



## Discussion Paper

# A European Institute of Peace? Value-added, Risks and Options.

September 2012

## About mediatEUR

mediatEUR is a new venture in international peace mediation. Our goal is to promote the peaceful transformation of conflicts within and between states through effective methods of conflict resolution, dialogue and mediation. We combine expertise in mediation, peace processes, and transitional justice.

mediatEUR brings together a network of proven and qualified mediators and experts. We support conflict parties, as well as third-party practitioners and policy makers working to resolve conflicts, with the latest techniques and proven methodologies, grounded in sound knowledge of the field. We also work to help EU institutions and actors develop the capacities they need to support successful peacemaking across the world.

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To find out more, visit [www.themediateur.eu](http://www.themediateur.eu).

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## 1. Background and Introduction

In order to strengthen the EU's ability to respond to global peacemaking challenges, Sweden and Finland jointly launched an initiative in 2010 that advocates for the creation of a European Institute of Peace (EIP), with a focus on peace mediation. This initiative was kick-started by a joint letter from the two Foreign Ministers Carl Bildt and Alexander Stubb to High Representative Catherine Ashton in December 2010. mediatEUr was tasked in May 2011 by the two Foreign Ministries to accompany and advise this process, through several tracks:

1. Design and facilitate a consultation process with key stakeholder groups on the creation of an EIP
2. Provide sustained support to the two Ministries through policy analysis and advice on demand
3. Convene and facilitate an informal expert Advisory Council to look at the value-added of such an institute, and options for the design of a business model for an EIP.

This paper provides a concise overview of the value-added, risks and institutional set-up options that interlocutors helped identify in the course of the project, which reached out to more than 150 stakeholders in a yearlong process.

While the report does not give a blow-by-blow account of the detailed discussions and deliberations that took place as part of this project, the analysis draws on:

1. An Open Space conference hosted in Brussels, attended by peace practitioners, EU policymakers, Member State representatives and think tanks
2. A conference and seminar on the topic organised by ESSEC – IRENE and the Academie Diplomatique Internationale in Paris
3. Detailed discussions with members of the External Action Service
4. A scoping mission to the US to draw lessons from similar institutions there, such as the United States Institute of Peace, and the International Peace Institute
5. Systematic inputs from an informal expert Advisory Council
6. Numerous meetings, phone conferences, and discussions with stakeholders in Brussels and beyond
7. A lessons-learned seminar organised by swisspeace and the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs
8. A detailed options paper drafted for the informal Advisory Council and the Swedish and Finnish Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

## Purpose and scope of the paper

The intention of this paper is to give a concise overview of the ‘state of debate’, to help inform future steps of the EIP initiative. It also aims to move the debate on the EIP forward: from discussions on whether or not there is a need for such an institute; to formulating more clearly the risks and opportunities involved, and resulting options for an institutional set-up. It thus provides an input for policy- and decision-makers in Brussels and European capitals that can help shape political deliberation on an EIP. Equally importantly, it can also serve to inform policy advocacy on the EIP from civil society organisations.

Given this narrow scope, the paper does not include an overall analysis of the kinds of gaps that exist today in European peacemaking and global conflict prevention efforts. These have been discussed comprehensively elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

What is clear from the project consultation process is that, while there is general consensus that European peacemaking around the world can and should be strengthened further, there are different views on how this should be done – ranging from the creation of new institutions, to strengthening those efforts and actors that already exist.

Given this diversity of opinions, the paper is based on a number of key assumptions that should serve to move the debate forward - while at the same time respecting this diversity of opinions.

## Key assumptions informing the analysis

The paper builds on several key assumptions in presenting value-added, risks and institutional options for an EIP:

1. The European peacemaking and conflict prevention landscape today is more diverse than ever. At the same time, it is not yet a ‘saturated market’ where all needs are being met efficiently.
2. The increasingly complex peacemaking challenges that exist across the globe today require diverse responses by a range of actors at different levels, and with different scopes.
3. A new European organisation *can* have value-added and contribute towards tackling these complex challenges, *if* it addresses clearly articulated gaps in this already rich tapestry of actors, institutions and efforts. In other words, its ‘value added’ cannot be assumed, but needs to be reasoned and articulated carefully.

