

Gendering Normative Power Europe in practice

A study of the European Union's implementation of the
Women, Peace and Security-agenda

Abstract

UNSCR 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security agenda has been in place since year 2000, yet women's participation in conflict resolution processes remains low and they are still largely being excluded from deciding how their future society is going to look like. The European Union is known for being a normative actor in international politics, with gender equality being one of their core norms. As they take a larger role in conflict resolution processes, it is interesting to study if they manage to decrease gender blindness in these processes and help speed up progress in the implementation of 1325.

This study applies the theory of Gendering Normative Power Europe on a qualitative case study of the EU's facilitation of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, which is a case where the EU both have an interest in diffusing their core norms as well as it is a conflict resolution process where 1325 need to be implemented. The results show that, while they are not completely failing, the EU is not as strong an actor as would be expected in the implementation of the WPS-agenda.

Key words: Women, Peace and Security agenda, EU, normative power, conflict resolution, Belgrade-Pristina dialogue

Characters: 62 954

List of Abbreviations

EEAS	European Union External Actions Service
EU	European Union
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission Kosovo
HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission
ICJ	International Court of Justice
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MWAHR	Mitrovica Women's Association for Human Rights
NAP	National Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RWL SEE	Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

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1 Introduction

Perhaps what was not grasped [following the adoption of 1325], and is still not absorbed by the members of the delegations or by the thousands of officials worldwide who found 1325 lying in their inboxes, was the genuinely radical understanding that informed the feminist analysis undergirding 1325. That feminist understanding is that patriarchy [...] is a principal cause both of the outbreak of violent societal conflicts and of the international community's frequent failures in providing long-term resolution to those violent conflicts – (Enloe, 2005: 281)

Almost two decades after the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 – in which one of the central pillars is the demand of the inclusion of women in all levels of decision-making for the management, prevention and resolution of conflict – women comprise less than 10 percent of peace negotiators and under 4 percent of signatories to peace agreements (UNSC 2000; Kirby & Shepherd 2016: 376). As such, women are still not allowed to on equal footing with men decide how their post-conflict society is going to look like. UNSCR 1325 was followed by seven resolutions that further elaborated on how the pillars outlined in 1325 would be implemented. The framework for the implementation of 1325 and subsequent resolutions is called the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and is used by women's movements as well as national governments and transnational organisations worldwide. Yet, the slow progress has resulted in critique against the effectiveness of 1325 and the accusation of it only leading to an entrenchment of women's marginalisation and victimisation (Puechguirbal 2010). Indeed, even when internationally powerful actors such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) set up ambitious action plans to follow through on the commitments given by 1325, they struggle to implement them (Guerrina & Wright 2016).

A majority of the National Action Plans (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 that have been produced worldwide come from EU member states, and gender equality has since decades back been part of the normative framework of the EU (Guerrina & Wright 2016: 293). When the EU is increasing their visibility in conflict and post-conflict contexts, especially as a mediator, they are both an actor probable to push for the WPS-agenda, based on their commitments to gender equality, as well as it is their responsibility to follow through on their commitments. When the EU are increasing their engagement as mediator in international conflicts it is of utmost importance that they unconditionally and from the start make sure to include women's rights and participation in these post-conflict contexts. For them to do that, conditions that allow for gender perspectives to permeate all actions need to be in place.

By adopting the theoretical framework of Gendered Normative Power Europe and applying velvet triangles to the analysis, this study will qualitatively assess

how the EU have acted to mitigate gender blindness in the *Dialogue on Normalisation of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina*. The dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia is a case where the EU is acting both as a mediator, and the countries are also on a membership-path toward the European Union and is as such a case where the EU have an interest in diffusing their norms. This study will therefore seek to evaluate how the EU has mitigated gender blindness, and as such strived to follow their commitments under the Women, Peace and Security-agenda in their facilitation of the *Dialogue on Normalization of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina*.

1.1 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this paper is to develop the theory on Gendering Normative Power Europe, by applying the theory to a specific case where in-depth findings can be made. This will both bridge theory between the EU and conflict resolution, their normative power and the WPS agenda, as well as serve as a needed analysis of one specific actor and their implementation of 1325 in one specific case. With the slow progress in the pillar of women's participation in conflict resolution, it is necessary to investigate why this is and where implementation is lacking. By scrutinizing a clearly normative actor, with many incentives to carry through on aspects relating to gender, interesting findings can be made regarding, if and why, even such an actor fall short in ensuring women's equal participation. The study will thus not focus on the effectiveness of the EU as a mediator, but rather on the EU as an actor in pushing for the WPS-agenda. The study emanates from research on the EU as a normative actor, and this case is one where the EU is driving gender equality in the form of a norm originating from the UN – the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

The research question is as follows:

How is gender blindness mitigated in the European Union's work as facilitator in the Dialogue on Normalization of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina?

“Mitigating gender blindness” is within the scope of this study understood as efforts to implement the WPS-agenda, since the agenda is the only comprehensive and universal framework for providing gendered responses and improving the participation of women in conflict resolution settings.

1.2 Disposition

In the following section, *2. Theoretical Framework*, literature on the EU as a mediator and normative actor, as well as research on the WPS-agenda will be outlined, as this study will advance research in these two fields. Further, the theory on Gendering Normative Power Europe will be presented together with the concept of velvet triangles. The study will be conducted through a qualitative content analysis using material from the EU, independent non-governmental organisations (NGO) in Kosovo and Serbia, as well as academic and expert sources, which will be further explained under section *3. Method*. The triangulation of material ensures reliability and is necessary in case study research, which is the chosen strategy for the study. To situate the reader in the context, a background on the conflict history, the dialogue and the EU's framework for implementing UNSCR 1325 is given under section *4. Background*. Following that, in section *5. Results & Analysis* results from each of the three categories of the content analysis will be presented. Lastly, some concluding remarks will be made together with suggestions for further research.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Previous Research

In research on the EU as a mediator, no focus has been given to their ability in implementing the WPS-agenda. The research in this area is focused on their effectiveness in mediation regarding reaching agreements and settlements, rather than studying how well they are living up to their commitments of including women in decision-making positions in conflict resolution settings and allowing women to give input on relevant issues (see e.g. Bergmann & Niemann 2012; O'Donnell 2016; Grono 2010). In two studies assessing the EU's mediation in the Russo-Georgia conflict and subsequent resolution in 2008, the EU is criticized for their normativity regarding Georgia's territorial integrity, which the scholars mean can be regarded as partiality and would limit the EU's mediation effectiveness (Forsberg & Seppo 2011: 135; Grono 2010: 7). The normative aspect of EU as a mediation actor is in line with the purpose of this study and as such, these are interesting conclusions, as the arguments made in this study is that the EU should rather be *more* normative.

