

STANDING UNITED FOR PEACE: The EU in Coordinated Third-party Support to Peace Processes

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CONTENTS

Acronyms	6
Executive Summary	7
Introduction	9
Evolving Third-party Coordination in Peace Processes	11
What Role for the EU in Peace Process Support?	14
EU Value Added and Advantages of Joining Coordinated Peace Efforts	14
EU Limitations?	17
Lessons on Coordinated Peace Process Support	20
Recommendations: Strengthening the EU's Role in Peace Process Support through Improved Coordination	23
Table 1: Sample EU Involvement in Third-party Coordination Efforts	25
Annex 1: Functions of Third-party Coordination during Peace Processes	27

ACRONYMS

AMISOM	AU Mission to Somalia
AMM	Aceh Monitoring Mission
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPC	Civilian Protection Component
CR	Conciliation Resources
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEAS	European External Action Service
EPLO	European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
ESS	European Security Strategy
EUFOR Chad/CAR	EU Mission in Chad and the Central African Republic
EUSRs	EU Special Representatives
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
GSP	Generalised System of Preferences
ICG	International Contact Group
ICGL	International Contact Group on Liberia
IFP	Initiative for Peacebuilding
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMT	International Monitoring Team
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MRU	Mano River Union
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OAS	Organisation of American States
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
OIF	International Francophone Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
P5	Permanent 5
SR	Special Representative
UNMIT	UN Integrated Mission
UNSC	UN Security Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EU is a major player in supporting conflict-affected regions to overcome violence and to strengthen democratic institutions. Through several of its institutions and Member States, the EU has developed and strengthened its toolkit in support of conflict prevention and is also beginning to become more active in international mediation support.

The task of promoting peace is increasingly a multilateral endeavour, up to a point where some have suggested that mediation is becoming a crowded field:¹ *some* international support is generally needed, but not *all* support is really helpful or conducive to peace.

In any case, international support has to be coordinated in order to avoid duplication or, worse, competing efforts. This report gives a background to how international third-party support to peace processes has evolved since the end of the Cold War, and draws lessons on third-party coordination of relevance for EU peace process support. In particular, it seeks to contribute to the implementation of the recent EU “Joint Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities”, which stresses the importance of coordination.

This report suggests that the EU is often in a good position to contribute in several ways – in alliance with other international actors – to help societies overcome armed conflict: through political and economic leverage, financial backing, and making use of its toolbox of institutional, normative, political and economic instruments. At the same time, the EU is faced with several core limitations, notably the difficulty of agreeing to common positions and actions, and reacting quickly to developments in the field.

In order to increase its performance and impact, there is a need to draw more systematically from lessons of coordinated efforts in support of peace processes, notably the EU’s own wealth of experience. This report seeks to contribute to this analysis and the subsequent assessment on when, where and how the EU is best placed to provide multilateral support to peace processes.

The recommendations for the EU are to:

- Ensure that third-party coordination efforts are part of wider peace process support strategies, and make these a central element of the European External Action Service (EEAS);
- Choose a role for the EU that complements that of others, and does not duplicate efforts;
- Take a principled approach to participating in coalitions for peace;
- Ensure inclusion *and* effectiveness of coordination efforts;
- Systematically assess different options for EU peace process support, in each case, including where it will be in the lead and where it will follow the lead of others;
- Promote interest-based and transformative approaches to mediation;
- Promote balanced approaches to peace process support to avoid bias;
- Habitually assess the impact of EU-backed peace process support, and regularly adapt policy and practice accordingly;

¹ T. Whitfield (2005). ‘A crowded field: Groups of Friends, the United Nations and the resolution of conflict’, Occasional Paper. New York, US: Center on International Cooperation, New York University.

- Continue to raise awareness about mediation as a process, and sensitise heads of EU delegations, Special Envoys and relevant parts of the EEAS to the need for coordination and complementarity in peace process support; and
- Systematise the accumulated experience in support to peace processes.

Keywords: peace, peace process support, coordination, contact group, mediation, EU

INTRODUCTION

‘To be truly effective, contemporary peace processes require the contribution of multiple actors whose assistance can be tapped at different stages of the process in accordance with their specific strengths.’²

The EU has a strong value-based commitment to supporting human rights, peace, security and development throughout the world, rooted in its own experience as an ‘on-going exercise in making peace and prosperity’.³ While, in the past, the EU’s foreign policy and action has perhaps focused more on trade, humanitarian and development aid, EU support to peace processes in different parts of the world is becoming more prominent in its external action, and is increasingly seen as aligned with securing its own strategic interests.⁴ At the same time, in comparison to the EU’s track record in supporting crisis management and peacekeeping operations, its potential for conflict prevention and peace mediation is still underutilised and can be strengthened further.⁵

International peace mediation is indeed a rapidly expanding field that has evolved from classic diplomacy to more complex, multilevel and multi-stakeholder affairs, up to the point where today few (if any) international mediation efforts are conducted by one actor only. As a result, peacemakers have developed a multitude of collective coordination mechanisms to ensure complementarity between different actors’ support to peace processes, ranging from informal cooperation to more formalised set-ups like Groups of Friends.⁶ Indeed, in many cases, the EU does not necessarily directly lead mediation efforts;⁷ but it has played and does play a significant role in supporting a number of peace processes together with other actors.⁸

This document looks at lessons on coordination among different third parties that support particular peace processes, and their relevance for EU peace process support. In particular, it seeks to contribute to the implementation of the recent EU ‘Joint Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities’, which stresses the importance of coordination.⁹

This report develops analysis and recommendations for EU policymakers and implementers, especially relevant parts of the Council, the Commission and the nascent European External Action Service (EEAS). This analysis and these recommendations build on two years of research, policy and advocacy work carried out by the EU-funded Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP),¹⁰ desk-based research, as well as interviews and consultations with

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- 2 UN Security Council (UNSC) (2009). ‘Report of the Secretary-General on enhancing mediation and its support activities’, S/2009/189. p.24.
 - 3 European Commission Communication on Conflict Prevention (2001). pp.5 and 7. See also Göteborg Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts (2001); European Commission Communication on Conflict Prevention (2001); European Security Strategy (ESS) (2003); and SG/HR Report on the Implementation of the ESS (2008).
 - 4 See, for example, European Council (2008). ‘Report on the implementation of the European Security Strategy – Providing security in a changing world’, S407/08, 11th December. Brussels, Belgium.
 - 5 A. Herrberg (2009). ‘Unleashing the soft power of the European Union: International peace mediation’. Helsinki, Finland: CMI.
 - 6 See the extensive work of Teresa Whitfield on the role of Groups of Friends and other international coordinated initiatives: T. Whitfield (2005). *Op. cit.*; T. Whitfield (2007). *Friends indeed? The United Nations, Groups of Friends, and the resolution of conflict*. Washington DC, US: USIP; T. Whitfield (2010a). ‘Working with Groups of Friends’, *USIP Peacemakers’ Toolkit*, Vol. 6. Washington DC, US: USIP.
 - 7 See S. Gentz (2007). ‘EU influence in conflict: Power to mitigate, or mediate?’ Geneva, Switzerland: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. One exception is Georgia, where the EU plays a leading mediation role.
 - 8 See Table 1.
 - 9 The EU Joint Concept stresses the importance of EU coordination with other actors in the field of peace mediation, but does not develop this point in detail. See Council of the EU (2009). ‘Council/Commission Joint Concept on strengthening EU mediation and dialogue capacities’, 15779/09. Brussels: Council of the EU.
 - 10 For more information on the non-governmental organisation (NGO) consortium’s work on mediation in particular, see <http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/mediation.php>

experts within and outside the EU. As plans for the EEAS were still unfolding at the time of writing, the findings are presented to be relevant regardless of its final shape and functioning.¹¹

The following section gives some background to how international third-party support to peace processes has evolved since the end of the Cold War, and the nature and function of different types of coordination mechanisms. The second part of this report presents the EU's potential strengths, but also limitations, when it comes to providing peace process support, and coordinating this effectively internally as well as with other third parties. The third section indicates lessons on international third-party coordination relevant to the EU. The final section suggests some ways forward to further deepen and strengthen the EU's engagement in this type of collective support to peace processes.

