

Concept for the Conference on Mediation in the OSCE Area (Bucharest, Palace of Parliament, 15-16 July 2013)

Organizers: Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation and the OSCE Secretariat, Centre for Conflict Prevention.

Background/Framework:

Mediation is instrumental in all phases of the conflict cycle. It has been recognized in the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation as “one of the most effective methods of preventing, managing and resolving conflicts”. Strengthening mediation efforts and capacities at the local, national, regional and global level is essential for addressing the entire spectrum of challenges related to the conflict cycle.

The OSCE, as a regional security Organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, is a prime instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation. Starting with the CSCE Helsinki Summit Document of 1992, the Organization has developed its capacities in this respect extensively. In Ministerial Council Decision 3/2011 participating States have recognized the need to further strengthen OSCE capabilities in the conflict cycle, including with regard to dialogue facilitation and mediation-support and entrusted the Secretary General specific tasks to this end. As part of the implementation of this Decision, the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre - having been designated as focal point for mediation-support - undertook efforts to maximize the continuity, consistency and effectiveness of OSCE engagement in conflict mediation and to strengthen the role of OSCE mediators.

The OSCE efforts are in sync with the efforts at the global/UN level with regard to strengthening mediation. The UN General Assembly adopted in 2011 by consensus the first ever UN Resolution on mediation, *Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution* and had a dedicated discussion on this topic in its 66th session. Furthermore, in September 2012 the UN developed the *Guidance for Effective Mediation*, a set of “mediation fundamentals” and guidance for their implementation.

Goal:

The goal of the Conference on mediation in the OSCE area is meant to contribute to raising awareness with regard to the importance of mediation as an essential tool throughout the conflict cycle, help building mediation capacity at the level of regional organizations, as well as enhancing the synergies among actors involved in mediation efforts and identifying ways of implementing concrete measures in this respect.

Objectives:

- Offer a framework of encounter between efforts at the UN level and at the regional level, in the OSCE area;

- Define more clearly the challenges that are encountered in the field of mediation in the OSCE area and beyond;
- Explore some of the fundamental elements that serve as pre-requisites for solid mediation efforts;
- Take stock of lessons learnt in mediation processes;
- Offer practical examples of best practices in mediation, from concrete situations;
- Explore how to better capitalize on Track II initiatives in mediation efforts;
- See how the OSCE can further contribute to global efforts with regard to mediation, in cooperation with other international and regional organizations;
- Feed into the Helsinki+40 Process debate with regard to how to further strengthen the OSCE capacities in mediation as part of the conflict cycle.

Target group: Practitioners, decision-makers in the field of mediation from OSCE participating States, the UN, OSCE and other regional organizations, NGOs, academic community.