



**THE EUROPEAN  
CONTRIBUTION TO  
THE MINDANAO  
PEACE PROCESS**

JEOFFREY HOUVENAEGHEL

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# **The European Contribution to the Mindanao Peace Process**

*By Jeffrey Houvenaeghel<sup>1</sup>*

## **Abstract**

The Mindanao region in the Southern Philippines has been the scene of a conflict for hundreds of years ever since the Spanish set foot on the islands. Since the 1970s, the conflict has cost the lives of 120,000 people and it has been estimated that since 2000 more than 3.5 million people have been displaced. Several peace negotiations and agreements have failed and have been followed by escalated outbursts of violence worsening the already dire situation. The successful signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro in 2014 marks supposedly the end of the conflict ushering a new era of peace.

The paper provides an overview of the importance of Mindanao and the Philippines in a wider strategic context as well as providing a historical background on the conflict. The main analysis is focused on the EU's contribution to the peace process specifically on its aims, instruments and impact. The main findings of the paper are that the EU transitioned from development actor to a partner for peace, as the EU has recently sought to be a more active political player rather than payer.

This paper expresses the views of the author and not the views of the European Institute for Asian Studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Houvenaeghel is a researcher and holds a MA in European Studies from KU Leuven, MA Intelligence and Security Studies from Brunel University and a BA Criminology and International Politics from Keele University. Email: jeffrey.houvenaeghel@gmail.com

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### **List of Abbreviations**

AMM	Aceh Monitoring Mission
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
BDA	Bangsamoro Development Agency
CBRNe	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and explosives
CPC	Civilian Protection Component
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
DCI	Development Co-operation Instrument
EC	European Commission
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EU	European Union
EWER	Early Warning Early Response
FPA	Final Peace Agreement
FSD	Fondation Suisse de Deminage
GPH	The Philippine Government
GOP	Government of the Philippines
HDC / CHD	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
ICG	International Contact Group
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IfS	Instrument for Stability
IMT	International Monitoring Team
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MPC	Mindanao People's Caucus
MTF	Mindanao Trust Fund
MTF-RDP	Mindanao Trust Fund for Reconstruction and Development Program
NVPF	Nonviolent Peace Force
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
TPMT	Third Party Monitoring Team
UDP	Upland Development Programme in Southern Mindanao
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

## 1. Introduction

The Mindanao conflict is a multifaceted complex problem that exists since the mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century. The onset of Spanish colonialism after the arrival of the Spaniards in 1556 was the mere beginning of the conflict resulting in deep societal fragmentation and deterioration of living standards over the next 400 years. Mindanao eventually merged territorially with the Philippines in 1947 as a result of a decision made by the United States after granting independence to the Philippines, but the Moros, the Islamic population in Mindanao, continued to resist the government's rule.<sup>2</sup> The conflict escalated into an all-out-war in the 1970s. A subsequent peace agreement was signed in 1976. Since then, there have been numerous attempts for reconciliation, but given the complexities of negotiations and the different priorities of national administrations, several peace negotiations and agreements have failed and have been followed by escalated outbursts of violence. The recent conclusion of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro between the Philippines and MILF, was a landmark event as it incorporated the lessons learned from past mistakes from both parties as well as Benigno Aquino III administration's resolute drive to achieve peace.<sup>3</sup>

The EU has been involved in Mindanao since the late-1970s and its involvement is an under-researched topic in academic literature. The EU has delivered remarkable work over the past decades, constantly balancing the interests of Brussels and Manila in its decision-making. The EU's involvement in the Philippines started as a development and humanitarian actor with a clear focus on poor and remote areas which inadvertently focused its attention towards Mindanao. As the conflict in Mindanao escalated in the early 2000s, it became imperative for the EU to provide support to the Mindanao peace process.<sup>4</sup> Remarkably, the EU's engagement has been solely based on first pillar instruments specifically in the area of shared competence in development and humanitarian aid.<sup>5</sup>

The paper critically analyses the role of the EU in Mindanao. The research includes the analysis of the EU's goals, foreign policy instruments and the impact achieved by EU measures, and provides the strategic significance of Mindanao and a short overview of the conflict. A detailed analysis reveals that despite the limitations and challenges the EU faces, it nevertheless still manages to deliver effective instruments based on the first pillar community instruments to support the peace process. The EU's positive contributions in the Mindanao conflict could plausibly demonstrate to the international community that the EU is a credible international partner that has the capability to provide support to distant regions around the world. In this region, the EU is not perceived as a great power with imperialist ambitions in Mindanao, thereby the EU is perceived to be a neutral actor. Moreover, the EU is not subject to the limitations that its international counterparts face. Thus, the EU's perceived weaknesses can be argued to paradoxically be strengths that can help the EU gain further influence.<sup>6</sup> For this paper,

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<sup>2</sup> Pg.255. Macasalong, Marjanie Salic (2013) 'Mindanao Conflict and Islamic revivalism: The Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Approach.' *Islam and Civilisation Renewal*, 4(2), p. 250 - 278.

<sup>3</sup> Pg.5. MacDonald, Alistair & Vifals, Gabriel Munuera (2012) 'The EU and Mindanao: Innovative Avenues for Seeking Peace.' Occasional Paper, EU Institute for Security Studies.

<sup>4</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Kamp, Karl-Heinz. (2014). NATO's European members, too, should pivot to Asia. Retrieved from <http://europeworld.org/2014/02/24/natos-european-members-too-should-pivot-to-asia/>.

we need to take on a practical approach and for that we will use the EU's evaluation papers and supporting documentation to draw conclusions on results and impact. The paper will summarise the results of the previously discussed external instruments in a wider-context of the peace process.

## **2. The EU's Pivot towards Asia: The Strategic Contribution to the Philippines and Mindanao**

It is strategically significant for the EU that Asia is steadily growing in importance as a trading partner for the EU. At the same time, this also means the EU has become more reliant on a region which can be disrupted by conflict.<sup>7</sup> Javier Solana, Former High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (1999-2009) argued for an EU pivot to Asia entailing a more concrete Asian policy based on the strengths of EU foreign policy.<sup>8</sup> The Philippines and Mindanao are important within the context of this pivot for three reasons.

First, in order to create an effective EU pivot to Asia, the EU requires likeminded normative allies or partners that would share and support EU's interests and values within the region, as outlined in the "Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia 2012."<sup>9</sup> The Philippines can be considered as one of the EU's potential key normatively like-minded partners as primarily demonstrated by the Philippines' commitment to democracy and its normative commitment to pursue an international legal solution to conflicts – such as with its claim against China through the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in regard to the South China Sea dispute.<sup>10</sup>

Second, the EU's engagement in the Mindanao Peace Process builds trust and a mutually beneficial partnership between the EU and the Philippines, as well as demonstrates the effectiveness of the EU's external capabilities and capacities in a distant region. This also contributes to its credibility as an international peace and security actor.<sup>11</sup> This could encourage potential regional partners to involve the EU in their regional security challenges.<sup>12</sup>

Third, the Philippines' geostrategic importance should not be underestimated.<sup>13</sup> As Anthony Bergin, Deputy Director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute states, "...we sometimes forget that the Philippines occupies an important geostrategic location between the Americas, Oceania and Asia; it serves as a bridge between Southeast and Northeast Asia."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Kamp, Karl-Heinz. (2014). NATO's European members, too, should pivot to Asia. Retrieved from <http://europeworld.org/2014/02/24/natos-european-members-too-should-pivot-to-asia/>.

