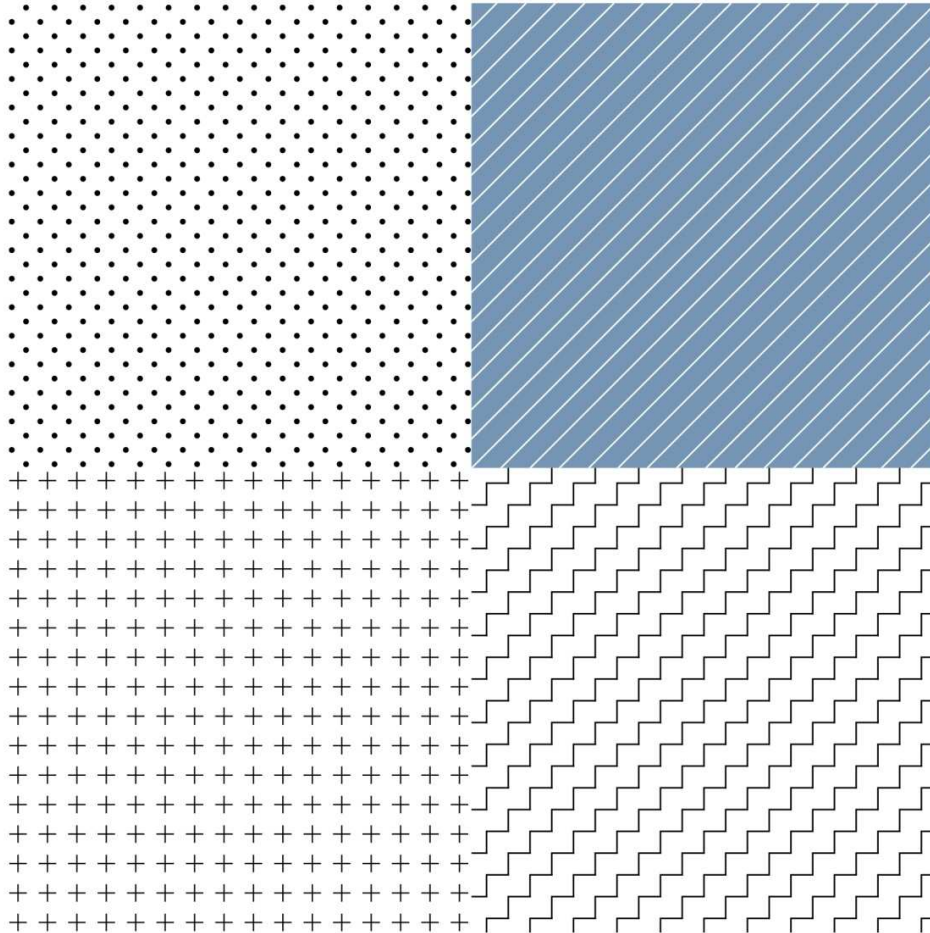


W O S C A P

ENHANCING EU PEACEBUILDING CAPABILITIES



## The Role of the EU and Other Third Parties in Promoting the Gender, Peace and Security Agenda in Mediation and Dialogue Processes

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## Colophon

# THE ROLE OF THE EU AND OTHER THIRD PARTIES IN PROMOTING THE GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN MEDIATION AND DIALOGUE PROCESSES

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Deliverable 4.9: Best Practices Report: Gender

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## Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

This report was produced as part of the project “Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding”. It analyses lessons learned and good practices in introducing a gender perspective to peace processes in order to strengthen the EU’s capabilities in multi-track diplomacy. The document reflects on various practical experiences by the EU and other third parties in the area of gender and multi-track diplomacy in two specific spheres: the gender dimension in EU’s role as a mediator/facilitator, and EU’s actions via other types of engagement (promoting, supporting, leveraging and funding). The report contributes to identifying ideas and challenges for EU peacebuilding, which will require further analysis and problem-solving beyond the life of this project. Based on the research and engagement with key stakeholders, it is part of a series of reports that investigate cases of best practices and lessons learned related to several cross-cutting themes that the project focuses on.



ENHANCING EU PEACEBUILDING CAPABILITIES



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## Executive summary

EU policy on gender and multi-track diplomacy is part of the global development of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda after the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in 2000. Multi-track diplomacy is one of the core items on the WPS agenda, which establishes in different Security Council resolutions women's significant and equal participation in peace processes, an increase in the number of female mediators and the introduction of a gender perspective to all multi-track diplomacy efforts as priorities. This report analyses lessons learned and good practices in introducing a gender perspective to peace processes in order to strengthen the EU's capabilities in this area. The document reflects on various practical experiences by the EU and other third parties in the area of gender and multi-track diplomacy in two specific spheres. Firstly, the gender dimension in EU's role as a mediator/facilitator. This report analyses issues like challenges and dilemmas of mediation from a gender perspective; complementarity and coordination in multi-track diplomacy from a gender perspective and the availability of gender-responsive mediators. Secondly, the report focuses on EU's actions via other types of engagement (promoting, supporting, leveraging and funding), like political support for women's involvement in peace processes, financial and technical support to empower women and strengthen local women's organisations and financial support for capabilities in the area of gender and third-party mediation.

# 1. Introduction

This report analyses the EU's capabilities in terms of integrating the gender dimension into its multi-track diplomacy efforts.<sup>1</sup> Despite the persistent exclusion of women and gender in peace processes (Coomaraswamy, 2015; Castillo and Tordjman, 2012; De Alwis, Mertus and Sajjad, 2013), recent research shows the importance of including gender given its positive effects on the chances of reaching peace agreements and their sustainability (O'Reilly, Ó Súilleabháin, Paffenholz, 2015). Some progress in practical experience has been made in this regard (Coomaraswamy, 2015; UNSG, 2015). Thus, this report aims to reflect on lessons learned and good practices to strengthen the EU's capabilities in introducing a gender perspective to peace processes. Multi-track diplomacy is an entry point with enormous potential for the EU to engage with gender in wider peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts, as it can have a positive impact in other areas such as SSR and governance reforms as a result of its specific inclusion in peace negotiations and agreements. It is important to acknowledge that gender in multitrack diplomacy should be considered from a broader perspective within the frame of a Whole of Society approach (Martin et al., 2016) in which gender is an essential component that allows us to analyse and enhance the effectiveness of EU peacebuilding capabilities *in toto*.