Research on Normative Power Europe was brought forward by Ian Manners (2002) and builds on the idea that the EU is neither a civilian or military power in international politics, as these are both composed of empirical factors which is not the EU's strongest asset. The EU's power lies in its ability to control what is considered 'normal' in international relations – the EU is a normative power. Declarations, treaties, policies, criteria and conditions build the *acquis communautaire*, the body of rights and obligations that are binding for all current and future EU member states. These are diffused in a number of different ways through the EU's actions, one of them being 'procedural diffusion', meaning the institutionalization of a relationship with the EU and a third party – such as through enlargement. Manners identifies five core norms that the EU diffuses – the centrality of peace; the idea of liberty; democracy; rule of law; and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Manners 2002: 238-245). Following Manners, numerous scholars have studied the EU's norm diffusion in their external actions (see e.g. Laïdi 2008; Pace 2007). Vast literature also exists on the EU and their work on gender equality, both within their member states as well as in relation to third countries (see e.g. Kantola 2010; Bretherton 2002). The studies show that the EU is generally better at pushing their gender equality agenda inside

its borders than outside, and are thus worse at what Manners called procedural diffusion when it comes to gender norms. This study will further contribute to research on the EU's work on spreading gender norms outside its borders.

In research on the WPS agenda, critique is directed at the seemingly overweight given to the protection pillar, at the cost of less emphasis given to participation (Kirby & Shepherd 2016: 380). Perhaps the slow progress in women's participation in conflict resolution is an indicator of this, and for these reasons this study will focus on the participation-pillar. State-centrism in the implementation of the WPS agenda is another point of criticism. While many states have adopted NAPs to guide their fulfilment of the WPS-agenda, only one third of NAPs are developed with the help of civil society and 45 percent of NAPs mention civil society involvement (Ibid 384). Since women's civil society organisations worked for decades toward the adoption of the WPS-agenda, I find it regretful that they are not fully included in the implementation of it. A general misunderstanding of 1325, such as presented in the opening quote of this essay, is of great concern to scholars studying the implementation of WPS. This includes that 'women' and 'gender' are used interchangeably in documents; essentialist claims of women always being proponents of peace are common; and structural obstacles continuously hinder real change (Puechguirbal 2010: 176, 179, 184). Much research on the WPS-agenda is broad and look at general trends in the global work that has followed 1325's adoption. Within the research that is actor-specific, two studies are found on the EU as an actor within the WPS-agenda. Karen Barnes (2011) outlines the evolution and obstacles in the EU's work in creating coordinated policies regarding their implementation of 1325, and address that the EU is one of the most active supporters of 1325 (2011: 211-222). Guerrina & Wright (2016) examines how well the EU has adopted the implementation of the WPS-agenda into their external actions, and as this is part of the theoretical framework it will be further elaborated below.

This study will contribute to widening research on the EU in conflict resolution, by including the aspect of their ability to implement the WPS-agenda, as well as add to research on WPS by looking closely at one specific case, in contrast to the wide studies that are dominating the research field.

2.2 Gendering Normative Power Europe

Roberta Guerrina and Katherine Wright (2016) combine what they see as two aspects worth examining regarding the EU as an actor in international affairs; its role as a promoter of gender equality in transnational settings as well as the debate about Normative Power Europe. They aim to examine how well the EU are at advancing the WPS agenda as a foreign policy objective. To Manners' five core norms, presented above, Guerrina and Wright adds a sixth one – that of gender equality. The promotion of gender equality is part of the EU's normative framework, they argue, illustrated through the inclusion of gender mainstreaming

in all policy areas as a core principle in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam (2016: 293-294). However, in external policies, Guerrina and Wright find that the mainstreaming of gender is forgotten. There seems to be a tension between the EU's rhetoric about gender equality and their failure to follow through on these commitments, as they see this as a possible hinder in international negotiations. The EU seem to be biased in their external actions, as to traditional approaches of security and defence rather than altering their approaches to be able to more radically implement 1325 (Ibid: 295). This study aims to add empirical knowledge to the theory, by investigating one specific case where the EU should act gendered normative. In Guerrina and Wright's examining of the extent of gender mainstreaming in external actions they study the EU's framework for implementing the WPS-agenda and use the tool of *velvet triangles*, which will be further explained below. Like Guerrina and Wright adopted velvet triangles to their study on the EU's gendered normativity in their external actions in general, this study will adopt the velvet triangle to a specific case of EU's external actions and as such develop the theory of Gendering Normative Power Europe.

2.2.1 Velvet Triangles

As mentioned above, Guerrina and Wright uses the theory of velvet triangles in their assessment of the EU as a gendered normative actor. The theory on velvet triangles is originally developed by Alison Woodward (2003), who argue that velvet triangles are crucial for women's rights advocacy to become grounded. The velvet triangle can be applied globally but the version presented below is adjusted to the EU specifically. A velvet triangle consists of three cornerstones;

- 1) Femocrats – individuals positioned within the European Commission or the European Parliament who are motivated to work towards transformative change in line with feminist goals.
- 2) Civil society organizations – the established and organised women's movement.
- 3) Epistemic communities – networks of professional experts with recognized competence in academia or other consultancies with an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge (Guerrina & Wright 2016: 296; Woodward 2003: 85).