<sup>8</sup> Solana, Javier. (2013). Europe's Smart Asian Pivot, Project Syndicate. Retrieved from <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-eu-s-strategic-advantages-in-asia-by-javier-solana>.

<sup>9</sup> Pg.2. Council of the European Union. (2012). Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia. Retrieved [http://eeas.europa.eu/asia/docs/guidelines\\_eu\\_foreign\\_sec\\_pol\\_east\\_asia\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/asia/docs/guidelines_eu_foreign_sec_pol_east_asia_en.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Permanent Court of Arbitration. (2014). The Republic of the Philippines v. The People's Republic of China. Retrieved from [http://www.pca-cpa.org/showpage.asp?pag\\_id=1529](http://www.pca-cpa.org/showpage.asp?pag_id=1529).

<sup>11</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Kamp, Karl-Heinz. (2014). NATO's European members, too, should pivot to Asia. Retrieved from <http://europeworld.org/2014/02/24/natos-european-members-too-should-pivot-to-asia/>.

<sup>13</sup> Bergin, Anthony. (2014) Partnering with the Philippines. Retrieved <http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/partnering-with-the-philippines/>.

<sup>14</sup> Bergin, Anthony. (2014) Partnering with the Philippines. Retrieved <http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/partnering-with-the-philippines/>.

Any regional instability can have global repercussions. For instance, Operation Bojinka which was a three-phase failed terrorist plot to target Pope John Paul II and to detonate 11 commercial airliners in mid-air as well as crash an airliner into the Pentagon. Despite its failure, it served as a blueprint for the 9/11 attacks planned by Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and Ramzi Yousef in the Philippines.<sup>15</sup> Mindanao was a preferred training location by terrorists due to a lack of central government control over the area.<sup>16</sup> Planning and training grounds of insurgents marked as terrorists were left undisturbed as evidenced by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) training camps within MILF territory.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the potential for escalation to a regional conflict has been argued to exist due to the Abu Sayyaf (ASG)'s reported connections with Al-Qaeda and JI.<sup>18</sup>

### 3. Background on the Mindanao Conflict

The origins of the Mindanao conflict date back to the Philippines' colonial past. Spanish colonialism started in 1556 in the Philippines,<sup>19</sup> but Spanish colonial rule never fully subjugated the Philippines particularly in Cordillera and Mindanao. Consequently, the Moros, a term coined by the Spanish to describe the Muslim population in Mindanao, had the capability and capacity to militarily resist the Spanish. The Moros eventually became engaged in a long war of attrition against the central government until 1898.<sup>20</sup> Abubakar stated, "having a defined territory, a political history, and structure of its own, a cultural and religious identity, the Moro states under the sultanates of Sulu and Maguindano claimed their own sovereignty and independence."<sup>21</sup> Despite Spain failing to gain control over Mindanao, the Moros paid a terrible price.<sup>22</sup>

The Treaty of Paris in 1898 was a critical milestone, as the Spanish Empire surrendered control over the Philippines to the United States and in the process introducing US colonialism. While the US claimed the Philippines and Mindanao as part of the treaty, the Moros continued their resistance to subjugation. The US conducted large-scale military campaigns, where they successfully fully gained control of Mindanao in 1913 leading to

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<sup>15</sup> Pg.147. Kean, Thomas H, and Hamilton, Lee. (2004) *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States.

<sup>16</sup> Pg.30 - 31. Collier, Kit (2006) 'Terrorism Evolving Regional Alliances and State Failure in Mindanao' *Southeast Asian Affairs*, p. 26 - 38.

<sup>17</sup> Pg.98. Abuza, Zachary (2008) 'Borderlands, Terrorism, and Insurgency in Southeast Asia' In *The Borderlands of Southeast Asia: Geopolitics, Terrorism, and Globalization*, edited James Clad, Sean McDonald and Bruce Vaughn. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic Research Institute for National Strategic Studies by National Defense University Press, p. 89 - 106.; Pg.13 - 14. International Crisis Group (2002) 'Southern Philippines Background: Terrorism and the Peace Process.' ICG Asia Report No. 80, Singapore/Brussels: International Crisis Group.

<sup>18</sup> Pg.4. Niksch, Larry (2002) 'Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation.' CRS Report for Congress. The Library of Congress.

<sup>19</sup> Pg.450. Abubakar, Carmen (2004) 'Review of the Mindanao Peace Processes.' *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 5(3), p.450-464.

<sup>20</sup> Pg.75 -76. Montiel, Cristina & Rodil, Rudy & de Guzman Judith (2012) 'The Moro Struggle and the Challenge to Peace-building in Mindanao, Southern Philippines.' In *Handbook of Ethnic Conflict*, edited Dan Landis and Rosita D. Albert. New York: Springer, p. 71 - 89.

<sup>21</sup> Pg.450. Abubakar, Carmen (2004) 'Review of the Mindanao Peace Processes.' *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 5(3), p.450-464.

<sup>22</sup> Pg.8. Boada, Albert Caramés (2009) 'Past, present and future in Mindanao Analysis of the MNLF and MILF peace and reintegration processes' Madrid: Escola de Cultura de Pau.

the forceful integration of the region into the Philippines.<sup>23</sup> Afterwards, US policy focused more on the systematic integration of the Moros into the wider Philippine identity.<sup>24</sup>

The Moros were gradually alienated through the mounting of grievances as they fell victim to structural and cultural violence in both colonial periods.<sup>25</sup> These grievances provided them with an external aggressor to unite and mobilize against, and moreover reaffirmed their identity and strengthened their resolve to demand independence.<sup>26</sup> Spanish colonialism produced deep-rooted structural violence as the Moros were deprived of access to basic social services, a system of governance and basic infrastructure.<sup>27</sup> US colonialism produced cultural violence as it imposed a narrative of the 'uncivilised' Moros.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the Philippine government engaged in a massive resettlement program bringing Christians to Mindanao since 1918 until some Moros fled the country and the remaining were reduced to a minority.<sup>29</sup> The cost and impact of colonialism and the national government's policies transformed Mindanao from a prosperous region under the Mindanao Sultanates to a region resembling a failed state.<sup>30</sup>

The late 1960s marked a period where all the inherent colonial legacies agglomerated into one violent outburst. The Jabidah massacre in 1968, a pivotal juncture where the Armed Forces of the Philippines massacred Moro recruits, further intensified the discontent of the Moros concerning the discrimination by the Catholic majority in Mindanao and fuelled unrest. In September 1972, martial law was declared by Ferdinand Marcos resulting in a war fought from 1972 to 1976 with an estimate of 120,000 casualties.<sup>31</sup> Eventually, the government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) signed the Tripoli Peace Agreement in 1976,<sup>32</sup> but the agreement failed to be implemented as it lacked a verification and monitoring mechanism.<sup>33</sup> Afterwards, dialogues were held with different administrations and a Final Peace Agreement was signed between MNLF and Ramos in 1996 – though this agreement failed to bring lasting peace to the region.<sup>34</sup> One of the key reasons for the failure of the Final Peace Agreement was that President Estrada did not perceive the implementation of the

<sup>23</sup> Pg.8. Boada, Albert Caramés (2009) 'Past, present and future in Mindanao Analysis of the MNLF and MILF peace and reintegration processes' Madrid: Escola de Cultura de Pau.

