
Peace and Security in 2019

Evaluating EU efforts to support peace in Colombia



STUDY

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

Author: Isabelle Ioannides
Ex-Post Evaluation Unit
PE 631.746 – May 2019

Peace and Security in 2019

Evaluating EU efforts to support peace in Colombia

This second thematic study in the Peace and Security series focuses on European Union (EU) peace support efforts in Colombia. The series will make an annual evaluation of EU performance in the field of peace and security in a specific geographical region.

This study evaluates EU engagement during the 50-year conflict in Colombia, and focuses on peacebuilding since the historic 2016 final agreement between the government and the main armed group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP). This is a country where the EU has mobilised a large spectrum of civilian instruments: bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; humanitarian and development aid; and trade relations. After placing the conflict in its geopolitical context, this evaluation analyses the EU approach to and implementation of support to peace in Colombia, the European Parliament's contribution, risks since the signature of the peace agreement, and ways to mitigate them.

A parallel study, published separately, provides an overview of current EU action on peace and security and introduces the 2019 Normandy Index. The studies have been drafted with a view to their presentation at the Normandy World Peace Forum, in June 2019.

AUTHOR

Dr Isabelle Ioannides, Ex-Post Evaluation Unit, EPRS

This paper has been drawn up by the Ex-Post Evaluation Unit of the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

To contact the author, please email: EPRS-ExPostEvaluation@ep.europa.eu

Maps where the source is indicated as EPRS were prepared by Samy Chahri, EPRS.

LINGUISTIC VERSIONS

Original: EN

Translation: FR

Manuscript completed in May 2019.

DISCLAIMER AND COPYRIGHT

This document is prepared for, and addressed to, the Members and staff of the European Parliament as background material to assist them in their parliamentary work. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of its author(s) and any opinions expressed herein should not be taken to represent an official position of the Parliament.

Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the European Parliament is given prior notice and sent a copy.

Brussels © European Union, 2019.

Photo credits: © Norman Chan / Fotolia.

PE 631.746
ISBN: 978-92-846-4832-0
DOI: 10.2861/833005
CAT: QA-03-19-380-EN-N

eprs@ep.europa.eu
<http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu> (intranet)
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank> (internet)
<http://epthinktank.eu> (blog)

Executive summary

The European Union (EU) has a long-standing presence in Colombia, dating back to the late 1990s, which is chronologically associated with the first developments of EU foreign policy and the internationalisation of the Colombian conflict. The EU approach to supporting peacebuilding in Colombia has been comprehensive, comprising a wide spectrum of soft (civilian) means, and favouring dialogue and cooperation for the resolution of disputes. It has involved combining political dialogue (at national, regional and local levels), financial aid (development cooperation and humanitarian aid), and trade relations. From the beginning of its engagement, the EU has focused on addressing the root causes of the conflict – socioeconomic inequality; human rights violations; armed conflict and illegal activities – through reconciliation efforts (in the form of Peace Laboratories), economic territorial development (through rural integration), and multi-level political dialogue (also within the context of its trade relations).

The EU's action has been complementary (some would argue juxtaposed), to that of the United States (USA) and its 'war on drugs', which explicitly targeted the far left-wing guerrilla, the cartels, and later the 'terrorists', as threats to be removed or at least downsized. The more interventionist approach of the United States seems to have been underpinned by successive US security paradigms, rather than peacebuilding in Colombia per se, and did not help prevent the erosion of confidence in public institutions. Despite a dynamic relationship, with its ups and downs, the EU has also generally been a more stable partner to Colombia than the country's immediate neighbours. Admittedly, neighbouring countries were inevitably more directly affected by the spill-over effects of the conflict, which necessitated different strategies for containing the conflict, and were also later more direct actors in its resolution.

Despite its good intentions and manifest commitment to peacebuilding, EU action has had limited impact on the resolution of the Colombian conflict. The EU approached the Colombian crisis as a case for conflict resolution and peacebuilding at a time when most Colombian political elites had not bought into this view. Instead, the Colombian political class has long considered the violence in Colombia a problem of internal security and territorial control. From that perspective, the EU action was a precursor to the approach to peacebuilding adopted in Colombia since the signature, in 2016, of a peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP), the largest armed group in the country.

This discrepancy between the EU and Colombia in their understanding of the dynamics of violence and the conflict meant that the EU had measured leverage on challenges on the ground. While the project-based Peace Laboratories, in particular, and other EU development assistance, led to some institutional changes at local and, to some extent, national level, they were met with inevitable security constraints because much of the EU action took place in areas where there was violence and that were not under government control. The political dialogue that took place at regional and bilateral level acted as a pressure point to keep Colombia engaged at international level and to raise human rights and sustainable development concerns. Experts, however, argue that the EU could have done more than make declaratory gestures, and should push harder the Colombian government at high level summits to address human rights violations.

The impact of trade cooperation and the free trade agreement (FTA) Colombia signed with the EU in 2012 has also had mixed results. Despite the fact that diversification of Colombia's exports to include agricultural products has aided employment, civil society organisations have been critical of the European institutions' monitoring of the agreement. They have suggested that the European Commission has not focused enough on sustainable development. Moreover, although the European Parliament has played an active role in defending human rights networks and vulnerable groups, civil society organisations hoped for stronger demands from Parliament on respect for

human rights, linking it to the 'democracy clause' of the FTA, which can be triggered in case of repeated serious human rights violations.

Ultimately, the peace process was the concerted result of internal dynamics in Colombia, and political decisions taken by just some of the parties to the conflict in the country. It is a process that emerged from, on the one hand, the recognition by the Colombian government that the violence in the country constituted a conflict, and on the other, the FARC-EP's increasing willingness to engage in compromise, at least in part because of its weakening position in the conflict. That is not to say that the explicit support of the international community, including the EU, to the peace process was not a key factor. The peace process was inclusive, not only including the direct parties to the conflict (the government and the guerrilla fighters), but also building on the support of civil society.

Through this process, the European approach to crisis management and conflict resolution prevailed in the Colombian post-conflict environment and in the organisation of aid in support of peacebuilding in the country. The final agreement between the FARC-EP and the government signed in 2016, was a strong basis for peace, but only partial peace. It has set out solid bases for comprehensive rural reform; the demobilisation, disarmament and reincorporation into civilian life of the FARC-EP; their political participation; transitional justice and victim reparations; a plan for addressing illicit drug cultivation and trafficking; and implementation, verification and ratification mechanisms. The EU has redoubled its efforts, firstly, financially, through the EU Trust Fund for Peace in Colombia that has been set up to coordinate the aid and programming of peace projects, and, secondly, politically, through the naming of an EU Special Envoy for the peace process in Colombia.

Three years since the signature of the peace deal, Colombia is at a crossroads. Despite some initial results, in particular in terms of ending the conflict with the FARC and on demobilisation efforts, implementation of the peace process has proven slow and difficult. Violence remains widespread on a large part of the territory, as not all FARC-EP guerrillas have demobilised: the next biggest armed group (the National Liberation Army, ELN) is not party to the peace deal, and other smaller groups are still involved in killings and kidnappings. Criminal activities, including the cultivation of illicit crops and drug trafficking have not been halted. Poverty and social exclusion, especially in rural areas, have not been alleviated. Human rights violations remain a challenge, and victim reparations are lagging behind.

The commitment to peace of the parties to the agreement, including Colombian institutions, is being tested. International support to assist Colombia will continue to be key in the coming years. For peace to be sustained, it will be important for peacebuilding efforts to be inclusive and guarantee civil society participation; ensure that the momentum for reforms is not lost and that they are implemented consistently; provide the necessary resources for and place emphasis on reconciliation and transitional justice; address the continuing security challenges; eradicate the cultivation of drugs in Colombia; and help tackle the implications of the Venezuelan crisis.

Table of contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1. Geopolitical considerations	2
1.1.1. Regional dynamics	2
1.1.2. The US factor	4
1.1.3. Internationalisation of the Colombian conflict	5
1.2. Objectives and structure	6
2. The EU approach to supporting peace in Colombia	9
2.1. Political dialogue	9
2.1.1. Region-to-region relations	9
2.1.2. Bilateral relations	11
2.2. EU financial aid for Colombia	14
2.2.1. EU strategy for Colombia	15
2.2.2. EU development cooperation and humanitarian aid	16
2.3. EU-Colombia trade cooperation	19
2.3.1. EU-Colombia trade in numbers	22
2.3.2. Implementation of the trade and sustainable development title	25
3. European Parliament contribution	29
3.1. Parliament's position	29
3.2. Parliament's activities	30
4. Colombia's fragile stability	34
4.1. Elements of the peace agreement	37
4.2. Funding and implementing the peace agreement	38
4.3. Current Colombian government approach	42

5. Assessing the implementation of the peace agreement	44
5.1. Disarmament, but continued insecurity	44
5.2. Political capacity-building but human rights violations	48
5.3. Socio-economic challenges	51
6. Moving forward: Options for the future	53
References	58
Annex I: A chronology of the conflict in Colombia	66
Annex II: Map of Colombia	73

Table of boxes

Box 1 – Methodology	7
Box 2 – What is 'positive peace'?	34

Table of figures

Figure 1 – EU approach to peacebuilding in Colombia	15
Figure 2 – EU-Colombia bilateral trade in goods 2003-2018 (€ billion)	23
Figure 3 – EU-Colombia bilateral trade in services, 2010-2017 (€ billion)	24
Figure 4 – Colombia's profile according to the 2019 Normandy Index	36
Figure 5 – Areas where the EU Trust Fund for Colombia is being implemented	40
Figure 6 – Areas of operation of the three main armed groups active in Colombia in 2018	46

Table of tables

Table 1 – Main economic indicators for Colombia	22
---	----

List of acronyms

AGC	Gaitanista Self-defence Forces of Colombia (<i>Autodefensas Gaitanistas</i>), Colombia
ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, European Parliament
ALOP	Latin American Association of Development Promotion Organizations
APC	Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (<i>Agencia Presidencial de Cooperación Internacional</i>), Colombia
AUC	United Self-defence Forces of Colombia (<i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i>)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BM	Meta Bloc (<i>Bloque Meta</i>), Colombia
CAN	Andean Community of Nations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (<i>Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños</i>)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAG	Domestic Advisory Group
DAND	Delegation for relations with the countries of the Andean Community, European Parliament
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument, European Commission
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration process
DG	Directorate-General
DG AIDCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Office, European Commission
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists, European Parliament
EEAS	European External Action Service
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EFDD	Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy, European Parliament
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, European Commission
EI PACCTO	Assistance Programme against Transnational Organised Crime, European Commission
ELN	National Liberation Army (<i>Ejército de Liberación Nacional</i>), Colombia
EP	European Parliament
EPL	Popular Liberation Army (<i>Ejército Popular de Liberación</i>), Colombia
EPP	European People's Party, European Parliament
EPRS	European Parliamentary Research Service, European Parliament
ETCR	Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (<i>Espacio Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación</i>), Colombia
EU	European Union
EuroLat	Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly
EUTF	EU Trust Fund for Peace in Colombia
FARC-EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército Popular</i>)
FARC	Common Alternative Revolutionary Force (<i>Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común</i>), Colombia

FDI	Foreign direct investment
FSI	Fragile States Index
FTA	Free trade agreement
G24	Colombia Support Group
GDP	Gross domestic product
Greens/EFA	Greens/European Free Alliance, European Parliament
GUE/NGL	Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left, European Parliament
GSP	Generalised Scheme of Preferences
HDI	Human Development Index
HR/VP	High Representative for the EU foreign and security policy/Vice-President of the European Commission
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, European Commission
IDP	Internally displaced persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
INDEPAZ	Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz, Colombia
INTA	Committee for International Trade, European Parliament
JEP	Special Jurisdiction for Peace (<i>Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz</i>), Colombia
LAC	Latin American and Caribbean
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex
M-19	Movement of 19 April (<i>Movimiento 19 de Abril</i>), Colombia
MAPP/OAS	Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (<i>Misión de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz en Colombia</i>), Organization of American States
MEP	Member of European Parliament
Mercosur	Southern Common Market (<i>Mercado Común del Sur</i>)
MMV	Mechanism for Monitoring and Verification
MRP	People's Revolutionary Movement (<i>Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo</i>), Colombia
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NI	Normandy Index
OAS	Organization of American States
OACP	Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (<i>Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz</i>), Colombia
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
ONIC	National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia (<i>Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia</i>)
PAM	Peace Accord Matrix
PCC	Communist Party of Colombia
PDET	Development Programmes with a Territorial Focus (<i>Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial</i>), Colombia
RRI	Comprehensive Rural Reform (<i>Reforma Rural Integral</i>), Colombia
S&D	Socialists & Democrats, European Parliament
SENA	National Service of Learning, Colombia
SME	Small and medium enterprise
TSD	Trade and sustainable development

UARIV	Unit for the Comprehensive Care and Reparation of Victims (<i>Unidad de Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas</i>), Colombia
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNASUR	Union of South American Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGRD	National Unit for the Management of Risk of Disasters (<i>Unidad Nacional para la Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres</i>), Colombia
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
UP	Patriotic Union Party, Colombia
US/USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization
WMD	Weapons of mass destruction

1. Introduction

Colombia is at a crucial crossroads in its history. On 24 November 2016, the Colombian government and the country's largest guerrilla organisation, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo*, FARC-EP) signed a historic peace accord, the 'General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace'. The agreement followed six weeks of broad-based national dialogue between the government of President Santos, the leaders of the 'No' campaign, the FARC-EP, and representatives of civil society, aiming to respond to the concerns and wishes that the Colombian people had expressed in the 2 October 2016 referendum. In a surprise result, voters had very marginally rejected the initial agreement (with 50.2 %, compared to 49.8 % who voted in favour).¹ President Santos sent the revised deal to Congress for ratification and both of its houses ratified the revised peace accord at the end of November 2016. The final agreement, which has been implemented since 1 December 2016, not only meant the end of violence between the government and the biggest armed group in the country, it also sought to lay the basis for what the Nobel Committee called a 'just peace',² one that responds to the needs of all Colombians.