Box 1. Definitions

Academic and policy literature on international peace and conflict is a veritable minefield of terminology. Different authors and institutions often use different terms to describe similar issues and approaches in promoting peace and security; or even the same term to describe different ideas.

In 'An Agenda for Peace' (1992),¹² the then UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali coined the following terms now most widely used in the UN system: peacemaking (describing interventions that support negotiations leading to a peace agreement), peacekeeping (as a security stabilisation mechanism) and peacebuilding (understood as post-agreement efforts to help build and sustain the peace in the aftermath of war).

Peace scholars and practitioners, meanwhile, tend to refer to conflict resolution, conflict transformation or peacebuilding to cover the whole span of a peace process.

A recent Concept by the EU Council (2009) defines mediation as 'a way of assisting negotiations between conflict parties and transforming conflicts with the support of an acceptable third party'. It considers mediation in a broad sense, to be 'a relevant feature of crisis management at all stages of ... conflicts: before they escalate to armed conflict, after the outbreak of violence, and during the implementation of the peace agreement'.

In this report, the authors understand 'peace process support' to include assistance to all three peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, though the discussion particularly focuses on support provided to third-party mediation (peacemaking) efforts during peace talks.

11 As this is evolving rapidly at the time of writing, recommendations with regard to EEAS policy or operations will, of necessity, be cursory, and based primarily on experiences with the work and policies of the previous organisational structures of the Commission and Council that are being combined to form the new EEAS. See Council of the EU (2010). 'Council Decision Establishing the Organisation and Functioning of the European External Action Service', 20th July.

12 B. Boutros-Ghali (1992). 'An agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping', A/47/277-S/24111, 17th June. Available at <http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/agpeace.html>

EVOLVING THIRD-PARTY COORDINATION IN PEACE PROCESSES

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world experienced a boom in negotiations of armed conflict. Peace agreements multiplied and armed conflicts went down from a height of 53 in 1992 to a low of 29 in 2003.¹³ In terms of conflict termination, since the end of the Cold War more conflicts have been ended through a negotiated settlement (a peace or ceasefire agreement) than by military victory of one of the sides.¹⁴ Indeed, currently parties in almost all armed conflicts are engaged in, or have explored, negotiations.¹⁵

While the first years after the Cold War signalled an impressive *quantitative* increase in peace processes and peace agreements, analysts in recent years have also started to become more concerned with improving the *quality* of support provided and resulting agreements. Many peace processes have not lived up to the expectations people had, and too often a “no war, no peace” situation follows an agreement.¹⁶ Structural transformations of root causes of conflict often remain elusive.

During the same time, peacemaking has evolved along three major lines:

- 1 An increase in coordinated diplomatic efforts to address the challenge of peacemaking. In 1990 the UN Secretary-General Special Representative (SR), Alvaro de Soto, encouraged four countries (Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela and Spain) to build a Group of Friends of the Secretary-General for the peace process in El Salvador. The SR thus pioneered the utility of an informal group as a means of harnessing and channelling the energies and contributions of states with an interest in a given peace process (avoiding them going off at cross purposes to each other, and the mediator).¹⁷ Parties to the conflict, the formal mediator and the supporting countries alike discovered the mutual benefits of a coordinated effort. Groups had been previously involved in Central America (like the Contadora Group), but had not engaged directly with a mediator. This initial use of “Groups” would be replicated in subsequent years to support UN efforts in places like Cambodia, Mozambique, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Tajikistan and Western Sahara (although with mixed results). One of the reasons that mediators turned to coordinated peace process support was the need to avoid multiple mediation, where several actors would compete playing mediation roles, and instead create structures that allow interested states or their envoys to play a useful role without trying to duplicate or usurp the role of the mediator.¹⁸
- 2 A horizontal expansion of multilateral actors engaged in peacemaking. The demand for international support rapidly exceeded the UN’s capacity and thus favoured the engagement of other regional organisations. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Organisation of American States (OAS), African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), EU, etc. have become actively engaged in several peace processes, sometimes supporting the UN, but also without direct UN involvement.

13 According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, since 2003 the number of armed conflicts have remained fairly stable, at around 32 to 37. For more details, see L. Harbom and P. Wallensteen (2010). ‘Armed conflicts, 1946–2009’, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 4, pp.501–09.

14 See J. Kreutz (2010). ‘How and when armed conflicts end: Introducing the UCDP Conflict Termination dataset’, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 2, pp.243–50; and A. Mack (2008). *Human security brief 2007*. Vancouver, Canada: Human Security Report Project.

15 V. Fisas (2010). *Yearbook on peace processes*. Barcelona, Spain: Escola de Cultura de Pau.

16 R. Mac Ginty (2008). *No war, no peace. The rejuvenation of stalled peace processes and peace accords*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

17 T. Whitfield (2007). *Op. cit.*

18 *Ibid.*

- 3 A vertical expansion of non-state actors, moving beyond the classic diplomatic circles. As armed conflicts have developed from mainly international to internal conflicts, the number and type of actors involved in any one peace process have also developed. Diplomats acknowledge that a state-centred approach based on political leverage is not always sufficient to secure entry points to a given context and to build trustful relationships with different armed actors and social groups.¹⁹ Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other civil society organisations have developed expertise to play complementary roles to formal diplomacy, sometimes acquiring mediation roles themselves.²⁰

Despite these developments, coordination between these actors has not been even across the board, and when, how and why it evolves is based on quite idiosyncratic reasons in each case.²¹ This evolving landscape today offers a broad diversity of coordination efforts between third-party supporters of peace processes. The names given to these “coalitions” are manifold and actually reveal little about their composition or function:²² they may range from ‘Friends’ of the UN Secretary-General, or a particular peace process/country, to Contact Groups, Troikas, Quartets, Monitoring Teams, Committees and so on. Box 2 provides a background to the nature and functions of different types of “peace coalitions”.

Box 2. Third-party Coordination for Peace Process Support: Nature and Functions

In analysing and comparing different types of coordination mechanisms, it is useful to distinguish them in terms of their different characteristics; and the actual functions they have served in support of peace processes in different instances:²³

- **Composition – types and numbers of members:** Membership of coordination groups or mechanisms can involve purely states; hybrids of states and multilateral agencies; eminent persons in their individual capacities; and, latterly, innovative multiparty groups including both state and non-state actors (see Box 5 below on the Philippines). They have ranged from small groups of a few supporters to larger, sometimes unwieldy coordinating efforts (such as the “International Contact Group on Somalia”, with more than 30 members; see also Table 1).
- **Different mechanisms throughout a peace process:** Peace coalitions can cover the whole peace process or, instead, focus on specific aspects or stages: getting the parties to talk; facilitating or mediating talks; monitoring ceasefires or the implementation of agreements; or supporting an international peacekeeping mission.
- **Time-span:** While international actors may prefer to offer time-bound and short-term support to a particular peace process, reality shows that peace processes can become as protracted as the original conflict itself (as the Middle East suggests). Some group mechanisms were set up on a temporary basis for a specific period of time; others have accompanied protracted peace processes over the long term. More recently, in recognition of the “gap” that has been observed in many peace processes between support to the signing of an agreement and its subsequent implementation,²⁴ the UN system has more permanently institutionalised coordinated support to peacebuilding efforts in different countries, through the UN Peacebuilding Commission.²⁵
- **Formation and convening:** Group support mechanisms are often convened or invited by the lead mediator, but can sometimes be “self-formed” by concerned third parties, with an interest in a particular peace process. They have also been invited by the parties to a conflict themselves (sometimes through formal agreements and written terms of reference).

19 J. Lassila (2006). ‘Multi-track, Track 2 and Track 1,5 diplomacy?’, CMI Background Paper 2/2006. Helsinki, Finland: CMI.

20 N. Mirimanova (January 2009). ‘Mediation and dialogue: Official and unofficial strands’. Brussels, Belgium: Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP).