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<sup>1</sup> For recent examples, see: Gunilla, H. (2012) ‘Establishing the Knowledge Base of a Smart Power: a Blue Print for an EU institute for Peace’ (Brussels, Belgium: European Parliament). Middleton, R. et al. (2011) ‘Implementing the EU Concept on Mediation: Learning from the Cases of Sudan and the Great Lakes’ (Brussels, Belgium: European Parliament). Sherriff, A. et al. (2011) ‘Thematic Evaluation of European Commission Support to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding’ (Brussels, Belgium: ADE).

4. As with any institutional and policy change process, there are also inherent risks involved in creating a new organisation in what some perceive to be a 'crowded' field. These risks need to be clearly articulated also, and addressed in the design and functioning of any future organisation.

## Outline

Section 2 of the paper lays out the core benefits that proponents of a new institution argue an EIP can bring to European peacemaking. Section 3 then presents some of the risks that EIP critics have identified in the course of the project, and offers options for mitigating them. Section 4 identifies three institutional set-up options for an EIP: the 'Agency Model', based on experience from other European agencies, such as the EUISS; the 'Collaborative' or 'Hybrid Model', i.e. an institution that is closely affiliated with official EU structures but independent, similar to the United States Institute of Peace; and finally, the fully 'Autonomous Model', i.e. an institution such as a not-for profit organisation with a mandate to support European peacemaking, but fully independent from official institutions. The paper ends with a set of key questions in Section 5 that the EIP initiative needs to answer in order to move ahead in future.

## 2. What value can a European Institute of Peace add?

Based on a business modeling exercise,<sup>2</sup> the project informal Advisory Council elaborated in what way a European Institute of Peace could enhance the EU's and Europe's peacemaking capacities. This section provides a summary of the areas where an EIP could respond to current gaps identified.

### **Value # 1: Enhance the visibility, credibility, accessibility and comprehensiveness of the EU as a peacemaker.**

The multi-faceted and quite complicated institutional set-up of the European Union mean that its identity as an 'agent for peace' remains diffuse and somewhat opaque for external (and internal) actors. The EIP has the potential to contribute to a clearer and more coherent peacemaking identity for Europe, if it provides an institutional 'face' to EU peacemaking; and offers a coherent, substance-driven approach.

### **Value # 2: Exemplify and champion professional standards in mediation and negotiation in Europe (helping, in turn, to raise the profile and standards of mediation and negotiation worldwide)**

In a field that is currently diffuse and lacks coherent standard-setting, the EIP can serve to promote high-quality professional mediation practice in international peacemaking. Where EU institutions are currently lacking knowledge management systems on peacemaking, it could also add value by gathering and making available a systematised knowledge repository of best practice. Development of solid quality standards can, in turn, help to address the lack of global professional standards (and reinforce the perception of the EU as a global leader in peacemaking).

Systematic knowledge management and lesson-learning can also inform the development and offer of peace mediation support capacities.

### **Value # 3: Make the EU more 'accessible' on peacemaking issues**

There is to date no 'one-stop-shop', be that virtual or real, that interested conflict parties, or European peace actors, can go to in order to build networks with key European institutions, or access information and resources. By serving as a convener and 'hub' for European peacemaking, an EIP could help address this gap, taking into account and closely working with already existing networking efforts. This can help make the EU more accessible to outsiders when it comes to peacemaking, and streamlining information flows to and between peacemaking actors.

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.businessmodelgeneration.com](http://www.businessmodelgeneration.com)

#### **Value # 4: Amplify a professional peace-mediation network in Europe**

Efforts to network and coordinate international peace mediation actors are still in their infancy; and none currently exist that focus on networking of actors who are working on peace mediation issues *within* Europe. An EIP can help to network and raise the profile of peacemaking professionals from Europe and Regional Organisations that can deliver effective services in this area, for the EU and others.

#### **Value # 5: Give the EU a rapid and action-focused peacemaking capacity**

Mobilising flexible and rapid capacity and resources for international peace mediation, and making them available just when and where they are needed, remains a core challenge – not just in European peacemaking. An EIP can make a real contribution here, if it remains ‘unencumbered’ by existing institutional and bureaucratic obstacles. In this way, it could provide a capacity to act more quickly, and in contexts where EU institutions and Member States may not be able or willing to engage, for a number of reasons.