The final agreement marked the formal end of a conflict that lasted over five decades, the longest-running armed conflict in Latin America. The Colombian conflict started in the mid-1960s as a low-intensity asymmetric war between the Colombian government, paramilitary groups, crime syndicates and far left armed groups – notably, the FARC-EP, the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, ELN), the Popular Liberation Army (*Ejército Popular de Liberación*, EPL), M-19 (*Movimiento 19 de Abril*) – who were fighting for greater influence in Colombian territory. The conflict was one of drugs, guerrillas, terrorism, and according to Murillo, was also about the unwillingness of the country's elite to open up spaces for democratic participation in economic, social and political areas.³

This violent armed conflict has caused immense suffering: the death of over 200 000 people, the disappearance of a further 100 000, and the forcible displacement more than 7.7 million Colombians since 1985, generating the world's largest population of internally displaced persons (IDPs).⁴ While guerrilla groups affected mostly isolated areas of Colombia at the beginning of the conflict, from the 1980s onwards, the conflict became increasingly militarised through the production and trafficking of drugs by armed groups, which also led to a blurring of these groups' initial political grievances. In parallel, paramilitaries enlarged both the war and narco-traffic activities across the country, penetrating all levels of the Colombian government – from local organisations to the highest national level. That, and the consolidation of organised paramilitary forces in the 1990s, radically transformed the political scene.⁵ Consequently, the conflict has largely destroyed the country's social fabric, eroding citizens' trust in the Colombian government. It has seriously affected its economic development and undermined the resilience of large parts of its population, especially in Colombia's rural areas, which were disproportionately affected by the violence and suffered the most from illegal activities.

¹ However, the turnout was low with fewer than 38 % of voters casting their votes. [Colombia referendum: Voters reject Farc peace deal](#), BBC, 3 October 2016.

² The Norwegian Nobel Committee, [The Nobel Peace Prize for 2016](#), Press release, Oslo, 7 October 2016.

³ Mario A. Murillo, *Colombia and the United States: War, Unrest and Destabilization*, Random House Publisher Services, New York, 2011.

⁴ Human Rights Watch, [Colombia: Events of 2017](#), World Human Rights report 2018, New York, 2018.

⁵ Dorly Castaneda, [The European Union in Colombia: Learning how to be a peace actor](#), Paris Papers No 3, Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (RSEM), Paris, 2012, p. 13.

Weak state presence in parts of Colombian national territory is still a factor of instability. The gap between urban and rural areas, in particular, remains large and is compounded by very unequal access to land in rural areas. This is linked to huge socio-economic disparities, considerable imbalances in income, and an increase in illegal activities and related violence. 'In the shadow of the conflict, systemic corruption, state capture and organised crime were able to spread and connect, further undermining the state's legitimacy.'⁶ Thus, while Colombia has functioning institutions and public administration at central level, it lacks the institutional capacities at local level to assume its responsibilities in terms of delivering public services, engaging in local development, and ensuring the execution of budgets in the affected rural areas.⁷

Drug trafficking and organised crime are also an important challenge. One third of the poorest municipalities in Colombia coincide with natural parks, protected areas or their buffer zones, where illicit activities take place, such as the cultivation of coca plants, drug and arms trafficking and placing of antipersonnel mines, which directly affect civilians living in such zones. These municipalities show high levels of poverty and are at the same time communities that were (some still are), strongly affected by the armed conflict and organised crime. The radical restructuring of organised crime in Colombia in the 2000s seems to have made control of the drug traffic more complex. The demobilisation of the United Self-defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) paramilitary groups between 2003 and 2006 led to the formation of new criminal gangs deeply rooted in drug trafficking. Since 2011, these emerging criminal bands have overtaken the FARC-EP and ELN as a national security threat. The presence of Colombian organised crime groups is limited in the EU, essentially in the Iberian Peninsula, due to cultural, linguistic and historical ties, and is where they have been particularly involved in the cocaine trade and laundering of criminal proceeds.⁸

1.1. Geopolitical considerations

The Colombian conflict has not unfolded in a vacuum. It has also had regional ramifications that become obvious when looking at a map (see Annex II: Map of Colombia). International actors – Colombia's neighbouring countries, the United States (USA), and the EU, among others – have significantly impacted on the strength and objectives of Colombia's armed groups.

1.1.1. Regional dynamics

Colombia is located at the strategic meeting point of Central and South America, acting as a gateway for South American nations to Central America and North America. The country shares a land border with Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru and Ecuador, and has coasts on both the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, also the location of the Dutch islands of Aruba and Curaçao. Inside Colombia, the Magdalena river basin connects the core of the country to Cartagena and Barranquilla, the country's largest ports. The dense Amazonian rain forests to the south, the sparsely populated Orinoco plains to the east, and the Pacific coastline, make up Colombia's periphery (see Annex II: Map of Colombia). These regions, where government control has been challenged by drug trafficking and rebel insurgency, are also rich in valuable commodities such as oil and coal.

⁶ OECD, OECD Integrity Review of Colombia: Investing in Integrity for Peace and Prosperity, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017, p. 3.

⁷ European External Action Service and Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation, European Commission, [Multiannual Indicative Programme \(MIP\) 2014-2017: Colombia](#), 2014, pp. 1 and 3.

⁸ European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the fulfilment by Colombia of the relevant criteria in view of the negotiation of a visa waiver agreement between the European Union and Colombia \(SWD\(2014\) 329 final\)](#), COM(2014) 665 final, 29 October 2014, pp. 5-6.

Colombia's conflict has had significantly destabilising spill-over effects on neighbouring countries (Ecuador and Venezuela), which have had to cope with a major influx of refugees from Colombia for decades. Equally, the presence of the insurgent and terrorist groups (especially the FARC-EP) from Colombia in their respective territory, was also a source of tension. Political leaders have also contributed to border tensions. For example, in 2008, President Uribe's efforts to control the FARC-EP inside Ecuadorian lines were met with resistance and backlash from Ecuadorian President Correa and Venezuelan President Chavez. Relations with Nicaragua had been strained over territorial disputes over the Colombian islands of San Andrés y Providencia and the archipelago's surrounding Caribbean waters.⁹ More recently, bilateral relations with neighbouring Ecuador and Venezuela, have been restored and intensified. For instance, in 2007, Venezuela sought to support the Colombian and FARC-EP peace negotiations by encouraging FARC-EP leaders to participate. Brazil, which is the second-largest market in the world for Colombian cocaine after the United States, was known to be a source of weapons for Colombian guerrilla and paramilitary groups. The Brazilian Lula da Silva government, in contrast to its predecessors, cooperated with Colombian security forces in joint anti-guerrilla operations along the Brazil-Colombia border in an attempt to control this cross-border trafficking.¹⁰ Thus, while maintaining allegiance to its traditional partners, including the United States, Colombia has been successful in diversifying its foreign policy by placing more emphasis on intra-regional relations and on deeper economic integration with 'like-minded' neighbours.

Improved relations with key regional partners have transformed Colombia into a respected and influential actor in Latin America. Colombia is also a founding member of the Pacific Alliance, composed of four Latin American countries (Peru, Colombia, Chile and Mexico), whose aim is to strengthen regional integration through trade in goods and services, capital markets and investment, but also through cooperation on migration, education, and security.¹¹ In addition, Colombia is active in the Andean Community (CAN), which has been mainly about trade – Colombian exports to the Andean countries have accounted for about 20 % of its total exports since 2000 – infrastructure, and mobility of citizens. The Andean Community, including Colombia, reached a free trade agreement with the Mercosur countries (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay) in 2005. The country is part of a number of regional and sub-regional constellations: the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Mercosur (Southern Common Market, *Mercado Común del Sur*), and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). It is also a member of the Organization of American States (OAS), an observer at the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and participates in the negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Initiative.¹² Colombia has also signed free trade agreements with individual countries or associations from its region, including the Central American Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras), Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, and Venezuela.¹³

⁹ On 19 November 2012, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) decided this case by upholding Colombia's sovereignty over San Andres y Providencia, and other disputed islands.

¹⁰ Rex Hudson, Country Profile: Colombia, A Report prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress under an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Defense, Washington DC, February 2007 p. 26.

¹¹ OECD, [Latin American Economic Outlook 2018: Rethinking Institutions for Development](#), OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018, p. 129.

¹² After Venezuela's withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Initiative, the four active members of CAN are Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador. European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the fulfilment by Colombia of the relevant criteria in view of the negotiation of a visa waiver agreement between the European Union and Colombia \[SWD\(2014\) 329 final\]](#), COM(2014) 665 final, 29 October 2014, p. 7.

¹³ [Information on Colombia](#), Foreign Trade Information System, Organization of American States (OAS), 2019.

1.1.2. The US factor

The United States (USA) has been a determinant actor in the Colombian peace process. The level of trade between Colombia and the United States – the USA is Colombia's first trading partner, which is worth US\$11.1 billion and is therefore equivalent to 26.5 % of total Colombian exports¹⁴ – explains the high impact the USA can have on Colombia, in comparison with the EU (see section on EU-Colombia trade cooperation). The stated US political, economic, development, and security strategies towards Colombia were consistently geared in support of establishing a healthy, stable, democratic, and market-friendly society that would be a constructive partner for US public and private entities.¹⁵ Ultimately, however, given its geographic proximity, the USA focused on concerns regarding illegal migration and trans-border trafficking, especially the drug route from Colombia to the USA through Mexico. According to Murillo, 'for years, the United States concerned itself with fighting the war of drugs, investing millions of dollars on a primarily military approach'.¹⁶ This approach has not always led to the desired results, with some experts arguing that it resulted in further escalation in the internal military conflict, an increasingly deteriorating human rights crisis, and a general failure to put a dent in the international drug trade.¹⁷

Long before the rise of the US-funded 'war on drugs' in Colombia, in 1959, a US 'Special Survey Team' made up of counter-insurgency experts was sent to investigate the security situation in the country after nearly a decade of *La Violencia* (the violence) that left more than 200 000 dead. Nonetheless, the key US involvement in Colombia was President Clinton's 1999-2001 initiative, known as Plan Colombia, which consisted of a US\$1.3 billion plan for mostly military aid, which at the time made Colombia the third biggest recipient of US military aid after Israel and Egypt. In addition to increasing Colombia's counter-narcotics capabilities by providing helicopters and training, this US aid was designed to support human rights, humanitarian assistance, alternative development, and economic and judicial reforms. In March 2002, in response to a request from President George W. Bush and in support of the 'war on terrorism' and 'war on drugs', the US Congress lifted restrictions on US assistance to Colombia to allow the funds to be used for counterinsurgency in addition to antidrug operations.¹⁸ Ultimately, Plan Colombia was seen as a plan to eradicate drugs, organised crime and eliminate the guerrilla factions who thrived on them. It was also seen as aiming to reconsolidate US power in Latin America and as such, as being plagued by inconsistencies and doublespeak.¹⁹

In parallel, the USA also placed considerable pressure on Colombia to disband the Medellín cartel. Once Medellín was disbanded in 1993, the USA pressured then Colombian President Samper to also take action against the Cali organisation. During the narco-terrorist era (1983-1993), narcotics traffickers sponsored assassinations of numerous government officials, justices, and politicians, particularly those who favoured an extradition treaty with the USA. In the midst of the conflict, more than 90 % of the cocaine that entered the USA was produced, processed, or trans-shipped in

¹⁴ Daniel Workman, [Colombia's Top Trading Partners](#), World's Top Exports, 14 March 2019.