21 T. Whitfield (2005). Op. cit. p.8.

22 T. Whitfield (2010b). ‘External actors in mediation: Dilemmas and options for mediators’, CHD Mediation Practice Series No. 1. Geneva, Switzerland: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

23 T. Whitfield (2007). Op. cit.

24 S. Stedman, D. Rothchild and E. Cousens (Eds.) (2002). *Ending civil wars. The implementation of peace agreements*. International Peace Academy, Center for International Security and Cooperation. Boulder, CO, US: Lynne Rienner.

25 Established in 2005, one of the Peacebuilding Commission’s goals is to ‘bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on the proposed integrated strategies for post conflict peacebuilding and recovery’. It supports specific countries’ peacebuilding efforts through country-specific configurations; currently, these include Sierra Leone, Burundi and Guinea Bissau.

- **Degrees of formality and informality:** In some instances, mediators have worked with informal networks of individual peace process supporters. In others, more formal mechanisms and mandates have been put in place that have extended to coordination at the international level of capitals and UN headquarters.²⁶
- **Peacemaking and peacebuilding capacities:** States and multilaterals may assign individuals to participate in peace process support “coalitions” because of their diplomatic, political or civil service backgrounds, or they may end up there simply by virtue of their position in the system at a given moment. The degree of specific peacemaking or peacebuilding skills can therefore differ vastly among different supporters, or even be lacking altogether. Some state-based supporters may be more familiar with and lean towards “power-based” approaches to mediation, and may lack more interest-based and transformative skill-sets.²⁷ Some coalitions have made up for this gap in skills by bringing on board specific peace process experts, often from academic or non-governmental backgrounds, either with specific process or thematic expertise.

Coalitions in support of peace processes have played a variety of functions, depending on the needs of the lead mediator, the parties and the wider peace process. Roles are also – and sometimes more so – shaped by the interests of members themselves, as well as capacities and composition of the coalition.²⁸ They can include:

- Managing international support to the peace process;
- Moral support and leverage;
- Resource support;
- Technical support to the mediator;
- Process support to the mediator; and
- Technical support to the parties and wider stakeholders to the peace process.

More details on these functions, including examples, are given in Annex 1.

²⁶ See B. Jones (2001). ‘The challenges of strategic coordination: Containing opposition and sustaining implementation of peace agreements in civil wars’. US: International Peace Academy and Stanford University Center for International Security and Cooperation.

²⁷ D. Lanz, M. Wählisch, L. Kirchhoff and M. Siegfried (2008). ‘Evaluating peace mediation’. Brussels, Belgium: CMI, Centre for Peace Mediation and Swisspeace. p.11.

²⁸ T. Whitfield (2005). Op. cit.

WHAT ROLE FOR THE EU IN PEACE PROCESS SUPPORT?

‘The initial aim for the EU is to optimize the use of existing tools and instruments in the area of mediation by ensuring close cooperation and coordination, internally and with other actors, leading to coherence and complementarity.’²⁹

The EU is increasingly involved in different peace processes at different stages and in different ways, both directly as a multilateral body – through delegations of Special Representatives or Envoys for example, or Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions – and indirectly – through individual Member States. When it comes to participation in the types of “peace coalitions” discussed here, the EU has considerable wealth of experience across some 20 peace processes around the world (see Table 1).

Given existing and previous engagements, future involvement should, therefore, be based on lessons learned from these past efforts. Developing and implementing coherent, EU-wide peace process support, including participation in coordination efforts, will require leadership from the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy through the new EEAS, including Brussels-based policy and regional desks; as well as EC in-country delegations (to become EU embassies under the EEAS); and EU Special Representatives (EUSRs). Policy coherence on peace process support with Member States will need to be mediated through the EU Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by the High Representative; and rotating EU presidencies.

EU VALUE ADDED AND ADVANTAGES OF JOINING COORDINATED PEACE EFFORTS

The recent EU Joint Concept on Mediation spells out the various roles the EU sees for itself in support of peace processes, in addition to lead- or co-mediation:³⁰

- Promoting mediation;
- Leveraging mediation;
- Supporting mediation; and
- Funding mediation.

The EU’s potential value added compared to other third-party peace process supporters is made up of several pieces; to what extent these translate into “real” value added in any particular case will depend on each situation’s idiosyncrasies, including the challenges and opportunities raised in subsequent sections:

Political and economic leverage: While the union of 27 states’ vast trading capacity and development assistance does not necessarily translate into influence over conflict parties or a particular peace process, it does provide an array of carrots and sticks that few other third parties can match. Reforms to the EU’s foreign relations under the Treaty of Lisbon – including the EEAS and the High Representative of Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – have given the EU more “teeth” in this area than it has had in the past. Powerful individual Member States have also “vested” the EU with their own leverage when this has been tactically useful in a peace process, for example

²⁹ Council of the EU (2009). Op. cit. p.11.

³⁰ Ibid. p.6.

through EU presidencies or *Troikas*. With two of its Member States also permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC), the EU has a direct link to the core international actors in international peace and security; and its Member States and financial contributions form an important block in the UN system. This leverage can translate into strong backing when smaller countries such as Norway, Switzerland or Qatar act as lead mediator.³¹ The EU has also been able to use its political leverage to counterbalance powerful bilateral actors and their agendas in some peace processes.³²

Wide field presence: The EU has more than 130 permanent delegations around the world, which provides the organisation with a unique capacity for direct engagement in a number of countries. The EU delegations can monitor and analyse developments on the ground; maintain a permanent dialogue with local actors; and, thus, identify windows of opportunity when EU support can make a difference³³ if delegation officials are sufficiently attuned to and familiar with peace process support and what the EU can offer in this regard.³⁴ This seems to have been the case in Somalia, for example, where EU delegations based in Addis Ababa and Nairobi were seen to make a strong contribution to the overall peace mediation effort, given individuals' knowledge and experience with peace process support.³⁵

Financial backing: Funding peacemaking and peacebuilding, especially coordination among third parties, remains challenging. In response to past criticism that decision-making and disbursement of funding for conflict and crisis prevention has been slow and bureaucratic, new mechanisms such as the Instrument for Stability offer more rapidly disburseable financial support to others' efforts – a distinct advantage in comparison to other multilateral actors, such as the UN or regional organisations, which often need to solicit funds rather than coming with their own. Financial backers of a particular peace process have, in some instances, felt that this support has entitled them to a say in the process, or even the outcome.³⁶ While donors like the EU need to ensure financial accountability, they also need to be clear that financial support does not translate into influence on the outcome at the peace table.

Diverse toolbox and capacity to work across different policy areas and instruments: When it comes to effectively utilising the range of EU instruments at its disposal during peace processes, experiences such as the EU's recent negotiations with Sri Lanka on extension of GSP+³⁷ have shown that outside economic leverage does not automatically translate into peace process leverage. Conversely, development and trade issues are not just "carrots" but can also provide important avenues for peace negotiations.³⁸ Therefore, while coherence between different policy areas is required as a minimum to ensure that other interventions do not harm peace efforts, the policy instruments at the EU's disposal that will be most suitable to positively support a particular peace process will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis.³⁹ The Aceh peace process highlights the considerable amount of legwork behind the scenes, personal networking, political will and buy-in at the highest levels needed to make successful coordination between EU institutions, policy areas and funding mechanisms, and with other third parties, a reality.⁴⁰

31 Interview 1, 3rd September 2010.

32 In Somalia, the EU was able to moderate the strong American influence in the International Contact Group (ICG) during the days when US foreign policy was strongly influenced by the "war on terror" agenda, to promote a more balanced approach to the conflict. Interview 13, 21st September 2010.

33 Interview 6, 16th September 2010.

34 Interview 14, 21st September 2010.

35 Ibid.

36 Interview 12, 17th September 2010.

37 The EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) is a trade mechanism that gives developing countries preferential access to European markets, by reducing tariffs on imported goods from those countries. GSP+ involves extra incentives to promote good governance in certain countries, offering additional tariff reductions for countries that ratify and implement relevant international conventions in this area, such as human rights treaties. Sri Lanka enjoyed GSP+ status until February 2010, when the EU Council of Ministers decided to temporarily withdraw it on the basis of lack of implementation of certain human rights conventions, relating to the government's conduct of the war. Analysts had argued that the GSP+ negotiations and the EU's political dialogue with the government would be a powerful bargaining chip to exert leverage over the government in the course of the war; this turned out to be a wrong assumption.

