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International Security
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Stefan Krümpelmann; Claudia Major

Enter the European Institute of Peace: Competing with or strengthening the European Union?

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SWP

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
German Institute
for International and
Security Affairs

Ludwigkirchplatz 3-4
10719 Berlin
Phone +49 30 880 07-0
Fax +49 30 880 07-100
www.swp-berlin.org
swp@swp-berlin.org

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Dr. Claudia Major is deputy head of SWP's International Security Division

Stefan Krümpelmann is currently working as an intern in the International Security Division

Introduction¹

This year 2013 might well witness the birth of yet another European (although not EU) institution: apparently, several European states, led by Sweden, are planning to launch a European Institute of Peace (EIP) in an effort to strengthen the European mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution capacities.

Various politicians have strongly advocated the idea, mainly Franziska Brantner, Carl Bildt and Alain Lamassoure. The most recent and influential non-paper, the so-called “Draft Concept Paper”, dates from April 2013. It has probably the highest chances to be implemented. The paper is attributed to the Swedish Foreign Ministry and German Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Franziska Brantner.²

Sweden has directly approached a handful of European states and invited them to participate both in political and financial terms in the project. Interestingly, these states comprise of both new and old European Union (EU) members (among them Poland, Hungary and Finland) as well as non-EU countries, such as Switzerland and Norway. This underpins the institute’s planned nature as an endeavour independent from the EU. Its precise relationship with the EU has been a matter of debate, as has the EIP’s added value to the existing European capacities.

Given that the idea to set up an EIP now seemingly come to fruition, it seems worthwhile to investigate both how the debate emerged and what exactly it is that the founding fathers envisioned for the EIP. This article aims to provide an overview of the current state of discussion by structuring, examining and comparing the various ideas surrounding a potential EIP. It also seeks to assess to what extent the most recent Concept Paper takes into consideration the previous suggestions and discussions.

1. How the debate emerged

At first sight, the EU seems to possess the relevant capacities (institutions, concepts and resources) to engage in mediation and conflict prevention. In 2009, the EU published its “Concept on Strengthening EU

Mediation and Dialogue”.³ It claimed that the Union had an excellent position to undertake mediation worldwide but needed a more systematic approach. To assure future mediation efforts, it outlined coherence, comprehensiveness, an appropriate assessment of risks and the support of human rights as well as the participation of women as guiding principles.

In terms of institutions and actors, the European External Action Service (EEAS) itself has been part of the EU’s efforts to streamline its mediation capacities. It incorporates i.a. the Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation Instruments (CPPBM) Division which supports EU actors in their mediation efforts. These actors include EU Delegations, Common Security and Defence Policy missions and EU Special Representatives (EUSR) who are engaged in facilitating dialogue and talks with conflict parties.

However, as a study commissioned by the European Parliament (EP) sets out, these mechanisms still suffer severe shortcomings: the current lack of a rapid expert deployment for mediation services, adequate and coherent evaluation of past missions, mediation engagement with proscribed actors and the set-up of a forum and events involving EU decision-makers.⁴ Decision-making processes can be tedious and rely heavily on consent by the EU members. As a result, critics of the status quo have called for the creation of a European Institute of Peace as a non-EU body to fill the existing gaps.

According to Sweden’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt, the idea of an EIP emerged in three distinct places at roughly the same time.⁵ Firstly, former Finnish president and Nobel Peace Prize winner Martti Ahtisaari called for the establishment of such an institute on April 1st, 2009. He particularly underpinned the need for improved learning from past lessons and suggested the potential EIP to be an extension of the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS).⁶

³ General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue, 2009.

⁴ Peter Brorsen, European Institute of Peace: Costs, Benefits and Options, Final Report on a Study Commissioned by the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2012.

⁵ European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs, Workshop on the Establishment of an EU Institute for Peace. video recording, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/video?event=20120920-1430-COMMITTEE-AFET> (accessed April 12, 2013).