These networks of feminist actors in policy-making help to ensure that actors and institutions are held accountable and fulfil obligations on gender equality (Guerrina & Wright 2016: 297). The constellation involves cooperation between actors with different professional interests but with a commitment to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Thus, it is much less likely that gender blindness can occur in policy making and policy implementation if a velvet triangle exists (Ibid 298). As such, the theory of velvet triangles will be used operationally to define the concept of "mitigating gender blindness". If a velvet triangle exists in the EU's facilitation of the dialogue between Belgrade and

Pristina, there is less risk that the process is being gender blind, in the form of not adhering to the demands of the WPS-agenda.

Guerrina and Wright addresses that it is harder for civil society and epistemic communities to reach the policy area of foreign policies (2016: 298). As mediation and dialogue often take place behind closed doors, I would argue there is a risk that these parts of foreign policy become even harder to reach. This means there is even more reason to scrutinize the EU's work in this area.

3 Method

3.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

In developing the theory on Gendering Normative Power Europe, this study will use a more qualitative approach than Guerrina and Wright. Their study is largely quantitative, assessing for example the attendance numbers in meetings held by the EEAS Task Force in Women, Peace and Security and how women are framed as a category in key EU policy documents on WPS. This study's focus of one specific mediation effort by the EU makes a qualitative method more suitable, allowing to reach more in-depth knowledge.

Content analysis allows for the systematic analysing of textual information and is as such a suitable method for the answering of the research question (Halperin & Heath 2017: 345). The theory will be applied to the material in that the three categories of velvet triangles, 1) femocrats, 2) civil society, and 3) epistemic communities will be coded in all material. The measurements are not quantifiable but need to be interpreted and assessed in its context due to the complexity of the issue, which is why a qualitative approach is fitting. The concrete proceeding of the content analysis is further elaborated under section 3.4. *Operationalisation*.

The choice of a qualitative method is imperative to the internal validity of this study, since a quantitative approach, e.g. counting the amount of times the words "women" or "gender" is used in the material, would not at all measure the conditions for the EU to follow their 1325-commitments in conflict resolution contexts. In fact, that would contradict the very feminist premise that underlines the research question and go in line with an "add women and stir"-take on gender equality. The strength of the qualitative and interpretative approach is thus that the complex latent meanings can be discovered. Furthermore, each step of the process is controlled and the findings are consistently measured in relation to its context (Kohlbacher 2006: 14).

3.2 Case Study and Case Selection

The chosen research strategy is a case study, due to the aspiration to reach depth and explain a highly complex context (Flyvbjerg 2006: 237; Kohlbacher 2006: 5). The study is inductively theory developing through the application of theory on Gendered Normative Power Europe by allowing categories from velvet triangles to guide my analysis (George & Bennet 2005: 111). Studying a case of international mediation develops on the findings expressed by Guerrina and Wright in their article on Gendering Normative Power Europe and moves the theory from Brussels-based findings to a concrete case of mediation.

It being a previously somewhat low-status research strategy, several scholars have written work that eminently explains how case studies contribute to social sciences (see e.g. Flyvbjerg 2006; George & Bennet 2005; Kohlbacher 2006). Bent Flyvbjerg (2006) defends case studies against those who claim that they are weak in validity, reliability and theory and refute five common misunderstandings on the strategy. For example, he proves that case studies can be generalizable when they are a critical case – even in the predominantly more quantitative natural sciences (Flyvbjerg 2006: 226-227, 235).

The selected case is the EU's role as facilitator in the *Dialogue on Normalisation of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina*. The EU is, as mentioned, a normative actor in world politics and a majority of NAPs worldwide have been produced by EU member states. The EU themselves have also adopted numerous action plans and guiding documents on the implementation of 1325, which will be presented below. With this background, it is reasonable to believe that the EU in their facilitation of a dialogue would adhere to the demands given in the original UNSCR 1325 and in their subsequent action plans. The Belgrade-Pristina dialogue is both part of Kosovo and Serbia's paths toward memberships to the EU, as well as it is one of the EU's current mediation efforts. This means that it is a case where the EU traditionally would diffuse their norms through procedural diffusion – as membership requires adherence to the EU's *aquis communautaire*, as well as one where the EU is facilitating a conflict resolution process. As such, it is both a case where the EU would try to influence the actors to certain norms, as well as a case where the WPS agenda needs to be followed. This makes the EU's actions in the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue a most likely case since these factors indicate that the EU would act as a gendered normative actor (Gerring 2007: 232).

Regarding external validity and generalizability, this is limited due to the choice of a single case study. However, the adoption of a most likely case does allow for some form of generalizability. As mentioned above, the EU is perhaps the most likely actor in the population of national and regional actors in world politics to follow commitments under the WPS-agenda, so if they do not – who would? (Flyvbjerg 2006: 231). Certainly, robust conclusions cannot be made until other cases are tested, but due to the relative extremity of the selected case, inferences drawn in this study will be relevant also outside of this single case (Halperin & Heath 2017: 215, 149).

There are more actors than the EU that have a responsibility to implement the WPS-agenda in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, but the sole focus of this study will be on the EU. Indeed, they are merely facilitating the dialogue and the national governments also bear the responsibility to include women in the negotiating teams and to listen to women's priorities. However, this does not mean that the EU's responsibility disappears, and they are still in a unique power position due to the dialogue being related to Kosovo and Serbia's accession processes. It is their obligation to demand from Kosovo and Serbia to make these efforts, and the EU should also take own initiatives to listen to women's groups from the regions to hear their demands.