#### **Value # 6: Provide a neutral space for peacemaking, across different tracks**

Providing a safe space for peace efforts is a core competence and contribution that external actors can bring to conflict situations. Different actors bring a number of comparative advantages to this, at different levels: at times, governments are best placed to bring conflicting parties together; in other situations, multilateral or non-governmental organisations, or the academe, may be better placed. ‘Quasi-official’ yet independent organisations are often able to provide a comparative advantage that others may lack by virtue of being ‘labeled’ more clearly as one or another type of institution.<sup>3</sup> Providing such a safe space for peace efforts in Brussels can be a significant value-added of an EIP, when it draws on a clear benefit vis-à-vis other third parties, or even supports other third parties by providing venue, logistics and so on.

#### **Value # 7: Be visible when official EU institutions cannot act, and discreet when discretion is required**

There are times when EU institutions, due to political constraints, are challenged to dialogue with conflict parties via official channels, but still need to communicate ideas and actions. Here an EIP can provide a separate communication channel. At the same time, the EIP can also be simply a facilitator of negotiations and discussions where others are unable or unwilling to do so.

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the recent efforts by the United States Institute of Peace in Syria: Rogin, J. ‘Inside the Quiet Effort to Plan for a Post-Assad Syria’, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2012, *Foreign Policy*. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at <http://tiny.cc/xytzhw>

**Value # 8: Connect research, knowledge, experience and ideas with action to become a clearing-house for European peacemaking**

While much research exists on international peace mediation today, this is not always linked in effectively with policy-relevant discussions, or provided in a way that can inform decision-making and interventions. While several European think tanks exist that provide Member States and EU institutions with foreign policy analysis and advice, there is currently no ‘clearing house’ that connects research and knowledge on European peacemaking with relevant actors and action. The EIP could add real value here through partnerships with think tanks and academic institutions, acting as a ‘clearing house’ on European peacemaking knowledge and practice.

**Value # 9: Provide small, flexible and rapid grant-making for peacemaking efforts**

Despite a number of instruments that have been put in place to disburse funding more rapidly in conflict-affected countries, decision-making and disbursement of European funds for peacemaking remain slow and cumbersome.<sup>4</sup> The EIP could add value here through a small and rapid grant-making mechanism, including clear and transparent decision-making, rapid disbursement and nimble financial management systems. This can include support to interventions that are often difficult to fund in conflict contexts, such as pilot activities, scoping missions and small interventions such as scenario building or problem solving efforts.

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<sup>4</sup> See for example findings in Görtz, S. and Sherriff, A. (2012) ‘First Among Equals? The Instrument for Stability and Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in the EU’s New Financial Perspective’ Briefing Note No. 39, May 2012 (Maastricht, Belgium: European Centre for Development Policy Management).

### 3. What risks in setting up a new organisation?

As with any new and ambitious initiative, creating a novel organisation to tackle complex challenges also comes with certain risks. This section presents recurring concerns that were raised by interlocutors during project consultations, discussions of the informal Advisory Council and the Open Space meeting. Going beyond these discussions, we also here suggest options for how these could be mitigated. Most concerns relate to how the creation of an EIP would impact on existing actors and organisations in this field. Any future institutional set-up would need to carefully factor these risks into design and operations:

#### **Risk # 1: The EIP ends up acting in competition, rather than complementarity, with existing organisations active in this field**

‘Competition’ over scarce resources and opportunities is today a reality, not only in the peace mediation sector, but in non-governmental work more broadly. It is clear therefore that the EIP would need to seek collaborative partnerships and dialogue with other organisations working in this field. For example, the work of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict has evidenced that collaborative practice can create a global impact. At the same time, while the peace mediation sector may be growing, it has also become more sophisticated in setting up coordination and partnership mechanisms for organisations to work more in unison and complementarity, both on global policy advocacy agendas, as well as in specific crises.

#### **Risk # 2: The EIP takes attention and energy away from building internal EU capacity**

Those active in supporting EU conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding capacities have made significant achievements in recent years in putting these issues more firmly on the agenda, getting the EU to commit resources, and building dedicated institutional capacity (most recently in the newly established EEAS). These achievements may end up being reversed if attention, energy and resources are diverted to a new institution. Three factors can mitigate this risk: existing EU institutions need to be on board in the establishment of an EIP, recognise and appreciate its value-added for their own purposes, and see clearly how they can draw on an EIP to advance their own peacemaking work. In fact, evidence from ‘industrial clusters’ suggests that strong actors in a particular sector can and do benefit the entire sector more broadly, by driving innovation, creating more demand, and resulting in ‘spin-off’ industries.

