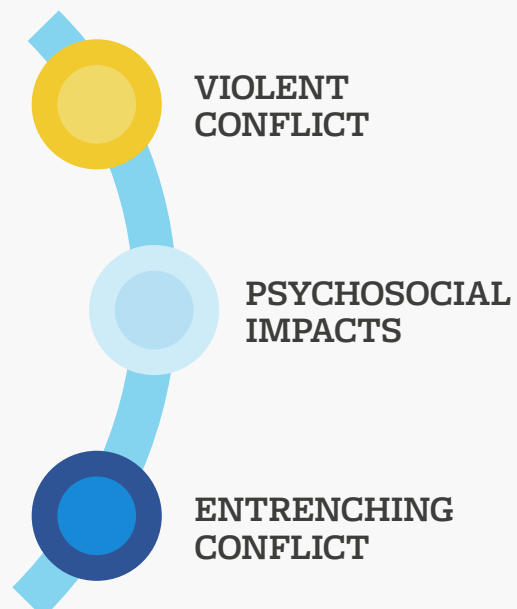
Mediators should pay attention to identity and group belongings, adhere to strict standards in terms of fairness, respect autonomy in decision-making and seek a deep connection with the issues and people at stake, though without engaging in therapeutic relationships. Such an approach **enables a mediator 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 and professional 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, for their mental health, specialised and professional psycho-social support, 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 details such as nameplates (including spelling). 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. However, while Rwanda has achieved significant development gains and stability since 1994, efforts towards long term sustainable peace must be sensitive to the presence of trauma within Rwandan society and seek to redress it. According to the 2018 Rwanda Mental Health Survey<sup>23</sup>, 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. Globally, studies have found that traumatised and anxious individuals find it difficult to stay focused in pursuing sustainable livelihoods strategies and are more likely to withdraw from or engage inappropriately in social interactions,

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 socio-economic 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.



**NEVER AGAIN!**

## Mediation capacities and actors

# I. Professional approaches in peace mediation

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

This chapter aims at providing EU mediators with insight to six key elements of a professional approach to Peace Mediation, namely 1) Training, 2) Mediation support, 3) Team effort, 4) Reflective practice, 5) Communication and 6) 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 and Expertise

The basic parameters of Peace Mediation are spelled out in the UN Guidance for effective mediation.<sup>20</sup> They stress **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 have received more than 200 hours of training and/or hold an academic degree in the field. Peace mediation is an evolving field 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.

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>21</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) Mediation as a 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 diplomatic level to the level of Track 2 (steered by civil society) practice, **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) Self-awareness & Communication

**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, no matter how small or big. 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, which also requires skills.

#### 5) Mediation as Reflective Practice

Mediation often takes place in time-bound, stressful environments, which give limited space for reflection.

To enhance mediation knowledge, it is nevertheless 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**. It can take the form, for example, of a **mediation diary** shared with other professionals. Peer learning and coaching is part of a reflective practice in which practitioners, with the help of a facilitator, can learn from each other. **Recorded debriefings**, when appropriate, are a form of systematised questioning on a mediation process by mediation experts and support future learning. The collection of feedback from parties to a mediation process can also provide valuable insights.

#### 6) Digital Technologies

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.

Digital technologies form an **increasingly important part of the political landscape of conflicts**. Digital activism is 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 current and future mediation efforts. The spread of disinformation and ‘fake news’ threatens to polarise societies and fuel tensions that can lead to conflict. Digital technologies are also used as tools to wage wars. It is thus important that mediators understand the digital ecosystem surrounding the mediation and include it in their analysis and preparatory work.

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 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 smartphones or may not be visible on social media. 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 areas, the internet penetration rate could be very low.

### 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)

## II. 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)**, within the **Directorate for Integrated Approach to Security and Peace (ISPD)**, 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 divisions**, **EU Special Representatives (EUSR)** 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 ISPD, 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 at Managing Director level, ensures the political steer of EEAS mediation activities.

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, both via a specific, informal group created for this purpose and through the appropriate EU Council preparatory bodies, in particular the Political and Security Committee.