3.3 Material

For the purpose of both acquiring in-depth knowledge and to compensate for the potential difficulty in reaching some important pieces of documents due to the dialogue being on-going as well as partly behind closed doors, a large variety of textual sources will be used. These include written evaluations of the dialogue from academic or other experts, NGO reports and recommendations, EU statements and other communicative material produced by the EU. All material is such that it is relevant to the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. Both EU material and material produced by independent NGOs runs the risk of being biased in different directions. Certainly, each piece of material will be subject to source criticism, but it is probably impossible to get away from the fact that the sender will have some sort of agenda. Triangulation of material from three different type of sources will be done to reduce this problem (Höglund & Öberg 2011: 191). These include:

- 1) Sources deriving from the EU – this includes statements and news articles produced primarily from the EEAS as the institution responsible for facilitating the dialogue. Material will also be drawn from Members of European Parliament (MEP), who are working toward Kosovo or Serbia and thus can politically pressure the EEAS on their work in the dialogue.
- 2) Independent NGOs active in Kosovo and Serbia – this includes reports and shorter documents such as open letters and press releases.
- 3) Professional experts – academic reports or reports produced by think-tanks or similar expert organisations. These will be both from the region and from e.g. international universities.

The material sources mirror the theory, as they derive from the EU, civil society and epistemic communities, which should ensure that all relevant views of the context will be uncovered. This does not mean that information on e.g. civil society organisations can only come from NGO material; information on all aspects can be found in all sorts of material. Furthermore, seeing as the research is conducted in the form of a single case study, triangulation is helpful to generate a thick and holistic description of the case (Kohlbacher 2006: 23).

A limitation in the material is that only material written in English can be examined. Since the EU is the actor studied and material deriving from or directed at them will be in English, this is not a large limitation. However, it is possible that some fruitful analysis of the situation in Kosovo or Serbia or similar sort of material written in Albanian or Serbian will be excluded due to this.

The dialogue began in March 2011 and this is the start of the time-period concerned. The dialogue is still ongoing but the time-period will be limited until March 2018, and material will be collected from this 7-year timespan.

3.4 Operationalisation

To measure how gender blindness has been mitigated, and the EU has had a ground for implementing the WPS-agenda in the facilitation of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, the tool of velvet triangles is adopted. The velvet triangle is the operational definition of the dependent variable, as they will exemplify the loose concept of “mitigating gender blindness”. The three aspects of a velvet triangle are, as mentioned above, 1) femocrats, 2) civil society organizations, and 3) epistemic communities. Any information related to the three aspects will be coded, and the material will then be interpreted to determine if it is in a positive or negative manner. This will be presented under section 4. *Results & Analysis*. The qualitative and interpretative approach fits well with these rather open definitions (Kohlbacher 2006: 16-20).

For the femocrats found to be relevant to the study, they must have the possibility to influence the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, and this can be both from the European Commission or the European Parliament. Regarding civil society organisations and epistemic communities pushing for the WPS-agenda, this will partly be searched for in the EU’s material, to decipher if they seem to be an important aspect from their part. Reports and evaluations from local NGOs, academia and other relevant expert organisations will both reveal if civil society organisations as well as epistemic communities with a strong focus on women’s rights and gender equality are present in the region and giving focus to the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, as well as if and how they are included in the dialogue.

4 Background

4.1 Conflict History

Contested opinions over Kosovo's territory dates back around a century, to when Kosovo seceded from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. According to the Serbian narrative, the Kosovan territory was liberated, while an Albanian narrative claims that Kosovo was instead occupied by Serbs. From 1918 Kosovo was part of Yugoslavia, where they possessed an autonomous status from 1974, different from the six other republics constituting the federation. In late 1980s, the Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic took over Kosovo's institutions, which resulted in the proclamation of Kosovo Albanians as a republic within Yugoslavia in 1990, and an independent state in 1991 (Mehmeti & Radeljic 2016: 3-4). Clashes between Serbian forces and the Kosovo Albanian population followed, at first with a predominantly peaceful resistance from the Kosovo Albanian side. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), a guerrilla force for freedom or a terrorist group depending on who you ask, initiated attacks toward the Serbian army in late 1990s and the conflict escalated. Between 1998 and 1999 thousands lost their lives and hundreds of thousands were displaced or expelled from their territory (Gashi et. al. 2017: 536). Sexual violence was widespread during the conflict and affected thousands of women (Chick 2016).

In March 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces began an air-strike campaign which lasted for nearly three months, and eventually led to the withdrawal of Serbian forces. After the intervention, a UN administrative mission (UNMIK) and a NATO peacebuilding mission (KFOR) was established and Kosovo began developing their own state institutions. Mediations and negotiations between Kosovo and Serbian representatives led by the UN between 2005 and 2007 failed, and the UN Special Envoy to Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, was tasked to present a proposal for the status of Kosovo. His conclusions were that an "independence supervised by the international community" should be Kosovo's final status. On February 17th, 2008, Kosovo declared its independence, which Serbia opposed and questioned the legality of to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (Gashi et. al. 2017: 536-537; Mehmeti & Radeljic 2016: 4, 7).

Since the breakaway of Kosovo's territory from Serbia, the institutions in Kosovo has been failing to govern some municipalities in northern Kosovo, separated by the southern part of the country by the river Ibar, that are dominated by Kosovo Serbs. The Serb community rejects the authority and independence of the Kosovo government, and animosities have been strong and continuous

between the Kosovo Serb communities and the Kosovo Albanians (Burema 2012: 10-11).

4.2 The EU-facilitated Dialogue for the Normalization of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina

Following Serbia's questioning of Kosovo's independence in 2008 before the ICJ, and them refusing to accept that the ICJ did not find the declaration illegal, the UN adopted a resolution which obliged the EU to facilitate a dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina aimed at normalizing relations between the two countries (Beha 2015: 102-103). The overall aims set up by the EU for the dialogue are threefold, 1) promote cooperation between the two sides, 2) help them achieve progress on the path to Europe, and 3) improve the lives of the people (EEAS 2016). The dialogue began in March 2011 and has consisted of a series of talks between the two governments, with a number of agreements on technical issues being reached, such as on freedom of movement and the reciprocity of license plates; civil registries; custom stamp procedures; cadastral records; acceptance of university diplomas; and regional representation and cooperation (Phillips 2017: 8). The dialogue began with a technical focus, as a way of trying to de-politicize it, due to the extreme sensitivity in relations between the countries. While even the smallest of technical details were being subjected to blocking from the parties, it was evident that the dialogue will have strong political consequences no matter what issues are being discussed. Nonetheless, a strong focus has continuously been given to technical factors (van der Borgh et. al. 2017: 39). Two years into the dialogue, the so-called *Brussels agreement*¹ was reached which is considered the biggest success of the negotiations so far (Economides & Ker-Lindsay 2015: 1028). The agreement consists of 15 points that addresses the accommodation of Serbs in northern Kosovo; groups that before this refused any authority of the Government of Kosovo. The agreement is historic in that it is the first agreement reached and signed between Kosovo and Serbia (Mehmeti & Radeljic 2016: 8).