⁶ Elitsa Vucheva, EU Could Do More for Peace, Ahtisaari Says, EU Observer, 2.4.2009. <http://euobserver.com/foreign/27893> (retrieved April 29, 2013).

¹ The authors would like to thank Tobias Pietz (ZIF) for his very valuable comments on this paper. The authors are nonetheless solely responsible for its content.

² European Institute of Peace. Creating a Hub for Peace Mediation, Informal Dialogue, and Knowledge Development. Draft Concept Paper, April 2013.

Independently of that, Bildt himself, together with the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Stubb developed similar notions into a joint non-paper that was addressed to EU High Representative Catherine Ashton in 2010.⁷ They especially referred to the limits of traditional diplomacy and emphasised the added value that capacities beyond those available to high-level decision-makers could have. They also brought up the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) as a potential model for an EIP.

Thirdly, the idea of a European Institute of Peace also gained increasing attention among the members of the European Parliament (MEP) and was particularly supported by German MEP Franziska Brantner and French MEP Alain Lamassoure.

Since the initial proposals, several articles and studies have been published on the issue. First of all, there is the initial 2010 “blue print” developed by Gunilla Herolf in a study commissioned by the EP.⁸ The EP further commissioned a cost-benefit analysis by Peter Brorsen that was finalized in October 2012 and complemented by a study of the added value and financial appraisal by Huib Poot, Achim Vogt und Max van der Sleen in March 2013.⁹ The European Forum for International Mediation and Dialogue mediatEUR has advocated the initiative through a project jointly funded by the Swedish and Finnish Ministries of Foreign Affairs.¹⁰ Beyond that, Jonas Claes of the USIP issued a brief report on the topic as well.¹¹ Other insightful sources of information on the EIP were numerous workshops and seminars, such as a workshop in the EP’s Committee on Foreign Affairs initiated and chaired by Franziska Brantner and held on September 20th, 2012 as well as three workshops organised by

the Irish EU Presidency and the EP in Paris, Berlin and Sofia in 2013.¹² The most recent step was a high-level conference in Brussels on May 28th, 2013, which was jointly organised by the EP, the Irish EU Council Presidency and the EEAS.

While the tenor in these publications and debates mostly (not always though) is that an EIP could indeed help to enhance European mediation and conflict prevention capacities, the nuances vary. These include questions such as how to prioritize the potential tasks or how manage the institute’s relations to the EU.

2. Gaps to be filled: the EIP’s potential tasks and functions

The advocates of an EIP are convinced that simply building upon the current EU institutions would leave gaps that can severely hamper EU efforts to make an impact in the realm of mediation and peace consolidation. The proposed solution to filling these gaps is the EIP. Four main fields appear to be most important.

Engaging actively in mediation and informal negotiations

As mentioned above, a wide range of actors is involved in mediation efforts in conflict regions within the current EU system. Apart from the Member States themselves and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, there are the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) and Heads of EU Delegations (HODs), for instance. While these can help to facilitate dialogue between conflict parties they are not specialized and trained mediators and serve a much broader range of responsibilities. It has hence been proposed that representatives from the EIP should engage actively in on-the-ground mediation missions, similarly to the work of the USIP. Herolf’s initial blueprint did not specify this task other than that the EIP could work as an informal negotiator.¹³ Since then, two aspects have become most prominent.

Firstly, there is the need for engagement when other EU institutions face political constraints. Due to its intended character as independent from the EU, the EIP could, for instance, play a role in talks with proscribed actors. While this would naturally require the

7 Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Foreign Minister Stubb and Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt propose Establishment of the European Institute of Peace, 3.9.2010, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=199709&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (retrieved April 18, 2013).

8 Gunilla Herolf, Establishing the knowledge base of a smart power: a blue print for an EU Institute for Peace, Study commissioned by the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2012.

9 Brorsen, Costs, Benefits and Options.; Huib Poot/Achim Vogt/Max van der Steen, M., European Added Value – Financial Appraisal. European Institute of Peace: Costs, Benefits and Options. Study commissioned by the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2013.