As an essential part of the EU's Integrated Approach to external conflict and crises, **CSDP missions and operations** are key contributors to international peace and stability. In this capacity, they can play a supporting role in peace monitoring and mediation, according to their mandates.

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 the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

## CASE STUDY:

The diversity of actors that can mediate on behalf of the EU provides the EU with a competitive advantage. In addition to EU-level capacities, many Member States have considerable experience and willingness to engage in mediation efforts. It is however imperative to be strategic in deciding when to deploy which actor. One of the strengths of the EU role in **Colombia** was the understanding that the EU acted as the entire Union, including Member States. It was therefore possible for the EU Delegation to speak for all 27 Member States and for a population and market of 500 million people, providing for greater leverage. The EU Delegation was successful in coordinating the combined EU and Member State efforts, which led to a much more significant intervention. Spain and Germany also played a leading and complementary role in this context.

The diversity of EU actors has also provided the EU with a comparative advantage in **Yemen**. Two inconclusive rounds of peace talks took place in Switzerland in 2015, providing the backdrop to the next round of peace talks on Yemen in Kuwait from April to July 2016. For the 2016 round, the EU, in close cooperation with the UN Special Envoy, mobilised initially very successful ceasefire arrangements ahead of and during the talks. In this, the EU leveraged the ERMES project to identify and dispatch international military experts at very short notice who were able to set up the Local De-escalation and Ceasefire Committee consisting of representatives from both sides of the conflict in a remote 'Operations Room' in Kuwait. The EU continues to co-chair, with the US, a technical sub-working group on a ceasefire agreement.



# III. Success, monitoring and evaluation in peace mediation

Defining **success in mediation** is challenging, as the measure of success is mitigation or the absence of violence or war and, ultimately, the attainment of sustainable peace. Moreover, mediation is often a non-linear, time-consuming and iterative process, taking place in complex and volatile multi-stakeholder environments, which can further complicate efforts to define and assess the success of a process.

Conceptualising mediation success strictly in terms of outcomes provides only a limited perspective on the impact achieved. **Process and assistance related indicators**, such as more coordinated, cohesive and well-funded mediation engagements, provide one avenue for assessing the impact of mediation and mediation support, but should be complemented by more holistic perspectives of success.

Success for EU mediation engagements can best be captured in relation to the EU's wider role in a peace process. The EU can be considered successful when it builds support for a peace process, enhances process design and strengthens dialogue infrastructures, advises and capacitates mediators, empowers insider mediators and promotes the inclusion of marginalised groups.

Success for EU mediation can also be measured in terms of the attainment of the EU's foreign policy objectives in the conflict resolution domain, including through positive changes generated by EU mediation in a region or a country. The pursuit of a difficult mediation process or a dialogue, supported by the EU or its Member States, can in itself be a success indicator.

**Monitoring and evaluation (assessing impact) aims**

**at enhancing accountability and learning.** When assessing mediation, quantifiable measurements are not sufficient. The focus should be on context-specific assessments and in capturing the process. This is because the complexity of most contemporary conflicts makes it increasingly difficult to establish a link between a specific mediation initiative and the evolution of the situation.

Evaluations of mediation can use participative methods, such as **peer reviews**, which allow internal and, if appropriate, external experts to give feedback to EU mediators and their teams. Specific evaluations can take place on parts of a process. Workshops, meetings and case studies can also be used to capture developments and impacts.

**Mediation does not end with the signature of a peace agreement.** Rather, its focus moves to building peace that delivers a long-term sustainable violence-to-peace transition and shifts attention from mediation to governance. To this effect, it is important to think early about follow-up and implementation, considering the full range of EU external policy instruments. Monitoring and evaluation should be part of a mediator's plan from the very beginning.

Success for EU mediation engagements can best be captured in relation to the EU's wider role in a peace process. The EU can be considered successful when it builds support for a peace process, enhances process design and strengthens dialogue infrastructures, advises and capacitates mediators, empowers insider mediators and promotes the inclusion of marginalised groups.