<sup>24</sup> Pg.165. Russel, Susan & Ty, Rey (2010) 'Conflict Transformation Efforts in the Southern Philippines'. In Conflict Resolution and Peace Education: Transformations across Disciplines, edited Candice Carter. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 157 - 186.

<sup>25</sup> Pg.8. Boada, Albert Caramés (2009) 'Past, present and future in Mindanao Analysis of the MNLF and MILF peace and reintegration processes' Madrid: Escola de Cultura de Pau.; Pg.291. Galtung, Johan (1990) 'Cultural Violence' *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), p. 291 - 305.

<sup>26</sup> Pg.76. Montiel, Cristina & Rodil, Rudy & de Guzman Judith (2012) 'The Moro Struggle and the Challenge to Peace-building in Mindanao, Southern Philippines.' In Handbook of Ethnic Conflict, edited Dan Landis and Rosita D. Albert. New York: Springer, p. 71 - 89.

<sup>27</sup> Pg.256. Macasalong, Marjanie Salic (2013) 'Mindanao Conflict and Islamic revivalism: The Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Approach.' *Islam and Civilisation Renewal*, 4(2), p. 250 - 278.

<sup>28</sup> Pg.76. Montiel, Cristina & Rodil, Rudy & de Guzman Judith (2012) 'The Moro Struggle and the Challenge to Peace-building in Mindanao, Southern Philippines.' In Handbook of Ethnic Conflict, edited Dan Landis and Rosita D. Albert. New York: Springer, p. 71 - 89.

<sup>29</sup> Pg.260. Macasalong, Marjanie Salic (2013) 'Mindanao Conflict and Islamic revivalism: The Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Approach.' *Islam and Civilisation Renewal*, 4(2), p. 250 - 278.

<sup>30</sup> Pg.27. Collier, Kit (2006) 'Terrorism Evolving Regional Alliances and State Failure in Mindanao' *Southeast Asian Affairs*, p. 26 - 38.

<sup>31</sup> Pg.78. Montiel, Cristina & Rodil, Rudy & de Guzman Judith (2012) 'The Moro Struggle and the Challenge to Peace-building in Mindanao, Southern Philippines.' In Handbook of Ethnic Conflict, edited Dan Landis and Rosita D. Albert. New York: Springer, p. 71 - 89.

<sup>32</sup> The Tripoli Agreement, signed on 8 February 1976, entered into force on 23 December 1976.

<sup>33</sup> Pg.11. Bauzon, Kenneth (2008) 'The Philippines: The 1996 Peace Agreement for the Southern Philippines: An Assessment' *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), 84(1), p. 1 - 11.

<sup>34</sup> Adriano, Fermin. (2013) Confidence in Mindanao Peace Process Fragile. Retrieved <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2013/06/19/confidence-in-mindanao-peace-process-fragile/>.

agreement as a high priority.<sup>35</sup> In 2000, Estrada committed to an "all-out war policy."<sup>36</sup> This devastated Mindanao as it displaced one million people.<sup>37</sup> In addition, violence that erupted in 2003 and 2008 displaced another million people.<sup>38</sup>

In 2011, Benigno Aquino III and Murad 'Al Haj' Ebrahim, Chairman of MILF met in Japan to discuss and advance the progress of the peace process followed by numerous exploratory discussions gradually framing the 'Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro.'<sup>39</sup> This was followed by negotiations on the annexes and on the Bangsamoro Basic Law, which eventually led to an agreement by both parties called the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro in 2014.<sup>40</sup> The agreement provides greater autonomy to the Moros and establishes a new political entity called 'the Bangsamoro' which replaces the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Whilst the Bangsamoro will have autonomous self-rule, the Philippine government remains the purveyor of defence and foreign policy. Overall, the agreement recognises the Moro identity and arguably provides legitimacy to their ambition to become an autonomous region.<sup>41</sup> This agreement is far more ambitious than its predecessors as it engages in a more holistic approach addressing the aforementioned deep-rooted societal challenges that have been described, as well as establishes an international monitoring team to make both parties accountable for their actions.<sup>42</sup> The agreement is a first step of many to reconcile and encourage Philippine identity, as Quilop stated:

"As long as the Philippine state is unable to provide an environment that allows the Muslims to appreciate a sense of being Filipinos while preserving their ethno-national identity military conflict will continue. That environment entails recognition of Moro culture and equitable share of the country's development."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Pg.460. Abubakar, Carmen (2004) 'Review of the Mindanao Peace Processes.' *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 5(3), p.450-464.

<sup>36</sup> Pg.13. The Mindanao Think Tank (2013) 'Recommendations of Prominent Observers of the Peace Process to the New Philippine President.' The Mindanao Think Tank.

<sup>37</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2014). Philippines IDP Figures Analysis. Retrieved <http://www.internal-displacement.org/south-and-south-east-asia/philippines/figures-analysis>.

<sup>38</sup> Pg.3. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2009) Submission from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in anticipation of consideration of the twentieth periodic report of the Republic of the Philippines submitted to the Committee under Article 9 of the Convention. Retrieved:

[http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/IDMC\\_Philippines75.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/IDMC_Philippines75.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> Reynaldo, Santos Jr. (2013) Timeline: The long road to the Bangsamoro region. Retrieved <http://www.rappler.com/nation/48841-timeline-bangsamoro>.

<sup>40</sup> The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, signed on 27 March 2014, entered into force on 27 March 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Aquino III, Benigno S. (2014) Speech of Pres. Benigno S. Aquino III at the Signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. Retrieved <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/milf/news/speech-pres-benigno-s-aquino-iii-signing-comprehensive-agreement-bangsamoro>.; The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, signed on 27 March 2014, entered into force on 27 March 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Pg.166. Russel, Susan & Ty, Rey (2010) 'Conflict Transformation Efforts in the Southern Philippines'. In *Conflict Resolution and Peace Education: Transformations across Disciplines*, edited Candice Carter. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 157 - 186.