¹⁵ Ted Piccone, The Geopolitics of China's Rise in Latin America, Order from Chaos: Geoeconomics and Global Issues Paper 2, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, November 2016, pp. 20-21.

¹⁶ Mario A. Murillo, *Colombia and the United States: War, Unrest and Destabilization*, Random House Publisher Services, New York, 2011, p. 123.

¹⁷ See, Mario A. Murillo, *Colombia and the United States: War, Unrest and Destabilization*, Random House Publisher Services, New York, 2011; Dorly Castañeda, *The European Approach to Peacebuilding: Civilian Tools for Peace in Colombia and Beyond*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2014.

¹⁸ Rex Hudson, Country Profile: Colombia, A Report Prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress under an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Defense, Washington DC, February 2007.

¹⁹ See, for example, James Petras, 'Geopolitics of Plan Colombia', *Perspective*, vol. 35, issue 52-53, 2000.

Colombia.²⁰ To tackle this problem, the USA supported the Colombian policy of destroying crops used for illegal drug production (marijuana, coca and poppies) through Plan Colombia. Farmers claimed that the chemicals (herbicides) used, which were spread via airplanes, were responsible for widespread destruction of other crops besides coca. The government required coca farmers to either cease activity or face crop destruction by fumigation. If a farmer opted to cease activity, he or she received compensation from the government. However, this compensation was not considered sufficient to sustain a family for a year, making it unlikely that farmers would comply with the plan. Consequently the fumigation technique was accused of fuelling, rather than curbing, opposition.²¹ Colombia's US-financed aerial drug-eradication programme created tensions in bilateral relations with its neighbours, namely Ecuador and Peru, who complained that sprayed chemicals were drifting over the border and destroying agriculture. Moreover, the disintegration of the last of the big cartels, Norte del Valle, in 2004, simply led to the creation of hundreds of smaller, lower-profile cartels, many of which operated (and some still do) in association with the paramilitary and guerrilla groups, rather than eradicate the problem.

In 2016, during his last full year in office, US President Obama pledged US\$450 million annually in support of the Colombian peace accord over 10 years for a total US aid package of US\$4.5 billion. However, the Trump administration withdrew from Obama's aid commitment to Colombia in 2017-2018. In 2019, President Trump promised the Duque government US\$391 million, none of which can be used to finance the peace process with the FARC-EP or the ELN. US assistance to Colombia has been tied to more effective government coca eradication programmes, including the renewal of aerial spraying of coca fields – a programme that was abandoned by the Santos government in 2016 as a result of World Health Organization (WHO) warnings that glyphosate spraying could cause cancer in affected human populations.²²

1.1.3. Internationalisation of the Colombian conflict

Despite the shifting alliances in Colombia's conflict over the past decades in Colombia, the peace process has consistently benefited from the support of the international community. In the 1980s and 1990s, international actors had rather played the role of enablers – not mediators – of similar peace negotiations between the Colombian government and armed groups. Examples include attempts by regional actors (Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico), as well as EU Member States (Spain, Germany). The European Parliament too played a key role, as will be explained later in this study (see Chapter 3.2), by facilitating Colombian civil society efforts to push for the establishment of the office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 1996. The United States also supported the peace process, when, in 1998, it sent a high-level representative to a secret meeting between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP.

From the late 1990s onwards, when Colombia's Samper government launched 'Diplomacy for Peace' (*Diplomacia para la Paz*), more structured mediation efforts were able to take place. The government's goal was to engage the USA, EU Member States and international organisations in the peace negotiations with the FARC-EP and the ELN. This policy was also, in a certain way, an inevitable consequence of the internationalisation of the spill-over effects of the conflict (e.g., drug trafficking and trans-border guerrilla violence). For example, the '*Países Amigos*', which included Cuba, Spain, France, Norway and Switzerland, played an instrumental role in 2000, when the negotiations

²⁰ Rex Hudson, Country Profile: Colombia, A Report Prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress under an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Defense, Washington DC, February 2007.

²¹ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, [The United States and Illegal Crops in Colombia: The Tragic Mistake of Futile Fumigation](#), Paper No 3, Center for Latin American Studies, University of California, Berkeley, CA, June 2003.

²² Bruce Bagley, [The Colombian peace process under duress](#), *News@TheU*, University of Miami, Miami, FL, January 2019.

between Colombia's Pastrana government and the ELN fell apart. That same year, when a demilitarised area was agreed with the ELN, the '*Países Amigos*' with Germany, Canada, Japan and Portugal, were designated 'auditors' of the zone. Other efforts included the creation, in 2001, of the 'Group of Facilitators' ('*Grupo de Facilitadores*'), which included representatives from Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico, Canada, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Spain, France, and Italy.²³

Strong political and financial backing from the international community, including the EU, and with Norway and Cuba as guarantors, continued throughout the Havana Peace Process launched in 2012. This process led to the signature of the peace deal between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP. The most prominent expression of this support has been unanimous adoption by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) of Resolution 2261(2016), authorising a political mission to monitor and verify the laying down of arms.

1.2. Objectives and structure

Political relations between the European Union (EU) and Colombia have been strong, stable and dynamic. In many ways, as will become apparent later in this study, the long-standing EU action has also been complementary to other international efforts. This is a country where the EU has mobilised a broad spectrum of civilian instruments in parallel: bilateral and regional political dialogue; humanitarian and development aid; and trade relations. The EU's approach to Colombia has therefore been soft, when compared to US engagement, and it is not characterised by volatile shifts, as has been the case with Colombia's neighbours. Its stated focus has been on the root causes and consequences of the conflict, in order to achieve sustainable development and support peacebuilding. The EU has aimed to be inclusive in its approach, engaging national government through its diplomatic effort; local authorities and civil society (especially human rights organisations and associations representing indigenous communities, women and other vulnerable groups) through its development and emergency aid; and government, business and social partners through its trade relations.

Against this complex and shifting geopolitical scene outlined above, this study analyses the specific action and performance of the EU in supporting peace and sustainable development in Colombia during the country's 50-year conflict and since the signature of the historic final agreement between the government and the main armed group, the FARC-EP, in 2016. It outlines the diplomatic efforts the EU has undertaken to address human rights abuses, local productive development, the sustainable use of national resources, local institutional strengthening, citizen participation and the containment of the violence. It examines how the EU has organised and implemented its financial aid and development cooperation to touch the populations that are most in need, especially those in the rural areas, and support societal transformation towards peace. This evaluation also analyses the implementation of the Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) title in the EU-Colombia/Peru/Ecuador trade agreement, which is another instrument the EU has at its disposal for leverage in favour of the respect of human rights and for providing a platform for civil society and social partners to voice their needs. To assess whether the EU has been able to contribute to addressing the root causes of the conflict and supporting the move towards sustainable peace, the analysis focuses on four areas:

- the relevance of the objectives set to local needs;
- EU responsiveness in a conflict context;

²³ Dorly Castaneda, [The European Union in Colombia: Learning how to be a peace actor](#), Paris Papers No 3, Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (RSEM), Paris, 2012, pp. 15-23.

- consistency of action; and
- the added value of the EU's contribution.

Box 1 – Methodology

The analysis in this evaluation combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Qualitatively, empirical evidence relating to the evaluation of European Commission development aid, which is the backbone of its support to the country, has relied on official EU documents, the answers the European Commission has given to questions posed by Members of the European Parliament (EP) during the last legislative mandate (2014-2019), the external evaluations that the European Commission contracted in the framework of its own assessment of its programmes, and publications by specialised academics and legal practitioners. For the crucial contribution of the European Parliament in supporting the respect for human rights and vulnerable groups in Colombia, EP reports, resolutions and written questions from Members of Parliament to the European Commission have been studied.

For the scrutiny of more recent developments in the country, the analysis has benefited from press reviews and reports prepared by human rights NGOs and networks. These were also complemented by the accounts of think tanks, EU and NGO workers in the field, which have been collected either through interviews or at events organised on the issue at hand in the Brussels environment. The author is particularly grateful to the EU Delegation to Colombia, in Bogota, and the secretariat of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with the countries of the Andean Community (DAND) for sharing their insights and information. The study acknowledges the inherent limitations of this approach. These refer to the fact that civil society actors consulted for the preparation of this study are not necessarily representative of the entire civil society in a country. In addition, it is recognised that civil society does not necessarily have the full picture of either the EU intervention in Colombia, or of the diverse aspects of its external action (development, trade, humanitarian aid, security support) that are underway.

To examine the developments in the country, this study has also reviewed documents prepared by relevant international organisations (e.g. the UN agencies, especially the International Labour Organization, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the World Bank and the OECD) and research by academics and think tanks, both European and Colombian. For an evaluation of the implementation of the final agreement, the study focuses on the assessments and reports of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, in Indiana, USA, which is the official monitoring body for its implementation. For triangulation purposes, other secondary literature prepared by Colombian think tanks and academics has also been examined.

Statistical data from Eurostat have been used to assess the economic benefits of the EU-Colombia/Peru/Ecuador trade agreement. Data from the Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz (INDEPAZ), in Bogota, were used to map the violence in Colombia post-peace agreement. Quantitative data organised in numerous recognised indexes – the Global Peace Index of the Institute for Economics & Peace, the World Bank's Gini coefficient, the UNDP's Human Development Index, the Fragile States Index produced by the Fund for Peace, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, and EPRS' Normandy Index – have provided a sense of the state of affairs in Colombia on different facets of 'positive peace' (see Box 2), notably corruption, rule of law, and economic inequality.

The analysis provided in this study is organised chronologically, examining the EU's engagement in Colombia before and after the signature of the 2016 final agreement; and functionally, according to the three areas of EU intervention (dialogue, financial aid and trade). Having placed the conflict in its geopolitical context, where it outlines the shifting alliances within the region and the US approach to the Colombian conflict, the study goes on to juxtapose the EU approach to the conflict and to building peace in the country. Therefore, in the following chapter it analyses the implementation of EU support for peace in Colombia in three areas: political dialogue (bilateral and regional); financial aid (humanitarian and development cooperation); and trade cooperation. It then explains the contribution of the European Parliament, which has played a key role in Colombia, in

particular in acting as a sounding box for concerns and needs voiced by the most vulnerable communities during the conflict and since the signature of the peace agreement. Despite much investment and the progress made towards a more peaceful society in Colombia, important challenges persist, particularly in the areas of security, political development and capacity-building, the protection of human rights, and addressing socio-economic challenges. These are assessed against the recent change of government in Colombia and the implementation of the important aid package that has been mobilised by the international community to support the 2016 final agreement. Finally, the study suggests ways to mitigate the risks analysed and push for further peace.

2. The EU approach to supporting peace in Colombia

The European Union appeared as a counterbalance to the US approach, with a softer approach oriented towards long-term peacebuilding. Its action was also a counterbalance to the strategies adopted by Colombia's neighbouring states, since being geographically far from the conflict, the EU did not bear direct consequences. At the level of negotiations, the European Union has supported peace negotiations between the Colombian authorities and the FARC-EP since the very beginning of those negotiations and is also supporting the peace talks with the ELN. Support for peacebuilding efforts has also been a central feature in EU-Colombia relations over the last decades, with the emblematic Peace Laboratories that ran for 10 years (2002-2012), continued by the Regional Development Peace and Stability programme and New Peace Territories project (concluded in 2017). The European Commission's programming documents, outlined below, show continuity in the approach to put the EU's commitment into practice. In terms of nurturing relations between the EU and Colombia, trade cooperation and the signature of a free trade agreement (FTA) that followed, allowed for a deepening of institutional relationships. The FTA offered the potential for strengthening the peace process and later the peace agreement in a context of corruption, drug crime, and violence against social leaders and (ex-)combatants. Diplomacy through trade is an aspect of the EU approach that has been tested with other long-standing Latin American partners who suffer some of the same security and human rights challenges, namely Mexico.²⁴ To understand the EU's approach to assisting the peace process and peacebuilding in Colombia, three aspects of the EU's contribution are discussed and assessed: diplomatic relations at regional and bilateral levels; EU development cooperation and humanitarian aid; and bilateral trade policies.

2.1. Political dialogue

'Dialogue is the EU's preferred approach when dealing with human rights issues in third countries', as the European Commission itself asserts.²⁵ This has been manifest in the constant and consistent dialogue carried out with Colombia throughout the different phases of the conflict that has been placed on three levels, from the multilateral to the bilateral: at the level of dialogue and agreement with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, CELAC (previously, the Rio Group); under the EU-CAN Cooperation Framework Agreement; and bilaterally between the EU and Colombia.