EU policy on gender and multi-track diplomacy is part of the global development of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda after the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in 2000. Multi-track diplomacy is one of the core items on the WPS agenda, which establishes women's significant and equal participation in peace processes, an increase in the number of female mediators and the introduction of a gender perspective to all multi-track diplomacy efforts as priorities in different Security Council resolutions.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the EU, the gender dimension in the area of multi-track diplomacy is essentially contained in two policy documents: the *Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the UNSC Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security* (2008) and the *Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities* (2009). The *Comprehensive Approach* identifies peace processes as "opportunities to promote women's empowerment, gender equality, gender mainstreaming and respect for women's rights". The *Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation* identifies the "promotion of women's participation" as one of the five guiding principles of EU policy in this area (Council of the EU, 2009). Two other key documents, one related to the EU's foreign and security policy is the *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, and on the other hand regarding gender equality is the *Gender Action Plan 2016-2020*. Both commit the EU to greater women's involvement in diplomacy and peace processes (Villegas et

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<sup>1</sup> The EU uses a definition of 'gender' of the DG Employment and Social Affairs from 1998 (One Hundred Words for Equality: a glossary of terms on equality between women and men) that considers that gender refers to "socially constructed differences, as opposed to the biological ones, between women and men; this means differences that have been learned, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures". Additionally, the development of the WPS agenda has shaped a certain "standard of gender-responsive peace processes", as stated by the United Nations, according to which negotiators and mediators must always have technical gender expertise available, women's organisations must be consulted systematically in all stages of any peace process, both the agenda and the different agreements reached in a process must explicitly address women's priorities and needs and significant female representation must be guaranteed in the negotiations and the institutions in charge of implementing the agreements (Coomaraswamy 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Essentially, UNSCR 1325 (2000), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015).

al., 2016). In addition, the recent Action Plan for the implementation of the EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises identifies WPS as one of the actions to be prioritised in 2016-2017.

This report reflects on various practical experiences by the EU and other third parties in the area of gender and multi-track diplomacy in two specific spheres. Firstly, the gender dimension in EU's role as a mediator/facilitator, analysing issues like challenges and dilemmas of mediation; complementarity and coordination in multi-track and the availability of gender-responsive mediators, all from a gender perspective.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, EU's actions via other types of engagement (promoting, supporting, leveraging and funding), such as political support for women's involvement in peace processes, financial and technical support to empower women and strengthen local women's organisations and financial support for capabilities in the area of gender and third-party mediation. To do so, a review of the relevant literature has been conducted drawing on the scoping studies previously presented in this project. This desk research has been enriched by the holding of a Community of Practice seminar with the participation of different stakeholders relevant for the research topic. This resulted in many contributions that combined conceptual and practical elements related to gender in multi-track diplomacy and included examples of practical experiences that provide useful lessons and insights to the EU.<sup>4</sup> The authors have also conducted various interviews with relevant stakeholders in the field of gender and peace processes to enrich the findings of the research.

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<sup>3</sup> According to OSCE "A gender-responsive, third-party mediation rests on three overlapping and intertwined areas: 1. Representation and participation: Comprises the measures and initiatives taken to reverse under-representation of women in peace negotiations and to allow for women's meaningful participation. 2. Institutional framework and process management: Includes planning, design and implementation of third-party mediation processes in such a way that (institutional) policies, procedures and practices take into account the impact they will have on individuals as a result of their gender. 3. Substantive issues on the agenda and content of agreements: Refers to the extent to which gender dimensions of substantive topics on the agenda and the provisions contained in agreements are designed and implemented to be equally beneficial to men and women and would neither undermine nor harm them." (OSCE, 2013)

<sup>4</sup> Community of Practice event, "The gender, peace and security agenda in mediation and dialogue processes: the role of third parties and lessons for the EU", Barcelona, 22nd September 2016.

## 2. The EU as a mediator and the inclusion of the gender dimension

The EU participates in various peace processes as a mediator/facilitator (Dudouet and Dressler, 2016; Fisas, 2016). Different EU stakeholders are involved in (co)mediation and facilitation tasks (HR/HP, EUSRs, HoDs, EP). As a third party, in coordination with other stakeholders, the EU has the possibility of engaging in gender-responsive mediation/facilitation and of implementing its related commitments. Nevertheless, EU's practical experience in this area has been uneven, with some good practices, constraints and challenges, including dilemmas present in international debates, especially in relation to the effective integration of a gender perspective beyond merely including women (Coomaraswamy, 2015; De Alwis, Mertus and Sajjad, 2013; Bell, 2004; Goetz, 2015, Villellas et al., 2016).

### 2.1. The role of third parties in mediation from a gender perspective

Despite the international commitments for gender-sensitive mediation stemming from the international WPS agenda and the growing calls for mediators to implement more specific measures (Coomaraswamy, 2015), various challenges continue to be identified. These challenges are related, among other issues, to the mediators' degree of political will and/or ability to include a gender perspective, the possibility (or not) of circumventing reservations of negotiating parties or those of third parties involved in mediation efforts, the need (or not) for more specific mandates, and questions about how to conduct gender-responsive mediation in practice, among other aspects. The EU's experience as a mediator and co-mediator shows how these challenges have arisen in cases like Mali and Yemen. In Mali, the EU was one of 11 co-mediators in a team led by Algeria as part of the negotiations that resulted in a peace agreement in 2015. Although the inclusion of women in the peace process was one of the priorities of the EU and the UN (also co-mediator), the reservations expressed by Algeria, other mediators and the negotiating parties themselves led to the suspension of the issue of women's involvement and resulted in the peace process not being gender-sensitive (Coomaraswamy, 2015; Ghorbani, 2015). This resistance was imposed in a highly masculinised mediation context (only the EU and the UN had women working as experts or advisors on their teams), despite the mobilisation of Malian women to demand greater involvement (O'Reilly, Ó Súilleabháin and Paffenholz, 2015; Coomaraswamy, 2015).<sup>5</sup> In the period running up to the signing of the agreement, women's organisations with the support of UN Women lobbied political and traditional leaders and organised briefings on the negotiations with hundreds of women. After the agreement was signed, they held consultations, identified priorities and demanded parity in the institutions involved in implementing the agreement (UN Women, 2015; Peace Women, 2016). In political statements made after the agreement was signed, the EU underscored the need for men and women to participate together in implementing it (Council of the EU, 2015a).

