



Civil Society Dialogue Network Discussion Paper

Maritime security and peace mediation in EU external action

Terms of Reference

Background

Over recent years, the European Union has significantly increased its efforts to carry out and support peace mediation globally, including through developing a dedicated policy framework and toolset (most notably the Concept on EU Peace Mediation and the EEAS Operational Guidelines), which are implemented in partnership with other international and regional organisations, EU Member States and EU partner countries, as well as peacebuilding practitioners.

In October 2023, the EU adopted its updated EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) and its accompanying Action Plan. The EUMSS recognises the increasingly critical role of the maritime domain in geopolitics and international conflicts, and covers security threats in depth, emphasising internal EU concerns, such as economic resilience, energy security, border control and overall ocean governance. While the strategy includes preserving global peace and stability as one of its main objectives, it only marginally explores the potential synergies and connections with EU peacebuilding and conflict prevention policies.

Maritime security is emerging as a key arena where conflict, governance, international peace and stability intersect. As the EU establishes itself as a more prominent peace mediation actor globally, this CSDN Discussion Paper will provide a timely opportunity to reflect on the intersections between the EU's conflict prevention and peace mediation policy and maritime mediation, as well as to identify entry points for EU peace mediation within maritime security issues.

Objectives of the discussion paper

The primary objective of the discussion paper is to explore the linkages between EU peace mediation practices and maritime security. It aims to reflect on opportunities for the EU to build capacity for dialogue and mediation within its maritime security policies, and to examine how peace mediation and maritime security considerations can be integrated into existing EU external action frameworks (e.g., the Strategic Compass) and operational tools (e.g., CSDP missions and operations).

Sub-objectives are as follows:

- 1) Analysing the strategic positioning of maritime security within broader EU external action and defining how the EU conceptualises maritime security;
- 2) Exploring entry points and linkages between maritime security, the overall peace mediation and conflict prevention policy framework, and the implementation of foreign policy;
- 3) Providing actionable, operational recommendations on how dialogue and peace mediation capacities can be systematically built as a part of EU maritime security actions.

Methodology and content

The author will address both strategic policy considerations and practical implementation.

This will involve:

- A brief overview of existing EU policies and practices on maritime security, with a particular focus on peace and security considerations;
- A brief overview of the international debate and existing initiatives linking maritime security and peace mediation;
- An overview of relevant examples of peace mediation practices connected to maritime security (including beyond EU initiatives), comprised of lessons learned/best practices highlighting the impact of such initiatives;
- Presenting consolidated recommendations for the EU to build peace mediation capacity in the context of maritime security initiatives, comprised of potential entry points in specific conflict contexts.

Deliverable and scope of work

The external consultant will work closely with an EPLO staff member to produce the paper. Both the consultant and the EPLO staff member may be credited as co-authors of the Discussion Paper.

The external consultant will carry out the research (including conducting interviews with relevant EU officials from HQ and EUDs, civil society representatives, experts, etc.) for the paper in consultation with EPLO in the selection of the case studies and interviewees.

The consultant will agree to submit a first draft for the Discussion Paper, on which EPLO will then provide feedback, before the consultant submits a second draft if needed. EPLO reserves the right to perform a final editorial revision.

Timeframe

Deadline for expression of interest	24-07-2026
Signature of contracts and kick off meeting	Week of 03-08-2026
First draft due	08-09-2026
Final draft due	16-09-2026

10 working days are estimated.

Format

The Discussion Paper will be written in English (British English). The Paper will have a length between 5000 and 7000 words, plus an executive summary of maximum two pages in the format of the template for Discussion Papers (approx. 500-1000 words).

Required expertise and experience:

- Proven knowledge of EU external action/prior experience working on EU affairs with a focus on peace and security
- Proven knowledge of EU peace mediation policy
- Experience working on peacebuilding projects will be an asset
- Experience conducting interviews
- Proven strong research, analytical, writing and editing skills
- Experience working with the non-profit sector
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English
- Alignment with EPLO's objectives and values
- Availability within the timeframe

Application procedure:

Qualified and interested candidates should send their financial offer and the following documents to jobs@eplo.org (subject line: Maritime Security Paper) by **24 July 2026 at 23:59**

- An up-to-date CV, including contact details of a reference
- A cover letter setting out how they will approach the research task
- Links to 2-3 recently published papers

Applications will be reviewed, and short interviews will be scheduled with short-listed candidates.

Remuneration:

10 days' work in the range of 500-700 EUR (excl. VAT) per day.