2.1.1. Region-to-region relations

Relations between the EU and Colombia coincide with the intensification of efforts to develop the EU's foreign policy. From the outset, the EU concentrated on issues that it saw as being at the root of inequality and poverty: the lack of sustainable development and illicit drug trafficking. The relations between the two parties first took place in the context of EU relations with the community of Andean nations (CAN),²⁶ which date back to 1991, when the Andean countries' goods were

²⁴ See Isabelle Ioannides, [The effects of human rights related clauses in the EU-Mexico Global Agreement and the EU-Chile Association Agreement](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2017, pp. 49-115.

²⁵ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Human rights and the EU-Colombia trade agreement](#), Question by Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) to the Commission for written answer P-003854-15, 2 May 2015.

²⁶ Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru signed the Cartagena Agreement in 1969. The agreement was extensively amended and codified by the Trujillo Protocol of 1996 (Peru having withdrawn) and the Sucre Protocol of 1997. See Rafael A Porrata-Doria Jr, 'Andean Community of Nations (CAN)', *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Comparative Constitutional Law*, Oxford Public International Law.

granted preferential access to the EU market as a way to promote sustainable development and good governance, while also contributing to the fight against drugs. In 1995, the EU-CAN set up a high-level dialogue on drugs and, in 1996, the EU signed bilateral agreements with Andean Community member countries on the control of chemical precursors (used to produce illicit drugs);²⁷ these entered into force in 1997. The importance of both of these issues was then underlined in the Cochabamba Declaration of the EU-Rio Group,²⁸ following its meeting in Bolivia, in 1996.²⁹

EU relations with Colombia also take place in the framework of EU relations with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).³⁰ This strategic partnership is grounded on a commitment to fundamental freedoms, sustainable development and a strong rules-based international system. The first summit between the EU and CELAC was held in Rio de Janeiro, in June 1999, and established a 'Bi-regional Strategic Partnership'. The most recent biennial summit was held in June 2015, in Brussels, and was the second region-to-region meeting between the EU and CELAC.

In June 2015, the European Commission announced €230 million to set up a 'Facility for International Cooperation and Partnership', to support the efforts being made towards the sustainable development of Latin America and the Caribbean and the consolidation of peer learning among countries in the region, as well as to promote joint cooperation with emerging donors in the region. For Colombia, a programme worth almost €21 million seeks to support efforts to overcome the social and economic disadvantages in remote areas and conflict affected regions through local sustainable development. As stated in the press release, 'It is expected to foster income generation opportunities for almost 2 000 peasant families and improved livelihoods of around 3 000 indigenous and Afro-Colombian families living in National Parks, where all kinds of social and environmental conflicts rule'. This action constituted the first building block of the EU's support for the Colombian peace process.³¹

For over 20 years, these summits have aimed to strengthen the links between the two regions at the highest level and address issues on the bi-regional and the international agenda, including the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council and UN General Assembly Third Committee, where the two parties jointly presented a resolution on the rights of the child. Debates have focused on topics as diverse as democracy and human rights; fighting poverty; promoting social cohesion, innovation and technology; and the environment and climate change.³² Democratic values and the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, lie at the core of the EU-CELAC strategic partnership. Accordingly, dialogue has focused on freedom of expression and association; gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment; non-discrimination of minorities and indigenous peoples; economic, social and cultural rights (including land, water and sanitation and housing rights); functioning rule of law, especially the judiciary; and the abolition of the death penalty and torture. In this context,

²⁷ The last (11th) meeting on drugs took place in October 2012, [XI Reunión de diálogo especializado de alto nivel sobre drogas Comunidad Andina - Unión Europea, Comunicado Conjunto](#), Quito, Ecuador, 31 October 2012.

²⁸ Rio Group is a predecessor of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) established in 2010.

²⁹ European Commission, [Cochabamba Declaration](#), Press release, 16 April 1996.

³⁰ The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was launched in 2011 and represents a regional political coordination mechanism, which gathers all 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries in the region.

³¹ European Commission, [EU boosts support for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), Press release, 11 June 2015.

³² Jesper Tvevad, [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), Fact Sheets on the European Union, European Parliament, October 2018.

the EU supports civil society organisations and human rights defenders, especially those experiencing diminished opportunities for free, active and meaningful participation in decision-making.³³

To further strengthen political dialogue between the two parties, leaders mandated the foreign ministers to hold meetings in the years between summits. In this spirit, the first stand-alone EU-CELAC Foreign Ministers Meeting took place on 25-26 October 2016, in Santo Domingo, and a second one was held in Brussels, on 16-17 July 2018.³⁴ In addition to the political declarations, the Brussels summit adopted an EU-CELAC Action Plan, which sets out more concretely 10 priority areas for bi-regional cooperation:

- science, research, innovation and technology;
- sustainable development and the environment, climate change, biodiversity and energy;
- migration;
- education and employment to promote social inclusion and cohesion;
- the global drug problem;
- gender;
- investment and entrepreneurship for sustainable development;
- higher education;
- citizens' security.³⁵

In concrete terms, however, these fora did not help resolve specific human rights violations, instead remaining at declaratory level. However, they helped advance international cooperation between the EU and Colombia, particularly at the level of the United Nations (UN), for instance through EU participation in the multilateral bodies supporting the peace process in Colombia (the Colombia Support Group, G24) and offered the potential to move the climate change agenda in Colombia forward through the Cartagena Dialogue.

In view of the fast evolving geopolitical environment, the EU is currently reflecting on how to further strengthen its relations with the Latin American region, including with Colombia, conscious of the fact that since 2002, China-Latin American trade increased from US\$17 billion to US\$257 billion in 2017.³⁶ China is rivalling the EU as the second trading partner of Latin America and, more broadly, has become a partner of growing relevance for the region. The traditional role and influence of the United States in the region has also changed over time, although Colombia is one of the LAC countries with the largest trade exposure to the United States.³⁷

2.1.2. Bilateral relations

The EU and Colombia bilateral political and policy dialogue is based on the 1996 Rome Declaration, which opened the door for institutional cooperation in the form of presidential summits, meetings of ministers of foreign affairs, and ad hoc thematic meetings. The 2009 Memorandum of Understanding established an informal bilateral consultation mechanism at senior officials' level. A bilateral human rights dialogue complements relations between the European Union and

³³ European External Action Service, [EU-CELAC relations](#), 16 July 2018.

³⁴ The third EU-CELAC summit originally scheduled to take place in El Salvador, in October 2017, was postponed.

³⁵ Council of the European Union, [EU-CELAC Action Plan](#), EU-CELAC Summit 2015, Brussels, 10-11 June 2015.

³⁶ Mark P. Sullivan and Thomas Lum, [China's Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean](#), Congressional Research Service, US Congress, Washington DC, September 18, 2018.

³⁷ OECD, [Latin American Economic Outlook 2018: Rethinking Institutions for Development](#), OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018, p. 95.

Colombia. In this framework, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission services address the issues of rule of law, governance and the fight against corruption.³⁸ High level political and sectorial dialogue meetings are held annually. The 11th annual Human Rights Dialogue took place on 8 April 2019, in Bogota.

In these discussions, the EU has expressed its support or disapproval of Colombian policies on several occasions and adjusted its approach accordingly. In that sense, high-level and sectorial meetings have been used for political leverage. For example, under the Uribe administration, Colombia's relations with the EU were cold, and the EU was critical of President Uribe's hard-line US-supported counterinsurgency strategy. The EU was particularly concerned with President Uribe's approach, such as granting amnesty to right-wing paramilitaries, which was seen as increasing the potential for human rights abuses in Colombia. Consequently, in 2004, the EU withheld its support for Uribe government's peace initiative with paramilitaries due to the lack of a credible and comprehensive peace strategy, and EU aid to Colombia was limited to social investment.³⁹ The high-level dialogue has also been used positively in support of the Havana negotiating peace process in 2012. As echoed during the visit of the High Representative for the EU foreign and security policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP), Federica Mogherini, to Colombia, in May 2016, the highest priority for both parties in recent years has been the pursuit of stable and lasting peace.⁴⁰ To further solidify cooperation between the EU and Colombia, they concluded a framework agreement to allow Colombia to participate in EU-led international crisis management operations, on 5 August 2014, organised in the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy.⁴¹

In recognition of the importance of Colombia's efforts to build peace, HR/VP Mogherini appointed former Irish Deputy Prime Minister Eamon Gilmore as the EU Special Envoy for the peace process in Colombia in November 2015.⁴² He visits Colombia approximately every six to eight weeks to bolster EU political support for the implementation of the peace agreement, and meets with victims, human rights defenders, government, opposition, FARC-EP, civil society and media.⁴³ Since the appointment of the EU Special Envoy, priority has been given to gender (gender sensitive transitional justice, support for women's participation in the peace process, the fight against sexual exploitation); child rights (reintegration of child combatants); transitional justice; and victims.⁴⁴ On 31 May 2018, an event in Brussels entitled 'Conflict Resolution in the 21st Century: The Case of Colombia' took place, with the participation of key figures from the Colombian peace negotiations, including HR/VP Mogherini and former Colombian President Santos. According to the EEAS, 'they discussed lessons learned from the peace negotiations, the state of the Colombian economy and the country's development, as well as social reconciliation of people affected by conflict, children in particular'.⁴⁵ This high-level relationship between the EU and Colombia is also important because it

³⁸ European Commission, Follow-up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on the implementation of the Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru (A8-0446/2018), 16 April 2019.

³⁹ Rex Hudson, Country Profile: Colombia, A Report Prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress under an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Defense, Washington DC, February 2007, p. 27.

⁴⁰ European External Action Service, [EU-Colombia relations factsheet](#), 20 May 2018.

⁴¹ European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the fulfilment by Colombia of the relevant criteria in view of the negotiation of a visa waiver agreement between the European Union and Colombia \[SWD\(2014\) 329 final\]](#), COM(2014) 665 final, 29 October 2014, p. 8.

⁴² European External Action Service, [EU-Colombia relations factsheet](#), 20 May 2018.

⁴³ Information shared by the EU Delegation to Colombia, in Bogota, 16 April 2019.

⁴⁴ Information shared by the EU Delegation to Colombia, in Bogota, 16 April 2019.

⁴⁵ European External Action Service, [Colombia: building peace and moving forward](#), 31 May 2018.

offers the potential for policy coherence on other key international efforts, for example, on climate change, as both parties participate in the Cartagena Dialogue.⁴⁶

In February 2019, EU Envoy Gilmore was also appointed EU Special Representative for Human Rights. The relationship between human rights and security is frequently raised by the EU Envoy in his regular contacts with the Colombian authorities responsible for security (Vice-President, General Prosecutor, and Minister of Interior, among others). In this context, he raised the worsening security situation in Colombia, namely the killings and attacks against human rights defenders, in high-level meetings with Vice-President Naranjo, Chief of the Armed Forces General Mejía and with President Elect Iván Duque, in July 2018.⁴⁷ He is also in contact with communities and civil society organisations across the country, in some of the areas most affected by violence. He is increasing his presence in the Colombian regions to directly monitor the situation on the ground, follow debates on human rights issues (including the gender dimension) closely, and monitor the implementation of the peace deal.⁴⁸

In parallel, a technical working group on human rights has been established, with representatives from all EU missions in Bogota and the Colombian authorities.⁴⁹ The EU Delegation in Bogota has established a contact group with other embassies supporting the Colombian government's efforts to ban the use of mercury in gold mining. Regular contacts between EU missions and external interlocutors (national authorities, NGOs, embassies of third countries and international organisations) help form a more complete picture of the human rights situation and of emerging trends.⁵⁰ The dialogue on drugs, money laundering, illegal mining and oil should also be mentioned as an example of EU support for Colombia.⁵¹ In this respect, the EU Delegation is coordinating public diplomacy activities to raise issues or individual cases of concern with relevant authorities. The fight against organised crime, respect for human rights, investigations of crimes against human rights defenders and their protection, and the land restitution process, are challenges that the EU and

⁴⁶ Eva Mass et al., [The EU and Colombia Climate Partnership Beyond Aid and Trade](#), Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague, August 2015, p. 2.

⁴⁷ European Commission, [Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini, Impunity for human rights violations in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL), Estefanía Torres Martínez (GUE/NGL), Miguel Urbán Crespo (GUE/NGL), Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) and Xabier Benito Ziluaga (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-003439-18, 23 August 2018.

⁴⁸ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Anti-LGBTI hate crimes and intolerance in Colombia](#), Question by Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-004612-1, 13 October 2017; European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR – Delay in dismantling paramilitary structures in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Javier Couso Permuy (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-007729-17, 29 March 2018.

⁴⁹ European Commission, [Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission, The EU-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and respect for human rights](#), Question to the European Commission from Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-003079-15, 14 May 2015.

⁵⁰ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Monitoring the human rights roadmap following the implementation of the EU-Colombia Trade Agreement](#), Question from Jude Kirton-Darling (S&D) to the European Commission for written answer E-003448-15, 14 May 2015.

