

**Expert Meeting
within the Framework of the Conflict Cycle - V to V Dialogue
'Strengthening the Mediation-Support Capacity within the OSCE'
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Building EU Mediation Support Capacity (Speaking Points)

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First important formal step: 2009 "Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities", adopted by EU Council, i.e. at ministerial level.

Concept states that mediation is not a new endeavour for the EU which in the past has already been involved in numerous mediation initiatives (either directly or supporting them politically and/or financially). In line with its strong commitment to conflict prevention, EU sees mediation as an important tool, which it wants to be able to use better, i.e. more effectively, more professionally and more systematically.

Link to mediation support: Better support to mediators (be they EU mandated or EU supported) and their teams as well as to conflict parties is a precondition for more effective mediation, given the complexity of tasks involved in any mediation process.

EU Mediation Concept spells out classical mediation tasks, which are fully in line with draft OSCE mediation concept:

- Training/capacity building/coaching
- Operational support (ranging from providing specialized expertise to logistical support)
- Knowledge management/lessons learnt
- Outreach and cooperation: in the case of the EU this goes beyond cooperation and exchange of experiences and includes contributing to strengthening mediation and mediation support capacities of other organizations. EU and EU Member States financially support UN MSU, AU, national and local governmental and non-governmental actors. Most important financial means is the Instrument for Stability which i.a. allows for the support of individual mediation initiatives in crisis situations and long-term capacity building.

Where do we stand with implementing the Concept and building up such mediation support capacities in the EU?

EU went through a lot of change and entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty right after the adoption of the Concept initially slowed down implementation of the Concept, but meanwhile significant progress.

Concept turned out to be a useful reference point which helped to do important things:

- Create an institutional home for mediation in the EEAS (Division for Conflict Prevention, Mediation and Peacebuilding).
- Increase the offer of mediation training opportunities (covered mostly by the regular EEAS training budget).
- Elicit interest in the EP – the EU's budgetary authority – which led to the adoption of a "pilot project". This in effect provided us with a supplement to the EEAS administrative budget dedicated to establishing the nucleus of an EU mediation support structure. Under this pilot project we are now in the process of recruiting additional mediation experts so that by October 2011 we will have a team of 3 to 4 working on mediation support, which is the critical mass for a functioning mediation support structure.

Lessons learnt in this process:

- Importance of Concept as a key to creating an institutional home and a go-to-place for mediation issues, both within the organization and for contacts with the outside world.
- Need to match political objectives with human and financial resources to be able to make a difference.
- Supply and demand closely linked, hard to sustain demand for mediation support if no relevant support on offer. Positively formulated: good quality mediation support will further increase demand for it.

Less than 2 weeks ago at the Annual Security Review Conference Helga Schmid, Dep. Sec. General of the EEAS, stated that the EU fully supports OSCE endeavours to strengthen its capabilities to act effectively throughout the entire conflict cycle and that this would need to include strengthening OSCE mediation capabilities.

The OSCE is one of the key partners of the EU in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution. We see room for, and are interested in, further strengthening our cooperation in the area of mediation, both between headquarters and in the field, both in specific crisis areas and also on mediation support issues, such as joint trainings and exchange of experiences.