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<sup>5</sup> Different sources put the initial number of women at between three and five from among the hundred or so delegates of the parties. This figure rose to 11 after a civil society women's group joined (O'Reilly, Ó Súilleabháin and Paffenholz, 2015; UN Women, 2015).

In contrast, the National Dialogue Conference (NDC, March 2013-January 2014) in Yemen has been internationally considered as an example of a process in which third parties played a key role to ensure women's participation (Coomaraswamy, 2015; O'Reilly, Ó Súilleabháin and Paffenholz, 2015; Paffenholz et al., 2016). It is considered that one of the lessons of the Yemeni NDC is that gender inequality and cultural objections can be overcome by sustained pressure by the local women's movement and international actors (Coomaraswamy, 2015).<sup>6</sup> After women's active participation in the revolt against Saleh, the NDC marked the significant entry of women into politics (Shakir, 2015) in a country that has continued to be ranked lowest in terms of gender equality in the world.<sup>7</sup> The EU, which had been developing several initiatives focusing on women in areas of governance and security and which had a profile as an external actor working on gender issues in Yemen,<sup>8</sup> played a role through various channels supporting the NDC, and with several EU actors being involved in these efforts. The EU collaborated in the preparation and implementation of the NDC under the leadership of the UN and used its political influence to promote the participation of women in the dialogue initiative. An EEAS MST mission gave technical assistance to the EU delegation and, in order to support the NDC, it recommended working with a focus on groups traditionally marginalized in Yemeni society, including women.<sup>9</sup> Actually, as part of EU's engagement in G-10, one of the main tasks of the EU delegation was the outreach to those groups not included in the negotiations of the GCC initiative (Girke, 2015). The EU publicly defended the holding of an inclusive process and the HoD Bettina Muscheidt supported this subject personally in her deliberations with the president and with government officials in Yemen. According to the HoD, the political support of the EU delegation (HoD and Head of Political Section) and of various EUMS for gender issues and the EU's role in the international supervision of the transition agreement were important factors in raising the quota of 30% female participation in the NDC. The different Yemeni stakeholders were aware that it would be difficult for them to question an issue like the role of women, which is important for positions for the EU.<sup>10</sup> Other international actors took a similar stance.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the EU maintained contact with female delegates and women from civil society and it also funded initiatives that included the identification of women's priorities for the transition,<sup>12</sup> and attempted to strengthen the inclusiveness of the dialogue process.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Several external actors played a prominent role, including the Office of the Special Envoy of the UN, UNDP, UNFPA, USAID and international organisations like OXFAM, NDI and the Berghof Foundation.

<sup>7</sup> In 2013, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index ranked Yemen last worldwide.

<sup>8</sup> In Yemen the EU has funded initiatives on girls and women's rights (e.g. awareness action aimed at ending child marriage), women's empowerment (e.g. support and capacity building to local women's organisations), gender equality in justice system (e.g. a project aimed at improving the lives of female detainees and their children), and a gendered SSR (e.g. a study on women's security interests into police reform).

<sup>9</sup> The MST started its work on Yemen when the EU delegation was headed by the ambassador Michele Cervone d'Urso and continued its work with Bettina Muscheidt, who became HoD in October 2012. ECP personal communication with EEAS MST Mediation advisor, 14 October 2016.

<sup>10</sup> ECP personal communication with former EU HoD to Yemen, Bettina Muscheidt, 30 September 2016.

<sup>11</sup> The UN Special Envoy passed the message to Yemeni stakeholders that they would remain impartial but not neutral in issues such as women's participation (Zyck, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> A project carried out by Saferworld and Conciliation Resources held consultations with women from different backgrounds in Aden, Sana'a, Saada and Taiz before the NDC began.

<sup>13</sup> The EU supported the holding of local dialogues with various stakeholders that included 30% women's representation in its activities.



While various aspects of the NDC have been welcomed from a gender perspective, limitations have also been identified.<sup>14</sup> In addition to its general inability to transcend the existing power dynamics (Adra, 2015), questions have been raised about its level of representativeness, and its disconnection with local realities.<sup>15</sup> It has also exposed the problems Yemeni women face in maintaining the progress made in terms of their political presence following the events of 2011 and after the NDC ended (Shakir, 2015). In fact, after the escalation of violence in 2015, women have had little space in which to influence negotiating efforts. This situation may have provided evidence of a certain tokenism in the acceptance of the participation of women, the unwillingness of conservative local stakeholders to accept women's role in political life, a lack of sustainable results and a need of long term and coordinated engagement on gender issues by external actors.

Since 2015, the UN has been promoting women's participation in the peace talks, also at the request of local women's groups. The UN Special Envoy was keen to raise the number of women in the delegations to the Kuwait peace talks but both parties to the conflict resisted this proposal – despite incentives the UN had offered to even enlarge the overall number of delegates in case. In the end only two women were nominated by the parties. A UN project (UN Women led) brought together 7 women, speaking on behalf of a larger cross party caucus. The EU emphasised these efforts with the EU HoD<sup>16</sup> calling publicly for the necessary involvement of women, met with the “group of seven women” (also with EUMS ambassadors) and then promoted meetings between the women and the warring Yemeni delegations as both official Delegations to the Peace Talks were reluctant to meet with the women.<sup>17</sup> The negotiating efforts are blocked since August 2016 and the EU's ability to apply pressure to implement the WPS agenda is also limited by the lack of a presence on the ground for security reasons.