⁵¹ Isabel Alvarez et al., Implementation of the Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru: Ex-Post Evaluation, in Anna Zygierewicz, [Trade agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru: European Implementation Assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, July 2018, p. 86.

Colombia address in this framework.⁵² Issues of military jurisdiction and impunity, and the need for constitutional reform have also been discussed.⁵³

In parallel, regular dialogue with civil society and human rights defenders also takes place.⁵⁴ The EU Delegation to Colombia, in Bogota, is in contact with human rights NGOs, trade unions, think tanks, international organisations, companies and business associations. Dialogue with civil society covers a wide range of business and human rights issues (e.g. labour rights), the environment, human rights defenders and land restitution.⁵⁵ Civil society is kept abreast of discussions that take place in the EU-Colombia high-level and sectorial level human rights dialogue. For instance, a seminar was held in Colombia with human rights civil society organisations specifically to gather inputs in view of the EU-Colombia human rights dialogue in July 2016. One of the two main themes was business and human rights. Post-dialogue, a debriefing with NGOs was held in Bogota, where the subject of business and human rights was also discussed. This feedback mechanism is important for building a solid relationship with Colombian civil society. Frequent meetings, field visits, participation in forums, observations of trials and dialogue with Colombian institutions are also organised.⁵⁶

2.2. EU financial aid for Colombia

During 15 years of cooperation with the Colombian government, a large part of the EU's financial assistance for Colombia has been devoted to helping address the root causes of the internal conflict and some of its consequences. As stated several times since 2001, within the framework of the Colombia Support Group (the G24), the EU has committed to channelling all its cooperation efforts in Colombia towards peace.⁵⁷ Together with its Member States, the EU has invested €1.5 billion in peacebuilding activities in Colombia during this period (see Figure 1).⁵⁸ Considering only the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the EU has financed human rights projects totalling more than €21 million in Colombia in the past 10 years.⁵⁹

⁵² European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Human rights and the EU-Colombia trade agreement](#), Question from Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) to the Commission for written answer P-003854-15, 2 May 2015.

⁵³ European Commission, [Réponse donnée par Mme Mogherini, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission, VP/HR – EU-Colombia Framework Agreement on participation in EU crisis management operations](#), Question from Javier Couso Permuy (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-008682-14, 17 March 2015.

⁵⁴ European Commission, [Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini, European Commission, Protection of human rights defenders](#), Question to the European Commission from Monika Beňová (S&D) for written answer E-003396-18, 28 August 2018.

⁵⁵ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Monitoring the human rights roadmap following the implementation of the EU-Colombia Trade Agreement](#), Question by Jude Kirton-Darling (S&D) to the European Commission for written answer E-003448-15, 14 May 2015.

⁵⁶ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Alleged involvement of European companies in human rights violations in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Clara Eugenia Aguilera García (S&D), Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero Fernández (S&D) and Carlos Zorrinho (S&D) for written answer E-003560-17, 13 September 2017.

⁵⁷ European Commission, [Colombia Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013](#), 28 March 2007.

⁵⁸ European Commission, [EU Trust Fund for Colombia](#), 28 January 2019.

⁵⁹ European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the European Commission, Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Hans-Olaf Henkel (ECR) for written answer E-003409-18, 20 September 2018.

Figure 1 – EU approach to peacebuilding in Colombia



Source: Reproduced by EPRS, based on European Commission, [EU Trust Fund for Colombia](#), 29 January 2019.

2.2.1. EU strategy for Colombia

The EU's allocation of financial aid is governed by its overall strategy on Colombia, which links the gradual commitment the EU is ready to make with progress made in the peace talks. Over the 2002-2011 period, the EU transitioned from relief to rehabilitation in the highly-sensitive conflict-ridden Colombia. EU cooperation with Colombia during the 2002-2006 period had one main objective: 'to support Colombia's search for peace, defining as a priority fighting against the main root causes of the conflict such as marginality, inequality, social exclusion and extreme poverty'. Horizontal and regional programmes and coordination with of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Office (ECHO) were included in the 2002-2006 programming.

During the next programming cycle (2007-2013), the bilateral EU programme for Colombia focused on peace and stability, including alternative development first and foremost (70 % of the allocation), whose stated objective was to promote, in several regions of Colombia, sustainable human development, reduction of all illicit activities, the creation of areas of peaceful coexistence and the development of the public domain by promoting peace dialogues and sustainable socioeconomic development. Another focus was on rule of law, justice and human rights, including good governance and promotion of social dialogue (20 % of the allocation). Finally, 10 % of the budget was allocated to competitiveness and trade to help increase Colombia's capacity to integrate into

the global economy.⁶⁰ In parallel, the EU Regional Strategy Paper for the Andean Community (therefore also for Colombia), covering the 2007-2013 period, identified three focal sectors for cooperation at sub-regional level:

- to assist the Andean Community to strengthen its economic integration, thereby giving the region a stronger position in the world economy;
- to support initiatives to enhance social and economic cohesion within the Andean Community; and
- to assist the Andean countries in their difficult fight against illicit drugs, in line with the principle of shared responsibility that governs EU-Andean relations in this area.

A strategic evaluation of EU action in this period (2002-2011) notes that the long-term objectives of development were not sufficiently linked to short-term relief objectives. Determining factors were the lack of a comprehensive and structured strategic framework to mainstream good governance principles and a non-adaptive capacity development scheme, notably on territorial development. Weaknesses were also identified on coordination and complementarity with other donors.⁶¹

In 2014, the EU considered that Colombia was 'on a positive trend of political reforms and economic and social progress'. For this reason, it elaborated its multiannual indicative programme for Colombia for 2014-2017 in the perspective of phasing-out bilateral cooperation in the country under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), and therefore adjusting to 'the country's economic performance and role as a global player and influential regional actor'.⁶² In that respect, the DCI 2014-2020 established specific areas of cooperation for Latin America, among which for Colombia particular attention was to be given to strengthening social cohesion; addressing governance issues, particularly regarding public institutions at sub-national levels; supporting an active civil society; and promoting development aid for trade to ensure that micro-enterprises and SMEs can benefit from international trading opportunities. During this period, EU attention continued to focus on the large gap between urban and rural areas, which was compounded by very unequal access to land in rural areas. Past EU interventions had already helped address the specific problems of rural Colombia. The idea was to replicate these experiences where there was little state presence to support the Colombian government on social equity and development.⁶³

2.2.2. EU development cooperation and humanitarian aid

The Peace Laboratories, which ran for 10 years (2002-2012), were an emblematic example of EU development cooperation assistance. They were followed by the 'Regional Development Peace and Stability' programme and the 'New Peace Territories' project, which ended in 2017. In this framework, a total of €230 million (€160 million from the EU budget) was invested in 1 108 projects in the areas of economic and regional development, human rights and democratic governance. These projects have benefited approximately 280 000 persons in 249 municipalities and 19 Colombian departments. They sought to give a voice to civil society in the violence-affected areas at community level, on matters of economic development, re-establishing individual dignity and

⁶⁰ Development Researchers' Network et al., [Evaluation of the Commission of the European Union's co-operation with Colombia, Final Report](#), Evaluation for the European Commission, Rome, October 2012. external evaluation of DG AIDCO.

⁶¹ Development Researchers' Network et al., [Evaluation of the Commission of the European Union's co-operation with Colombia, Final Report](#), Evaluation for the European Commission, Rome, October 2012.

⁶² European External Action Service and Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation, European Commission, [Multiannual Indicative Programme \(MIP\) 2014-2017: Colombia](#), 2014.

⁶³ European External Action Service and Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation, European Commission, [Multiannual Indicative Programme \(MIP\) 2014-2017: Colombia](#), 2014, p. 2.

engendering hope.⁶⁴ The Peace Laboratories in Colombia are a European peacebuilding proposal that has allowed the EU to differentiate itself from the USA, as well as create a place for itself on the international stage as an actor for peace.⁶⁵

Despite their small size and undetected impact on the overall resolution of the conflict in Colombia, the Peace Laboratories have instigated institutional changes at local, national and international levels.⁶⁶ As the European Commission's strategic evaluation asserts, 'the main achievements of the EC's contribution have been in creating platforms of dialogue between the different actors present in the territory, in strengthening of networks and civil society organisations, in promoting the creation of alliances between public and private actors, and in supporting productive activities for the socio-economic stabilisation of the territories'.⁶⁷ However, the initiative also shines a light on the difficulties of establishing an international presence in conflict environments. One of the biggest challenges faced in the implementation of the Peace Laboratories was that they were developed as a mechanism to support a peace process at a time and in areas where there was no peace and negotiations were not advancing. This meant that EU activities were affected by factors that were outside its control, namely the armed confrontations, tense relations with bordering countries, the permeability of local organisations to armed actors and narco-traffic, inadequate capacity of local organisations, among other issues.⁶⁸ The EU has been criticised for 'heavy, slow, inflexible, and highly bureaucratic' procedures, which reduce its positive impact.⁶⁹

The Peace Laboratories were complemented with action aiming at reinforcing the state (administrative and judicial reform) and helping the victims of the conflict (landmines). Under non-programmable aid, an estimated €35 million was earmarked for NGO co-financing, IDPs, human rights, and science and technology. Since 2010, the Emergency Fund has allocated 13 direct grants to human rights defenders from Colombia and their families (maximum grant of €10 000 per case).⁷⁰ The European Commission strategic evaluation for this period speaks of key contributions to the protection of IDPs' land and patrimonial assets and Colombian public policy for IDPs; and the strengthening of victim and human rights organisations' capacity to participate in the transitional justice process and maintain a high level of activity in favour of the defence and promotion of human rights. It argues that EU development cooperation has also contributed to the strengthening of local players. It has helped sub-national bodies promote participative budgeting and focus public service delivery according to social and territorial needs; it has partially helped them build technical capacity and fight corruption.⁷¹

Reaching out and supporting human rights organisations and defenders has been a core EU concern. Since 2014, the EU has provided funds averaging €1 million per year through the EIDHR

⁶⁴ European Commission, [EU & Colombia: Key Partners for Peace](#), 20 June 2018, p. 3.

⁶⁵ Dorly Castañeda, [¿Qué significan los Laboratorios de Paz para la Unión Europea?](#), Colombia Internacional, vol. 69, 2009, pp. 162-179.

⁶⁶ Dorly Castaneda, [The European Union in Colombia: Learning how to be a peace actor](#), Paris Papers No 3, Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (RSEM), Paris, 2012, p. 4.

⁶⁷ Development Researchers' Network et al., [Evaluation of the Commission of the European Union's co-operation with Colombia. Final Report](#), Evaluation for the European Commission, Rome, October 2012.

⁶⁸ Dorly Castaneda, [The European Union in Colombia: Learning how to be a peace actor](#), Paris Papers No 3, Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (RSEM), Paris, 2012, pp. 24, 39, 40.

⁶⁹ Miguel Barreto Henriques, [Peace Laboratory of Magdalena Medio: "a peace laboratory"?](#), Documentos de CERAC No 6, Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos, Bogotá, December 2007, p. 12.

⁷⁰ European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the European Commission, Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Hans-Olaf Henkel (ECR) for written answer E-003409-18, 20 September 2018.

⁷¹ Development Researchers' Network et al., [Evaluation of the Commission of the European Union's co-operation with Colombia. Final Report](#), Evaluation for the European Commission, Rome, October 2012.

instrument for civil society organisations (CSOs) to enhance the defence of human rights in Colombia.⁷² Between 2013 and 2015, the EU financed a project (worth €553 000) on empowering the Wayuu women in the Gauajira department, to provide legal advisory services and inform international partners about the challenges faced by this community.⁷³ In 2015, the EU provided financial support to a number of NGO-run projects aimed at improving the human rights situation, with a focus on the situation of human rights defenders and other activists at risk, the conflict's victims, gender-based violence or children in armed conflict. As far as labour-related issues are concerned, the EU is providing financial support to the national trade union school, one of the key bodies active in promoting progress in the effective implementation of labour rights and the protection of union leaders.⁷⁴ In addition, the EU human rights defenders protection mechanism (managed by a consortium of 12 specialised NGOs) has, since its creation in 2015, allocated 30 direct grants and organised 32 training activities for human rights defenders at risk (individuals and organisations). It can be used for legal or psychological support, medical aid, security improvement or emergency relocation (up to a few weeks/months) of human rights defenders.⁷⁵ Several EIDHR-funded projects have addressed the specific needs of indigenous communities, which the EU recognises have been disproportionately affected by the internal conflict, by supporting the fight against discrimination and capacity-building to enable their dialogues with public institutions and authorities on their rights and issues.⁷⁶ Equally, the EU has invested in gender equality and in the fight against organised crime. The EU promotes social cohesion through EUROsocial and citizens' security with El PacCTO (Assistance Programme against Transnational Organised Crime).

