



Federal Foreign Office



Peace Mediation Framework

I. Our approach to peace mediation

Peace mediation refers to the efforts by a third party accepted by all sides to facilitate the resolution of conflict through formal and informal negotiations and dialogue held on a voluntary basis. The procedures and instruments of peace mediation can be used to prevent, manage and resolve intra- and interstate conflicts at various levels of society (“tracks”).

The mediation process is based on principles such as self-determination, respect, transparency and openness towards the outcome of the process. In addition, our approach to peace mediation follows the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation drawn up in 2012.

As a third-party mediator, Germany is closely committed to these principles, while at the same time taking into account its own policy interests. We do not engage as a mediator in, or supporter of, mediation processes out of purely altruistic motives; rather we act on the basis of our own interests and values, which we convey in an open and transparent manner to the conflict parties and the international community.

We are committed to the principle of multiparty. We assess carefully whether our own interests in the course and outcome of a process or our obligations resulting from political alliances and multilateral treaties run counter to the interests of the conflict parties. If this is the case, we will choose a different role in the peace process concerned, such as supporting only one conflict party or focusing on security-related efforts or military engagement.

Assuming the lead role in a mediation process implies renouncing any parallel use of military or political pressure to increase the parties’ willingness to negotiate or to enforce a one-sided outcome. In particular, when obligations resulting from political alliances and multilateral treaties exist, we assess carefully whether a German lead role is in the interest of all parties concerned.

However, being aware and making good use of the fact that Germany's political weight can have a positive impact on the conflict parties' commitment to a peace process constitutes an integral part of our approach. In doing so, we draw on past experiences where Germany has achieved a positive impact at local, regional and national level.

II. Embedding peace mediation into our stabilisation strategies

Whether by supporting third parties (project funding) or engaging directly, we use instruments such as mediation and dialogue to prevent or manage conflicts. These are essential components of coherent crisis management. Simultaneously, mediation processes can serve as a starting point for additional stabilisation and support efforts, for example, in cases of pending comprehensive transformation processes, such as demilitarisation, promoting the rule of law, and security-sector or constitutional reform. In such situations, mediating in conflicts means creating entry points for further engagement that allow us to deploy the whole range of instruments available to our Directorate-General for Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation, Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Assistance in a concerted manner. Subsequently, we underpin our efforts through follow-up support. Combined with financial resources at our disposal for crisis prevention and stabilisation efforts, we thus establish a sound basis for our mediation efforts.

III. Why we are expanding our efforts

Worldwide, there has been a marked increase in the need for professional negotiation and mediation. Today, many conflicts occur in increasingly complex and asymmetrical contexts that require a focused foreign policy with tailored and integrated instruments in the area of crisis prevention and response. Among these instruments, values-based, principled and methodologically sound peace mediation can facilitate precisely the kind of crisis intervention needed to pursue both peace-policy considerations *and* political interests when engaging in conflict resolution.

There are significant expectations in conflict regions and within Germany that we should play a strong and more active role as a mediator or a supporter of mediation and negotiation processes. In accordance with the guidelines, Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace (2017), Germany prefers civil conflict resolution measures whenever possible. The procedures and methods of peace mediation, along with the access generated by the process, can re-establish contact and trust between conflict parties and keep channels of communication open.

Peace mediation can help to bridge the societal and ideological divisions between conflict parties, particularly because its possible uses cover the entire spectrum from conflict prevention and supporting ceasefire negotiations to implementing agreements and the political reform processes arising from them. Germany regards peace mediation as a preferred foreign policy instrument for advancing the peaceful resolution of conflicts in regions of political importance to it, facilitating long-term access and positioning itself as a reliable partner – also and especially in light of current tensions within the multilateral system and a challenged international order.

The willingness, in principle, to also employ security-sector instruments when responding to crises makes a comprehensive approach possible. Our practice of dealing with our past – including the reconciliation with France and Poland – and our first-hand experience with the process of reunification, as well as with federalism, are of interest in many crisis contexts. What also makes us an effective mediation actor is that we have the necessary instruments and financial resources to provide long-term and therefore reliable support as part of an overall strategy. This unfolds special relevance for a number of long-term processes that can typically result from mediation – namely, the demobilisation and reintegration of fighters, the drafting of a constitution, security-sector reform and/or stabilisation projects resulting from peace agreements.

Germany's position and responsibility within the international community, along with its desire to be an active agent for peace, set the parameters for its strong commitment to peace mediation.

The spectrum of possible German engagement – ranging from funding projects and conducting multilateral cooperation to taking the lead in mediation processes – enables and requires a context-specific and tailor-made approach to present day conflict settings.

IV. Forms of German engagement

We take a multi-dimensional approach:

German direct engagement in close coordination with our partners

When we engage directly as a mediator, we support various formats, send special envoys or conduct shuttle mediation, all with the aim of helping two or more parties to reach an agreement on a certain issue. In these efforts, we work closely with our partners, both governments and civil-society organisations. The prerequisite for any engagement is that we must be welcome as an agent for peace, bring added value through our political weight and do not duplicate any efforts by our partners. We ensure that our activities receive the broadest possible support from the parties involved, as well as from relevant stakeholders and multilateral actors (e.g. the UN, OSCE, EU and AU).