10 mediatEUR, A European Institute of Peace? Value-added, Risks and Options, Discussion Paper, 2012.; Irina Bratosin/Lukas Krienbuehl, European Institute of Peace: Advisory Council Meeting on 23rd of March 2012, Berne Report, 2012.

11 Jonas Claes, Toward a European Institute of Peace: Innovative Peacebuilding or Excessive Bureaucracy?, Peace Brief 141, 2013.

12 EP Committee on Foreign Affairs, Workshop.

13 Herolf, Establishing the Knowledge Base of a Smart Power, p.5.

generation of an enormous amount of trust on both sides, it could help to keep channels open that would otherwise be closed due to high-level decisions. Brorsen's study as well as Claes' USIP-report identified this potential Track 1.5-diplomacy as one of the most pressing requirements for European states to play a more valuable part in international peacekeeping.¹⁴ The 2013 Concept Paper has assigned this issue enormous importance. It points to the increasing intra-state nature of conflicts, which makes engagement on a less official level all the more important. Nonetheless, the authors are eager to emphasize that direct mediation by EIP members will only happen in few selected cases.¹⁵

Secondly, there appears to be agreement among the proponents of the EIP that a similar need exists for a more rapid deployment of mediation specialists in crisis regions. Even when they are not directly undertaking mediation efforts they can provide guidance and advice for those officials who are involved. In accordance with the general ambition to provide for more accessible measures this could help to overcome cumbersome bureaucratic processes. More specifically, Brorsen suggests that the EIP maintain a "10 member expert roster ready for quick deployment and short notice process oriented-advice" that would work on other issues when not deployed.¹⁶

Poot, Vogt and van der Steen specify this further by assuming that this expert roster could work a total of 1500 days per year in the field, if every member was deployed 40 per cent of the time. They also speak of a mobilization at 48 hours' notice.¹⁷

The mediatEUr Discussion Paper underpins the added value of specialized mediation experts that would lie in the world-wide exemplification of high mediation standards and would thus go beyond the success in each individual case.¹⁸

The 2013 Concept Paper Swedish initiative envisions the "rapid and flexible mobilization of high-quality expertise in support of mediation and dialogue" as a core function for the EIP. It specifies further that the institute could provide such support not only on behalf of the EU but also other actors or the conflict parties themselves.¹⁹

¹⁴ Brorsen, Costs, Benefits & Options, p.14.; Claes, Toward a European Institute of Peace, p.2.

¹⁵ Draft Concept Paper, p. 1,4;

¹⁶ Brorsen, Costs, Benefits & Options, p.14.

¹⁷ Poot/Vogt/van der Steen, European Added Value, p. 36.

¹⁸ mediatEUr, Value-added, Risks and Options, p.7.

¹⁹ Draft Concept Paper, p.3.

Providing training to a wide range of actors involved in mediation

At the EP's Committee on Foreign Affairs workshop on the EIP, Roeland van de Geer, EUSR for the Horn of Africa, underlined the need for better training in mediation for EUSRs and other EU officials in conflict regions. He highlighted that individuals are chosen for these roles primarily for their knowledge on the respective region but that they often lack an extensive training in mediation and facilitating dialogue. As an example, he pointed to a lack of awareness of the conflict cycle causing false assumptions about the phase a conflict is in. According to him, the EIP could provide, for instance, a mediation toolbox that would help avoid such issues.²⁰

While there appears to be no consensus on the exact degree and extent of training to be delivered by the EIP, its proponents agree that it should include some sort of training component. In her study for the EP, Herolf argued that while Member States should still train their mediation experts, the EIP should provide guidelines on this training. Furthermore, it should potentially take over parts such as the debriefing and analyzing of mistakes as this was a sensitive issue best carried out by an independent institution.²¹

In a similar vein, Brorsen does not see the EIP as becoming a centre for training in its own right. Instead, he favours the assignment of a Training Orientation Officer, tasked with providing information about and maintaining relations with relevant training institutions that could be attended by interested individuals.²²

Antje Herrberg, from mediatEUr, calls for an extensive training programme to be established by the EIP, forming a long-term "training infrastructure and process, which will include quality standards and control".²³

Clearly, the institution's intended size and amount of personnel will substantially influence how such a training component will look like.