# 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; Women Peace and Security; Human rights; Religion, Environment and climate change; Psychosocial support.
- 3 "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy": [https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\\_stories/pdf/eugs\\_review\\_web.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf)
- 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.
- 5 European Commission and EEAS, "Guidance Note on the Use of Conflict Analysis in Support of EU External Action": <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-fragility/wiki/guidance-note-use-conflict-analysis-support-eu-external-action>
- 6 "Actors, Content, Context, Process Conflict Analysis Framework - A Video Illustration": <https://mas-mediation.ethz.ch/tools/accp-conflict-analysis-framework.html>
- 7 The UN Development Programme's guide "[Engaging with Insider Mediators - Sustaining peace in an age of turbulence](#)" (2020) 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".
- 8 The Youth, Peace and Security agenda has gained momentum in recent years and marks a shift in the understanding of who young people are and their role for peace and security. It is the first international policy framework that recognises the positive role young people play in preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism and building peace. See: Council of the EU, "Youth in external action - Council conclusions of 5 June, 2020": <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8629-2020-INIT/en/pdf>; UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015): [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2250\(2015\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2250(2015)). Furthermore, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 considers as a priority the meaningful participation of children and youth in decisions that affect them at all levels, including in EU policy-making and implementation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN:2020:5:FIN>
- 9 Ali Altiok and Irena Grizelj, "We are Here" (2019): <https://www.youth4peace.info/node/348>
- 10 United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office - Stabilisation Unit, "Supporting Elite Bargains to Reduce Violent Conflict" (2018): [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/765973/Supporting\\_Elite\\_Bargains\\_to\\_Reduce\\_Violent\\_Conflict\\_-\\_Summary.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765973/Supporting_Elite_Bargains_to_Reduce_Violent_Conflict_-_Summary.pdf)
- 11 "The EU will also foster inclusive governance at all levels through mediation and facilitation. At the same time, we will develop more creative approaches to diplomacy. This also means promoting the role of women in peace efforts – from implementing the UNSC Resolution on Women, Peace and Security to improving the EU's internal gender balance." European Union Global Strategy, (2016), p.31: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs\\_review\\_web\\_0.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf)
- 12 "Council Conclusions on Women, Peace and Security" (2018): <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37412/st15086-en18.pdf>
- 13 "EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2024" (2019): <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11031-2019-INIT/en/pdf>
- 14 Krause, J. Krause, W & Bränfors, P. (2018). Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace, *International Interactions*, 44:6, pp. 985-1016, DOI: 10.1080/03050629.2018.1492386.
- 15 Women Mediation Networks include the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, the Nordic Women Mediators Network, Women on the Frontline and the Women Across the Commonwealth.
- 16 "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>
- 17 "The EU's Policy Framework on support to transitional justice" (2015): [http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\\_stories/pdf/the\\_eu\\_policy\\_framework\\_on\\_support\\_to\\_transitional\\_justice.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/the_eu_policy_framework_on_support_to_transitional_justice.pdf)
- 18 "Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP" (2011): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32011D0168>
- 19 United Nations Department of Political Affairs and United Nations Environment Programme, "Natural Resources and Conflict: A Guide for Mediation Practitioners" (2015): [https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNDPA\\_UNEP\\_NRC\\_Mediation\\_full.pdf](https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNDPA_UNEP_NRC_Mediation_full.pdf)
- 20 "UN Guidance for Effective Mediation" (2012) <https://peacemaker.un.org/guidance-effective-mediation>
- 21 United Nations Mediation Support Unit, "Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers": <https://peacemaker.un.org/mediation-support/stand-by-team>
- 22 United Nations Mediation Support Unit, "Digital Technologies and Mediation Toolkit 1.0": <https://peacemaker.un.org/digitaltoolkit>
- 23 2018 Rwanda Mental Health Survey : [https://cnlg.gov.rw/index.php?id=87&tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Bnews%5D=3139&tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx\\_news](https://cnlg.gov.rw/index.php?id=87&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=3139&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news)



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