<sup>43</sup> Pg.20. Quilop, Raymond (2000) 'The Uneasy and Costly Road to Peace in Mindanao.' Panorama, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

#### 4. The EU: From a Development Actor to a Partner for Peace

The EU's engagement in the Mindanao Peace Process underwent an evolutionary process. As a development actor, the EU focused on small-scale projects.<sup>44</sup> Eventually, the EU-Philippines Framework Agreement signed in 1984 defined the objectives and conditions for EU assistance.<sup>45</sup> However, engagement was temporarily suspended due to the escalation of the Marcos dictatorship which started to impede EU project implementation.<sup>46</sup> The programme resumed in 1986 with a clear focus to provide assistance to poor and remote areas. Over the next decades, this policy has continued to be a priority. The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002–2006 reaffirmed this policy by stating "The main areas of concentration for the co-operation will be assistance to the poorest sectors of society and to facilitate the integration of the Philippines in the flow of international trade."<sup>47</sup>

One marked difference from the EU's previous approach was that in order to identify these poor and remote communities, the EU engaged in constructive dialogue with the Aquino administration on how it could effectively help.<sup>48</sup> Mindanao became a focus area because of the pervasiveness of abject poverty in the area. This is a critical milestone to becoming a partner for peace, because from the start it was engaging in an area where conflict is one of the root causes of poverty. The EU had to progressively monitor and support the Mindanao Peace Process in order to achieve the set development goals within the region.<sup>49</sup>

Over the next three decades since 1980, there were numerous developments within the Mindanao Peace Process which changed the direction of the EU's engagement in Mindanao. The escalation of violence in 2000, 2003 and 2008 undoubtedly had an impact on the EU's development programme for the region, and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was at the center of these clashes.<sup>50</sup> Altogether, these conflicts had an immensely detrimental impact including an increase in poverty, crime and population displacement as well as deteriorating levels of agricultural production output, all of which are directly linked to the work and priorities of the EU development programme.<sup>51</sup> In greater detail, Estrada's war policy in 2000 caused EUR 2.48 million in damages to agriculture, and EUR 4.1 million on infrastructure.<sup>52</sup> The conflict in 2003 caused EUR 2.6 million in losses to infrastructure.<sup>53</sup> Consequently, since 2000, it has

<sup>44</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>45</sup> Pg.4. European Commission (2002) The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

<sup>46</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>47</sup> Pg.18. European Commission (2002) The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

<sup>48</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>49</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.;

<sup>50</sup> Pg.26 – 27. Particip (2011) Evaluation of the European Commission's Cooperation with the Philippines. Volume 1, European Commission.

<sup>51</sup> Pg.2. World Bank. (2005). The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend. Retrieved from [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTICPR/214578-1111996036679/20482477/WP24\\_Web.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTICPR/214578-1111996036679/20482477/WP24_Web.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> Pg.13. Concepción, Sylvia., Digal, Larry. Guiam, Rufa. de la Rosa Romulo. Stankovitsc, Mara (2003) 'Breaking the links between economics and conflict in Mindanao.' Discussion Paper presented at the 'Waging Peace' conference.

<sup>53</sup> Pg.14. Concepción, Sylvia., Digal, Larry. Guiam, Rufa. de la Rosa Romulo. Stankovitsc, Mara (2003) 'Breaking the links between economics and conflict in Mindanao.' Discussion Paper presented at the 'Waging Peace' conference.

been estimated that around 3.5 million people have been displaced.<sup>54</sup> The conflict had an immense impact on EU funded projects.<sup>55</sup> The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002–2006 stated that the conflict “[...] also hindered investment opportunities that could have helped reduce economic inequalities.”<sup>56 57</sup> The country strategy paper further built on that recognition by stating the need for “stability and security in the Philippines, which constitute a precondition for sustainable development.”<sup>58</sup>

The EC reviewed the EU’s strategy in the Philippines and Mindanao in 2005 and determined that the objectives of previous programmes were correctly chosen based on the social and economic situation of the time.<sup>59</sup> There was one important change introduced which was a policy shift to prioritise social policy over rural development.<sup>60</sup> This change can be explained as a response to the outbursts of escalating violence where in fact, social policies, especially concerning health programmes, would be far more effective considering the growing number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).<sup>61</sup>

The EC-Philippines Strategy Paper 2007–2013 built on these policy changes where the main focal point was to aid the Philippines in achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through “supporting a more equitable access to quality basic social services through budget support and sector-wide approaches.”<sup>62</sup> These basic social services focused on the Health Sector Support Programme which for the period 2007-2013 became the EU’s dominant programme in the region.<sup>63</sup> The MDGs complemented other long-term goals of the EU, for instance the goal to “eradicate extreme poverty & hunger.”<sup>64</sup> The strategy paper for the first time explicitly states that “support to the Mindanao Peace Process” is a priority for the EU.<sup>65</sup> This is the first time that the EU officially acknowledged the importance of security and the outcome of the Mindanao Peace Process as a precondition to make the EU’s development goals in Mindanao possible.<sup>66</sup>

Based on research in July 2014, The EU–Philippines Strategy Paper 2014–2020 has not yet been publicly released at the time of writing. Based on conducted interviews it is expected that the focal points will be energy and job creation and rule of law and justice.<sup>67</sup> Rule of law is arguably the most crucial focal point as it is directly attributed to

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<sup>54</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2014). Can Mindanao’s new peace agreement help end displacement?. Retrieved from <http://www.internal-displacement.org/blog/2014/can-mindanaos-new-peace-agreement-help-end-displacement>.

<sup>55</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.; Confidential. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, July 25, 2014

<sup>56</sup> Pg.22. European Commission (2002) The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

<sup>57</sup> Pg.22. European Commission (2002) The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

<sup>58</sup> Pg.18. European Commission (2002) The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

<sup>59</sup> Pg.18. European Commission (2002) The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

<sup>60</sup> Pg.16. European Commission (2002) The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

<sup>61</sup> Pg.16. European Commission (2002) The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

<sup>62</sup> Pg.7. European Commission (2007) The EC-Philippines Strategy Paper 2007-2013.

<sup>63</sup> Particip (2011) Evaluation of the European Commission’s Cooperation with the Philippines. Volume 1, European Commission.

<sup>64</sup> United Nations. (2013). End Poverty Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>.

<sup>65</sup> Pg.31. European Commission (2007) The EC-Philippines Strategy Paper 2007-2013.

<sup>66</sup> Pg.31. European Commission (2007) The EC-Philippines Strategy Paper 2007-2013.

<sup>67</sup> Confidential. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, July 15, 2014.; Confidential. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, July 25, 2014.

the Mindanao Peace Process because it supports the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. Thus, we will see EU external instruments under the theme of rule of law supporting the various aspects of the agreement till the end of the interim period in 2016.

The EU as a development actor focused on support to poor and remote communities, engaging in areas where armed conflict was one of the principal root causes of poverty.<sup>68</sup> By addressing poverty, it was inadvertently gradually focusing on the Mindanao conflict. President Estrada's "all-out-war" policy and the subsequent escalation of violence then provided the EU with a sense of urgency to support the peace process. A key observation is that the EU has been a consistent external actor where policy shifts are attributed proportionally as a response to the changing situation in Mindanao.