As it looks now, the Concept Paper for the EIP includes training for officials of the EU and other organisations

²⁰ EP Committee on Foreign Affairs, Workshop.

²¹ Herolf, Establishing the Knowledge Base for a Smart Power, p.9f.

²² Brorsen, Costs, Benefits and Options, p. 14.

²³ Antje Herrberg, The Challenges of European Peace Mediation - The European Institute of Peace as an Opportunity, in: Tanja Tamminen (Ed.): Strengthening the EU's Peace Mediation Capacities: Leveraging for Peace through New Ideas and Thinking. Helsinki 2012, pp.55-68 (61).

in an attempt to add to existing services by the EU bodies, Member States and NGOs.²⁴ In how far this training will happen in-house or rather be based on deploying experts in other institutions to perform training duties is not specified.

Serving as a centre for research and knowledge, and evaluation

In one way or another, a research and evaluation component is included in all proposals for the EIP. mediatEUr has been particularly busy underpinning the need for such a knowledge hub. In their Discussion Paper, they call for the EIP to become a “clearing house” in that it connects research with relevant actors and actions.²⁵ Herrberg places an emphasis on establishing a knowledge base on all previous mediation efforts in order to capitalize on and learn lessons from earlier experiences. Furthermore, she as well as mediatEUr’s Irina Bratosin in cooperation with Lukas Krienbuehl of swisspeace, maintain that an EIP could help to create a more comprehensive and coherent European conflict prevention and mediation concept. This could be based on research and the evaluation of previous missions.²⁶

Again drawing parallels to the USIP, Claes also argues that by building extensive knowledge on conflict areas, an institute could serve to highlight and anticipate tensions between groups in these regions.²⁷ Brorsen envisions this component of the EIP as constituting a gateway at which interested users can find all sorts of relevant information on peacebuilding and mediation issues.²⁸ There is far-reaching agreement that such a centre for knowledge can only be accomplished through close interaction with other relevant actors in the field such as think-tanks and NGOs.

Luis Peral offers an alternative proposal for the EIP that is almost exclusively focused on such an evaluation of previous efforts and anticipation of potential conflicts on a global scale. He argues that the EIP should not engage in mediation itself but should solely monitor existing engagements and identify opportunities for involvement. This engagement should not be carried out by the institute itself

though, but by EU actors or NGOs, for instance. As such, while remaining independent it would merely have an advisory capacity building on the development of “a peace and conflict impact assessment framework”.²⁹ As the Swedish focus is on mediation, however, Peral’s suggested sole concentration on such evaluation is not very likely to materialise.

Providing financial support, and advice on financial support for mediation efforts

In terms of the role that the EIP is to play with regard to funding third-party engagements views differ. mediatEUr calls for the EIP to provide rapid funds for mediation efforts, hence overcoming bureaucratic impediments and increasing flexibility and transparency.³⁰ At the same time, Brorsen believes that such an ambition was too far-reaching and that the focus should instead be on simply establishing a Mediation Funding Expert who has the task of providing advice to third-parties on funding opportunities, e.g. within the EU or its Member States. The scope of this task would be comparable to that of the Training Orientation Officer in his respective area of expertise.³¹

The extent of financial support that the EIP itself can provide obviously depends on the amount of funding it receives from the participating Member States. The Concept Paper entails the possibility that “depending on circumstances, the EIP may bear the costs of deploying external mediation and dialogue experts”.³²

3. Obstacles to overcome: the EIP’s potential risks

Despite their agreement that there are gaps to be filled within the European mediation and conflict prevention capacities, the EIP’s proponents acknowledge that there are areas of concern about the institute’s creation. Three aspects are most prominent here.