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<sup>14</sup> The literature has highlighted the establishment of the 30% quota, the delegation of 40 seats for women, the mechanisms designed to ensure women's influence in decision-making, and the adoption of measures to promote dialogue between representatives, among other issues. At the same time, several difficulties have been stressed such as the security problems facing the delegates, the resistance in addressing women's rights issues in the discussions, and the fact that in practice, the women participating in the NDC did not act as a unified group to push their demands forward (Coomaraswamy, 2015; O'Reilly, Ó Súilleabháin and Paffenholz, 2015; Paffenholz et al., 2016; Shakir, 2015; Adra, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> ECP personal communication with Yemeni consultant, 15 July 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Bettina Muscheidt ended her mission in Yemen in summer 2016.

<sup>17</sup> ECP personal communication with former EU HoD to Yemen Bettina Muscheidt, 30 September 2016.

## 2.2. Complementarity and coordination in multi-track diplomacy from a gender perspective

Women participate in peace processes in various modes and tracks (Paffenholz et al., 2016; Castillo and Tordjman, 2012; Conciliation Resources, 2013). Third parties can also get involved in different levels of diplomacy, in those areas where they are best situated, to promote the inclusion of gender and the participation of women in various roles and formats, moving away from narrow focuses on formal peace processes (Coomaraswamy, 2015). In the case of the EU, the range of actors and their vast geographical presence create windows of opportunity, since mediation/facilitation tasks may be complemented with engagement at other levels and in alliance with other stakeholders. However, there is also evidence that these opportunities could be taken advantage of more effectively.

In Georgia, the EU, through the EUSR, is co-facilitating the Geneva International Discussions (GID) together with the UN and the OSCE, and it also co-facilitates the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM)<sup>18</sup> through the EUMM mission. The EU's experience in Georgia reflects some good practices and limitations. Shortcomings identified in the GID include, for example, the fact that the co-mediators, including the EU, lack gender advisors and that their engagement with the gender dimension has been limited.<sup>19</sup> Dilemmas regarding the mandate can also be identified.<sup>20</sup> The EU highlights the EUSR's "emphasis on" the WPS agenda and its consultations with civil society, including in Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Council of the EU, 2011, 2014), although it does not provide disaggregated information about them. Still, the representatives of EU Delegation have participated in the meetings between Georgian GID participants and local NGOs, which can be seen as positive per se. In any case, due to the rationale of these local meetings, it is the EUMM that is encouraged to participate in these meetings, which is something that the EUMM does regularly. In addition, it is useful to take into account that local gender stakeholders indicate that there are relevant factors making the involvement of high-level foreign stakeholders more complex, like the high politicisation of the context or the design of the format itself (for example, the scenario of holding the talks far from Georgia and the lack of a continuous presence of all the co-mediators in Georgia). More generally, positive aspects to the GID include the relative strength of the participation of women in the Georgian delegation (30%, including at high levels),<sup>21</sup> favoured in part by the National Action Plan (NAP) (Castillo and Tordjman, 2012).<sup>22</sup> The inclusion of women's demands

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<sup>18</sup> The IPRM is a security mechanism established in the peace process that involves monthly meetings between the security stakeholders on the ground, related both to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The IPRM on Abkhazia was suspended between 2012 and 2016.

<sup>19</sup> ECP Skype interview, UN Women-Georgia officer, 7 October 2016.

<sup>20</sup> It is revealing that the EUSR's mandate does not contain references to mediation/facilitation from a gender perspective, whereas it is mandated "to contribute to the implementation of the Union's human rights policy and the Union Guidelines on Human Rights, in particular with regard to children and women in areas affected by conflicts" (Council of the EU, 2015b).

<sup>21</sup> Ketevan Tsikhelashvili, State Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality, formerly the Deputy State Minister, has presided over the second working group of the GID for four years and the Georgian delegation also includes various female representatives of the MFA. In contrast, the delegations of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have no women.

<sup>22</sup> The two NAPs of Georgia on UNSCR 1325 and WPS (2012-2015 and 2016-2017) institutionalise the participation of women in the peace process. The NAPs have received support from the EU.

in Georgia's approach to the GID was also positive, although without many effective results, amidst what is mostly an overall lack of results in the entire process.<sup>23</sup>

The co-mediating role of the EU in the GID has been complemented by the active role of the EUMM, despite the mandates restrictions.<sup>24</sup> This support has resulted in political backing (for example, public calls by the HoM for more female participation in the GID) and in systematic consultations with local women's organisations. Among other good practices, the latter is reflected in the organisation of meetings with the local population following the rounds of the IPRM to exchange information. These meetings specifically invite women's organisations and also address issues from a gender perspective. According to the mission, these meetings are considered as necessary and positive by the women's organisations. Furthermore, the EUMM participated regularly (by means of its Head of Mission and the Gender Adviser, and occasionally other additional officers) in the meetings organised by UN Women in coordination with the Georgian government, including women's organisations and representatives of Georgia's delegations in the GID and IPRM.<sup>25</sup> Their aim is to promote the participation of women and the exchange of information and ownership of the process.