#### **Risk # 3: The EIP as an international organisation undermines local peace initiatives and capacity**

This is a real risk that the peacemaking and peacebuilding fields have been recognising and tackling for a number of years. Solid and sophisticated approaches and partnership models have been developed by now that respect the primacy of local actors, and focus on building local peace

capacities. An EIP, like any other institution in this field, needs to apply good practice to avoid this risk, and ensure it acts in subsidiarity and complementarity with local peace efforts. In this, it could emulate some international NGOs' practice of formulating clear codes of conduct for their peace work. At the same time, the case for outside third parties in supporting local peace efforts is well-articulated and clear, and provides a solid basis for assessing an EIP's value added in any particular context. With the right set-up, an EIP could, for example, provide flexible and accessible ad-hoc advice that is often requested by local parties.

**Risk # 4: The EIP gets bogged down by the same obstacles and challenges to effective peacemaking that it is meant to help overcome**

If part of the rationale for the creation of a new organisation is that existing set-ups are bureaucratically cumbersome and often unable to act because of political constraints, then an EIP will need to be safeguarded against 'falling victim' to the same ailments. The institutional set-up and governance structure of an EIP would need to ensure that it can be close enough to EU and Member States to benefit from their leverage and act as a real 'service provider', while remaining independent enough to not come under the same bureaucratic and political logics. This is further discussed in Section 4.

**Risk # 5: In the current financial context, setting up a new organisation is difficult to justify and sustain financially.**

This is a risk that any new institution in the current environment needs to have answers for. It means that a comfortably funded and lavishly resourced EIP is neither feasible, nor desirable, in the first instance. To avoid this risk, an EIP would have to have an innovative organisational set-up – away from the large, expensive institutions of the past, towards more nimble, network-based structures, rather than occupying a lot of institutional or physical space.

**Risk # 6: 'Mission creep' and mandate confusion**

A new institution with a title as ambitious as 'European Institute of Peace' can risk rapidly broadening its mandate and mission across the entire conflict cycle and range of interventions, duplicating others' efforts. Mandate 'confusion' is partly inherent in the name 'European Institute of Peace', suggesting a very broad remit. For this to be avoided, mandate and mission need to be developed and circumscribed clearly. When first mooted the idea of an EIP, the principals envisioned a narrow focus on peace mediation and peacemaking for Europe, rather than the whole gamut of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Such a narrow focus can help avoid the risk of mission creep.

## 4. Institutional options for an EIP

The three main institutional options for setting up an EIP discussed by the informal Advisory Council to this project are:

1. The agency model
2. The collaborative, or hybrid model
3. The autonomous model

They are based on analysis of existing institutional set-ups of similar organisations elsewhere (such as the United States Institute of Peace, or swisspeace); and institutions close to the EU, mandated to work in other sectors (such as the European Institute of Technology).

### **Agency Model**

The Agency Model emulates the set-up and accountability structures of other EU Agencies, such as the EUISS, or the Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). As an integrated entity with close relationships to existing EU institutions as its main 'client', this will serve most closely the need to build internal EU capacity and have a dedicated entity focusing on supporting EU institutions. Funding for such an agency would come from Member States; or from within existing budget lines.

The advantage of the agency model would be to give EU institutions full ownership over the EIP's scope and activities and provide additional capacity, as it would act as a service agency dedicated to one client only. This model would also add significant 'weight' to the EIP. The risks of this fully integrated model are that such a new agency may face the same bureaucratic and political obstacles as current institutions. Full integration may also weaken its independence and impartiality, an important third party asset in any given conflict context.

### **Collaborative, 'Hybrid', Model**

This model would resemble the set-up and functioning of the US Institute of Peace for example; or Switzerland's swisspeace: established as independent entities but with close working relationships to a main client, which also has a role in its governance structure. Its funding as well as client-base could be more diversified than in the fully integrated model.

There are several advantages to this model: such an organisation may be more flexible and rapid than a fully integrated institution, e.g. in developing and implementing work and deploying experts at short notice. An 'arms-length' relationship with official EU actors can also offer plausible deniability for sensitive interventions, and may enable the EIP to engage with actors or in contexts that official EU institutions sometimes cannot. EU institutions could draw on it on a needs-basis, while it could also work with and for others. The

EIP may also have more leeway to independently design and implement peacemaking work in this set-up. There is however a higher risk with this model of creating 'another actor' in this field, with potential for increasing competition. It would also likely require more attention and time in order to build and maintain close working relationships and trust with EU institutions, and could face the challenge of 'being caught between the two stools' of official structures and the NGO community.