## 5. The EU's External Instruments in Mindanao

The analysis on the EU's external instruments in support of the peace process will be limited to only the instruments from 2007 onwards due to the fact that this is the period where the EU has increased its involvement as a peace support actor, and because this is the time period specified in the EC-Philippines Strategy Paper 2007–2013. Most importantly, as this analysis relies on country strategy papers, it will only analyse instruments that have directly contributed to the peace process.

The Development Cooperation Instrument has provided EUR 163 million to the Philippines since the late 1970's for supporting the reconstruction and empowerment of local communities with a special focus on rural development which eventually phased out in the late 2000s.<sup>69</sup> Even though the development programme has been implemented prior to the Bangsamoro Agreement, it importantly reflects the annex on normalisation of the agreement specifically on the socio-economic development.<sup>70</sup> The EU has been improving their capacity and capabilities with regards to local communities long before the Bangsamoro Agreement. It reveals that the EU has been implementing an accurate development programme based on the needs of Mindanao.<sup>71</sup>

The Mindanao Trust Fund for Reconstruction and Development (MTF-RDP) is "a multi-donor funded community-based development program that assists in the social and economic recovery of conflict-affected communities in Mindanao."<sup>72</sup> In addition to these objectives, the MTF-RDP also aims to strengthen local governance by promoting greater accessibility for local communities.<sup>73</sup> The MTF-RDP is administered by the World Bank with a steering committee which controls the program management.<sup>74</sup> Overall, funders

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<sup>68</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>69</sup> Pg.6. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>70</sup> The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, signed on 27 March 2014, entered into force on 27 March 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Pg.2. World Bank. (2005). The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend. Retrieved from [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTICPR/214578-1111996036679/20482477/WP24\\_Web.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTICPR/214578-1111996036679/20482477/WP24_Web.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> Pg.6. World Bank (2013) Annual Report 2013: Mindanao Trust Fund. Taguig City: World Bank.

<sup>73</sup> Pg. 1. World Bank. (2005). The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend. Retrieved from [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTICPR/214578-1111996036679/20482477/WP24\\_Web.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTICPR/214578-1111996036679/20482477/WP24_Web.pdf).

<sup>74</sup> Pg. 1. World Bank, The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend.

lose direct control and some influence on the programme, which could plausibly mean that the funders have set aside self-interest.<sup>75</sup> The main contributors are the EU, along with the US, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Sweden.<sup>76</sup> In 2013, the EU became the largest contributor accounting for 70 percent of the MTF.<sup>77</sup> Despite the EU's established presence and acquired expertise in Mindanao, the EU has deliberately chosen the MTF-RPD as it preferred a multilateral instrument that pools and shares resources, as it was the only way to effectively address the immense challenges that Mindanao faces.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, it can be argued that since the EU played a financing role for so long, as opposed to the role of a conflict mediator, it does not have the implementing experience.<sup>79</sup> From a development perspective, addressing Mindanao's challenges requires vast amount of financial resources that can only be effectively addressed through a multilateral instrument. A unilateral instrument would provide more visibility to a country but will have limited impact, as it can address fewer challenges.<sup>80</sup>

Another EU funded programme is the Mindanao Health Sector Policy Support Programme worth EUR 48 million from 2007–2014,<sup>81</sup> the programme complements the "Universal Health Care Agenda of the Government."<sup>82</sup> Its overall aim is to provide healthcare to the poorest and remote regions. As a bilateral programme, the EU financed the Department of Health as the implementer.<sup>83</sup>

In addition, the EU also provides aid to internally displaced people in Mindanao by undertaking projects to reintegrate them into society, such as their regional program "Aid to Uprooted People."<sup>84</sup> It is a combined programme with the UN's World Food Programme as implementer and is part of their Protracted Relief and Recovery (PRRO) program.<sup>85</sup> It further supported the "UNDP's Act for Peace."<sup>86</sup> The overall aim was to increase capabilities of barangays (villages) to ensure greater intake of people.<sup>87</sup>

One way the EU promotes awareness and transparency is through financing third party organised and implemented events that bring together local stakeholders.<sup>88</sup> Over the years, it has financed more than 450 activities.<sup>89</sup> Importantly, there is potential for the EU to become more visible through these events. Ledoux stated, "... European

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<sup>75</sup> Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>76</sup> World Bank. (2013). A Multi-Donor Fund that Supports Reconstruction and Development in Mindanao. Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2013/04/10/addressing-the-needs-of-conflict-affected-communities-in-southern-philippines>.

<sup>77</sup> European Commission Press Release, IP/13/1052 (Nov. 11, 2013).

<sup>78</sup> Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>79</sup> Confidential. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, July 25, 2014.

<sup>80</sup> Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>81</sup> Pg.7. Author Unknown (2011) 'Evaluation of sector programmes and budget support operations in the context of EU development cooperation.' Powerpoint Presentation, 1st M&E Network Forum, Manila, 07 - 08 November 2011.

<sup>82</sup> European Commission Press Release, IP/13/1052 (Nov. 11, 2013).

<sup>83</sup> European Commission Press Release, IP/13/1052 (Nov. 11, 2013).

<sup>84</sup> Pg.1 - 4. European Commission. (2012) Action Fiche for Aid to Uprooted People in the Philippines. Retrieved [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/aap/2012/af\\_aap\\_2012\\_asia\\_p2.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/aap/2012/af_aap_2012_asia_p2.pdf).

<sup>85</sup> I Pg. 4. European Commission. (2012) Action Fiche for Aid to Uprooted People in the Philippines. Retrieved [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/aap/2012/af\\_aap\\_2012\\_asia\\_p2.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/aap/2012/af_aap_2012_asia_p2.pdf).

<sup>86</sup> Pg.22. MacDonald, Alistair & Viñals, Gabriel Munuera (2012) 'The EU and Mindanao: Innovative Avenues for Seeking Peace.' Occasional Paper, EU Institute for Security Studies.

<sup>87</sup> Pg.22. MacDonald, Alistair & Viñals, Gabriel Munuera (2012) 'The EU and Mindanao: Innovative Avenues for Seeking Peace.' Occasional Paper, EU Institute for Security Studies.