24 Draft Concept Paper, p.4.

25 mediatEUr, Value-added, Risks and Options, p.9.

26 Herrberg, *The Challenges of European Peace Mediation*, p. 59;

Bratosin/Krienbuehl, *Berne Report*, p.3.

27 Claes, *Toward a European Institute of Peace*, p.2.

28 Brorsen, *Costs, Benefits and Options*, p.14.

29 Peral, L. (2012). *A European-engendered Peace Institute – Give it a Chance*, in: Tanja Tamminen (Ed.): *Strengthening the EU’s Peace Mediation Capacities: Leveraging for Peace through New Ideas and Thinking*. Helsinki 2012, pp.69-77.

30 mediatEUr, *Value-added, Risks and Options*, p.9.

31 Brorsen, *Costs, Benefits and Options*, p.14.

32 Draft Concept Paper, p.3.

Avoiding duplication or competition with other organizations and EU agencies

This appears to be the most severe point of scepticism the idea of an EIP has attracted so far. The Swedish initiative envisions the EIP to work outside of existing EU structures. One could argue that when Member States actively participate in setting up an entirely new entity outside of the EU, they might be less inclined to invest in both: the new (EIP) and the old (EU) structures. To put it bluntly, the member state's support for the EIP risks going at the expense of the support for the EEAS. As the EU is enhancing its own capacities, as for instance in the EEAS' mediation engagements, it might end up competing over work and resources (both political and financial) with the newly founded EIP. These worries are further amplified by the fact that both the interaction and coordination with the EU are not yet entirely clear, even though the 2013 Concept Paper makes a clear effort to determine them.

According to the Concept Paper, the EIP will be linked to the EU through representatives of the EEAS, the Commission and the EP who will all serve on the EIP's Board for Governors. This Board is to be its highest governing body, the EU institutions will hence be part of the strategic direction of the EIP.³³ To a certain extent, EU bodies will be involved in EIP decision-making processes. It remains to be seen whether this is enough to ensure the willingness and the effectiveness necessary to coordinate tasks properly.

The authors of the Concept Paper envision the EIP to work in assistance of the EEAS and potentially also other EU bodies, and other international organisations or NGOs. The EEAS, for instance, would be able to "request the EIP to take on tasks".³⁴ This, however, remains an unclear concept and will need to be specified further. For instance, it will be important to see to what extent the EIP will be obliged to work on requests by the EEAS if its capacities are already devoted to tasks on behalf of other organisations.

MediatEUr expresses concern that the EIP's mandate could broaden quickly both in terms of regions in which it engages as well as in the types of missions.³⁵ This might be particularly possible if the EIP is to take on tasks in support of a broad range of actors and organisations. Peace mediation and conflict preven-

tion is a broad field and it will be important not to interfere with other initiatives. For instance, the work of NGOs should be complemented rather than replaced to not diminish the effectiveness of other ongoing mediation efforts. The Concept Paper claims that the EIP should work in support of NGOs as well. However, with such a broad range of actors for which the institute is intended to work, this indeed carries a certain risk of mandate confusion. Especially with the naturally limited capabilities the EIP will have due to its small size, this might lead to frustration as possibly only a minority of requests could be carried out.

Justifying the creation of an institute in times of financial crisis

The lack of financial commitment to setting up an institute is the most blatant obstacle in its way. Given the broad austerity measures most European countries had to implement as a result of the Eurozone crisis, this is understandable. As a result, Claes has called the EIP proposal "the right initiative at the wrong time".³⁶ Poot, Vogt and van der Steen calculate the costs in a basic scenario with the EIP comprising of 15 staff members to be between 8.8 and 9.6 million Euros over a three year period, depending on the institutional setup (see section 4 of this paper).³⁷ This estimation of roughly three million Euros per year is picked up in the Concept Paper.³⁸

