

Group B: Confidence building, dialogue, mediation and reconciliation

Guiding questions

1. What are the local and national needs and priorities for local support to mediation, reconciliation and confidence building? How can the EU play a better role in these areas?
2. What role do regional organisations and regional networks of civil society organisations play in mediation, reconciliation and confidence building, and how can the EU best support their efforts and potential?

Participants' comments and recommendations

- Local support to mediation, reconciliation and confidence building is about empowering people to resolve their own problems, creating joint institutions which help them to resolve their own conflicts and improving relations between the key actors involved.
- Problems faced by many youth organisations around the world include access to funding and to peace processes. Mediation processes often exclude people from minority groups: youth organisations can play an important role in crossing community fault lines and convening people from different minority groups.
- The EU should work more on linking up different actors involved in in-country confidence building, dialogue, mediation and reconciliation measures in order to ensure that they can work together on collaborative programming and pool resources on in-country advocacy efforts. One practical example could be for EU delegations to bring together all civil society actors who are supported in a particular country twice a year and to facilitate dialogue between them.
- The EU should continue to reinforce the capacities of EU special representatives and EU heads of delegations, and possibly task them with linking up Track 1 and 3 diplomacy.
- There is a need for a better understanding of what it means to support the access of women and youth to mediation processes. Women and youth are often treated as a homogeneous group and the focus is on supporting the elite in both groups rather than on supporting a diverse group of women and young people.
- Local media can play a key role in connecting marginalised groups with international non-governmental organisations as well as with those actors directly involved in peace processes.
- It is important to have an exploratory phase before a mediation process takes place in order to consult and to ensure the appropriateness of the process design.
- The EU should take a context-specific approach to reconciliation as it can mean different things in different situations.
- There is a need to consider the dignity of the victims and to acknowledge and redress their rights as reconciliation often takes place in the aftermath of massive human rights abuses. In some countries, it is also important to address the issue of replacement as a prerequisite for reconciliation.
- The EU should prioritise support to civil society actors and media who are affected by a shrinking space both on a political and an economic level but who play an important role in creating credibility and legitimacy for dialogue or reconciliation processes.
- There is a need for a community-level approach which looks at building trust between people instead of seeing mediation as a process between clearly-defined actors.

- The EU has to accept that mediation projects are inherently risky and accept the risk of failure.
- When setting up a mediation process, the EU should keep in mind the following points in order to ensure local dialogue and local mediation capacities are supported:
 - How holistic is the programme? (e.g. in addition to mediation training does it also include training on practical skills such as project and grant management, and does it engage people who had previously been trained or only new people).
 - Does it build on previous successful programmes in other places or in the same area?
 - Does it focus on impact-led monitoring and evaluation methods or is it constrained by a log frame?
 - Does it endeavour to ensure inclusivity by taking into account invisible and marginalised groups?