<sup>88</sup> Pg.3. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>89</sup> Pg.4. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

experience may provide useful pointers to serve as a basis.<sup>90</sup> This statement reflects on the EU's success as a partner for peace around the world. The EU has encouraged exchanges of the EU's experiences in peacebuilding. In Mindanao, Jonathan Powell and Gerry Kelly (both involved in the 2006 St. Andrew Agreement) went to the Philippines and shared their experience without promoting it as a negotiating model.<sup>91</sup> Instead, they provided the context of their negotiations both to MILF and the government.<sup>92</sup>

The Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), replacing the Instrument for Stability (IfS) in March 2014, is the key instrument to support the peace process as it provides direct and clear contributions whereas development policy would encompass a wider approach. It "enables the EU to take a lead in helping to prevent and respond to actual or emerging crises around the world."<sup>93</sup> It is the most flexible and responsive external instrument because it has a simplified decision-making process where it only goes through a general discussion with member states which is prepared by the EU delegation.<sup>94</sup> Currently, there have been three rounds financed and implemented. It can be expected that there will be a fourth round (2015–2016) to bridge the gap till the end of the interim period of the peace agreement but there is no available information on this round.<sup>95</sup>

In the first round in 2009–2010, worth EUR 1 million, the EU financially supported the work of two international and one national NGO which were the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HDC), the Non Violent Peace Force (NVPF) and the Mindanao People Caucus (MPC).<sup>96</sup> The overall goal of these NGOs was to enable greater dialogue with the parties involved in the peace process while engaging in community-based peace building to strengthen local communities.<sup>97</sup>

The second round in 2010 – 2012, which was worth EUR 3.9 million, has the overall goal of "mediation, monitoring and confidence-building to ultimately bring about lasting peace and security."<sup>98</sup> The round financed EU's participation within the International Monitoring Team (IMT) and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD)'s participation within the International Contact Group (ICG).<sup>99</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Pg.2. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines. (2014) The European Union and the Government of Italy will fund an International Conference entitled: "Peace is Living Together Religions and Cultures in Dialogue for Peace and Reconciliation in Mindanao". Retrieved

[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/philippines/documents/press\\_corner/20140306b.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/philippines/documents/press_corner/20140306b.pdf).

<sup>91</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>92</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>93</sup> Pg.3. European Commission (2012) 2012 Annual Report on the Instrument for Stability. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. COM(2013) 563 final.

<sup>94</sup> Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>95</sup> Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>96</sup> Pg.39. Commission of the European Communities (2009) Annual report from the European Commission on the Instrument for Stability in 2008 - Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, SEC(2009) 932.

<sup>97</sup> Pg.39. Commission of the European Communities (2009) Annual report from the European Commission on the Instrument for Stability in 2008 - Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, SEC(2009) 932.

<sup>98</sup> Pg.11. European Commission (2012) 2011 Annual Report on the Instrument for Stability. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. SWD(2012) 225 final.

<sup>99</sup> Pg.11. European Commission (2012) 2011 Annual Report on the Instrument for Stability. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. SWD(2012) 225 final.

The EU, as part of the IMT, leads the "Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Development Component,"<sup>100</sup> in response to an invitation from the Philippine government and MILF.<sup>101</sup> It was invited based on its track record in development, as well as its perceived neutrality, lack of self-interest in the conflict, and secular approach, which was appreciated by both stakeholders. It validates the work of the EU in Mindanao as a development and humanitarian actor.<sup>102</sup> The role of the EU within IMT's mandate is to monitor the peace agreement through observation, monitoring, verification and actively involving third parties within IMT.<sup>103</sup> It further formulates recommendations to the head of mission.<sup>104</sup>

The EU financially supports two NGOs as part of the ICG.<sup>105</sup> The ICG is a supporting mechanism for the negotiations of the peace process, if there were to be a deadlock, the ICG would actively aid the parties involved trying to establish a compromise by providing its expertise.<sup>106</sup> Additionally, the United Kingdom is a member of the ICG, which can potentially represent the views of the EU providing the EU with some influence in the ICG.<sup>107</sup>

The third round in 2012–2015, worth EUR 9 million, pursued a more comprehensive approach focusing on mediation and the normalisation of relations between the Moros and the Philippine government.<sup>108</sup> It is split into two phases, where the first phase supports the conclusions of the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro while the second phase will support its implementation.<sup>109</sup> For the second phase, the following four projects have been approved:

First, "Supporting the Transition to Bangsamoro: Strengthening Institutions for Peace and Human Rights implemented by UNDP."<sup>110</sup> The EU provides support to the Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT) through the UNDP.<sup>111</sup> The TPMT is an independent party that monitors and evaluates the implementation of the peace agreement's commitments. It

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<sup>100</sup> Pg.3. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>101</sup> Pg.1. European External Action Service. (2010). EU confirms willingness to participate in International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao. Retrieved [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/philippines/documents/press\\_corner/20100608\\_02\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/philippines/documents/press_corner/20100608_02_en.pdf).

<sup>102</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Geoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>103</sup> Pg. 1 - 4. Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (2014) Terms of Reference of the International Monitoring Team.

<sup>104</sup> Pg.3. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>105</sup> Pg.3. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>106</sup> Pg.2 – 3. Conciliation Resources. (2012) Innovation in mediation support: The International Contact Group in Mindanao. Retrieved [http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/PracticePaper\\_MindanaoICG\\_ConciliationResources\\_0.pdf](http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/PracticePaper_MindanaoICG_ConciliationResources_0.pdf).

<sup>107</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Geoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.; Council of the European Union. (2014) What does the Council of the EU do? Retrieved <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/council/what-does-the-council-do?lang=en>.

<sup>108</sup> Pg.1. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

<sup>109</sup> Pg.3. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

<sup>110</sup> Pg.4. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

<sup>111</sup> Pg.4. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

consists of five people nominated by MILF and the Government of the Philippines (GPH) appointing one representative from each group, four representatives from international and local NGOs, while the chairman is appointed by both parties.<sup>112</sup> In the case of violations of commitments, it confidentially discloses these to the two parties and provides recommendations.<sup>113</sup> It also disseminates these conclusions to the public, promoting transparency and accountability.<sup>114</sup>

Second, "strengthening GPH-MILF partnership and Local capacities for Dialogue for inclusive Peace (implemented by CHD)."<sup>115</sup> This project aims to promote an informal dialogue between the two parties to build trust between the Philippine government and MILF as well as ensuring the respect towards the implementation of the Bangsamoro Agreement. Conducted by the CHD by creating "eight informal meetings."<sup>116</sup>

Third, "supporting Mindanao Peace Process through enhancing capacity of peace structures, Early Warning Early Response (EWER) mechanisms and local conflict prevention actors implemented by NVP."<sup>117</sup> The programme first supports the Civilian Protection Component (CPC) to fulfil its responsibility outlined by the IMT. Second, it strengthens the capabilities of local communities to effectively and efficiently report violations on the Philippine government or MILF.<sup>118</sup>

Fourth, "delivering peace dividends through the reduction of Explosive Remnants of War implemented by Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD)."<sup>119</sup> This programme is designed to strengthen anti-unexploded ordnance (UXO) capabilities, addressing all unexploded explosive weapons ranging from land mines to shells. The FSD is charged with training Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams and an assessment of the current requirements of the Philippine government to ensure proper ammunition facilities.<sup>120</sup>

Reflecting back on these instruments, Federica Mogherini, current High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission made a statement in October 2014 concerning the role of the EU in the Middle-East stating "(...) in particular, the EU has been an effective payer and needs to become an effective player."<sup>121</sup> *Prima facie* the EU is and has been a financial player in the Philippines. Through its instruments, the EU is merely a financer of projects or

<sup>112</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>113</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>114</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>115</sup> Pg.4. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

<sup>116</sup> Pg.5. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

<sup>117</sup> Pg.5. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

<sup>118</sup> Pg.5. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

<sup>119</sup> Pg.6. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

<sup>120</sup> Pg.6. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

<sup>121</sup> Pg.3. European External Action Service Opening Statement, 141007/03 (Oct. 7, 2014).

programmes implemented by third-party players. Even though the EU is not the only legal entity that acts as a financier in Mindanao, the EU has arguably contributed and provided Mindanao with greater capabilities to progress the peace process. This raises several important questions. *Is it enough for the EU to have been a financier for it to be perceived as a peace partner? Does the EU need to become a more actively engaged political player to be recognised as a credible international peace actor in the region?* The EU states "The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao."<sup>122</sup> In 2013, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) recognised the EU's contribution and support to the peace process.<sup>123</sup> But there are issues concerning the visibility of the EU's work to the general public and at times even to the stakeholders in Manila due to it primarily financing third parties.