These meetings are considered necessary and positive for both parties. They have overcome the local populations' lack of information about the peace process and they have become decentralised (with meetings about the IPRM not only in the capital but also in various regions). In addition, these meetings have become institutionalised (organised by the government of Georgia,<sup>26</sup> with logistical support from UN Women for meetings outside the capital), strengthening local ownership and sustainability.<sup>27</sup> The mobilisation of the women includes meetings prior to the consultations in order to prepare recommendations. These meetings take place twice a year, which is considered adequate by its organisers, given GID's own nature and frequency (four per year). In that way, each meeting between GID participants and NGOs deal with results of two GID rounds.<sup>28</sup> The WPS agenda is also channelled in Georgia through other processes (in the political sphere, the social sphere, etc.) in which the EU has also participated. The limitations of the parallel consultations include, among other issues, the reduced ability to influence the formal negotiations, the lack of similar mechanisms with Ossetian and Abkhaz women. The EUMM's participation in the highest level of the mission and its active involvement in these forums can be considered as good practices. This is also fostered and strengthened by internal elements (for example, the involvement of HoM, a full-time gender advisor and 13 strong Gender Focal Point Networks across the mission, bi-monthly meetings with focal points organised in field offices by the gender advisor, at least one

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<sup>23</sup> Despite the lack of substantive progress in the GID, through its demands, the women's organisations of Georgia have contributed to the agreement in the GID to reactivate the IPRM in Gali in 2016. In any case, this reactivation can be seen as the result of multiple elements beyond women's demands, as it has been on the GID political agenda. ECP personal communication with UN Women-Georgia officer, 7 October 2016.

<sup>24</sup> The EUMM's mandate does not include gender issues or the WPS agenda, but some operational documents do, like the Mission Monitoring Plan (three of its 70 functions referred to gender, including the specific function of promoting the inclusion of women in the peace process) (Olsson et al., 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Thirty per cent (30%) of the members of the Georgian delegation in the IPRM mechanism are women.

<sup>26</sup> Upon institutionalising consultations with women, the government invited also other CSOs, though women's groups are still the most dominant participants. ECP personal communication with UN Women-Georgia officer, 7 October 2016.

<sup>27</sup> ECP personal communication with UN Women-Georgia officer, 7 October 2016.

<sup>28</sup> ECP personal communication with UN Women-Georgia officer, 7 October 2016.

annual report on gender mainstreaming and more) (Council of the EU, 2014; Olsson et al., 2014). In any case, The EU has given support to the WPS agenda in Georgia through various means, including through funding, and political support. EU funding has included support to the multi-annual UNDP-led 'Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism' programme (COBERN), which covers initiatives on women's empowerment, among other issues; and UN Women-led 'Innovative Action for Gender Equality' project, which has involved women and men from across the divided communities in confidence-building activities. Besides, the EC also supported the "Women for Equality, Peace and development" project, which involved cooperation between UN Women and the Georgian Ministry of Defence on gender mainstreaming in the security sector.<sup>29</sup> In terms of political support, the Georgian government considers the EU as a crucial partner for its gender policy. Among other initiatives, Georgia organised in partnership with the UN and EU the International High-Level Conference on Gender Equality in 2015. It resulted in the Tbilisi Declaration, which recognizes the need for successful implementation of UNSCR 1325 and states that "women's needs and priorities should be considered in the time of peace as well as in war, armed conflicts and their aftermaths.

### 2.3. On the availability of gender-responsive mediators and expertise

Another important element related to gender-sensitive mediation refers to the availability of gender mediators and expertise. Faced with arguments about the lack of female moderators, it is increasingly evident that gender capacities and expertise exist, in contrast to the limited political will to make them participants (Castillo and Tordjman, 2012; Bell, 2013). In the sphere of international organisations, the United Nations' work stands out for making this technical expertise available to the mediating teams of parties in conflict. UN Women and UNDP's joint strategy on gender and mediation provides the framework for developing the United Nations' efforts towards further gender mainstreaming in this field. According to reports from the UN Secretary-General document in 2015, negotiating parties required the support of gender experts in 89% of the mediation processes which they led or jointly led, compared to 67% in 2014, 88% in 2013, 85% in 2012 and 36% in 2011. Efforts to document this practice are extremely important, since they enable us to observe how the upward trend is not yet sufficiently established. In addition, it has been identified that the number of signed peace agreements with gender-specific provisions has increased, which could be related to greater awareness by mediators, more inclusive processes and more access to gender expertise (UNSG, 2016).

On the other hand, it is also important to bolster the resources available for mediators to mainstream gender or to include it in particular areas. This includes, for example, the High-Level Seminar on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Processes for envoys, senior mediators and their teams and the specific guidelines for mediators on how to address sexual violence in ceasefire and peace agreements developed by the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA). Also prominent is the growing good practice of regional and national female mediator

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<sup>29</sup> The EU family has also been involved through EUMS, such as Netherlands' support to COBERN, or SIDA (Sweden) support to the UN joint programme to "Enhance Gender Equality in Georgia".

networks, including the Nordic Women Mediators' Network (NWMN), which is promoted by the EUMS Sweden and Finland along with Norway and Iceland. This is a network operated jointly by the centres CMI, PRIO, NOREF and UNU-GES, and it has already engaged with the peace process in Cyprus. Sweden, one of the EUMS most active in the area of gender in the EU, has also created its own Swedish Women Mediator Network, which forms part of the NWMN. Norway has also created its own network. Other notable networks include the African Women Mediation Forum, which inspired the NWMN. These are innovative mechanisms involved in sharing knowledge and perspectives in support of other stakeholders and in providing detailed analyses of women's participation in negotiating processes, among other elements (Villellas, Villellas and Urrutia, 2016). These are good practices that the EU could interact with and even promote from within the organisation. For the moment, EU's engagement with these practices has been scarce. It has included providing economic support to the gender work developed by the UN DPA (see section 3.3.) or hosting an edition of the High-Level Seminar on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Processes. Therefore, there is big potential for expanding its actions in this area.