The EU also provides assistance to Colombia's administrative and governance capacity-building. In that context, for example, the EU Delegation to Colombia has supported prior consultation regarding respect of human rights and followed up several emblematic cases on infringements of human rights defenders and the rights of indigenous communities, and discusses this issue periodically with the National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia (ONIC), even if it is the responsibility of the Colombian authorities to enforce legislation on prior consultation.⁷⁷ In addition, the EU and several of its Member States have assisted the Colombian government in the drafting and implementation of its National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. Further engagement had been earmarked for the implementation of a regional project on business and human rights that will cover prior consultation-related issues. The EU has funded projects to empower indigenous

⁷² As an upper-middle income country, Colombia is in principle not eligible for bilateral financial assistance under the Development Cooperation Instrument (main EU financing instrument for cooperation with Latin American countries). However, an exception was made of a bilateral allocation of €67 million for 2014-2017 due to the peace process. European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission, EU funding for post-conflict Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-008846-16, 1 March 2017.

⁷³ European Commission, [Joint answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Union action in respect of a coal exporting company allegedly involved in human rights violations in a third country](#), Question to the European Commission from Ignazio Corrao (EFDD) for written answer E-004676-17, 16 October 2017.

⁷⁴ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Monitoring the human rights roadmap following the implementation of the EU-Colombia Trade Agreement](#), Question from Jude Kirton-Darling (S&D) to the European Commission for written answer E-003448-15, 14 May 2015.

⁷⁵ European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the European Commission, Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Hans-Olaf Henkel (ECR) for written answer E-003409-18, 20 September 2018.

⁷⁶ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Indigenous people in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Marlene Mizzi (S&D) for written answer E-011185-14, 19 March 2015.

⁷⁷ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR — Duty of prior consultation to ensure respect of human rights in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Javi López (S&D) for written answer E-007689-17, 8 March 2018.

peoples in their relationship with businesses, for instance, 'Strengthening human rights and social and institutional advocacy through local initiatives of indigenous Wayuu women from Colombia'. In addition, the project entitled 'Transnational corporations and guiding principles: towards effective mechanisms for the protection of human rights in Latin America' has funded prior consultation-related action and has also aimed to contribute towards better implementation of International Labour Organization Convention No 169 (on non-discrimination).

The EU has provided Colombia with humanitarian aid for more than two decades. With €202.4 million in humanitarian aid between 1994 and 2014, Colombia is the second largest beneficiary of the European Commission's humanitarian aid in LAC, after Haiti. The assistance has covered the needs of IDPs and assisted Colombian refugees in neighbouring countries (primarily Ecuador and Venezuela (€184.4 million); responded to natural disasters (€11.4 million); and financed projects to better prepare communities and local, national and regional institutions to face dangers and reduce vulnerability (€5.6 million).⁷⁸ Part of the Peace Laboratories were financed through this budget line. In this context, the European Commission's ECHO has actively coordinated with the Unit for the Victims (UARIV), the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APCI), and the National Unit for the Management of Risk of Disasters (UNGRD), to address humanitarian needs in remote areas of the country where public services and response are hampered by armed actors.⁷⁹

2.3. EU-Colombia trade cooperation

Despite the socio-political challenges it has faced, Colombia has managed to maintain macroeconomic stability and its economy has enjoyed good growth rates in general. It is a (growing) middle-income country and a producer and exporter of hydrocarbons, notably oil and coal. Natural resources are plentiful and include agricultural land, water for irrigation, energy resources (oil, natural gas, and coal), and minerals (e.g., nickel, gold, and emeralds). However, Colombia is also the world's leading producer of cocaine, with all the violence and conflict linked to coca cultivation and cocaine trafficking. The EU posits that peace goes hand in hand with economic development and a critical element in the post-conflict phase in Colombia will be new, sustainable financial opportunities for all. It is in this context that the EU has sought to forge trade relations with Colombia.

The EU first signed a Cooperation Agreement with Colombia in 1983, followed by a broader Framework Cooperation Agreement in 1993. In December 2003, the two parties concluded a Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, which although it further broadened the scope of the cooperation, has not yet entered into force. Negotiations on an Association Agreement started in June 2007 and led to a multi-party free trade agreement (FTA) with Peru and Colombia in March 2010 (joined by Ecuador in 2017).⁸⁰ The EU-Colombia/Peru FTA was signed in Brussels in June 2012, after several rounds of negotiations, and entered into force with Colombia on 1 August 2013. This agreement, which is based on the principle of regional integration, trade promotion and international investment, seeks to contribute to sustainable development, poverty

⁷⁸ Dominguez, Roberto, *EU Foreign Policy towards Latin America*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2015, p. 108-109.

⁷⁹ European External Action Service and Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation, European Commission, [Multiannual Indicative Programme \(MIP\) 2014-2017: Colombia](#), 2014, p. 3.

⁸⁰ Jesper Tvevad, [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), Fact Sheets on the European Union, European Union, October 2018.

eradication, the creation of new employment opportunities and better working conditions for citizens.⁸¹

Title IX on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) of the trade agreement includes provisions regarding the strengthening of compliance with labour legislation, guaranteeing the fundamental rights established by the ILO, and the contribution of trade to productive employment and decent work, therefore aiming at a high level of protection. The agreement also includes firm commitments to effectively implement core labour standards, as contained in the ILO Fundamental Conventions.⁸² In that light, the agreement required the establishment of specific mechanisms:

- creation of a trade committee (Article 12), consisting of representatives from the EU and each signatory Andean country, to supervise and monitor the implementation of the agreement, and specialised bodies to evaluate the implementation of the agreement, including the Sub-committee on TSD (Article 280);
- establishment of an EU civil society domestic advisory group (DAG) consisting of European and Colombian trade union representatives (Article 281);
- organisation of an annual open forum with civil society to carry out a dialogue on matters related to the implementation of the TSD Title. Article 282 obliges the Sub-committee on TSD to convene meetings with civil society organisations.⁸³

The EU-Colombia FTA also includes the standard 'democracy clause', which has never been triggered.⁸⁴ In accordance with the European Parliament resolution of 13 June 2012 on this agreement, Colombia had explicitly undertaken to unequivocally commit to public policies that promote and defend human rights, a requirement it fulfilled in principle through the drafting of the Colombian government action plan. Failure to respect human rights and democratic principles would constitute a 'material breach' of the agreement.⁸⁵ This requirement to include in all EU trade agreements with third countries a clause on democracy and human rights that provides for the immediate and unilateral suspension of any agreement in the event of 'serious violations' of such rights and liberties, is based on Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union regarding fundamental rights.⁸⁶ The EU has nevertheless always upheld that 'the best way to foster continuous improvements of the human rights situation in Colombia lies in continuing and reinforcing its

⁸¹ European Commission, [Highlights of the Trade Agreement between Colombia, Peru and the European Union](#), 26 June 2012.

⁸² For an analysis of the role of EU trade agreements in the respect of human rights, see Isabelle Ioannides, [The effects of human rights related clauses in the EU-Mexico Global Agreement and the EU-Chile Association Agreement](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2017, pp. 14-37.

⁸³ ['Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Colombia and Peru, of the other part'](#), OJ L 354, 21.12.2012, pp. 3-2607.

⁸⁴ Article 1 of the EU-Colombia/Peru trade agreement reads as follows: 'Respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and for the principle of the rule of law, underpins the internal and international policies of the Parties. Respect for these principles constitutes an essential element of this Agreement'.

⁸⁵ [EU trade agreement with Colombia and Peru European Parliament resolution of 13 June 2012 on the EU trade agreement with Colombia and Peru \(2012/2628\(RSP\)\)](#), OJ C 332E, 15.11.2013, pp. 52–57.

⁸⁶ Article 21(1) TEU: 'The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation [...] and which it seeks to advance in the wider world; democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the UN Charter and international law [...]'.

constructive dialogue and cooperation with all relevant actors ... rather than activating the suspension clause'.⁸⁷

Two European Commission sustainability impact assessments, outsourced to external researchers before the signature of this FTA, considered the social impacts of a potential EU trade agreement with Colombia. The 2009 impact assessment, prepared by Development Solutions et al., found that poverty and inequality were quite pronounced in the Andean countries, including Colombia. It was argued that a potential trade agreement could push further transition from small-scale to large-scale agriculture in the Andean countries, including in Colombia, which would have a positive impact (a rise in wages). Furthermore, labour-intensive agriculture, food processing and light industrial product manufacturing sectors would expand with consequent positive social effects. Nevertheless, a significant negative social impact could also result from the FTA, namely social conflict from the expansion of mining, hydrocarbon extraction and logging activities in rural areas.⁸⁸ The second impact assessment prepared in 2012 by the Centre for Economic Policy Research came to similar conclusions. In terms of poverty reduction, a trade agreement made sense, because of the potential reduction in prices for goods consumed primarily by the poor that would consequently bring poverty down by 0.37 %. The impacts would be heterogeneous across regions, with a bigger positive effect in the rural lowlands and the smallest decline in poverty in the urban mountains. It was argued that inequality could decline modestly: since household income in Colombia's rural regions (where inequality would improve the most) would increase faster than in urban areas, income inequality would slightly decline at the national level. In addition, both studies found that wages for both skilled and unskilled workers would increase.⁸⁹

In parallel, dissenting voices from the European Trade Union Confederation, the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas, and their partner organisations, sent a letter to the European Parliament calling on them to oppose the trade agreement. They pointed to the continuing violence in Colombia and violation of human rights and labour rights, and 'the weakening of the Andean Community through individual EU trade agreements rather than bloc-to-bloc relations'. They also expressed their concern 'that the agreement and its sustainable development chapter do not provide the solid basis required to ensure that human and trade union rights are respected'.⁹⁰ On the Colombian side, in March 2011, more than 200 Latin American and European social organisations and trade unions presented a manifesto to the European Parliament demanding that the FTA with Colombia and Peru not be ratified, as it was considered detrimental to Latin American countries due to its potential socio-environmental impact.⁹¹ This is the kind of criticism that led Parliament to ask the Colombian government for an action plan on human rights and international humanitarian law, labour and trade union rights, and sustainable development, as a condition for signing the trade agreement, as mentioned above. Academics had also sounded the alarm, warning of negative effects on food, health, water, sanitation and land that would be felt most severely by

⁸⁷ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Continued attacks and killings in Colombia](#), Question from Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL), Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL) and João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-005509-15, 15 December 2015.

⁸⁸ European Commission, Development Solutions et al., [EU-Andean Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment. Final Report](#), Report commissioned and financed by DG Trade, October 2009.

⁸⁹ Joseph Francois et al., [Assessing the Economic Impact of the Trade Agreement Between the European Union and Signatory countries of the Andean Community \(Colombia and Peru\)](#), Final Project Report, Prepared for DG Trade under implementing framework contract TRADE10/A2/A16, Centre for Economic Policy Research, London, July 2012, pp. 39-43.

⁹⁰ European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), [Joint letter to MEPs on behalf of ETUC, TUCA, ITUC and CGU about the European Union Free Trade Agreement with Colombia and Peru, 22 February 2012](#), Brussels, 22 February 2012.

⁹¹ Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo, [Organizaciones sociales y sindicales presentan manifiesto contra TLC con UE](#), Bogota, 23 March 2011.

vulnerable groups, including informal workers, farmers, Afro-Colombians, indigenous people and women. Some of these impacts had already been demonstrated in the context of the GSP+ trade regime, which also included safeguards for rights and freedoms.⁹²

It should be remembered that at the time of the signature of the EU-Colombia/Peru trade deal, Colombia faced great insecurity, making it difficult for the economy to flourish due to the absence of trust in government institutions, extreme income inequality, and many living in fear of insurgent group violence.⁹³ Maher challenges the conventional wisdom that civil war inevitably stymies economic development and that 'civil war represents development in reverse'. Instead, he posits that not all conflicts have negative economic consequences and, under certain conditions, civil war violence can bolster processes of economic development. In that context, he shows how violence perpetrated by key actors of the conflict (the public armed forces and paramilitaries) have facilitated economic growth and processes of economic globalisation in Colombia (namely, international trade and foreign direct investment), while in parallel the violence profoundly negatively impacted on large swathes of civilians.⁹⁴

2.3.1. EU-Colombia trade in numbers

The EU remains Colombia's second trading partner, after the United States but ahead of China. Since the EU-Colombia trade agreement was signed, Colombian economic indicators have not improved greatly. Although this could largely be due to general growth deceleration in the past six years in Latin America and the Caribbean and unprecedented flows of intra-regional migration,⁹⁵ the indicators do not show the expected positive results. While Table 1 reveals the Colombian economy expanded by 2.8 % in 2018 as a whole, the highest growth rate in three years, this was largely driven by a rebound in domestic demand, which offset the negative contribution of the external sector (trade). Real GDP growth is still almost 2 % less than 2013, when the agreement came into force. The Economist Intelligence Unit expects that resilient domestic demand as the business cycle recovery gathers pace and moderate, though slow, global growth will allow Colombia's GDP growth to accelerate to 3.1 % in 2019.⁹⁶

Table 1 – Main economic indicators for Colombia

Indicator	Unit	Time period						
		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Population	Millions of inhabitants	47	47	48	48	49	49	50
GDP	Billions of euros	288	286	284	265	255	278	285
GDP per capita	Euros	6 175	6 073	5 968	5 483	5 240	5 647	5 725

⁹² Jaume Saura, Estapà, '[Implicaciones de derechos humanos en el tratado de libre comercio entre Colombia y la Unión Europea](#)', *InDret*, Vol. 4/2013, Barcelona, October 2013.