38 The Sudan Post-Conflict Needs Assessment carried out in parallel to the North-South peace talks, for example, provided an opportunity for the parties to work together on technical issues; built joint ownership of the plan between them; and built their capacity on policy and planning for development. Interview 7, 16th September 2010.

39 Conciliation Resources (CR) (2009). 'Ending war: The need for peace process support strategies', Policy Brief, November. London, UK: CR.

40 A. Herrberg (2008). 'The Brussels "backstage" of the Aceh peace process'. In Aguswandi and J. Large (Eds.). *Reconfiguring politics: The Indonesia-Aceh peace process*. London, UK: CR.

Box 3. Making Good Use of the EU Toolbox in Coordination with Others – Timor Leste

The EU's actions during the 2006 crisis in Timor Leste are a strong example of coordination between different EU instruments and with other third parties: when violence erupted in Dili as a result of disputes among different elements within the military, threatening to spread across the country, the EU appointed Miguel Amado as Special Envoy to carry out a three-week assessment mission to establish the best way forward for EU support. Based on his assessment, the EU dedicated €4 million for a stabilisation programme in support of the national dialogue in the run-up to elections in 2007, and to provide financial backing to the newly established UN Integrated Mission (UNMIT). The EU also funded a high-level dialogue between national Track I actors, which had earlier been initiated by the Club of Madrid, in particular former Prime Minister Valdis Birkavs of Latvia.

Source: S. Gentz (2007). *Op. cit.*

“Unity in diversity”:⁴¹ The diversity among the EU's Member States, including varying degrees of influence in different regions, relationships and interests, means that EU peace process support can benefit from the different strengths and contributions that each can bring on its own, in addition to the collective effort. In Somalia, for example, the UK and Italy were able to leverage their bilateral influence in parallel to EU efforts.⁴² Coordination by one lead mediator or strong third party should not completely stifle, but should draw on these potential diverse functions, contacts and access points.⁴³

At the same time, the EU ‘is in the business of coordination’,⁴⁴ and can put its own sophisticated coordination mechanisms – and track record of coordination with and between Member States – at the service of coordinating peace process support.⁴⁵ In Sudan, for example, liaison with all relevant third parties forms part of the EUSR's mandate^{46, 47} and includes engagement in several coordination fora at different levels, for internal coordination with EU Member States, as well as with other third parties:

- at the international level, informal coordination takes place between the six Special Envoys to Sudan (called the E-6 Group) including those of the five Permanent Members of the UNSC plus the EUSR, including on the sidelines of other international meetings;
- the Contact Group for Sudan is another informal forum bringing together Western states with an interest in the country;
- the Consultative Forum chaired jointly by the AU and the UN is a much wider grouping including *inter alia* some EU Member States, the Permanent 5 (P5), neighbouring countries, Norway, Qatar, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Arab League and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC); and
- finally, internal coordination with Member States is carried out through *inter alia* the relevant working groups and committees in the Council of the EU, such as the Africa Working Group, the Peace and Security Committee and informal bilateral liaison.⁴⁸

Strong normative framework: “Higher order” interests that are not specific to any one peace process, but form part of third parties' value base and wider foreign policy objectives, will be reflected in their support to particular peace processes. For the EU in particular, this means, for example, actively promoting its global commitment to human rights and transitional justice across different contexts, even at the risk of limiting its mediation capacity.⁴⁹

41 Interview 11, 17th September 2010.

42 Interview 14, 21st September 2010.

43 Ibid.

44 Interview 10, 17th September 2010.

45 Indeed, EU Member States and institutions have established internal “core groups” or “contact groups” among themselves to drive forward EU policy and action on several peace processes, including Somalia, Afghanistan and the Congo. See S. Keukeleire (2007). ‘EU core groups: Specialisation and division of labour in European Union foreign policy’, IIEB Working Paper No. 22. Belgium, Brussels: IIEB, University of Leuven.

46 http://webmail-ext.consilium.eu.int/exchange/PEREZFR/Drafts/RE:%20request%20for%20sign-off%20on%20interview%20reference.EML/1_text.htm#_ftn1

47 This also includes the promotion of a ‘consistent international approach towards Sudan’. See ‘Council Decision 2010/450/CFSP of 11 August 2010 appointing the European Union Special Representative for Sudan’.

48 https://portal.consilium.europa.eu/exchange/PEREZFR/Drafts/RE:%20request%20for%20sign-off%20on%20interview%20reference.EML/DanalInfo=.awfdpenrFm63Ko117y20B6U0FX7BI+1_text.htm#_ftn2

49 L. Davis (2010, forthcoming). ‘The EU, transitional justice, and peace mediation’. Brussels, Belgium: IfP.

Especially where third-party support to a particular peace process is dominated by bilateral interests and realpolitik approaches, the EU brings a strong normative framework to bear that includes commitment to human rights, democracy and participatory approaches to peacemaking.⁵⁰ These commitments are upheld and further fleshed out in the EU Joint Concept on Mediation, giving clear policy guidance that requires EU peace process support to include tackling issues of transitional justice in peace talks, agreements and their implementation.⁵¹ Up to a certain point, the EU – unlike its member countries – can argue that there is no other “hidden agenda” behind its commitment to supporting any particular peace process. In the process of defining itself and its roles, it can play the card of a “civic power” defending lofty ideals,⁵² while at the same time individual Member State agendas can affect the extent to which the EU can consistently apply these standards in each case.⁵³

Advantages to the EU and Member States: Participation in coordinated peace process support also brings clear advantages to the EU, as well as its Member States. It may enhance its own influence and status in a particular peace process without the attendant risks were it to go it alone; it models and further reaffirms the collaborative and collective approach to shared problems and external action that is at the heart of the EU project; and it offers opportunities for learning and increasing its own institutional capacity and expertise when it comes to peacemaking and peacebuilding. Member States, in turn, have benefited from EU involvement as a “catalyst” for a common position and effort where this has otherwise proven difficult, and have aligned their support behind an EUSR, for example, where they have not been willing or able to increase their own diplomatic engagement.⁵⁴

EU LIMITATIONS?

Despite the above-mentioned strengths, several circumstances can potentially limit the effectiveness of EU support to peace processes:

State bias: Bilateral or multilateral actors with a commitment to state sovereignty may have difficulties remaining impartial, or avoiding perceptions of partiality, in conflicts that involve demands for autonomy or independence of parts of a country – though this too is dependent to an important degree on the status of the country in question in the eyes of the international community. For example, calls for the breaking away of Croatia from the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s were supported by Germany; and the independence of Kosovo received strong international backing despite Serbian and Russian opposition. At the same time, Spain and France have sided with Morocco in its refusal to allow a referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara, as the UNSC has determined.

Internal coherence: If small is beautiful when it comes to coalitions for peace process support, then the sheer number of EU institutions and potential interlocutors on any one peace process, plus Member States, is a daunting task purely for internal coordination, let alone external coordination with others⁵⁵ (see also Box 4). While the EU is concerned with improving its internal coherence and the speed of decision-making, the challenges are still important.⁵⁶

The difficulty in agreeing and updating common positions limits the EU’s coherent approach to some sensitive and high-profile issues, as diverse as the recognition of Kosovo as an independent state or the reform of the UNSC. EU chairing of the coordination support group for the Somalia Post-Conflict Needs Assessment process was, for example, hampered by disagreements between the EU and different Member States.⁵⁷ On the other hand, once a common position is agreed on, it is very hard to transform and to adjust to changes in priority and

50 See, for example, Title II (‘Provisions on Democratic Principles’) and Title V (‘General Provisions on the Union’s External Action and Specific Provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy’) of the Treaty on European Union (consolidated version, 2010/C 83/01).

51 See L. Davis (2010, forthcoming). Op. cit.

52 Interview 1, 7th September 2010.

53 L. Davis (2010, forthcoming). Op. cit.

54 L. Davis (2009). ‘Small steps, large hurdles: The EU’s role in promoting justice in peacemaking’. Brussels, Belgium: IfP.