The dialogue has been used as an incentive in the two Balkan-countries' processes toward membership of the EU, since the EU demand that all interstate conflicts or disputes are solved before entering the Union. Indeed, the signing of the Brussels agreement has led to Serbia starting their accession negotiations and Kosovo reaching a Stabilization Association Agreement (Gashi et. al. 2017: 534). As mentioned briefly under previous research, the success of the dialogue is questioned. The last year has seen some troubling events, such as the murder of a Kosovo Serb politician in Kosovo and a provocation from Serbia by sending a

¹ The full name of the agreement is *First Agreement of principles governing the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina*

train into Kosovo covered in the text “Kosovo is Serbia” (Phillips 2017: 14; MacDowall 2016). A strong criticism against the dialogue has been its lack of transparency and inclusion. Information reaching the public has been lacking, and negative sentiments against the dialogue being predominantly top-down has been expressed (Development Group 2012; Phillips 2017). A survey conducted in 2014, one year after the Brussels agreement was reached, by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Kosovo, indicated that Kosovars were at most mildly optimistic on the expected results of the agreement, where the most negative attitudes were found among Kosovar Serbs in the North of Kosovo (NDI 2014).

The EU has collaborated with other actors during the dialogue. The United States (US) has been involved, in varied capacity, due to their strong support toward Kosovo. The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), has also helped in implementation some technical aspects of agreements (Phillips 2017: 15; Deda & Qosaj-Mustafa 2014; 5).

Finally, conflict resolution and mediation between Kosovo and Serbia is clearly an immensely complex matter. As such it is daring of the EU to even begin a dialogue with the aim to normalize relations between the two countries. What further complicates the matter is the fact that not only conflict resolution between the two countries is necessary, but reconciliation between Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs is also lacking (Burema 2012: 11-12; Crisis Group 2012: 3). Despite critique directed toward the EU’s achievements during the dialogue, some would argue that getting the representatives of Kosovo and Serbia in the same rooms and holding meetings in “a good atmosphere”, an expression often used by the EU representatives, is perhaps progress enough (Van der Borgh et. al. 2017: 71).

4.3 The European Union’s Commitments Under the Women, Peace and Security-agenda

The EU’s framework for implementation of 1325 and subsequent resolutions consists of two main documents; *Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security* and *Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as reinforced by UNSCR 1820 in the context of ESDP*. Three main aspects are identified as priorities in the EU’s implementation of 1325; 1) the integration of WPS issues in dialogue with partner governments, particularly those affected by conflict, 2) mainstreaming of gender, especially in relation to crisis management and development, and 3) support for specific strategic actions intended to protect, support and empower women. The first point is a typical example of what Manners (2002) would call procedural diffusion of norms to third party governments. The *Comprehensive approach* state that the EU will strive towards

greater number of women as mediators and chief mediators as well as involve women at all decision-making levels, and it recognizes the valuable resource that women's peace efforts are at local and national levels (Council of the European Union 2008). In the EU's *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*, one of their key priorities listed is "promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world", which also shows that the EU are striving to diffuse norms on gender equality outside its borders (European Union 2015). Regarding mediation, the *Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities* mentions the promotion of participation of women and inclusion of gender expertise in mediation efforts, which shows that the WPS-framework is present in that document as well (Council of the European Union 2009).

Critique that Guerrina and Wright (2016) direct at the EU's framework is that they are lacking in ambition, since they have not been updated following six of the eight resolutions on WPS. They have not been updated following the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 and the creating of EEAS as the main institution for external policies either. Moreover, in the *Comprehensive approach*, women and gender are used synonymously, indicating a lack of understanding on the concept of gender. The *Implementation of UNSCR 1325* furthermore is based on a resolution that frames sexual violence in a problematic way which has been updated in later resolutions, that are not taken into account in the EU's policy document (305-307).

The framework outlined above is applicable, and ought to have been applied, to the EU's action as mediator between Belgrade and Pristina. In the context of a conflict resolution process, the framework of implementing the WPS-agenda ought to be followed for the EU to diffuse their norms of gender equality. This study will not in detail determine if these factors have been enforced, but will rather investigate whether a velvet triangle, so to prevent gender blindness in the form of not applying the WPS-framework, is present in the context of the dialogue. However, it is quite inevitable that some conclusions will be made regarding indicators of the EU's implementation of WPS, and it is valuable to have the EU's commitments in mind while looking at the results.

5 Results & Analysis

5.1 Femocrats

The *Dialogue on Normalization of Relations Between Belgrade and Pristina* is led by the EEAS with the HR/VP as chief negotiator. As chief negotiator, there is room to set the agenda and decide which issues to bring forth, and as such it is of interest to see if any of the three chief negotiators so far – Robert Cooper, Catherine Ashton and Federica Mogherini – have been working toward transformative change in line with feminist goals.