⁹³ Celia Landesberg, '[A Bright Future for Colombia?](#)', Colombia: Geopolitics, December 2013.

⁹⁴ David Maher, *Civil War and Uncivil Development Economic Globalisation and Political Violence in Colombia and Beyond*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2018.

⁹⁵ [The World Bank in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), World Bank, 5 April 2019.

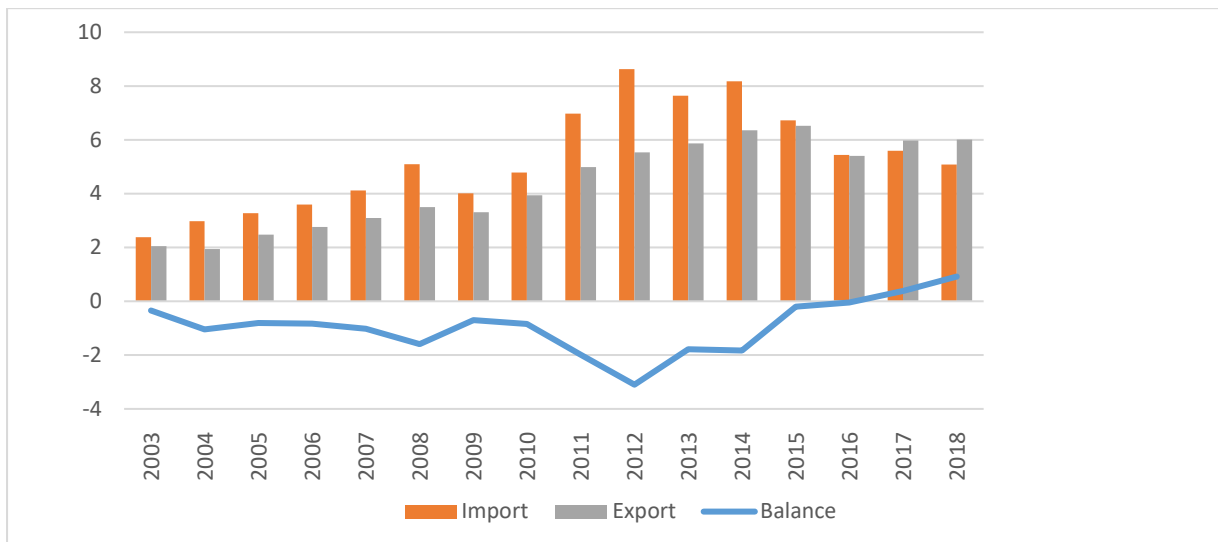
⁹⁶ [GDP growth picks up in 2018](#), The Economist Intelligence Unit, 11 March 2019.

Indicator	Unit	Time period						
		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Real GDP growth	%	4.0	4.9	4.7	3.1	2.0	1.8	2.8
Inflation rate	%	3.2	2.0	2.9	5.0	7.5	4.3	3.2
Current account balance	% of GDP	-3.1	-3.3	-5.2	-6.5	-4.3	-3.3	-2.4

Source: [Colombia](#), Directorate-General for Trade, European Commission, 19 March 2019; Colombia, Directorate-General for Trade, European Commission, 21 June 2016; [Colombia: Total population from 2012 to 2022 \(in million inhabitants\)](#), Statista, 2019; [Colombia: GDP growth](#), [Colombia: Inflation: CPI](#), [Colombia: Current account balance](#), The World Bank.

Trade in goods between the EU and Colombia increased substantially at the beginning of the formal peace negotiations in 2012, and continued with the signature of the EU-Colombia/Peru FTA. Bilateral trade in 2015-2016 was on a negative trend compared to 2012, the year before the application of the trade deal, due to the decline in commodity prices and slow growth of domestic demand in the EU. Bilateral trade was 18.2 % lower during 2015-2016, in line with the decrease in Colombia's total trade with the rest of the world (20.8 % during the same period). This trend was reversed in 2017 with a 7 % increase (due to increased domestic demand in the EU and a slight recovery in commodity prices) with bilateral trade amounting to €11.6 billion, compared to €10.8 billion in 2016.⁹⁷ In 2017, the EU accounted for 14 % of Colombia's total merchandise trade, up from 13.2 % in 2016. The positive trend registered from 2017 continued in 2018. However, goods imports were more important than their exports, as Figure 2 shows.

Figure 2 – EU-Colombia bilateral trade in goods 2003-2018 (€ billion)



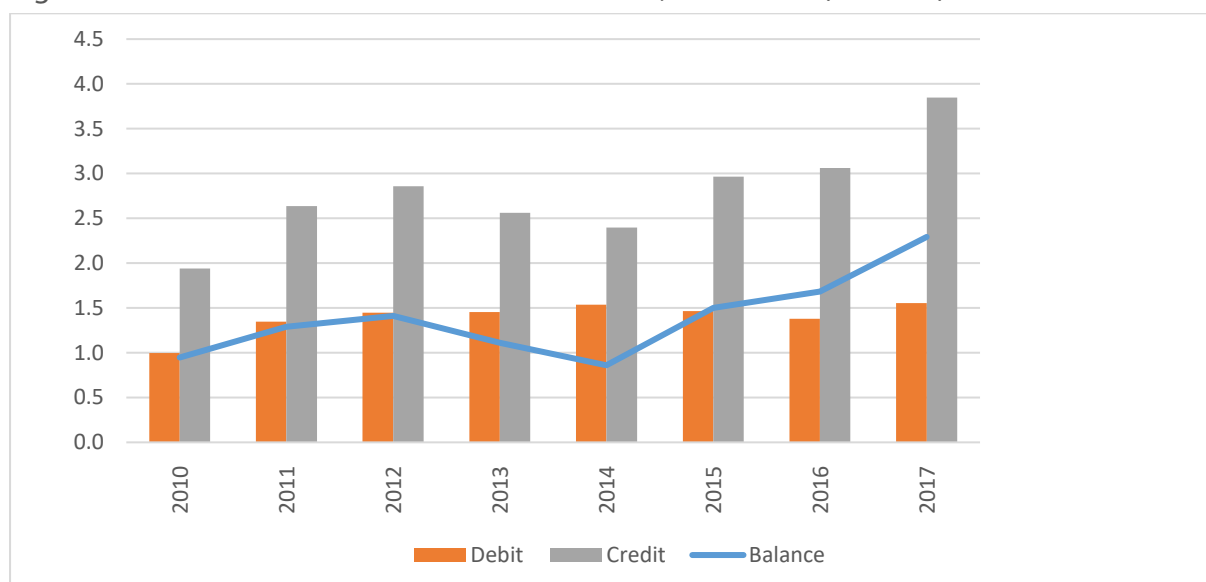
Source: Created by EPRS with [data from Eurostat, 15 April 2019](#).

⁹⁷ European Commission, [Commission Staff Working Document, Individual reports and info sheets on implementation of EU Free Trade Agreements, Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Implementation of Free Trade Agreements, 1 January 2017 - 31 December 2017, {COM\(2018\) 728 final}](#), SWD(2018) 454 final, 31 October 2018, pp. 36, 54.

In terms of benefits resulting from EU-Colombia trade relations, this agreement has greatly contributed to the diversification of Colombia's exports, notably in favour of the agricultural sector, 'thus creating regional employment opportunities positive for the implementation of the country's peace agreement'.⁹⁸ Since the agreement entered into force, exports of agricultural products from Colombia increased by 45 %, totalling almost €2.3 billion. The number of Colombian SMEs making use of preferential market access to the EU has also increased significantly.⁹⁹

Bilateral trade in services between the EU and Colombia increased by 0.7 % in 2016 compared to 2015, totalling €4.25 billion. While EU exports increased by 4 %, Colombian exports decreased by 5.6 % over this period. According to Eurostat, the EU share in Colombia's total trade in services represented 18 % in 2017. The EU posts a substantial surplus in the trade in services, as illustrated in Figure 3. For the third year in a row, the EU has remained the first foreign investor in Colombia, totalling €14.7 billion of foreign direct investment (FDI) stocks in 2016. According to Colombian statistics, EU FDI accounted for 36 % of the total FDI in flows to Colombia in 2017 with an amount of €5.4 billion. Colombian FDI stocks in the EU decreased by 18.4 % since 2015, totalling €2.7 billion in 2016, and according to Colombian statistics, 30.8 % of its outward flows went to the EU in 2017.¹⁰⁰

Figure 3 – EU-Colombia bilateral trade in services, 2010-2017 (€ billion)



Source: Created by EPRS with [data from Eurostat, 22 February 2019](#).

⁹⁸ European Commission, [Commission Staff Working Document, Individual reports and info sheets on implementation of EU Free Trade Agreements, Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Implementation of Free Trade Agreements, 1 January 2017 - 31 December 2017, {COM\(2018\) 728 final}](#), SWD(2018) 454 final, 31 October 2018, pp. 36, 55.

⁹⁹ Information received from the EU Delegation to Colombia, in Bogota, 16 April 2019.

¹⁰⁰ European Commission, [Commission Staff Working Document, Individual reports and info sheets on implementation of EU Free Trade Agreements, Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Implementation of Free Trade Agreements, 1 January 2017 - 31 December 2017, {COM\(2018\) 728 final}](#), SWD(2018) 454 final, 31 October 2018, p. 44-45.

2.3.2. Implementation of the trade and sustainable development title

As part of the monitoring of the implementation of the TSD title of the agreement, the European Commission regularly evaluates efforts made by Colombia to guarantee fundamental labour rights, taking the observations and recommendations made by the International Labour Organization (ILO) into account. Transparent and inclusive consultation mechanisms are key instruments to ensure that all parties abide by recognised labour and environmental protection standards. In that respect, the 2018 European Commission annual report notes that Colombia has advanced in terms of the institutional set up for the participation of civil society in TSD issues, with the creation of a domestic mechanism for consultation with civil society ('domestic advisory group', DAG) and an increasingly open and inclusive dialogue on labour and environmental matters. This initiative responds to repeated demands from civil society in Colombia, which the EU has consistently echoed.¹⁰¹ 'Civil society organisations [must] be systematically involved to monitor the implementation of these commitments'.¹⁰² The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) provides the secretariat for the DAG and has set up a dedicated page on its website.¹⁰³

The DAG has met several times and agreed its rules of procedure. During these meetings, in 2015, Colombian civil society representatives expressed their concern about the overall impact of the agreement. They raised problems linked to trade union rights, working conditions, labour informality and labour inspections. While recognising that much remained to be done, Colombian authorities argued that increased resources had been spent on improving the protection of trade union leaders threatened with violence and reiterated their commitment to fighting against impunity.¹⁰⁴ Similar concerns were raised in the DAG meeting in 2016, where the need to combat impunity for violations of human and labour rights, the criminalisation of social protest, and the implementation of ILO Convention 169 on indigenous and tribal people, were highlighted.¹⁰⁵ In the 2018 joint meeting of the Colombian, Peruvian, Ecuadorian and EU DAGs,¹⁰⁶ it was noted that there were no tangible results, and that there was even backsliding, on commitments set out in the TSD title. The need for respect for labour standards and the implementation of ILO conventions, respect for human rights, and transparency and inclusiveness in civil society participation were raised.¹⁰⁷ The

¹⁰¹ European Commission, [Commission Staff Working Document, Individual reports and info sheets on implementation of EU Free Trade Agreements, Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Implementation of Free Trade Agreements, 1 January 2017 - 31 December 2017, {COM\(2018\) 728 final}](#), SWD(2018) 454 final, 31 October 2018, pp. 50, 55.

¹⁰² European Commission, [EU-Colombia trade agreement takes effect on 1 August](#), Andean Community, News archive, 26 July 2013.

¹⁰³ See [The EU-Colombia/Peru/Ecuador Domestic Advisory Group](#), European Economic and Social Committee.

¹⁰⁴ European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Second Annual Report on the Implementation of the EU-Colombia/Peru Trade Agreement](#), COM(2016) 58 final, 10 February 2016, pp. 8-9.