### **Autonomous Model**

The autonomous model would see an EIP set up as a fully independent entity, such as a not-for-profit organisation with no formal institutional ties to other EU entities, but with a mandate focused on supporting European peacemaking efforts. Its funding base would need to be quite diverse to make it sustainable.

The advantage of a fully autonomous organisation would be considerable leeway in independent action; and flexibility to innovate and develop new ideas and areas of work. There may be a higher risk here of duplicating already existing institutions' approaches and work. It may also be harder for such an autonomous organisation to build and maintain the close working relationships with official EU actors that may be needed to effectively advise and support the EU on peacemaking. EU institutions would have the least amount of influence and control in this institutional set-up, and could not necessarily rely on its resources and capacities always being available for its own purposes when needed, as an independent organisation would develop and work on its own portfolio of projects and assignments.

## 5. Outstanding questions

There are a number of outstanding questions that the debate on the EIP needs to address in future:

### # 1 What is in a name?

The mooted name '*European Institute of Peace*' has caused some discussion both in Europe and beyond. Opinion is mixed as well about the merits of echoing the name of the *United States Institute of Peace* so closely (with some interlocutors viewing the resonance as positive, others as negative).

One advantage of using the word '*Institute*' can be that it allows the EIP to have a broad and flexible mandate for education and training in conflict management skills and peace studies.

While there is no consensus on other names so far, two possible alternatives that have been suggested are the *European Centre of Peace* (to avoid the perception of the EIP being too research-focused) and *European Peace Agency*.

### # 2 How independent is independent?

One of the key issues that needs resolving regarding a future EIP relates to the 'closeness' (or otherwise) of the new body to existing EU institutions - and with that, its accountability, funding and relative independence.

The US Institute of Peace illustrates one end of the spectrum, with a particularly close relationship to its client, to the point where it is often viewed as a federal agency. This will be a key issue to resolve in defining the eventual mandate for an EIP.

### #3 How broad or narrow should its mandate be?

The initial non-paper put forward by Sweden and Finland limits the mandate of the EIP to peace mediation. Some of those consulted suggest that it could go further, for example by working on related issues, such as transitional justice, or working with the business community. There is also an argument to be made that any new organisation needs to reflect current trends towards better integrated and more holistic approaches to peace mediation and peacebuilding across the entire conflict cycle, and a range of interlocking conflict factors. On the other hand, this opens the door to significant mission creep.

#### **# 4 What geographical scope?**

Some interlocutors have advised that, at the outset at least, the EIP should focus its activities in Europe's own neighborhood and on a couple of priority regions, in order to avoid too wide geographic coverage.

An underlying and sensitive question is whether or not an EIP should be active *within* Europe: as one interlocutor from the International Peace Institute in New York argued: 'working on European internal issues would make an EIP more credible outside.' Such enhanced credibility would need to be carefully weighed against the sensitivities involved in internal engagement.

#### **#4 Location, location, location**

Discussions in the course of the project have also centered around the potential location for a future institute, including questions whether Brussels is the best venue necessarily, or whether an EIP would not benefit from being located in another Member State, similar to the Paris-based EUISS.

A dedicated EIP venue in Brussels would allow for discussions, facilitated dialogue, conferences etc. to take place under one roof and could become an attractive shared space for EIP stakeholders (helping to boost the EIP's networking function). It would also help build the vital close relations an EIP would need to have with European peacemaking actors, policy- and decision-makers, many of them located or with seats in Brussels. On the other hand, a location 'further away from the centre of power' may enhance its independence.

## 6. Next Steps

The European Parliament has commissioned the EEAS to undertake a cost-benefit analysis on the establishment of an EIP, through a 200,000 Euro contribution to fund a study, to be finalised in mid-October 2012. The analysis will aim to:

- Identify how an EIP could serve the needs of the EU in peace mediation
- Study options for the set-up of such as an institution and assess the costs and benefits of these options.
- Propose options available in the EU context for such an organisation, with different degrees of formal and informal interaction with EU structures.

This 18 months project supported by Sweden and Finland will terminate at the end of September 2012. As the EIP process will likely continue beyond the duration of this project, mediatEUr welcomes reflections, feedback and suggestions on the points raised in this paper.

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