There is no information found in the material that indicates that either Robert Cooper or Federica Mogherini is pushing for transformative change in line with feminist goals. Catherine Ashton have during the time she held the position as HR/VP pushed for the WPS-agenda in some instances. In an open letter from a Swedish, a Kosovar and a Serbian women's rights organisation, she was acknowledged for her previous engagement for women's participation and women's rights. The letter acknowledges that the EU has excluded women's organisations from giving input to the dialogue, that they have failed to gender mainstream any agreements reached so far, and that they as such are failing to implement UNSCR 1325 (KWN et. al. 2013). Ashton responded to this letter and in her response, a feminist agenda regarding the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue is visible. She writes to reassure on the EU's commitment to implement UNSCR 1325 and to promote women's rights. The letter also addresses that women possess some key positions in the dialogue from both the EU, Serbian and Kosovan side. During Ashton's time as HR/VP, she collaborated with the Secretary of State to the US at the time, Hillary Clinton, who also is known for advocating women's rights. Ashton reveals in her letter that she and Clinton met with female politicians and leaders in Pristina during a joint visit to the region on 31 October 2012, and that she hopes to meet with the organisations that addressed her with a letter on her next visit (A (2013)). There is unfortunately no information found on whether this meeting happened, and most other material suggest very limited inclusion of women's civil society organisations. This material does however imply that a window of opportunity existed in the dialogue, regarding implementation of the WPS-agenda, when both Catherine Ashton and Hillary Clinton held key positions. When two of the highest positions in the negotiations were held by two women with transformative feminist

agendas, conditions for a strong implementation of the WPS-agenda was promising.

No information is found on whether Federica Mogherini continued this path when she replaced Ashton as HR/VP. The fact that the chief negotiators during most parts of the dialogue have been women has a value in itself, since statistics of women negotiators which is exceptionally low, as illustrated in the introduction. However, only one of the chief negotiators have clearly expressed an explicit interest in pushing for a transformative feminist agenda, and as such only one of the chief negotiators has shown indicators of acting as a femocrat, as defined by the theory.

Except from the chief negotiators, no women are currently represented in the negotiating teams, according to a recent analysis made by two women's organisations from Kosovo and Serbia (Pescanik & MWAHR 2018). Edita Tahiri was the Minister of Dialogue in Kosovo and as such leading the Kosovo negotiating team until fall of 2017. Studying actors from the national teams is beyond the scope of this essay, but seeing as Edita Tahiri is the chair of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe (RWL SEE) (see more under 4.3. *Civil Society Organisations*), it is possible that she had an agenda of including women's perspectives in the dialogue (RWL SEE 2015a).

Interestingly, Guerrina and Wright (2016) in their study in EU's gendered normativity in external relations in general, found that femocrats seemed to exist in a larger extent in the European Parliament than the European Commission (2016: 303). This could be damaging to the implementation of the WPS-agenda, since it is the EEAS under the European Commission that are responsible for all foreign actions and as such would benefit from committed feminists to mitigate gender blindness in their implementation work. In this case, a possible femocrat were found in the European Parliament, who has been working toward Kosovo and Serbia and as such has had the ability to put political pressure on the executors of the dialogue. Outgoing MEP Ulrike Lunacek from Austria has been a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) and the Delegation for relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (DSEE), and she raises violence against women in reports and speeches related to Kosovo's accession process (EP 2017, A8-0062/2017). She has however not mentioned women's participation and inclusion in the dialogue, and it is perhaps striking that someone who is driven by improving women's rights and gender equality, and who is invested in Kosovo, do *not* bring up the deficit in the EU's implementation of the WPS-agenda in the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue.

The organisations Mitrovica Women's Association for Human Rights (MWAHR) in Kosovo and Women's Association Pescanik in Serbia are implementing a project aimed at increasing the participation of women in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. In their narrative report for the project during 2017, they report on challenges regarding getting representatives of the EU to participate after inviting them to their activities. One EU representative they did reach and who participated in a training on "EU integration and gender equality"

with great satisfaction was Ana Milenic who is the Contact person for human rights and Gender focal point in the EU Delegation in Serbia. The organisations report that the participants very much appreciated her compliance in listening to their experiences (Women's Association Pescanik 2018). This is a positive result as it implies that there are EU-representatives in the countries concerned by the dialogue that allow women's organisations to provide input to the dialogue.

Of course, there is a possibility that the EU has taken more initiatives than can be found in the results regarding the inclusion of women's perspectives. The theoretical background of this study does however imply that if such initiatives were taken, representatives of the EU would want to display them. Due to their normative power, and gender equality arguably being one of their core norms, any initiatives taken to bring the WPS-agenda forward would be a perfect opportunity to symbolically present to the public that they are including these perspectives in their work as facilitator of the dialogue.

5.2 Civil Society Organisations

As mentioned above, the dialogue has received critique for not including civil society sufficiently. Indeed, an evaluation that the EU themselves have ordered, highlights that contact made by the facilitation team with local civil society has been limited (ECDMP 2011:15). If civil society organisations in general are not included in the dialogue, women's organisations specifically are evidently not included either. The following results show that the women's movements in both Kosovo and Serbia are strong and have a great interest in contributing to the Belgrade – Pristina dialogue.

An open letter, directed at the chief negotiator at the time, Catherine Asthon was written by Serbian, Kosovar and Swedish women's rights organisations in 2013. It expresses concern regarding the lack of participation of women's organisations in the dialogue and state that such exclusion come at a price since it leaves out the potential and expertise of the women's movement and decreases the legitimacy of the agreements reached within the dialogue. They bring up that women's priorities, e.g. survivors of conflict related sexual violence and missing persons since the war, have not been addressed and that when issues that greatly affect women are discussed, women's organisations have not been allowed to give input. These issues include health, education, economics at social rights. They relate to UNSCR 1325 and imply that the EU are failing to implement it (KWN et. al. 2013).

There are projects being implemented parallel with the dialogue with the aim of either influencing the national and EU decision-makers, or to enhance normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia outside of the dialogue. The organisations MWAHR in Kosovo and Women's Association Pescanik in Serbia have a project aiming to increase the participation of women in peace building and to inform citizens from Kosovo and Serbia on what has been achieved so far in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. In the scope of the project,

recommendations have been produced and distributed to national and EU authorities (Pescanik & MWAHR 2018). It is too soon to tell if the EU will listen to the recommendations.

RWL SEE has through similar projects gathered women from civil society, at local or national decision-making positions and other leadership positions from both Kosovo and Serbia, aiming to increase the involvement of civil society and minority groups in the dialogue. RWL SEE has released recommendations directed to national governments, the EU, the UN and other relevant international organisations. The recommendations include measures on implementing 1325 such as making sure that women voices are heard throughout the dialogue (RWL SEE 2015 a&b).