In addition, EU actors engaged in mediation/facilitation can draw on the support of the EEAS Mediation Support Team for the implementation of gender-responsive mediation. The whole team has received coaching and training on gender, it has a focal point on women's participation in peace processes, it draws on internal and external networks and it can reach to gender experts (on various technical fields) from partners' rosters, which include gender experts.<sup>30</sup> The MST is also trying to increase its contact with the team of the recently established EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender and the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325. All this places the MST in a good position for supporting gender responsive mediation (including through early engagement and tailored interventions), according to the team itself.<sup>31</sup> The MST is trying to promote the gender perspective more proactively in broader mediation/facilitation. Limitations include its dependence on the final willingness to commit to gender by the EU actors or external actors that request its support. The MST has identified greater acceptance among EU mediation/facilitation actors to take gender and mediation more seriously. This can be seen in efforts involving a dedication of resources towards women's involvement in mediation and peace processes in the MENA region. Still practical implementation of commitments across the EU is identified as a main challenge.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> ECP personal communication with EEAS MST Mediation advisor, 14 October 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

## 3. The EU and the promotion of inclusive peace processes with a gender perspective

In addition to engaging in mediation and direct co-mediation efforts, the EU also acts in the field of peace processes, facilitation and dialogue by promoting, supporting, leveraging and funding mediation and peace efforts, as defined by the EU Concept on Mediation (Council of the EU, 2009). With regard to the participation of women and the introduction of the gender dimension in peace processes, the EU has been developing a series of interesting practices, though not without challenges.

### 3.1. Political support for the participation of women in peace processes

Various experiences suggest that the participation of women in peace processes requires internal and external support, pressure from local women's groups and third parties, including international stakeholders (O'Reilly, Ó Súilleabháin and Paffenholz, 2015; Paffenholz et al., 2016; Goetz, 2015; Conciliation Resources, 2013). In fact, the most successful peace processes in terms of gender mainstreaming have been those that achieved synergy between local and international stakeholders, like in The Philippines (Herbolzheimer and Leslie, 2013; Villellas, Villellas and Urrutia, 2016) or Sri Lanka (Page, Whitman and Anderson, 2009).<sup>33</sup> Another example is Colombia, where women's organisations received institutional support from foreign stakeholders to participate more actively in the peace process.<sup>34</sup> In this regard, the EU uses its political and diplomatic influence to help to give greater visibility to the WPS agenda and to emphasise the importance of the equal and full participation of women in peacebuilding and specifically in the area of negotiations. The EU is raising the issue in high-level international forums (including through the EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender and UNSCR 1325) and through its network of delegations, is participating in multilateral initiatives that seek to promote the empowerment and political participation of women, including in peace negotiations, and provides political support for initiatives led by other stakeholders involved in promoting the inclusion of women in peace processes, such as the work performed by Mary Robinson, former UN special envoy for the Great Lakes region (Council of the EU, 2015). The EU and EUMS have been involved in initiatives to promote and lobby for the inclusion of women in peace and conflict-resolution efforts in various contexts, supporting the inclusion of women in formal and informal peace processes in over a dozen countries (Council of the EU, 2014; Sherrif and Hauck, 2012). One can highlight cases like the first-ever EU special representative for Sudan-South Sudan (2010-2013) Rosalind Marsden, whose mandate explicitly included a commitment

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<sup>33</sup> These examples illustrate how international actors have channelled women's groups' demands, especially in terms of inclusion, towards the parties represented at the formal negotiations. In the case of The Philippines members of the International Contact Group successfully advocated for gender inclusion after consultations with civil society groups. In the case of Sri Lanka, international actors supporting the peace process echoed women's demands and the parties were persuaded to include a Sub-Committee on Gender as part of the negotiations in 2002. The existence of UNSCR1325 was crucial for this cooperation to take place.

<sup>34</sup> See Box 1. Gender and Multi-track Diplomacy in Colombia in this report.

to the implementation of UNSCR 1325, and who played a role in promoting women's participation in peace negotiations. Although various EU documents cover some of these experiences, based on the information available it does not appear possible to identify the degree of systematicity and the level of political will with which the EU family is implementing the commitments of the WPS agenda in this sphere.<sup>35</sup>

### **Box 1. Gender and Multi-track Diplomacy in Colombia**

The case of Colombia provides an example of how to achieve integration of the gender dimension in multiple aspects of a peace process, as well as the importance of coordination between the different stakeholders involved and of consistency throughout the different aspects of a peace process. Despite the uncertainties following the plebiscite results in October 2016, lessons learned from the Colombian case remains relevant (Villemas, Urrutia and Villemas, 2016). Historically, women's organisations in Colombia have played a very active role in advocating a negotiated solution to the conflict, mobilising strategies in different ways. In its role as guarantor of the process, Norway conveyed the women's organisations' demand that the parties at the negotiating table agree to create a sub-committee on gender, a formal space for including gender in the talks, while also boosting female representation in their negotiating delegations (Herbolzheimer, 2016).<sup>36</sup> This sub-committee channelled the dialogue between the women of civil society and the negotiating delegations in Havana and was also a space where the parties to the conflict agreed on the elements of gender that were being mainstreamed in all aspects of the final agreement. Along with Cuba, another guarantor country, Norway also provided expertise on gender issues and facilitated the presence of other gender experts throughout the negotiating process, including female former combatants.

Meanwhile, UN Women gave broad support to women's organisations, which along with the support of other donors, enabled the holding of the National Summit for Women in 2013. The summit was the starting point for the parties to address the women's demand to play a greater role in the official peace process. UN Women also provided gender technical expertise to the sub-committee and politically backed the negotiations with the presence in Havana of the UN Women executive director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and the UN Secretary-General's special representative on sexual violence in conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura. In addition to diplomatic support, Norway has also channelled money to fund the women's organisations in different ways. On the one hand, NORAD has established a specific line of funding for implementing Resolution 1325, including funds for Colombia (a priority country in this line of funding, in accordance with the geographic priorities of the Action Plan). On the other hand, Norwegian civil society platforms with government funding have also lent support to multiple Colombian women's organisations (FOKUS, for example, has supported CCT, Corporación Humanas, Fuerzas de Mujeres Wayúu, LIMPAL Colombia and the Colectivo de Mujeres Excombatientes, among others, all of which are involved in supporting the peace process).