55 See, for example, M. Fricova Grono (2010). ‘Georgia’s conflicts: What role for the EU as mediator?’ London, UK: International Alert and IfP. p.17.

56 As an example, it took the EU five months to decide whether to accept the invitation to join the International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao (deploying two civilians).

57 Interview 7, 16th September 2010.

approaches.⁵⁸ In the worst scenario, the EU agrees on a common position, but individual Member States in parallel still pursue a different agenda.⁵⁹

Dealing with divergent interests: Mixed motivations in a diverse group of peace process supporters are inescapable; the challenge for lead mediators, as well as third-party peace process supporters (in the EU's case, for example, EUSRs or bilateral Special Envoys), is to manage the differences and avoid strong divergences. Whenever the Tokyo Co-Chairs in Sri Lanka could not agree on a common public position, for example, they agreed to instead reach out to the parties individually.⁶⁰

More problematic is partiality within a support coalition (either of individual members or the group as a whole) for one side in the conflict over another, or particular solutions to a conflict over others.⁶¹ Positions and perceived biases of its Member States have, in some instances, shaped how the EU's role as a whole has been viewed in some conflicts;⁶² and Member States' own and separate efforts in any one peace process can run at cross purposes.⁶³

Box 4. Limitations to EU Peace Process Support: The Example of Southern Caucasus

Numerous studies have traced the EU's role in the different peace processes in the South Caucasus. Most recently, the crisis in August 2008 between Georgia and Russia has shown up some of the challenges to EU peace process support.

The European response to the August 2008 crisis led some in the Caucasus to view the EU as a biased actor, not an impartial mediator. Previous lack of vigour in holding regional governments to account for democratic and human rights transgressions contributed to this attitude, and threatened the EU's institutional credibility when it comes to upholding its own standards. The EU's need to ally with governments to tackle security threats and safeguard energy needs depending on the region is seen to limit its ability in this regard.

Potential "carrots" the EU has at its disposal have also been shown to have limited appeal in this instance: "Europeanisation" is not a goal to which actors in the region automatically aspire, especially in the partially or non-recognised entities. The formula of "engagement but not recognition" has been an important step forward in the EU's outreach to the populations in these territories, but to be transformative it needs to go beyond technical support to include genuine political dialogue. Finally, there is a need to find ways to better articulate and justify the different approaches and stances taken by the EU and Member States in different peace processes across the world towards cases which local elites perceive as almost identical to the dynamics in the region (like Kosovo).

Based on: Jonathan Cohen, presentation given at the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament, January 2010.

Limits to balanced engagement: Some of the EU's foreign policy decisions can actively work against providing certain types of peace process support. One of the clearest examples is the EU's decision to draft and maintain a list of proscribed ("terrorist") organisations and persons. While the goal was to have a "stick" against certain armed groups to counteract their violent actions, at the same time it limits the EU's capacity of engaging with these armed groups to offer "carrots" (incentives, roadmaps) for changed behaviour.⁶⁴ In fact, the issue of one party to the conflict being on an international terrorist list has been a prominent reason for several recent crises in peace talks.⁶⁵ Indeed, the EU terrorist list has swollen from 13 groups in 2001 to 49 in 2009, now spanning most parts of the world – with

58 A change in the EU's common position in relation to Cuba has long been debated but has not been achieved yet.

59 The pre-eminence of Member States' agendas is especially tempting for former colonial powers in their geographic areas of influence.

60 Interview 2, 7th September 2010.

61 Third parties actively imposing specific solutions to a conflict on the parties are likely to lead to agreements not being honoured afterwards. Interview 12, 17th September 2010.

62 Its role in the conflicts in the South Caucasus – Georgia in particular – are regarded by some observers as guided by a pro-Tbilisi stance dictated by some Member States. See M. Frichova Grono (2010). Op. cit. p.14.

63 S. Gentz (2007). Op. cit.

64 A recent US Supreme Court ruling now makes it illegal to extend any 'material support' to groups identified as foreign terrorist organisations [SD FTO list and Treasury Dept list]. See A. Carl. 'Viewpoint: Ending wars peacefully just got harder', BBC, 29th June 2010. Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10432265>

65 See V. Fisas (2010). Op. cit.

the exception of Africa.⁶⁶ This will play a strong determining role in the kind of peace process support the EU will be able to give in places as diverse as Colombia, Iraq, Palestine and the Philippines.

Limited knowledge and capacity: Knowledge and capacity on conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding is still underdeveloped compared to the EU's capacity in crisis management.⁶⁷ Compared to UN agencies and donor embassies in-country, which frequently have dedicated experts or whole teams to provide peace process support, in many instances, the EU lacks staffing and expertise to know what to support, and when, in order to make a real difference.⁶⁸ Recent innovative coordination mechanisms bring in this required technical capacity by involving non-state experts on peace process support (see Box 5).

Box 5. Case Study: Innovative Approaches to Coordination Mechanisms in the Philippines

The government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have engaged in on-off negotiations to a four-decades-long armed conflict since 1997. During this long period the parties agreed to an increased internationalisation of the talks and, at the same time, a more inclusive design to allow for civil society participation.

In 2002 the GRP asked Malaysia to act as the formal facilitator. In 2005 the parties agreed to invite a non-armed International Monitoring Team (IMT). After the latest pitfall (August 2008–July 2009), the parties agreed to yet two more steps: to add a Civilian Protection Component (CPC) to the IMT, composed of four NGOs (three locals and one international); and to establish an International Contact Group (ICG) composed of four countries⁶⁹ and four international NGOs.⁷⁰

The ICG was created to 'exert leverage and sustain the interest of the parties' and to 'restore mutual trust'. Its mandate is to 'implement mutually agreed approaches' and to 'ensure the implementation of signed agreements'. Their roles include to 'attend and observe negotiations', 'conduct visits and give advice', 'seek out technical assistance' and 'help resolve substantive issues'.

ICG members usually sit in the meeting room, but only participate at the request of the parties or the facilitator. Members of the ICG have somewhat unexpectedly experienced the advantages of a mixed composition, with diplomats playing a much needed leverage role, while NGOs enjoy the freedom of creative thinking and more flexible engagement with actors across the political divides. This hybrid composition is an innovative effort of international support that allows the group to cover roles spanning direct mediation support to comparative learning from other experiences; at the same time, the ICG is also mandated to strengthen local participation and ownership.

After several months of internal deliberations, on May 2010 the EU accepted the invitation to join the IMT to cover the Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Development component. At the invitation of the parties, the EU (and the OIC) could eventually also get involved in the ICG.

Slow disbursement of funds: Despite improvements, EU funding for peace process support still suffers from complicated application procedures, bureaucratic reporting requirements and slow disbursement of funds.⁷¹ Especially when it comes to large donor pledging conferences in the final stages of a peace process, coordination proves difficult: money pledged by the EU has arrived with considerable delays in some instances, meaning bilateral supporters then had to step in to fill large gaps in what had been pledged – this can also detrimentally affect the EU's standing and legitimacy in the eyes of the parties.⁷²

66 Ibid. p.279.

67 Interview 10, 17th September 2010.

68 Interview 6, 16th September 2010.

69 Japan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the UK are part of the ICG.

70 The Asia Foundation, Muhammadiyah, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources.

71 Interview 3, 10th September 2010; Interview 9, 17th September 2010.

72 Interview 12, 17th September 2010.

Bringing new Member States on board: With EU expansion, the EU's commitment to supporting peace efforts in different parts of the world needs revalidating and reaffirming with new members that may have different perspectives and priorities. Several new Member States are sceptical as to why the EU should be supporting costly peace efforts on the African continent, for example, when there are urgent needs closer to home.⁷³

LESSONS ON COORDINATED PEACE PROCESS SUPPORT

Third-party “coalitions” for peace process support in and of themselves cannot guarantee the successful conclusion of a peace process of course; in fact, they may even stand in its way if not managed well. Several factors play a role in their effectiveness:⁷⁴