The EU is perceived as a neutral actor with no direct self-interest due to its relatively distant geographic proximity compared to China, Japan, Malaysia and Australia.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, it has no perceived religious bias in contrast to other international actors such as Libya, Brunei and Malaysia.<sup>125</sup> This perceived neutrality has one major repercussion - locally, this neutrality is often associated with indifference. This could be explained by EU member states' low level of interest in the conflict, and so long as that level remains low, then the EU is limited in its external action especially with regards to its Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP).<sup>126</sup> For example, there have been informal discussions in the EEAS on a potential CSDP mission to Mindanao but this will not happen because of the level of indifference of the member states as well as the potential reluctance of regional stakeholders.<sup>127</sup>

The EU faces a problem of visibility because it tends to finance third-party implementers- for example, local stakeholders would associate MTF with the World Bank, rather than all of the financial contributors. This problem of visibility and recognition is important because even though there is OPAPP recognition, the EU is gradually shifting its identity to a player and not just a payer, but for some, the EU is unable to shake off the perception of being a mere financier or even the perception of the EU being absent.

Analysing the EU's external instruments tests the scope of its power and capability over a large-distance. Jonathan Markowitz, Assistant Professor, University of Southern California and Christopher Fariss, Assistant Professor, Penn State University state that:

"The more power a state has and the less that power decays over distance, the higher its power projection capability. Thus, there are two variables that interact to determine a state's ability to project power: the amount of power a state has, and the degree to which that power decays over distance."<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Pg.1. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>123</sup> Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (2013) OPAPP lauds EU's support to peace process. Retrieved <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/milf/news/opapp-lauds-eus-support-peace-process>.

<sup>124</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>125</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>126</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.; Confidential. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, July 15, 2014.

<sup>127</sup> Confidential. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, July 15, 2014.; Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>128</sup> Pg.123. Markowitz, J. & Fariss C. (2013) 'Going the Distance: The Price of Projecting Power.' *International Interactions*, 39, p. 119 - 143.

Overall, the Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines functions in a constant of balance of decision-making between the interests of Brussels and Manila on what it can and cannot do.<sup>129</sup> Consequently, the EU acts with limitations in the Philippines and Mindanao but to achieve greater recognition and visibility as a partner for peace, it needs to invest more in enhancing its influence by being more of a player.

## 6. The Impact and Results of EU Support

Measuring the impact and results of these EU external instruments is a challenging subject. It relies on so many immeasurable variables, benchmarks, a vast amount of data collection, observations and is prone to subjectivity, as well as depends on the source of datasets, which can be misleading. There are two main underlining challenges, first, the research is inherently limited as it relies predominantly on secondary sources. To outline the situation, can we attribute the signing of the Bangsamoro Agreement to EU support? Some would say that the EU had a positive impact that contributed to the signing, but this claim cannot be proven or disproven.<sup>130</sup> Additionally, there have been studies that have shown that it is highly probable for peace agreements to fail and that conflict will resume after a period of five to ten years.<sup>131</sup> If peace fails, it can be perceived that the EU's engagement had no positive impact. This becomes a highly complex exercise as no tangible benchmark exists to measure the EU's impact.

One possible proposal is to draw parallels between the commitments of the Bangsamoro Agreement and EU goals in order to triangulate and identify which commitments overlap with EU goals. It will then be possible to use those overlapping commitments as indicators in order to identify what has been achieved in those areas. The challenges to conduct this sort of research include acquiring the manpower to conduct the study, deciding the scope and the cumbersomeness of researching all of these indicators. Importantly, the interim period has not ended so any study on impact is premature.<sup>132</sup>

The DCI has contributed positively over the past years to the development of Mindanao. Rural development has been a success story where the country strategy paper 2002-2006 reviewed that "the global review preparatory mission has found that EC-supported projects have had a positive impact on development of the targeted areas."<sup>133</sup> Regular evaluations are used to measure the results and impact where it can identify and correct weaknesses in the programme. In a recent evaluation from PARTICIP, it has concluded that from a macro-level perspective, the EU has had a positive impact, as it has distributed aid to Mindanao,<sup>134</sup> but on the medium and micro-level such as provinces and barangays (the smallest administrative division in the Philippines), the distribution of EU support was inconsistent. EU aid went to half of the poorest provinces while some affluent communities and barangays profited from this development aid, revealing

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<sup>129</sup> Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>130</sup> Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>131</sup> Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>132</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.; Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>133</sup> Pg.14. European Commission (2002) The EC-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

<sup>134</sup> Pg.56. Particip (2011) Evaluation of the European Commission's Cooperation with the Philippines. Volume 2, European Commission.

disproportionate logistical decision-making.<sup>135</sup> An explanation for these problems is poor situational awareness due to the complex nature of the logistical movement of aid in Mindanao. Organisations will not have the correct and reliable data that reflect the on-going developments in these areas to adjust proportionality and decide on which areas need priority development assistance.<sup>136</sup> The evaluation established that EU impact could not be established at the micro-level because there was insufficient data and lack of tangible evidence that directly linked EU aid to the improvement of these communities.<sup>137</sup>

The MTF has had a considerably positive impact. Based on its evaluation reports, it has achieved the following. First, it has improved dialogue between communities by encouraging a more positive perception on the peace process.<sup>138</sup> Second, the MTF has achieved greater access to basic social services and improved economic capabilities.<sup>139</sup> Third, it strengthened and broadened the participation of locals in decision-making processes thus promoting greater democracy as well as developing local ownership of the peace process.<sup>140</sup> Fourth, MTF strengthened the capacities of BDA on project implementation.<sup>141</sup> It had a considerably positive impact, aiding 412,219 people and 214 villages.<sup>142</sup> A total of 262 projects have been implemented where 71 percent improved local infrastructure.<sup>143</sup>

Health policy has mixed results compared to the other programmes. The Philippine government has a fragmented policy and has been decreasing its budget gradually over the years resulting in a severe lack of access to proper healthcare in the poor and remote areas.<sup>144</sup> Public perception has been quite negative on local authorities.<sup>145</sup> It is not the EU's fault but shows its limitations as a financier.<sup>146</sup>

Concerning IDPs and the World Food Programme, impact has been positive as it has helped 58,428 people and contributed to the increase of overall income for more than 500 families.<sup>147</sup> It has mainly concentrated on developing the capabilities of farmers.<sup>148</sup>

Dialogue has been the central theme of several instruments (Support to NGOs, ICG, CHD, events and cultural exchange).<sup>149</sup> Measuring impact is completely subjective, but it

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<sup>135</sup> Pg.56. Particip (2011) Evaluation of the European Commission's Cooperation with the Philippines. Volume 2, European Commission.

