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To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Council Conclusions on EU Peace Mediation

Delegations will find in the Annex the Council Conclusions on EU Peace Mediation, as adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 7 December 2020.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS
ON EU PEACE MEDIATION**

1. The Council reaffirms its support to peace mediation as a key tool of conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding under the Common Foreign and Security Policy when addressing risks to peace. In this context, the Council welcomes the new Concept on EU Peace Mediation (WK 12466/2020), which builds upon and replaces the 2009 Concept on strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities (doc. 15779/09). The new Concept reflects a heightened ambition for the European Union (EU) in the practice of peace mediation.
2. Violent conflicts and emerging new security challenges represent threats to peace and stability. The Council calls for timely, more proactive and resolute EU engagement in conflict prevention and resolution, including through value-based peace mediation.
3. The Council stresses the EU's value-based approach to peace mediation, rooted in its foundational values. The Council reaffirms the European Union's strong commitment to further advancing universal values for all. Respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights will continue to underpin all aspects of the internal and external policies of the European Union.
4. The Council stresses the EU's commitment to upholding and strengthening the rules-based international order, with the United Nations at its core, and ensuring effective multilateralism based on the respect for international law norms and principles, international humanitarian law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, also through human rights education. It recalls the UN's role as the EU's natural strategic partner in preventing conflicts and resolving crises across the globe.

5. The Council emphasises that conflict sensitivity and the ‘do no harm’ principle guide EU mediation engagement. The Council recognises that mediation and peace building can be lengthy, non-linear and iterative processes, and that risks associated with involvement should not preclude engagement.
6. The EU and its Member States will promote women’s and girls’ full enjoyment of human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a priority across all areas of action. In this context gender mainstreaming and women’s full, equal and meaningful access to, and participation and leadership in, political decision-making and peace processes at all levels, are a specific priority for the EU, therefore the Council stresses the need for specific measures in this regard. The Council reiterates the EU's commitment to the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and welcomes the contribution the Concept on EU Peace Mediation makes to the implementation of the EU policy framework on WPS.
7. The Council recalls that peace mediation is part of the EU’s Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises, in which it forms part of a politically and operationally coherent EU response based on a shared conflict analysis in the context of the EU’ Global Strategy. Applying the Integrated Approach to mediation requires the EU to further strengthen the way it brings together Member States, institutions, expertise and relevant instruments. The Council confirms that the Integrated Approach provides the right framework for determining which tools and instruments the EU should usefully draw on in its mediation approach to a specific context. In this regard, civilian CSDP missions could also play a supporting role in peace monitoring and mediation, where relevant and according to their respective mandate.
8. Considering the complex nature of current conflicts, requiring a multi-track approach, the Council stresses the importance of supporting inclusive peace processes that comply with international law, pursue the buy-in of stakeholders at the international and regional levels and involve all levels and segments of society, ranging from political leaders to civil society and local communities, including young generations, taking into account the particularly vulnerable situation of children in armed conflict.

9. The Council emphasizes the need for EU's peace mediation efforts to take into account the effect of climate change on peace and security. The Council recognizes that climate change is a threat multiplier that exacerbates conflict, endangering peacebuilding, and creating new unforeseen instabilities. The Council stresses that climate-related risks must therefore be consistently considered in conflict-prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies.
10. The Council emphasises the importance of cultural heritage in conflict prevention and resolution, promoting education on this issue, and calls for further attention to these aspects in EU peace mediation.
11. The Council emphasises the importance of working with mediation actors, in particular with those that share the EU's respect for a principled and value-based approach to peace mediation, notably with multilateral and regional organisations that can draw on unique relationships of trust and open up for facilitated dialogues with peace and conflict actors within their regions, such as the OSCE. It also encourages partnerships and cooperation with civil society organisations and local actors, including those who represent the countries and regions undergoing violent conflict.
12. The Council highlights the need to make full and timely use of the EU's leverage and conflict sensitive tools to support EU peace mediation objectives and to engage conflicting parties in dialogue with a view to building and sustaining peace.
13. The Council considers that continued capacity building and training of, provided by EU agencies, institutions and Member States, as well as practical mediation guidance to, EU mediation actors, including MS, and the EU's partners, with an emphasis on issues of increasing importance to peace mediation, such as preservation of cultural heritage, digital technologies, mental health and psychosocial support, climate change, limited access to natural resources, in particular water, and environmental degradation will be important to ensure the continued evolution of EU mediation practice.

14. Conflict prevention and mediation considerations should be reflected in EU strategic and programming documents and mainstreamed into the work of the Council within the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Council invites the EEAS to report to the Political and Security Committee on the progress made on the main elements set out in the Concept within one year, and on an annual basis thereafter.