Clarity, if not unity, of goals: While complete unity of purpose may be hard, if not impossible, to achieve, different third-party supporters need to thrive for at least a functional common thread to ensure cohesion in support of an overall peace process strategy. In some instances, this is provided by leadership from mediators themselves; in others, particular actors have taken a lead, for example as chairs or co-chairs of groups, or by nature of their comparative advantage vis-à-vis other members in a particular process. Alternatively, smaller groups of third-party supporters have worked in a more loosely networked way, and shared coordination responsibilities and tasks more equally (the Mindanao ICG is one example). While coordination mechanisms may be legion, clear joint strategies in support of a peace process are more difficult to generate, for all the reasons discussed above.⁷⁵ At the same time, given the need for improved and collaborative peace process support, coordination mechanisms may provide the ideal forum for developing and promoting them multilaterally.⁷⁶ This has to include harmonisation of different policy areas with potential impacts on a peace process (across foreign, security, inland and economic policies);⁷⁷ and clarity on policy goals among different third-party supporters.⁷⁸

For a multilateral actor like the EU, this means refining and testing its own strategies in support of peace mediation,⁷⁹ but also urging joint peace process support strategies among outside supporters, especially where the EU can exert influence in a coordination process – either because of strategic influence of the EU in a particular region; or where it can play a role in guiding a process, for example, as a co-convenor (as in the case of the ICG for the Mano River Basin) or chair of a group of third-party supporters. Indeed, EUSR's mandates set out clear policy objectives, including coordination and harmonisation of peace process support with other third parties.⁸⁰

Disagreements or conflicts between third-party supporters on how to proceed at particular peace process junctures are nevertheless likely, and perhaps inevitable.⁸¹ Trust and confidence-building, as well as deadlock-breaking, may therefore be as vital between third-party supporters as it is between the conflict parties. The EUSR for the Great Lakes' “meta-mediation” to find common positions among Member State representatives and act as the lead representative for EU states during the Goma peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is an example, and was positively perceived by Member States.⁸²

73 Poland, for example, took a tough stance during budget negotiations for the EU Mission in Chad and the Central African Republic (EUFOR Chad/CAR). Interview 12, 17th September 2010.

74 These are drawn from a review of the available literature on this topic, as well as interviews with mediation experts.

75 In a communiqué of 23rd April 2010, the ICG on Somalia appealed its members to ‘coordinate all their efforts to avoid gaps, overlaps and duplication and to create synergies. The ICG agrees there should be a wider process of information sharing and harmonization of strategies to maximize the support to the Transitional Federal Authority’.

76 CR (2009). Op. cit.

77 Ibid.

78 B. Jones (2001). Op. cit. p.6. In the case of the EU, EUSR mandates, for example, are based on EU policy objectives for a particular region.

79 As has been initiated with the EU Joint Concept on Mediation.

80 See, for example, ‘Council Decision 2010/446/CFSP of 11 August 2010 extending the mandate of the European Union Special Representative in Kosovo’.

81 See, for example, disagreements on tactics within the ICG for Bosnia Herzegovina, discussed in C. Schwegmann (2000). ‘The contact group and its impact on European institutional structure’, Occasional Paper no. 16. Paris, France: Institute for Security Studies. p.5f.

82 L. Davis (2009). Op. cit.; and personal communication, 2nd October 2010.

Coordination for a purpose: The harmful effects of lack of coordination in the international community's support to countries in, or emerging from, conflict is well documented.⁸³ They have resulted in coordination these days being one of the key policy recommendations in almost all areas of international community support.⁸⁴ This has led to sometimes dogmatic calls for coordination without clarity of who coordinates, who is being coordinated, and for what purpose.⁸⁵ When it comes to peace process support in particular, individual, confidential and parallel efforts can, in fact, be as important as collective ones, if not more so.⁸⁶ Coordination – for example, through lead mediators or influential third parties – should therefore not stifle or try to impose full control over the diversity of types of support that may benefit a peace process, including differences in approach, and potential strengths and capacities of different third parties to act in different ways.⁸⁷

Striving for complementary roles: Third-party coalitions for peace process support are rarely built on a systematic initial appraisal of what each supporter can bring to the mix.⁸⁸ While diversity in third-party support may, in fact, be to the advantage of conflict parties and the peace process,⁸⁹ unclear or overlapping roles can create confusion among third parties themselves, let alone conflict actors. In Sri Lanka, the fact that Norway was simultaneously mediator, member of the Co-Chairs group and head of the Monitoring Mission created confusion and, eventually, made Norway's work more difficult.⁹⁰ There may be myriad reasons why roles and a "division of labour" are not clearly agreed among third parties (a degree of ambiguity may, in fact, be in some supporters' interest⁹¹). Avoiding problems such as "mandate overload" of some,⁹² or undermining lead mediators,⁹³ will, however, require working towards complementarity between third-party supporters, including a willingness and upfront effort to create at least *sufficient* clarity on roles.⁹⁴

Acknowledging limitations of third-party peace process support: The lessons above suggest that third-party involvement cannot be assumed automatically to have beneficial effects in every instance.⁹⁵ Depending on the conflict dynamics, it will be more or less effective at different times.⁹⁶ Third-party involvement that is not informed by an understanding of the dynamics involved in peace talks and mediation can, in itself, generate problems in the process.⁹⁷

Similarly, international support is not always welcome. While there is hardly any peace process without some kind of international support, parties to the conflict are often reluctant to accept international engagement, especially when they are afraid that third parties may have some "hidden agenda". The degree of leverage that outside third parties can bring to bear and the role they can play will be determined to a significant degree by conflict parties' own specific interests in engaging outsiders in a peace process in the first place.⁹⁸ For example, in asymmetric armed conflicts, non-state armed groups tend to welcome international support more than states: while the former hope to increase their status, the latter may be protective of their sovereignty and want to avoid outsiders dictating the agenda. Common ground is sometimes found by inviting international mediators in their personal capacity, instead of representing a third country or international organisation.⁹⁹

83 B. Jones (2001). Op. cit.

84 See, for example, the OECD Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations (2007). Paris, France.

85 Interview 3, 10th September 2010.

86 Interview 8, 16th September 2010.

87 Interview 9, 17th September 2010.

88 Interview 3, 10th September 2010.

89 If peace process support can be regarded as a "marketplace" and conflict parties as "customers", then competition in the absence of egregious "market failures" should eventually result in better "services" (Interview 3, 10th September 2010).

90 Interview 2, 7th September 2010.

91 Clarifying division of labour between who leads and who follows may touch on political, diplomatic and even historical sensitivities. Interview 3, 10th September 2010.

92 H. J. Giessman and O. Wils (2009). 'Conflict parties interest in mediation', Berghof Policy Brief No.1. Berlin, Germany: Berghof Conflict Research and Berghof Peace Support. p.11; G. Bächler (2008). "Emerging archetypes": A comparison of patterns of the peace processes in Sri Lanka and Nepal'. Berlin, Germany: Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management. p.11.

93 C. A. Crocker, F. Osler Hampson and P. Aall (Eds.) (1999). *Herding cats: Multiparty mediation in a complex world*. Washington DC, US: USIP.

94 Interview 3, 10th September 2010.

95 Interview 4, 10th September 2010.

96 Once the ceasefire between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) broke down in 2006, for example, the role of the Co-Chairs became less and less effective. Interview 4, 10th September 2010.

97 For example, third-party supporters sitting in on talks as "observers" can create problems if parties are made to feel they are acting out their conflict to an audience, and end up "playing to the gallery" in a way that locks them into their respective positions. Interview 12, 10th September 2010.

98 H. J. Giessman and O. Wils (2009). Op. cit.

99 This was the case when former Finnish Prime Minister Matti Athisaari was invited to mediate the talks between the government of Indonesia and the Acehese rebels.

Applying lessons on good peace practice to third-party peace process support: Peace mediation and peace process support are ongoing learning processes. The international community has only a few decades of experience of systematic efforts to support peace processes. There is a need to continue to learn from past exercises, as well as to strengthen the conceptual frameworks that sustain peace support. There is no magic key to a successful peace process: conflict dynamics evolve, as do responses. Yet there are certain “cornerstone lessons” on good peace practice on which third parties need to build their support strategies: firstly, would-be peace process supporters need to resist transferring peace process templates from one context to another. This applies not only to peace talks themselves, but also to the social, political and economic reforms that peace agreements often herald, frequently encouraged, if not promoted, by third-party supporters.¹⁰⁰ These often come with their own set of destabilising dynamics that third-party supporters have failed to anticipate in the past.¹⁰¹

Secondly, third-party peace process support needs to enable, not hinder, local ownership. Over recent years the concept of “local ownership” has become a mantra, but moving from words to deeds is proving more challenging.¹⁰² Peace coalitions risk undermining local ownership either by becoming too assertive in their role, or by replacing some roles local actors could develop perfectly without external input. Third parties have to identify and acknowledge local capacities, and make an effort to work with them, and not in competition.