Advocates of the EIP like Franziska Brantner and Carl Bildt are eager to emphasize that a small and focused EIP would be financially beneficial in the long-run as it could help to avoid the consequential costs of armed conflicts.³⁹ While several studies seem to support this view, it might not be enough to convince a broad range of European states to contribute.⁴⁰

Interestingly, the EP's budget committee had already taken steps to prepare a legal foundation for EU-funds being allocated to the creation of an EIP. Funding the institute by means of this EP budget line, however, would have meant a closer tie to the EU and a closer

33 Ibid, p.5.

34 Ibid, p.8.

35 mediatEUr, Value-added, Risks and Options, p.11;

36 Claes, Toward a European Institute of Peace, p.2.

37 Poot/Vogt/van der Steen, European Added Value, p.9.

38 Draft Concept Paper, p.7.

39 Franziska Brantner/Alain Lamassoure/Carl Bildt, Flexibel, innovative und unabhängig. Ein Plädoyer für die Gründung eines Europäischen Friedensinstituts, Frankfurter Rundschau, 6.12.2012, <http://www.fr-online.de/meinung/gastbeitrag-flexibel-innovativ-und-unabhaengig,1472602,21050864.html> (accessed April 23, 2013).

40 Poot/Vogt/van der Steen, European Added Value, p.39.

control by the EP. Particularly Sweden insists upon the independence of the EIP and hence preferred to renounce to the EPs financial support.

Avoiding long bureaucratic processes

The EIP's advocates consider it as vital that the institute does not suffer from the strain of extensive bureaucratic structures – a criticism that many EU agencies face. This is an easily comprehensible concern: for if the EIP is to fill the gaps mentioned above as for instance providing rapid deployment and funding mechanisms, it must not be slowed down in complicated decision-making processes. This, again, is linked to the institutional set-up and the decision-making structure.

As indicated above, EU bodies will be represented within the EIP on a high level that is responsible for the institute's strategic direction. It will be essential to avoid that different goals and perspectives, or possibly also financial considerations, among these bodies will slow down the institute's ability to act quickly.

Generally, the supporters of the EIP insist that it has to be kept small and easily accessible to really provide added value. Poot, Vogt and van der Steen envision the EIP to comprise of fifteen employees or potentially even less.⁴¹ This could help to make the decision-making process rather straight-forward and aid the main goal of rapidly deploying mediation experts to conflict areas.

4. Financial support and organizational structure: the EIP's institutional set-up

None of the authors dealing with the question of the EIP's institutional set-up claims to have the ideal solution. In light of the previously-mentioned issues of lacking independence and the likelihood of being tied into bureaucratic processes, none finds the idea of the EIP being an EU agency to be feasible. Similarly, the so-called collaborative or hybrid model, which envisions the EIP as more independent but still having a close working relationship with the EU and the EEAS is regarded as problematic. While being slightly more flexible, it could nonetheless get caught up in tedious decision-making processes and might have difficulties

to rapidly deploy mediation experts to conflict regions.

The 2013 Concept Paper regards the idea of the EIP as an autonomous body as risky, but possibly also promising approach. mediatEUr is concerned that an independent body might run a greater risk of duplicating the work of EU bodies.⁴² Furthermore, it might find it more difficult to build closer ties to other organizations and potentially also conflict parties. At the same time, however, an independent EIP would be more flexible and thus best suited to make quick decision. Given the strong focus that Sweden puts on actual on-the-ground mediation this advantage understandably carries a lot of weight.