<sup>136</sup> Pg.56. Particip (2011) Evaluation of the European Commission's Cooperation with the Philippines. Volume 2, European Commission.

<sup>137</sup> Pg.57. Particip (2011) Evaluation of the European Commission's Cooperation with the Philippines. Volume 2, European Commission.

<sup>138</sup> Pg.11. World Bank (2013) Annual Report 2013: Mindanao Trust Fund. Taguig City: World Bank.

<sup>139</sup> Pg.18. World Bank (2013) Annual Report 2013: Mindanao Trust Fund. Taguig City: World Bank.

<sup>140</sup> Pg.21. World Bank (2013) Annual Report 2013: Mindanao Trust Fund. Taguig City: World Bank.

<sup>141</sup> Pg.25. World Bank (2013) Annual Report 2013: Mindanao Trust Fund. Taguig City: World Bank.

<sup>142</sup> Pg. vii. World Bank (2013) Annual Report 2013: Mindanao Trust Fund. Taguig City: World Bank.

<sup>143</sup> Pg. vii. World Bank (2013) Annual Report 2013: Mindanao Trust Fund. Taguig City: World Bank.

<sup>144</sup> Pg.90. Particip (2011) Evaluation of the European Commission's Cooperation with the Philippines. Volume 2, European Commission.

<sup>145</sup> Pg.90. Particip (2011) Evaluation of the European Commission's Cooperation with the Philippines. Volume 2, European Commission.

<sup>146</sup> Pg.90. Particip (2011) Evaluation of the European Commission's Cooperation with the Philippines. Volume 2, European Commission.

<sup>147</sup> Pg.5. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>148</sup> Pg.5. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>149</sup> Pg.21 – 25. MacDonald, Alistair & Viñals, Gabriel Munuera (2012) 'The EU and Mindanao: Innovative Avenues for Seeking Peace.' Occasional Paper, EU Institute for Security Studies.

should also be recognised that the negotiations have been concluded successfully. Essentially, these supporting instruments simply worked by bringing people together,<sup>150</sup> and it is important to understand these instruments are especially crucial considering that the 1996 agreement failed because it did not have these kinds of supporting instruments.<sup>151</sup>

Measuring impact and establishing the results of IfS is premature because the interim period ends in 2016.<sup>152</sup> More importantly, IfS is linked to a political process of peace negotiations, and ultimately, these negotiations have to be achieved by the Philippines and MILF and not by the EU. The first round has had a positive impact through including a broader audience but the scope of that impact is undetermined.<sup>153</sup> The impact of IMT cannot be concretely measured especially as it is still on-going but one can hypothesise that the role of monitoring, verifying and reporting is a positive contribution to the peace process.<sup>154</sup> For results, this requires interviews with the IMT. The Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT) has the same issue that it only can be evaluated at the end of its mandate. But it has an important role as a watchdog on the implementation of the Bangsamoro agreement as it obliges the parties to respect the agreement as it monitors and evaluates their commitments. Importantly, promoting transparency to the on-going developments to a wider-audience through public reports makes both parties accountable for their actions or lack of actions.<sup>155</sup> Early Warning Early Response (EWER) has the same issue as it is an early monitoring mechanism, and there are on-going evaluations on this due to the programme ending in 2015.<sup>156</sup>

The EU's support to CHD in the ICG has had a positive impact considering that the Philippine government and MILF have successfully negotiated an agreement.<sup>157</sup> Unexplored Ordnance (UXO) is straightforward because surveying and removing mines has a positive impact.<sup>158</sup> As it is still ongoing, the preliminary results are that 60 mines have been identified, 193 villages out of 348 villages have been surveyed and provided 8 training sessions.<sup>159</sup>

## 7. Conclusion

The role of the EU in Mindanao is a unique and interesting account on how the EU can successfully contribute as a peace partner addressing a conflict 10,000 km away. It

<sup>150</sup> Rood, Steven. (2013). Shifting from Negotiating Mindanao Peace Deal to Monitoring its Implementation. Retrieved <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/features/shifting-negotiating-mindanao-peace-deal-monitoring-its-implementation>.

<sup>151</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>152</sup> Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

<sup>153</sup> Pg.3. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>154</sup> Pg.3. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>155</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>156</sup> Pg.4. European External Action Service (2014) Note on IfS 'EU Participation in and support to the international organs established to assist the peace process and other confidence-building measures in the south of the Philippines.

<sup>157</sup> Pg.2 – 3. Conciliation Resources. (2012) Innovation in mediation support: The International Contact Group in Mindanao. Retrieved <http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r>

<sup>158</sup> Pg.6. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

<sup>159</sup> Pg.6. Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines (2013) The EU is a Partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao. European External Action Service.

demonstrates that, despite its perceived weaknesses such as limited resources, lack of member state interest and the geographic distance to the conflict, the EU has been able to make positive contributions towards the pursuit of peace. Limited resources have made the EU focus more diligently on which projects to finance to maximise effectiveness as well as acquire the necessary experience and expertise. The lack of EU member state interest has both been an inconvenience but has also a significant advantage because there was rarely disagreement between member states on the subject-matter allowing the EU to conduct its work in ease.<sup>160</sup> Distance strengthens the image of the EU as a neutral actor in that it enables the EU to work in areas where other international counterparts would be treated with suspicion.<sup>161</sup> It is true that the low level of interest has limited the EU in what it can achieve, but even with its limitations, the EU has shown that it is capable of tackling global and regional challenges.

In order for the agreement to succeed, both parties including the MILF and the Philippine government need to take accountability. Both parties must have a strong, determined willingness to ensure that the agreement succeeds.<sup>162</sup> The EU can play an important role by providing international legitimization through visibility and transparency to that accountability which is why TPMT and IMT are so crucial. The EU's support in Mindanao serves as a testimony to the EU being a credible partner for peace. Moreover, the EU has demonstrated its capability and capacity to help nations with complex challenges. This strengthens its pivot towards Asia and enables the EU to effectively protect its interests in the region.

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<sup>160</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>161</sup> MacDonald, Alistair. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, March 10, 2014.

<sup>162</sup> Manfredini, Edoardo. Interview by Jeffrey Houvenaeghel. Brussels, April 8, 2014.

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Rue de la Loi 67, Brussels

Tel: +32 (0)2230 8122

E-mail: [eias@eias.org](mailto:eias@eias.org)

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