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<sup>35</sup> The next report on the EU-indicators for the comprehensive approach to the EU Implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and 1820 on WPS (corresponding to the period 2013-2015) is expected to provide more information on the EU's activities to support greater participation in peace processes, identified as one of the four priority areas of the evaluation.

<sup>36</sup> Norway's commitment to including gender in the peace processes in which it is involved is defined by its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for 2015-18.

On the other hand, despite considerations regarding the EU's late engagement in the peace process, the EU and some Member States including Sweden, the UK and Spain gave political and economic support to the second National Summit for Women and Peace, which was held after the agreement was announced and before the plebiscite. Furthermore, the EU expressed its commitment to the implementation of the agreement with funds aimed at strengthening gender equality and human rights, among other things, as well as at addressing the particular needs of women and girls affected by the conflict, as stated in the document establishing the EU Trust Fund for Colombia. However, the future of this fund is uncertain due to broader questions on the future of the peace process.

### 3.2. Supporting women's empowerment and strengthening local women's organisations

Women's organisations, networks and movements play a crucial role in developing gender-sensitive peace processes (O'Reilly, Ó Súilleabháin and Paffenholz, 2015; De Alwis, Mertus and Sajjad, 2013; Villellas, Villellas and Urrutia, 2016). Along these lines, third-party support for women's organisations to build capacities to mobilise and to develop skills in the areas of negotiation and mediation, both before and after negotiations and also during the implementation phase, have been identified as key to facilitating the participation and influence of women in peace processes. Creating the conditions for this participation requires technical and financial support for travelling, organising meetings, developing networks, conducting trainings and other activities (Nilsson, 2011; Paffenholz et al. 2016; Bell, 2013). In this regard, the EU has provided technical and financial support to strengthen women's capacities in contexts of conflict and peace processes, funded through various mechanisms including the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP, formerly IfS).<sup>37</sup> At the request of local actors, the range of actions in this area include the support for capacity-building activities by training women in negotiation skills and conflict risk analysis; workshops and seminars on gender and mediation; women's coalition building; awareness-raising actions to underscore the importance of women's involvement in peace and reconciliation initiatives; assistance in creating NAPs; and the provision of technical support by the EEAS MST for dialogue processes, including women's groups. While the EU has been collecting information about some of these experiences in its reports monitoring the WPS agenda and evaluating the IcSP, it has recognised that one of the challenges in this regard is to measure the impact that these kinds of actions have on the inclusion of women in peace processes (Council of the EU, 2014). The EU also channels the funding of capacity-building activities and activities to include women in peace processes through financial support for European NGOs like, among others, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Conciliation Resources and Crisis Management Initiative.

One case that illustrates the type of support that the EU provides in this area is Afghanistan, where the EUSR backed the training of 16 members of the High Peace Council, including around a dozen women. It also supported capacity building for local NGOs that promote the rights of women to carry out monitoring and advocacy work in peacebuilding

<sup>37</sup> According to the Annual Report on Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), in the period 2007-2013, 14% of the funding earmarked for capacity-building support was allocated to the item "WPS and minors". Therefore, the information available refers to the general area of WPS, without disaggregating with regard to mediation and peace processes.



(Council of the EU, 2014). Another example of how to improve this capacity for influence is provided by Norway, which facilitated a meeting in Oslo between Taliban representatives and a delegation of nine women, including female MPs, members of the High Peace Council and human rights activists (Villemas, 2016). This meeting was viewed very positively by both the Norwegian government and the delegation of women and may have resulted in greater openness among the Taliban to accept basic rights for women (Mashal, 2015). However, the women have been constantly excluded from the peace process and left with very little ability to influence (Cameron and Kamminga, 2014), showing the limits of actions to support women's organisations that may subsequently lead to greater participation.

It seems to be difficult to assess the specific effectiveness of EU's leverage over wider participation of women through integration of gender in the multiple types of engagement as defined by the Concept of Mediation. This relates to the overall challenge for the EU of improving its evaluation capacities and the need to reflect not just on how *active* the EU is but also how *effective* (EPLO 2015). Despite these assessment limitations, the literature points to the positive impacts of women's participation in peace processes for peacebuilding in general (Coomaraswamy, 2015). With regards to the EU, there seems to be room for improvement in engaging more and earlier with participatory processes that promote women's participation both in peace negotiations and in wider fields (e.g. formal politics, security sector reform), like through NAPs, support to coalition-building and integrating gender in donor conferences, among others. Nonetheless, ongoing EU support to leading actors in this area, such as UN Women, is strategic. More visibility of this type of support could also reinforce EU's leverage.

A good international practice in the field of financial support for participation in peace processes is the creation of the Global Acceleration Instrument (GAI) in 2015, even if it is still in its infancy and awaiting further evaluation in an attempt to generate a mechanism specifically for funding the WPS agenda and facilitating civil society's access to resources. This fund establishes several expected outcomes, including but not limited to the creation of an environment enabling the implementation of WPS commitments, women's participation in decision-making processes and responses related to conflict prevention, as well as increased women's representation and leadership in formal and informal peace negotiations. The GAI is a partnership between member states, the United Nations and civil society managed by UN Women. It may serve as a point of reference for other international organisations like the EU with regard to the allocation of specific funds for the WPS agenda.

### 3.3. Supporting gender and mediation capacities and architecture by third parties

The EU also provides financial support for capacities related to gender and mediation by third parties, like the UN. The EU gives financial support to UN Women, a key stakeholder in promoting the participation of women in peace processes<sup>38</sup> and, more specifically, has contributed to the UN's gender architecture and mediation, which has been developed within the framework of the Joint Strategy on Gender and Mediation between UN Women and UN DPA.<sup>39</sup> As part of a project financed with funds from the IfS/IcSP,<sup>40</sup> the EU has supported the appointment of a gender expert to the Standby Team in the Mediation Support Unit (MSU) of UNDPA. In addition, the project included issues like support for an increase in the availability and quality of gender expertise in the areas of mediation, the development of materials in this field (like guidance notes on gender and mediation), the creation of an internal database on women and mediation and an agreement so that the EU may benefit from this specialised knowledge.