Supporting and coordinating mediation processes by other actors

Supporting third parties in mediation processes is a crucial part of Germany's engagement in the field of peace mediation. The third parties we support may already have direct access to key actors that allows them to react in a swift and informal manner to complex conflict dynamics. Furthermore, our approach to funding is often aimed at the level of civil society where direct and regular dialogue between conflict parties is just as necessary as it is at the high political level. When working with project partners, we emphasise close and strategic cooperation, especially in politically sensitive processes. We are engaged not only in hot spots such as Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, but also in contexts where the focus is on conflict prevention or long-term transformation processes.

Supporting multilateral engagement and strategic cooperation at state level

We provide both funding and expertise to the mediation support units of the UN, the OSCE and the EU, and the processes they steer, and strive to deepen bilateral cooperation in the area of mediation. We believe that the UN, and in particular its Mediation Support Unit (MSU), should remain a strong mediation actor. We will advocate inter alia for this and for an expansion of mediation activities during our stint in the UN Security Council and afterwards. We recognise the important role the OSCE and the EU play in expanding mediation activities at regional level and support both the EEAS mediation team and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre's Mediation Support Team. With some bilateral partners, like Switzerland, we are implementing, inter alia, joint training initiatives.

Conceptual development/professionalisation

Germany's peace-mediation methodology is based on comprehensive and theoretically substantiated expertise, and is also practised and shared through capacity-building efforts by a particularly diverse range of civil-society actors in this field. This expertise is closely integrated into the conceptual development of peace mediation. For example, we have been working closely with the Initiative Mediation Support Germany (IMSD) since 2014 on developing background material and building capacities. Since 2018, we have been collaborating with the European University Viadrina, with the express aim of creating an interface for knowledge transfer between academia and practice in the field of peace mediation.

V. Definitions of peace mediation and dialogue support, frame of reference

In contrast to **mediation**, which usually concludes with an agreement, **dialogue** processes focus on establishing contact and/or promoting understanding between conflict parties, without having to reach concrete agreements. Dialogues between members of the government and the opposition, between opposing civil-society actors, or aimed at including all levels of society (national dialogues) can help to prepare the ground and support peace processes, as well as to structure larger social change processes.

Mediation and dialogue processes can be assisted by **mediation support** teams. A mediation support team is available to mediators or dialogue facilitators and tends to comprise experts on conflict analysis, process design, constitutional reform, transitional justice, demilitarisation, reconstruction, logistics, etc. This support helps to ensure an effective process by analysing and addressing the issues inherent to the conflict and its lasting resolution in a professional way.

Mediation procedures and instruments can be part of **traditional diplomacy** and used by diplomatic staff. That said, mediation is not the same as diplomacy. For one thing, diplomats do not automatically possess mediation skills; rather, these must be acquired. Furthermore, diplomacy's remit extends much further than that of mediation. It includes, for example, bilateral negotiations, unilateral statements, the imposition of sanctions and the targeted use of political power to assert one's interests.

Our approach to peace mediation adheres to the United Nation's guiding principles for mediation (Guidance for Effective Mediation, 2012). In addition, we also bring some aspects of German foreign policy to bear. Our approach can be broken down as follows with regard to both the projects we fund and our own efforts:

Preparedness

Besides ensuring that our mediation teams possess the necessary skills and methods, before processes can begin, we make certain that the conflict analysis is comprehensive and takes diverse viewpoints into account and that the process design is based on realistic assessments.

Consent

Another important prerequisite for launching a peace mediation process is the willingness of all parties involved in a conflict to engage voluntarily in the process and with the mediator, as this is vital for lasting conflict resolution.

Impartiality

The mediating party must represent the interests of both or all conflict parties in the process equally. However, multipartiality must not be equated with neutrality.

Inclusivity

The inclusive design of a process can be the decisive factor for ensuring long-term success in the resolution of a conflict. Peace agreements often fail because key actors were not included. We decide whether or not to include a party based on the following questions: Can a party help to bring about a solution to the conflict? Is a party directly or indirectly affected by it? Can a party help to shape possible solutions, and will it be affected by their implementation? Whenever multi-track approaches or national dialogues can increase the likelihood of reaching a lasting and comprehensive solution, we believe these options should be pursued.

National Ownership

The content and outcome of a mediation process should be defined by those who are immediately affected – not by us or by third parties we support, as this would lower the prospects of ending the conflict. Wherever possible, we aim to take into account and support local approaches to conflict resolution.

Normative Frameworks

Mediation and dialogue processes are necessarily subject to certain norms. Compliance with or abuse of norms relevant to peace mediation may have consequences for actors, those affected and the viability of agreements. That is why, both in our own efforts and our support for third parties, we take particular care to ensure adherence to the norms of German foreign policy and accepted standards of international law.

Coherence and Coordination

The large number of actors in a highly competitive field must not be allowed to cause ineffectiveness, duplication or lack of coordination in the processes. We therefore advocate coordinating approaches efficiently and exchanging relevant information widely between third parties. We do this with the means at our disposal – as a member of the UN, the OSCE and the EU, as well as through our strategic partnerships.

Quality Peace Agreements

We believe that the issues addressed in a mediation process and included in the resulting peace agreement must also be the ones that lead to lasting resolution of the conflict. We therefore consider it essential that mediation and dialogue processes are enriched by the necessary expertise (mediation support).

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