The recommendations and demands from the above-mentioned projects and open letters address that women's voices need to be heard regarding issues that affect women; that women should be increasingly involved in the dialogue; that all agreements reached have been subjected to citizen involvement during all phases from consultation to implementation; increased transparency and information-sharing on the results of the negotiations; increased funds to women's organisations; and the mainstreaming of UNSCR 1325 into all future agreements. Since these recommendations have been given at different times during the dialogue, it is implied that the EU has not listened to the recommendations or become better at including women's organisations perspectives.

These results show that the conditions of an established and organised women's movement exist in Kosovo and Serbia. They are both experts on their own needs and demands and have already been working on reconciliation between their communities for years. As the open letters state, the dialogue will have trouble gaining ground and reach sustainable results if the civil society is addressed and if women's priorities are not considered. In her letter, Catherine Ashton implied that she would meet with women's organisations on her future visits to the region, but no information of these meetings is recorded in the material and it is thus not possible to say whether this inclusion took place or not.

UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions demand the inclusion of women at decision-making positions at all levels, and usually the top-levels are where the least number of women participate. It is interesting in this case that it seems like the EU have done the opposite – the chief negotiators have been mostly women but few women are included on the grassroots level. The exclusion of women's civil society organisations in dialogue does however reflect what was found in previous research on the WPS-agenda; that the women's movement, who largely made the agenda possible, are to a large extent not included in its implementation.

On the 13th of March 2018, the EU published a *Call for Project Ideas*, encouraging established local civil society organisations from Kosovo and Serbia to submit their ideas. This is the first instance found in the material where the EU are seeking civil society organisation's contribution to the dialogue. They seek projects that communicate to the public on the benefits of the dialogue, that encourage debates on all levels on how the dialogue can affect relations between Belgrade and Pristina, as well as sharpen interaction between various actors from Kosovo and Serbia. One of the criteria is to target “both information and

interaction among individuals and communities, including women and youth, and promote equal opportunities”, which shows an effort to actively include women’s perspectives. This is a step in the right direction toward including the established local women’s movement to the dialogue and as such prevent gender blindness (European Union 2018).

5.3 Epistemic Communities

Networks of professional experts with recognized competence in academia or other consultancies with gender-specific focus are a bit harder to find in the material. Of the implementation reviews and evaluations found on the dialogue none had a specific focus on performing a gender analysis of the dialogue. Some implementation reviews bring up the need to include civil society in a larger extent, which is positive as this would open up for an involvement from women’s civil society organisations.

David Phillips (2017) of the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at the University of Columbia, has conducted an implementation review of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue where recommendations are given on ways to improve the results. On critical issues that need to be addressed, missing persons are one such issue. This is also an issue that the women’s organisations in the region have demanded action on, and it is as such positive that this is brought up in the implementation review. The review furthermore addresses that all forms of trafficking should be addressed when security issues are on the table; and since trafficking often disproportionately affects women, this is a positive recommendation (UN News 2016; Phillips 2017: 4). In the review, there is a list of what Kosovo and Serbia respectively want, but this do not address gender-specific demands and is as such inadequate (Ibid 18-19). Under recommendations directed at affected populations and civil society, Phillips acknowledge that some focus should be given to youth, women and culture, as well as to “women’s issues”. One of the recommendations toward the EU is to set up a fund for financing track two activities, which as mentioned above was announced in March 2018. Perhaps this implementation review and others like it has informed the EU’s decision to fund civil society projects, which illustrate that epistemic communities could influence the EU and as such it is important that gender expertise exists even there (Ibid 22-23).

A number of implementation reviews found, written by epistemic communities, have a highly technical focus (see e.g. Deda & Qosaj-Mustafa 2013; Todocric & Malazogu 2011). As technical aspects have been at the centre of the dialogue, this merely implies that the epistemic communities are reflecting the EU’s work. Thorough gender analysis of the conflict, or assessments of gendered aspects of each agreement, is missing. This is perhaps an indicator that the epistemic communities have a weaker gender focus than the civil society organisations, but it does also reflect back to the EU’s poor work in addressing

gendered aspects of the conflict and conflict resolution in the dialogue and in the agreements.

EULEX provides technical support to the EU in implementing some of the technical agreements reached, for example the Brussels agreement, and as such they can be considered an expert consultancy. Their support to the dialogue includes assisting the integration of former Serbian police staff into Kosovo Police; a process in which EULEX provides basic orientation training courses for the integrated officers. EULEX also supports integration of Serbian judiciary authorities into Kosovo structures and the integration of Civil Protection staff operating in northern Kosovo into Kosovo structures. In this work, EULEX helps the selection of judges, prosecutors, support staff and staff for various Kosovo institutions and support technical steps taken in all these processes (EULEX a). Seeing as a gender adviser works at EULEX and that EULEX has provided support to Kosovo's security sector on gender-based violence and violence against women (EULEX b), there is hope that these measures are taken with a strong awareness of gendered implications, for example by including special training in the integration of police officers. However, this is not explicitly stated anywhere and thus it is unclear whether EULEX's gender expertise has been used.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the world's largest regional security organisation, and as such does also qualify as an expert consultancy. The OSCE has launched a project for strengthening women peacemakers between Kosovo and Serbia, that is not part of the EU-led dialogue but that runs parallel to it and may contribute to enhancing the normalisation process. In their project, women MPs; journalists, university professors and leading civil society activists have met on several occasions and the idea is that the women participating are role models for members of their communities, as promoters of peace, tolerance and reconciliation. The goal is to have a continuing dialogue to strengthen confidence-building and networking between the societies (OSCE 2016). The OSCE and the EU has since decades back had strong collaborations with each other, and when the OSCE is implementing a project in Kosovo and Serbia that directly relates to the EU's ongoing dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, that looks like a perfect opportunity for another collaboration, and this project could increase the presence of women in the EU-led dialogue.