Brorsen presents a number of different set-ups such a non-EU body could take: it could be established either as a foundation, an association or an international organization.⁴³ Poot, Vogt and van der Steen in their financial appraisal build upon Brorsen's suggestions and scrutinize these further. Placing a lot of emphasis on the envisioned mediation and Track 1.5-focus, they come to the conclusion that, though not the perfect solution, a foundation would arguably be the most suitable format. An international organization would still represent the participating governments and hence might find it difficult to engage in Track 1.5-activities. Furthermore, it is inflexible and would be built on rather strict operational procedures. The authors find foundations and associations to be more flexible, more independent and lighter in their structures.⁴⁴

The estimated costs as established in the financial appraisal for a three-year period vary depending on the institutional set-up and the amount of staff to be employed. An international organization would be the cheaper option (with approximately 8.8 million Euros for a staff of 15 and 6.2 million Euros for 10 employees) as compared to a foundation or association (with approximately 9.6 million Euros for a contingent of 15 employees and 6.7 for 10). The authors find it important to emphasize, however, that these estimated costs include those for activities and events, which are difficult to project as the level of activity is still uncertain. The cost differences between a foundation and association would be minor. However, the authors believe that a foundation could find it easier to attract financial support also from private persons and endowment

⁴² mediatEUr, Value-added, Risks and Options, p.13.

⁴³ Brorsen, Costs, Benefits and Options, p.13ff.

⁴⁴ Poot/Vogt/van der Steen, European Added Value, p. 9.

⁴¹ Poot/Vogt/van der Steen, European Added Value, p.8.

funds. This could help to build a financially more stable institution and makes the foundation arguably the most viable option.⁴⁵

It looks as if the 2013 Concept Paper would follow this advice with the proposed format being a non-profit foundation under Belgian private law (registered in Brussels). Members will contribute to the funding with the level of contribution depending solely on the respective government's will and ability.⁴⁶ Non-governmental actors would also have the possibility to contribute financially. Below the above-mentioned Board of Governors, which will determine the strategic direction as well as financial decisions, there will be an Executive Committee. This will consist of the Executive Director, his deputy and three mediation experts and will decide about individual cases of deployment and other significant activities, for instance.⁴⁷

5. Conclusion and Prospects

It remains to be seen whether the Swedish initiative will eventually result in the establishment of an EIP, and under which form. Clearly, on-the-ground mediation and Track 1.5-negotiations are envisioned to be the institute's core functions. At the same time, an evaluation of past missions will be an important component as well as advice and guidance on training in mediation. In these regards the initiative is likely to be in line with most of the suggestions that were expressed by the EIP's proponents. The various articles concerned with the EIP have underlined that the institute could indeed have an added value to the European conflict prevention and mediation capacities and could help to fill gaps.

It seems obvious that the institution is intended to be of a rather light character in order to best serve the purposes of rapid decisions and quick deployment. The costs for the institute will be first and foremost carried by the participating states.

It is interesting to see that while there is willingness to carry out tasks on behalf of the EU, it is important for the initiators to emphasize the institute's autonomy from the Union and an explicit non-EU alignment. Their reluctance to benefit from an EP budget line for funding the EIP underpins that. Indeed, the

decision to not build upon existing EU structures but rather establish new ones outside the Union seems to signal a loss of faith in the EU and its capacities. There seems to be little belief not only in the EEAS' ability to successfully streamline its functioning, but also in the capacity of the states to have a real impact upon the future functioning of the EEAS (such as within the EEAS review). The launch of the EIP explicitly outside the EU could thus well be read as a sign that some states have resigned and lost faith in the EU's capacities. Rather than concentrating their efforts on improving the EEAS and other EU crisis management structures, be it CSDP and Commission, they seem to consider that setting up something new outside the EU might be more efficient. It is something that other EU Members, which intend to invest in the EEAS, might see with worries, fearing that this turn towards non-EU bodies could well weaken the EU.

At the same time, it remains to be seen in how far the EIP will in fact be able to act independently, given that its members are largely EU Member States, and that representatives of EU institutions are involved in the institute's strategic direction. Furthermore, a broad mandate that explicitly sets out that the EIP is to take on tasks upon request of various organisations both within the EU and outside of it, carries the risk of unclear responsibilities and priorities.

Thus, while the new institute might in the best case strengthen Europe's role, or that of some European states, in the area of mediation, it might also end up weakening EU initiatives and affect the Union's voice and impact in international crisis management.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.8.

⁴⁶ Draft Concept Paper, p.8.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.6.