

PROPOSAL FOR:

‘CONCEPT ON STRENGTHENING MEDIATION-SUPPORT WITHIN THE OSCE’

(Annex to the Ministerial Council Decision on the Conflict Cycle)

I. Objectives and purpose of the ‘Concept’

- Conflict prevention and resolution is the OSCE’s core business. Already in the Helsinki Final Act participating States committed themselves to resolve conflicts by peaceful means. This was later spelt out in the Helsinki Document 1992 which contains wide-ranging provisions on early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and conflict resolution. However, in the deliberations within the Corfu Process and the V to V Dialogues, the need to strengthen and optimize OSCE’s efforts throughout the conflict cycle was clearly recognized. The OSCE’s conflict prevention and resolution related toolbox needs to be adapted to the challenges of future conflict and crisis situations, particularly but not exclusively in fragile state environments.
- Dialogue facilitation and mediation are viable instruments for conflict prevention, crisis management and conflict resolution, as well as instruments for confidence-building in all phases of the conflict cycle, including the post-conflict phase. They can also help in resolving disputes at an early stage. To be effective instruments, however, regional, national and local capacities for dialogue facilitation and mediation, especially in post-conflict situations, would need to be created or strengthened so as to provide credible contributions to preventing a relapse into violence and ensuring implementation of peace agreement provisions.
- Currently, the OSCE lacks systematic and professionalized support (a ‘mediation-support capacity’) to assist OSCE Chairmanships, their Special Representatives, Heads of field operations and other relevant actors, in dialogue facilitation and mediation. The aim of the Concept is to propose the development of such a mediation-support capacity in the Secretariat.

*) Redistribution due to change of distribution status text remains unchanged

II. Elements of a mediation-support capacity

- In order to give advice to OSCE mediators and dialogue facilitators on all levels, a systematic mediation-support capacity should bring together, when necessary, regional and country-specific expertise, expertise on mediation process design as well as thematic expertise, including on all aspects related to peace agreement implementation.
- A professionalized mediation-support capacity should incorporate the following:
 1. **Training and capacity-building** for relevant OSCE executive structures, including field operations; providing assistance in strengthening regional, national and local capacities for mediation, and also promote the effective participation of women in all forums and levels of the peaceful settlement of dispute.
 2. **Knowledge management and operational guidance**, including the creation of a central depository for documents and lessons learned/best practices; drafting OSCE operational guidance materials for CiO Special Representatives and Envoys, Heads of field operations, other OSCE officials or representatives serving as mediators or dialogue facilitators and relevant staff of their teams; conducting systematic lessons learned and best practices and co-coordinating after-action reviews or evaluations of mediation and dialogue facilitation activities.
 3. **Outreach, networking, co-operation and co-ordination** with other relevant local/national actors and other international, regional and sub-regional organizations and actors.
 4. **Operational support:** upon demand, the mediation-support capacity could provide direct process support to OSCE Chairmanships, their Special Representatives, Heads of field operations and other relevant actors, e.g., by maintaining a data base of thematic experts and special envoys (with expertise not available within OSCE executive structures). Furthermore, when requested by an OSCE mediator, the mediation-support capacity could assist in preparations for talks, maintaining records of meetings and correspondence, etc.
- **In addition to** the mediation-support tasks outlined above, any such mediation-support capacity could also contribute to early warning and early crisis responses within the context of dialogue facilitation and mediation. For instance, in close co-operation with other relevant OSCE executive structures, and linking it also to other phases of the conflict cycle, it could contribute to early warning of impending crisis situations within an existing dispute that may affect on-going dialogue facilitation/mediation efforts. In newly emerging crisis situations it could advise where early ‘preventive’ dialogue facilitation and/or mediation is required.

- Financial support: Consideration could be given to create a special conflict prevention and crisis management fund that will be made available when immediate action under existing tools and mechanisms is required, in particular, in serious crises or emerging conflict situations.

III. Implementation of an OSCE mediation-support capacity

- Participating States task the OSCE Secretary General to nominate a mediation support focal point within the CPC to serve as the core of the mediation-support capacity. That capacity will address the four elements of mediation-support listed under Section II, and may be gradually expanded, according to needs and existing resources.
- The Secretary General will co-operate with international and regional organizations already possessing such a mediation-support capacity as well as with relevant non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and/or other academic institutions, as necessary. Extensive and long-standing mediation-support expertise on national levels within the participating States should also be drawn upon.
- The Secretary General is requested to submit a first preliminary report on progress achieved by July 2012, detailing the need for additional support and/or decisions on the part of participating States to further optimize mediation-support capacities. Periodic reviews could be done as needed or required.

IV. Financial and human resources

- A mediation-support focal point will be established within existing resources.
- Demand-driven, the mediation-support capacity may be increased step-by-step and in accordance with appropriate future funding decisions and/or in-kind contributions (e.g., national consultants; funds for training).
- The provisions of this Concept will be shared with the Partners for Co-operation on a voluntary basis, and for consideration as an important tool in enhancing conflict prevention and resolution.