

Group 4: Business for peace

Guiding questions

1. Do you have examples of successful/innovative projects aiming to harness the potential of business actors to broker dialogue processes and/or to engage in confidence-building measures?
2. What elements should the European Commission take into consideration when it supports projects in this area? (What pitfalls should it avoid?)

Participants' comments and recommendations

- Civil society organisations (CSOs) and business actors are reluctant to engage with each other on peacebuilding issues in conflict-affected countries for a variety of reasons:
 - CSOs tend to speak a different language to business actors and they have different interests and priorities
 - Existing funding mechanisms provide limited space for programmes envisaging engagement between business actors and CSOs on peacebuilding issues whereas there is considerable support for CSOs to work on private sector development
 - There is a lack of incentives for business actors to engage in peace processes
- It is essential to identify the entry points for business actors to play the role of brokers in dialogue processes and to engage in confidence-building activities. In order to do so, the EU and CSOs should take the following issues into consideration:
 - The level of peace engagement: it can vary from high-level Track 1 peace processes to grassroots/community confidence-building activities
 - The characteristics of the business actors: they can vary from local market traders to large multinational companies in the extractive industries and can include chambers of commerce, trade unions and various other kinds of business associations
 - The affiliations of business actors: they can also have a political role, belong to religious groups and/or have a specific ethnic/clan affiliation
 - The role of business in the specific context: business can often be the only existing link between two different communities but it can also create further conflict and divisions
- It is very difficult to track progress or to evaluate the contribution to peace processes which are made by business actors
- Positive examples:
 - In the South Caucasus, work done on trade regulations based on existing informal trade routes has encouraged local businesses to create networks and co-operate in the production of honey
 - In Turkey, informing business leaders about the conflict has resulted in increased attention to conflict resolution from the media and the government
 - In Nepal, business leaders have created associations in order to work together to understand how to reorient their activities on the basis of the developments in the Track 1 peace process

For more information about any of the issues which were raised in this small group discussion, please contact [Ben Moore](#).