UN Women, a UN organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, are also active in the region and is due to their UN-status considered an expert organisation. Their work in Serbia is mostly focused on empowering migrants and refugees, but in Kosovo they have a stronger conflict resolution-perspective and are addressing the EU-led dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. They have funded the RWL SEE project on women's perspective in relation to the Brussels agreement, and is as such an actor that has the potential to positively influence the EU in their WPS-implementation. Since the WPS-agenda is originally a UN-norm, UN Women is especially relevant here (UN Women a & b).

Regarding the academic part of epistemic communities, the lack of gender perspectives in previous research on the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia

does suggest that there is perhaps a lack of scholars with recognised gender expertise who are studying this dialogue. These results do not necessarily mean that no epistemic communities of gender experts exist in the region who are concerned with the dialogue, but they were not found in this research.

6 Discussion & Concluding Remarks

This study has inductively developed the theory on Gendering Normative Power Europe, as an in-depth case study has highlighted the EU's gendered normative power in a specific conflict resolution setting. The results have shown varied presence of the aspects that would mitigate gender blindness, understood through the velvet triangle, for the EU's implementation of the WPS-agenda in the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. Some concluding discussions will be presented below.

The possible femocrats from the European Parliament and the European Commission mentioned are to some extent pursuing transformative feminist agendas on other issues, but are not applying this agenda to the dialogue. It is almost as if the EU does not recognise the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue as a case where the WPS-agenda should be implemented, which is remarkable since it is a typical case of a post-conflict context where a conflict resolution process could create a window of opportunity for the lives of women to improve through their inclusion in shaping the future society. The exception is Catherine Ashton, who during her time as HR/VP showed commitment to the WPS-agendas implementation on the dialogue. Since she was the chief negotiator, these are promising results, but they are still not compensating for the blindness and exclusion found in much other work on the dialogue.

However, there is hope. On the local EU-level, a representative of the EU Delegation in Serbia has been participating in events organised by the local women's rights organisations and have been listening to these women's priorities. The EU's Call for project ideas does also imply that there will be a greater inclusion of civil society organisations in the dialogue in the future, which will allow for greater participation by the women's movement and further mitigate gender blindness. Regarding epistemic communities, there are opportunities for the EU to draw on the expertise of especially EULEX, since is a EU-mandated mission. The OSCE and UN Women are also possible collaboration partners that could help bring the perspectives of women peacemakers forward, and who are already working together with women's civil society organisations. That this has not been done so far is however unfavourable for the implementation of the WPS-agenda, as it limits the contact between the three aspects of a velvet triangle and as such does not allow gender-conscious actions to be permeated.

Furthermore, critique directed at the EU regarding the dialogue is mainly on the lack of inclusion and transparency, and if large amounts of the populations feel excluded the legitimacy of the results reached within the dialogue is undermined. The perspectives within this study imply that the EU would increase their success as an actor in conflict resolution, were they playing on their normative power more and pushed for the inclusion of people's perspectives. The

EU's policy documents on WPS-implementation and their Concept on Strengthening Mediation and Dialogue Capacities both include the demands to ensure women's participation at all levels, which shows the connection between sustainable conflict resolution and the implementation of WPS, and implies that the EU would perhaps be more successful as a mediator between Belgrade and Pristina if they increased their commitment to the WPS-agenda.

Guerrina and Wright express in their original article on Gendering Normative Power Europe that the EU's failure to follow through on their commitments to WPS is due to their belief that this is a possible hinder in international negotiations. Although this is unfortunate, since it may result in a lack of progress in the agenda, perhaps it is due to the EU being a relatively new actor in international mediation. One could hope that as the EU become more comfortable in their role as mediator, they will be more comfortable bringing up these important issues. It is also interesting to consider the future of the EU's normative power in general – if they will continue to bring forward their norms as a strong power aspects, or if these results imply that other forms of leverage and power will become a stronger part of EU in the future.

Being a most-likely case, the conclusions are rather dire, even if a generalising inference is not supported by one single case. However, with the EU being an actor likely to take the WPS-agenda forward, preferably in a rather radical manner, and them failing to do so is disappointing from the perspective of reaching progress in the implementation of WPS. With the progress of participation of women in conflict resolution processes being so slow, this is especially damaging. The biggest issue regarding the implementation of the WPS-agenda in this case does not seem to be that the aspects of a velvet triangle does not exist, but that there is a lack of engagement from the EU's side on seeing this dialogue as a perfect opportunity in which to advance progress on women's participation in conflict resolution. As the sharp quote by Cynthia Enloe that started this essay highlights, and which becomes increasingly clear while studying a rather gender blind conflict resolution process; patriarchy is not only a cause of the outbreak of violent conflict, but also of the “international community's frequent failure in providing long-term resolutions to those violent conflicts”.

Finally, this study cannot make any certain conclusions on the detailed level of engagement and aspects for the EU to implement the WPS-agenda, due to the limited scope of the research. Other methods could reach even more in-depth findings and stronger conclusions; such as a discourse analysis on those from the European Parliament or the European Commission who are working with the dialogue, or a field study in Kosovo and Serbia to reach greater insight in the organisations and expert consultancies that are concerned with the dialogue and how they experience their inclusion or lack of inclusions from the EU. It was unfavourable for the study that the EU have not produced any evaluation report on what has been done in the dialogue, as this could have been used to more clearly see which measures the EU has taken and assess these. Furthermore, with the dialogue still being on-going, there is still time for the EU to make sure that the WPS-agenda is being implemented. However, I would argue that it is rather telling that they haven't paid more attention to it so far.

6.1 Future Research

As research on Gendering Normative Power Europe is still young, this could well do to be taken further, such as through similar case studies on other contexts where the EU are in a position to diffuse norms on gender equality and women's rights. To build on the idea of this being a most likely case, other regional actors and their implementation of the Women, Peace and Security-agenda could also be studied, to reach a bigger picture of the progress in implementing the agenda by prominent actors in international politics. I find velvet triangles to be a useful theoretical tool in those sort of studies, and this could thus be applied to other organisations or institutions. Regarding the case of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, studies can be conducted on the gendered aspects of the agreements reached so far or on the impact on the dialogue from the projects from civil society that will be conducted in the future.

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