Thirdly, third-party supporters need to challenge, not reinforce, women’s underrepresentation in peace processes. Ten years after UNSC Resolution 1325 calling for specific steps to increase women’s participation in all stages of a peace process, progress has been limited. Armed actors’ negotiating panels are often reluctant to include women at a decision-making level. Most often, the international community reinforces these male-dominated approaches by having mainly male representation in peace process support coalitions.¹⁰³ A lot more can also be done to support women’s participation beyond the negotiating table.¹⁰⁴

Finally, third parties need to muster institutional capacities, resources and political will to provide flexible, yet sustained, engagement and support: peace processes can be unpredictable, even chaotic, and drawn out; they therefore need accompaniment by actors that have the capacity to adjust to its changing nature, and remain throughout a sustained period of time. Historic and institutional memory become an essential asset and need to be valued, nurtured and carefully handed over when individuals are replaced along the process.

100 R. Paris (2004). *At war's end. Building peace after civil conflict*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

101 E. Newman, R. Paris and O. Richmond (2009). *New perspectives on liberal peacebuilding*. New York, US: UN University Press.

102 C. de Coning (2010). ‘Clarity, coherence, and context. Three priorities for sustainable peacebuilding’, Working Paper no. 3, the Future of the Peacebuilding Architecture Project. Norway: Centre for International Policy Studies, Norwegian Institute for International Affairs.

103 On 11th August 2010 the British diplomat Dame Rosalind Marsden was appointed as the new EUSR for Sudan. Dame Rosalind is the EU’s first ever female EUSR.

104 See ‘10 Points on 10 Years UNSCR 1325’, by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) (August 2010). Available at http://www.eplo.org/documents/10_points_on_10_years_1325.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS: STRENGTHENING THE EU'S ROLE IN PEACE PROCESS SUPPORT THROUGH IMPROVED COORDINATION

Recommendations to strengthen coordinated peace process support are numerous, and inevitably overlap to some extent with broader recommendations on strategic engagement, wider coordination and peace mediation.¹⁰⁵ Success in this area is to an important extent related to maintaining the momentum and attention to peace process support throughout the ongoing EU institutional reforms, including wider EU cooperation with other regional and international actors in peace mediation.¹⁰⁶

Key issues of direct relevance to the EU are highlighted below:

- 1 **Ensure that third-party coordination efforts are part of wider peace process support strategies, and make these a central element of the EEAS:** Conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding need to be granted an adequate status in the new EEAS to ensure it can deliver on existing policy commitments in these areas and strengthen the EU's role in international peace mediation. These functions need to have a clear institutional home in the EEAS and come under the leadership of a senior official. Its work needs to be directed by clear guidance on peace process support – including where the EU will take a lead or follow someone else's lead in coordination with others.
- 2 **Choose a role for the EU that complements that of others, and does not duplicate efforts:** In many instances, it is not the EU that takes a lead on a mediation effort. In deciding on what type of mediation to mobilise or support, the EU should consider who is the best person/organisation to do the job: in some instances, this may be a regional organisation; in others, the UN may be better placed, or specific bilateral states, or non-state actors. The EU should then use its own convening power and provide leadership where possible to encourage collaborative, complementary and purposive relationships between third-party peace process supporters.
- 3 **Take a principled approach to participating in coalitions for peace:** The EU has a strong legal, moral and policy commitment to upholding international human rights and humanitarian law standards, including in its own conflict-prevention and peacemaking efforts. In order to put this into practice in its peace process support, the EU should follow existing good practice and emerging standards in this regard. For example, the UN has strong normative guidelines for its mediators, including not to witness agreements which offer blanket amnesty for the most serious crimes. Taking a principled approach should include advocating this with other third parties involved in peace process support where there are conflicting agendas.
- 4 **Promote interest-based and transformative approaches to mediation:** Much international peace mediation by official third parties, especially powerful states, follows classical “deal-brokering” recipes that often leave root causes and damaged relationships at the heart of most conflicts unaddressed. The EU as a collective has access to networks, expertise and better practice in this regard. It should leverage these to promote and advocate interest-based, as well as more transformative, long-term peace mediation.

¹⁰⁵ See also other publications in this series that cover numerous aspects of the EU's role in peace mediation in different parts of the world. Available at <http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/mediation.php>

¹⁰⁶ Strengthening relationships between the UN and regional organisations is stressed in UN (2004). ‘A more secure world: Our shared responsibility’. Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change; Report of the Secretary-General in follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit; and UNSC (2009). Op. cit.

- 5 Promote balanced approaches to peace process support to avoid bias:** Particular interests and differing degrees of partiality in coalitions for peace may be an unavoidable reality. Yet impartiality is a principle to strive for, because it makes for better peacemaking, and will minimise perceptions of bias and therefore rejection of third parties by conflict actors. The EU should strive to minimise bias in its own support and promote the same among other third parties it works with.
- 6 Ensure inclusion and effectiveness of coordination efforts:** As an actor with access to multiple “tracks” (through networks, and funding relations with civil society partners for example), the EU is well placed to ensure that peace process coordination mechanisms do not remain the exclusive remit of states and powerful multilateral players. It should ensure, for example, that high-profile international support to a particular peace initiative does not crowd out local efforts and actors. At the same time, it can help improve effectiveness by promoting diverse and systematic coordination methods (such as multiple forums and mechanisms to involve different stakeholders), and where appropriate by providing strong leadership in coordination mechanisms, for example by convening or chairing initiatives.
- 7 Systematically assess different options for EU peace process support in each case, including where it will be in the lead, and where it will follow the lead of others:** Ad hoc involvement in third-party coordination efforts will stand in the way of consistent engagement by the EU across different countries. Instead, the EU should systematically consider options for different modes of engagement in different cases (e.g. the appointment of EUSRs, or work through delegations on the ground or through bilateral Member State engagement), including consideration of both positive and negative impacts of particular types of third-party support and engagements; complementarity of roles and responsibilities; and “red flags” where EU support may not be the best way forward at all.
- 8 Habitually assess impact of EU-backed peace process support, and regularly adapt policy and practice accordingly:** Whether the EU or its Member States mediate directly, finance others’ mediation efforts or participate in wider peace process support coalitions as discussed here, assessing impact, identifying and learning lessons has to become a habitual exercise for the EU if it is to strengthen its own mediation support capacity. Elsewhere, the IfP has suggested a framework to build on for evaluating peace mediation, which could be expanded to also cover indirect peace process support.¹⁰⁷
- 9 Continue to raise awareness about mediation as a process, and sensitise heads of EU delegations, Special Representatives (SRs) and their teams, and relevant parts of the EEAS to the need for coordination and complementarity in peace process support:** The EU’s increasing efforts to improve its own mediation capacity – for example, through training and technical support – are welcome. This is needed to ensure that those involved in supporting a mediation effort understand the requirements of the process, and can engage adequately. Such capacity-building should also include a focus on multiparty support to peace processes, coordination and coalition-building in peacemaking, including sharing lessons from the EU’s own experience in this area.
- 10 Systematise the accumulated experience in support to peace processes:** The EU now has a significant body of practical experience drawn from its engagement in a dozen or so specific geographic contexts (see Table 1). There has nevertheless been limited reflection and analysis of lessons learned from these experiences, and specific case study research is likely to produce further lessons.

¹⁰⁷ See D. Lanz, M. Wählisch, L. Kirchhoff and M. Siegfried (2008). ‘Evaluating peace mediation’. Brussels, Belgium: CMI, Centre for Peace Mediation and Swisspeace.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE EU INVOLVEMENT IN THIRD-PARTY COORDINATION EFFORTS

EU Member States have an impressive track record of engagement in third-party coordination mechanisms for peace process support. The EU has also gathered significant experience. The following table offers a sample of some cases where the EU has been or is actively playing some kind of role in coordinated efforts of support to peace processes.

