



**BUDAPEST CENTRE**  
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL  
PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE  
AND MASS ATROCITIES



**CENTER FOR  
CONFLICT,  
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STIFTUNG**

**Prevention of Mass Atrocities in Practice**

## **Difficult Dialogues**

**European colloquium on dialogue facilitation**

**organized by**

**Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass  
Atrocities**

**and**

**School of Public Policy's Centre for Conflict, Negotiation and Recovery**

**in partnership with**

**Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue**

**and**

**Friedrich Ebert Stiftung**

**Date: 30 May – 31 May 2014**

**Venue: Central European University, Gellner Room**

**Nador u. 9 – 1051 Budapest - Hungary**

## Context

Sustained, participatory dialogue is a powerful tool for addressing situations at risk including threats of mass atrocities and transforming conflict situations into peaceful processes.

Increasingly dialogue mechanisms aimed at averting or ending conflicts or mass atrocities are not between states or within the diplomatic confines of international organizations but take place among multiple actors, some of which are outside mainstream society. To tackle difficult problems it is often to engage in dialogue with extremist parties, criminal organizations or states that refuse to play by any rules.

In this context, those who facilitate dialogue need to consider the range of new problems involved in these sorts of discussions. Is all dialogue worth doing? Are some groups beyond the pale? How can such discussions be managed? Is it possible to bridge the gaps with extremists?

In Europe, the financial crisis revealed deep political and social rifts across the region. Trust for national and European institutions have declined. Hate speech and extremist political groups have gained support. Across the region there is a need to introduce reforms and enhance cohesion in societies, reduce the risks of violence, threats of vulnerable groups and minorities.

Numerous organizations in Europe facilitate dialogue processes across the globe to prevent escalation of fragile situations and occurrence of violent conflicts and mass atrocities. Dialogue processes have also been successfully facilitated in the aftermath of violence with a view to promote reconciliation processes and develop qualitatively new conditions for preventing the recurrence of violent conflicts.

In December 2009, the Council of the European Union agreed to enhance European capabilities for dialogue and the mediation of conflicts. Across the region a web of institutions now work on dialogue processes at many levels of society. Five years on, it is time to exchange views on what has been achieved so far and what remains to be done to ensure durable effective mechanisms for dialogue.

The meeting will draw on the expertise gathered together in two handbooks (“Democratic Dialogue – Handbook for Practitioners” and “Political Party Dialogue: A Facilitator's Guide”) published in 2007 and 2013.

The Budapest Centre is an organization dedicated to reducing the risks of atrocity crimes and violence, enhancing mechanisms for dialogue and improving cooperation on these issues across the globe. This conference, organized with the Center for Conflict, Negotiations and Recovery at the Central European University, is aimed at sharing practical knowledge on facilitation of dialogue including the most difficult forms. The conference is focused on the future with the perspective of prevention.

Among the subjects to be discussed are:

- The division of labour between the United Nations and the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in dialogue facilitation.
- The challenge of early warning and dialogue facilitation when supra-national

- organizations are often positioned close to governments involved in violence.
- The effectiveness of current mechanisms, particularly in the face of hatred, threats and extreme human rights abuses.
  - The role of NGOs and others in dialogue processes and their relationships with international organizations.
  - The impact of dialogue processes on cohesion within societies.
  - The structuring of dialogue process with criminal and other groups and lessons from recent experiences.

## Objectives

- Launch a process where practitioners will exchange views and share best practices on dialogue facilitation including its most difficult forms;
- Pool European resources in the domain of sustained/participatory dialogue;
- Explore the ways to facilitate dialogue processes in situations at risk to prevent mass atrocities;
- Develop improved methodologies for dialogue facilitation;
- Exchange views on developing dialogue processes to address societal challenges in Europe;
- Enhance the network of dialogue facilitators in Europe and across the globe;

In the course of colloquium there will be set up different formats of dialogue to make the discussions as interactive as possible.

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