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<sup>38</sup> The EU and UN Women signed a partnership agreement in 2012, which was renewed in 2016.

<sup>39</sup> The objectives of the Joint Strategy on Gender and Mediation include increasing the availability and quality of gender expertise in mediation processes, supporting greater and effective participation by women at all levels of conflict resolution and peacemaking, raising awareness among mediators and facilitators about the modalities and positive impacts of involving women in mediation processes and ensuring the establishment of joint platforms where women's capacities and views can be taken into account in UN mediation processes.

<sup>40</sup> Project for 2011-2012 for a total of two million euros.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

In the sphere of mediation and multi-track diplomacy, the EU has aligned its normative policy with the international agenda on women, peace and security promoted by the UN, the main stakeholder promoting a standard for gender-responsive peace processes (gender expertise in negotiating and mediation teams, systematic consultations with women, the inclusion of gender in agendas and agreements and effective female participation in all stages, among other aspects). In its practical experience as an actor involved in peace processes through various types of engagement, the EU has many windows of opportunity to implement its commitments in this area. Contributing to this is its broad territorial presence. In practice, various good practices are observed, but there are also significant limitations and dilemmas, many of them shared with other actors. These include dilemmas on the role of the mediators, the degree of political will and/or capacity of the mediators to integrate the gender dimension and overcome resistance, whether or not specific mandates to include women are necessary, and questions about the practical implementation of gender-sensitive mediation, among other aspects. Furthermore, the dilemmas include the potential and limits of complementary multi-track strategies, questions about the availability of female mediators, the importance of political support for gender-sensitive peace processes, the potential for technical and financial support for those processes and the windows of opportunity in support of other third parties.

There have been some advances in the EU's integration of a gender perspective in multi-track diplomacy and in broader EU peacebuilding policy, including the increasing availability of gender support (e.g. through EEAS MST, gender advisers in EU missions, gender focal point networks) and practical engagement of committed individuals (e.g. HoD in Yemen), as well as through funding initiatives. However, overall the EU still lacks a systematic approach that places gender at the centre of its interventions, alongside its other commitments. This is, among others, reflected in weak gender mainstreaming in mandates, insufficient sustainability mechanisms for its gender interventions, or anecdotal evidence that the EU itself provides in terms of implementation, impacts and results in its reports on implementation of UNSCR 1325 (Council of the EU 2012, 2014). While there is no active resistance to gender mainstreaming *per se* within the EU, there seems to be not enough political will to fully implement it, in contrast to the increasing availability of gender knowledge and resources globally, increasing demands by local stakeholders and the growth of good practices and lessons learned in the area of multi-track diplomacy and broader peacebuilding policies. This seems to point to an underachievement or insufficient use of windows of opportunities. This not only weakens the EU's potential and credibility as a gender-responsive actor but also its ability to reinforce its profile more broadly as a civilian peacebuilding actor. While UN leadership in the global development and implementation of the WPS agenda seems logical –as it is the main target of global grass-roots and institutional lobby on WPS and a leading mediator– the EU could reinforce its own leverage and profile by, on the one hand, engaging earlier and at its multiple levels of involvement and, on the other hand, by further reinforcing cooperation and coordination with other actors (UN and others) and also by giving more visibility to all of these efforts.

The diverse experiences and challenges evident in EU action in the sphere of mediation from a gender perspective seem to be related in turn to a more general challenge related to the ownership of the WPS agenda on the institutional level in the EU (Guerrina and Wright, 2016).

That is, who – which actors and with which mandates – do assume responsibility for their implementation and leadership. In this regard, the recent creation of the EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender and the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325 (promoted by Sweden), whose aims include the effective prioritisation of the WPS agenda in European foreign action, has been seen as a positive step forward, although it has been criticised for not being a higher-level post (Guerrina and Wright, 2016). Further, there are questions remaining about other possible limitations (limited staff, with no specific budget or direct line of communication with HR/VP) (Vilellas, Vilellas and Urrutia, 2016). However, this new position presents an (expandable) potential to promote gender mainstreaming and favour the implementation of the EU's commitments in terms of WPS, including the promotion of the participation of women and gender in mediation and dialogue.

The EU's capabilities in terms of integrating the gender dimension into its multi-track diplomacy efforts could be strengthened through:

- greater systematisation of its approach to peace processes, including via greater interaction between the peace and security agenda and the WPS agenda and their respective stakeholders;
- practices such as gender analysis in previous and early stages of its interventions in support of dialogue processes and throughout the cycle of intervention;
- systematic mapping processes and effective consultation (while avoiding tokenism) with women's organisations and local gender stakeholders from early stages, including an intersectional perspective, that takes into account the diverse experiences and specific needs among different women and other groups of population (e.g. indigenous women, IDP women, LGBTI, youth), which connects to the Whole of Society approach;
- the systematic provision of effective gender architectures in all interventions in support of peace processes (sufficient gender advisors, robust gender focal point networks, budgets, etc.) and involving levels of leadership in those gender architectures (for example, through mandates, strengthening the area of gender training and promoting gender champions in the leadership of its interventions);
- greater incentives for the negotiating parties to include women and gender experts; more documentation, evaluation and public visibility for the interventions and impact of the EU's actions in this area;
- greater impetus for cross-national knowledge sharing initiatives due to the potential for multiplication and ownership they possess;
- further coordination on the ground with other international stakeholders involved as third parties in supporting dialogue processes and interaction with growing international good practices, like women's mediator networks;
- more impetus for the direct and effective participation of women's organisations in donor conferences and other formal and informal decision-making spaces and processes;
- an increase in the number of women in high-ranking positions with mediation roles, such as EUSRs, and in missions engaged in peace-building efforts.

In brief, this is a challenge common to all third parties when shifting from a fragmented or ad hoc approach to a systematic focus and practice, adapted to each context, and in coordination and interaction with other actors, which may promote appropriation of the gender dimension by local stakeholders.

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