Conflict	Coordination mechanisms	Comments
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Contact Group (1994–): France, Germany, Russia, UK, US	The EU has had an SR since 2007 to implement the General Framework Agreement for Peace.
Caucasus (South)	Group of Friends of the UN Secretary-General for the Georgia–Abkhazia conflict: UK, France, Germany, US, Russia; Minsk Group Co-Chairs: US, Russia, France	Although the EU is not formally part of these two mechanisms, in Georgia the EU politically facilitates the talks process now, mainly through an SR deployed since 2003.
Cyprus		Mediation is in the hands of the SR of the UN Secretary-General. The EU plays a complementary role and uses the “stick” of integration to push Turkey to a solution.
Great Lakes Region	Multiple coordination processes	The EU has an SR supporting the post-transition phase in the DRC and the consolidation of the democratic process in Burundi, as well as ensuring constructive cooperation with Uganda and Rwanda in regional matters.
Guinea	ICG on Guinea (2009–): AU & ECOWAS (Co-Chairs); UN, EU, Mano River Union (MRU), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), OIC, International Francophone Organisation (OIF), World Bank, members of the UNSC	The ICG is monitoring the transition to democracy after the military coup in 2008.
Indonesia (Aceh)	Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM): EU and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)	Close support to Athisaari’s role during negotiations (2005). The AMM was a rare case of a quick deployment and equally quick withdrawal after an intense and rather successful mission.
Kosovo	Kosovo Troika: EU, US, Russia (2007–)	Set up to broker an agreement on Kosovo’s status. The EU has had an SR since 2008 who also acts as the International Civilian Representative.

Liberia	ICG II: France, Morocco, Nigeria, UK, US, AU, ECOWAS, EU, UN Implementation Monitoring Committee: ECOWAS, UN, AU, EU, International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL)	Peacemaking and peacekeeping since 2002, with EU and UN as Co-Chairs. Chaired by ECOWAS, to implement the Accra Agreement (June 2003).
FYR Macedonia	EU and US	Former Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Solana played a major role in the path to the Ohrid Agreement (2001). The EU has an SR to consolidate the implementation of the Agreement.
Mano River Basin	Contact Group on Mano River Basin	The EU was co-facilitator with ECOWAS, leading up to ouster of Charles Taylor. There was a good balance of capacities between both organisations, facilitated by personal abilities of respective envoys/representatives.
Middle East	Quartet: EU, Russia, UN, US	The EU has had an SR since 1996 to promote EU's policy objectives for the peace process.
Moldova	Close coordination with Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)	The EU has had an SR since 2005 who contributes to the peaceful settlement of the Transnistria conflict.
Pakistan	Friends of Pakistan: a long list of countries, including the EU	Established in 2008 to support the government of Pakistan in consolidating democracy.
Philippines (Mindanao)	International Monitoring Team: Malaysia, Libya, Brunei, Japan, Norway, EU (and four NGOs: three local and one international)	The EU accepted invitation to join the International Monitoring Team in May 2010, and will deploy experts on human rights and humanitarian assistance. The EU (and OIC) may still join the ICG that supports peacemaking.
Somalia	ICG: some 30 countries, as well as AU, EU, Islamic Development Bank, IGAD, League of Arab States, OIC, UN, World Bank	ICG established in June 2006 to support "peace and reconciliation" in Somalia. Since September 2009 it has been chaired by the UN SR for Somalia. The EU supports police reorganisation and security forces training, and is a major financial contributor to AU Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).
Sri Lanka	Tokyo Conference Co-Chairs: Norway, US, Japan, EU	Became rather irrelevant after the government of Sri Lanka moved away from the peace process and sought support from other countries. Nordic countries had to withdraw from the SL Monitoring Mission when the EU decided to include the LTTE in their list of proscribed groups.
Sudan (North/South, Darfur)	Contact Group for Sudan and other informal coordination mechanisms like the P5 and the EUSR	The EU has had an SR since 2007 working to implement the North/South Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and facilitating a political solution to the conflict in Darfur.

Sources: T. Whitfield (2005). *Op. cit.*; and V. Fisas (2010). *Op. cit.*, among others.

ANNEX 1: FUNCTIONS OF THIRD-PARTY COORDINATION DURING PEACE PROCESSES

Building on Box 2, this annex provides more detail and example of functions played by third-party coordination mechanisms during peace processes:

Managing international support to the peace process: Un-orchestrated international support to peace processes can do as much harm as good; in several instances, therefore, group mechanisms were created to provide one forum for discussion of joint approaches to one peace process.¹⁰⁸ Mediators have used coordination mechanisms to orchestrate third-party support to the extent possible, and to ensure the right support was given at the right time.¹⁰⁹ In other cases, groups were created to harmonise approaches and create a “common bottom threshold” of what the international community will deem acceptable or not in a peace process;¹¹⁰ or to balance the strong and partial influence of powerful bilateral third parties with a grouping of more “likeminded” members.¹¹¹

Moral support and leverage: Groups of states and multilateral supporters have thrown their collective weight behind a particular mediation effort to give it legitimacy and the requisite international standing, especially where there have been several competing mediation efforts going on in parallel.¹¹² Equally, where commitment to a peace process from the conflict parties or their constituencies has been weak, third-party groups have worked to put differing degrees of pressure on them to keep a process on track. Outside moral support and leverage through coalitions of third parties has also helped conflict parties and mediators navigate through difficult times during a peace process; and to “go the final mile” in the run-up to signing an agreement. For example, group mechanisms have provided confidence-building support, as well as security guarantees to conflict parties.¹¹³

Resource support: Most practically, third-party supporters have coordinated to marshal logistics support to talks, providing financial resources (to fund specific peacemaking efforts, provide discreet funding for specific needs during a peace process or commit funding to peace agreement implementation) and extending military support, for example through peacekeeping operations.

Technical support to the mediator: Third-party coalitions have provided substance support to mediators, for example, through access to information; international networks; technical expertise on mediation or specific thematic areas during peace talks; or regional and conflict expertise.¹¹⁴

Process support to the mediator: Third-party coalitions have also intervened on behalf of the mediator, when requested, to provide process support at particular points in time, for example, through hosting particular meetings, having bilateral discussions with the parties, delivering specific messages and so on.¹¹⁵ This has worked well where mediators have kept third-party supporters briefed on progress on an ongoing basis, and then called

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, the detailed account of negotiations and coordination between members of the ICG for Bosnia and Herzegovina during negotiations for the eventual Dayton Agreement in C. Schwegmann (2000). *Op. cit.*

¹⁰⁹ Interview 12, 17th September 2010.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Interview 4, 10th September 2010.

¹¹² See, for example, A. de Soto (1999). ‘Ending violent conflict in El Salvador’. In C. A. Crocker, F. Osler Hampson and P. Aall (Eds.). *Op. cit.*

¹¹³ In Colombia, in 2005 the governments of France, Switzerland and Spain, making up the ‘Exploratory Technical Committee’, even tabled a security plan that was designed to allow representatives from both the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to meet in a 180 km² area near the town of Pradera (Valle). (V. Fisas (2010). *Op. cit.* p.95.)

¹¹⁴ T. Whitfield (2005). *Op. cit.* p.16.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

upon them to help tackle specific stumbling blocks in talks.¹¹⁶ Of course, third-party supporters also intervene in the process in this way without blessing or request from the mediator or previous coordination with others;¹¹⁷ this risks undermining the whole purpose of coordinated efforts, and is potentially to the detriment of a process.

Technical support to the parties and stakeholders: Third-party supporters have also coordinated to provide direct support to the parties themselves to enable them to meaningfully participate in a peace process. This too can involve logistics support, but also capacity-building and coaching on negotiations or on specific thematic issues on the agenda of the talks, hosting side-events like problem-solving workshops with the parties and so on.

¹¹⁶ Interview 12, 17th September 2010.

¹¹⁷ Interview 4, 10th September 2010.

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