¹⁰⁵ Although Colombia was the third country in the world to ratify this international agreement (after Mexico and Norway in 1990), through Law 21/199127, ILO has highlighted a series of difficulties in implementing prior consultation processes, aimed at state and businesses, with regard to the fulfilment of their commitments. These include: the lack of a statutory law on prior consultation; weak state intervention; the lack of systematic mapping of ethnic communities; mistrust between parties; the emergence of 'new' communities; the lack of criteria to define compensatory measures; and armed conflict. [Summary of the discussion and key messages of civil society representatives and participants from the EU, Colombia and Peru \(Trade and Sustainable Development Title of the EU-Colombia and Peru Trade Agreement\)](#), Brussels-Lima-Bogota, 7 December 2016, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ These are DAGs organised at EU level and include European trade associations and social partners.

¹⁰⁷ European Economic and Social Committee, [Joint Declaration of the Advisory Groups from the EU, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador](#), 4th joint meeting of the EU Domestic Advisory Group and representatives from the domestic mechanisms of Colombia, Peru and Ecuador and Civil Society Open Session, Ecuador, 11 December 2018.

conclusions of the meetings of March 2019 were not available on the DAG website at the time of writing.

Colombia participated in the first meeting of the Sub-committee on TSD, in Lima, on 6 February 2014, where the parties committed to consulting their respective DAGs and considering their opinions and recommendations on implementation of labour-related and environment-related provisions. However, according to the conclusions of the meetings of 2014 and 2015, human and labour rights were not raised in this, more political, forum.¹⁰⁸ The fourth meeting of the Sub-committee on TSD, held in Lima on 22-23 November 2017, pointed out that 'a number of critical issues require follow-up and further action and that more dialogue on priority TSD issues is needed'.¹⁰⁹

The European Commission has raised persisting concerns 'in relation to freedom of association and collective bargaining, the high levels of informality and the inadequate labour inspection capacities'.¹¹⁰ To further support efforts to engage social partners, the European Commission launched a project worth €3 million in November 2018, to provide logistic support to the DAGs in the next three years. The project also envisages support for civil society consultation mechanisms in some partner countries, including Colombia. In December 2018, this project allowed civil society representatives from Colombia to travel to Quito to participate in the open session of the Sub-committee on TSD with civil society. Based on the results of this dialogue, the EU has initiated cooperation with Colombia in the area of business and human rights, contributing to the adoption by Colombia of a 'National Action Plan' whose implementation has begun.¹¹¹ In this forum, the EU has also been able to raise concerns regarding the killing of trade union leaders in Colombia and call for freedom of association for workers and protection for union trade leaders.¹¹²

Regarding labour inspections, the European Commission is aware of the challenges that Colombia faces. To support its efforts to strengthen labour inspections, the European Commission has launched a technical assistance project that the ILO will implement to strengthen labour inspection in the rural agricultural areas of the country. This project (worth €200 000), developed in cooperation with Colombia's Ministry of Labour, will include the development of specific technical tools for labour inspections and the training of labour inspectors. The objective is to achieve actual compliance with fundamental labour rights across the whole territory of Colombia, including

¹⁰⁸ European Commission, [Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Colombia and Peru, of the other part; Sub-Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development, Joint Statement](#), Bogota, 16-17 June 2015; European Commission, [EU-Peru and Colombia Trade Agreement Sub-Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development, Joint Statement](#), Lima, Peru, 6 February 2014.

¹⁰⁹ European Commission, [Commission Staff Working Document, Individual reports and info sheets on implementation of EU Free Trade Agreements, Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Implementation of Free Trade Agreements, 1 January 2017 - 31 December 2017, {COM\(2018\) 728 final}](#), SWD(2018) 454 final, 31 October 2018, p. 49.

¹¹⁰ European Commission, [Commission Staff Working Document, Individual reports and info sheets on implementation of EU Free Trade Agreements, Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Implementation of Free Trade Agreements, 1 January 2017 - 31 December 2017, {COM\(2018\) 728 final}](#), SWD(2018) 454 final, 31 October 2018, p. 49.

¹¹¹ European Commission, [Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission, Follow-up on roadmaps under the EU free trade agreement with Colombia and Peru](#), Question by Maria Arena (S&D) to the European Commission for written answer P-002362-16, 31 May 2016.

¹¹² European Commission, [Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR — Killing of trade unionists in Colombia](#), Question by Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-009627-15, 5 October 2015.

remote areas.¹¹³ For its part, Colombia is increasing its financial and material resources to enhance their labour inspection capacities, but close follow-up will be needed as important challenges remain.

A number of other activities organised in recent years in the framework of the EU-Colombia FTA have also sought to further develop TSD in Colombia and by extension have supported the peace agreement and its implementation. These include a circular economy business mission aimed at strengthening ties between EU and Colombian institutions in the environment field; a workshop on business development topics (e.g. corporate social responsibility, organic production and fair trade); and an EU-funded mission on international trade in brown caimans, aimed at improving conservation efforts. Equally, the EU Delegation to Colombia organised a three-day workshop in 2017, during which the topic of labour legislation was addressed, with the aim of explaining the current trade union landscape in the country.¹¹⁴ The 2017 annual report also points to EU efforts in the context of this trade agreement to support the peace process in Colombia. A number of events were organised to raise the visibility of sustainable development and its link to the peace process, including visits in areas affected by the conflict. The latest event was a conference in February 2017 on how the trade deal can contribute to creating economic opportunities in the context of the peace process.¹¹⁵

Despite consistent EU engagement through the consultation mechanisms available in the EU-Colombia trade agreement, evidence shows that the social effects of the agreement have been limited. One of the biggest constraints to obtaining more positive results has been the fact that mechanisms to guarantee the protection of human rights (i.e. the dialogue under the TSD title) are not binding. This means that discussions and commitments made in the framework risk remaining at a declaratory level. A recent evaluation conducted by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) argues that 'despite the complicated human rights context in Colombia both historically and today, it is difficult to establish a link between the current state of affairs and the trade agreement as such'.¹¹⁶ On the implementation of the TSD title per se, the study points to three key problems:

- First, the abundant information on citizens' rights violations, which greatly affect vulnerable populations (Afro-Colombians, indigenous populations and activists), and the criminalisation of social protest demonstrate the need for closer monitoring of how this aspect of the trade agreement will evolve.
- Second, the lack of institutionalised measures to guarantee workers' rights and high levels of job insecurity, short-term work, informal and illegal employment, characterise the current employment conditions in the productive sector, including in foreign (as well as European) companies.

¹¹³ European Commission, Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on the implementation of the Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru (A8-446/2018), 16 April 2019.

¹¹⁴ European Commission, [Commission Staff Working Document, Individual reports and info sheets on implementation of EU Free Trade Agreements, Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Implementation of Free Trade Agreements, 1 January 2017 - 31 December 2017, {COM\(2018\) 728 final}, SWD\(2018\) 454 final, 31 October 2018, pp. 50, 55.](#)

¹¹⁵ European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Third Annual Report on the Implementation of the EU-Colombia/Peru Trade Agreement](#), COM(2017) 585 final, 10 October 2017, p. 11.

¹¹⁶ Isabel Alvarez et al., Implementation of the Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru: Ex-Post Evaluation, in Anna Zygierewicz, [Trade agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru: European Implementation Assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, July 2018, p. 74.

- Third, the non-compliance regarding effective involvement of civil society organisations in the consultation phase of policy-making hinders the monitoring and defence of human rights.

What is particularly telling of the EU's soft approach when dealing with the Colombian conflict, is that the European Commission annual reports on the implementation of the agreement make limited reference to the conflict in Colombia and hardly any reference to the violence in the country.¹¹⁷ Only in the two latest annual reports prepared by the European Commission, which cover the period for 2016 and 2017 (therefore after the signature of the peace deal), admit to the complications violence in Colombia imposes on the implementation of labour reforms, in particular. More specifically, the 2017 annual report states that 'Colombia described reforms aimed at ensuring freedom of association for workers and progress in diminishing impunity and violence levels, as well as its ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention'.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ See, for example, European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Annual Report on the Implementation of the EU-Colombia/Peru Trade Agreement](#), COM(2014) 718 final, 4 December 2014.

¹¹⁸ European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Third Annual Report on the Implementation of the EU-Colombia/Peru Trade Agreement](#), COM(2017) 585 final, 10 October 2017, p. 9.

3. European Parliament contribution

Respect for human rights in Colombia has been at the core of the European Parliament (EP)'s work on the conflict in the country. Parliament has consistently raised concerns about the implementation of labour rights provisions and the protection of social rights in Colombia, in the context of the sustainable development prerogatives outlined in the action plan that was required by Parliament. It has played a key role in ensuring regular dialogue on human rights takes place and it was on its initiative that a decision was taken to grant Colombian citizens visa-free travel to the Schengen area. This chapter analyses these initiatives, focusing on the activities of Members of the European Parliament in the last legislative cycle (2014-2019), to demonstrate Parliament's active engagement in Colombia's conflict and its resolution.

3.1. Parliament's position

Parliament has consistently supported the peaceful resolution of the Colombian conflict and backed the peace negotiations and then peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP. On this basis, in January 2001, Parliament made a clear statement against 'Plan Colombia'.¹¹⁹ In January 2016, it expressed its commitment to the peace process in Colombia in a resolution tabled by seven political groups and adopted by Parliament.¹²⁰ In this resolution, Parliament welcomed the platform for talks between the Colombian government and FARC-EP, and the agreements that had been made by then (e.g. on comprehensive rural reform). Parliament 'reiterated its readiness to provide all possible assistance to support the implementation of the final peace agreement' and renewed its call on Member States to create a trust fund to accompany the post-conflict phase. Parliament also stressed the need to combat inequality and poverty in the post-conflict phase and recommended that Parliament's Delegation for relations with the countries of the Andean Community (DAND) and Eurlat 'monitor and, potentially, accompany the peace accords'.¹²¹

In its September 2017 resolution on EU political relations with Latin America, Parliament reiterated its support for the peace process, stressing 'the importance of involving the whole of Colombian society' and of 'guaranteeing the safety and protection of human rights activists and community leaders'. It called on the EU and its Member States 'to continue their political and financial support', and backed 'the role of the VP/HR's Special Envoy for Colombia' (currently the Irish diplomat, Eamon Gilmore).¹²² In its July 2018 resolution on the EU-Colombia trade agreement, Parliament stressed the need for effective implementation of the provisions of the TSD title and called on the European Commission to support Colombia in its efforts to strengthen labour inspections and to consider the introduction of sanctions in the dispute settlement mechanism for the TSD title. It also called for the monitoring of domestic reforms in the partner countries on rule of law and good governance, in particular on anti-corruption.¹²³

¹¹⁹ [European Parliament resolution on Plan Colombia and support for the peace process in Colombia](#), 1 February 2001.

¹²⁰ [European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2016 in support of the peace process in Colombia \(2015/3033\(RSP\)\)](#), P8_TA(2016)0016.

¹²¹ [European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2016 in support of the peace process in Colombia \(2015/3033\(RSP\)\)](#), P8_TA(2016)0016.

¹²² [European Parliament resolution of 13 September 2017 on EU political relations with Latin America \(2017/2027\(INI\)\)](#), P8_TA(2017)0345.

¹²³ [European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2019 on the implementation of the Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru \(2018/2010\(INI\)\)](#), P8_TA(2019)0031.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the context of its power of consent on international agreements, Parliament required the government of Colombia make an explicit, unequivocal commitment on public policies that promote and defend fundamental rights, before it could consent to the EU-Colombia trade agreement.¹²⁴ In its resolution of 13 June 2012, the EP also highlighted the absence of a binding dispute settlement mechanism, while recognising the importance of constructive dialogue between the partners, the inclusion of a chapter on trade and sustainable development and the creation of domestic dialogue mechanisms with civil society involving the participation of citizens of the Andean countries and the EU.¹²⁵ According to the same resolution, the Andean countries party to the FTA were requested to develop a transparent and binding roadmap on environmental and labour rights, aimed at safeguarding human rights,¹²⁶ with which, as analysed in the previous chapter, the Colombian government complied.

3.2. Parliament's activities

As Castañeda points out, the European Parliament has consistently been in contact and received representatives from the human rights networks in Colombia and those working on the country but based in different EU Member States (many of these NGOs included refugees who had escaped the Colombian conflict).¹²⁷ Thus, using their oversight power, Members have acted as facilitators, putting pressure on the European Commission and the European External Action Service. In that context, Parliament engaged with the human rights network on Colombia even before the Colombian government launched 'Diplomacy for Peace'. As early as 1995, these organisations managed to organise the first conference on human rights in Colombia, in the European Parliament in Brussels, with more than 350 participants, including Members of the European Parliament, politicians, European and Colombian NGOs, and a delegation from the Colombian government. This meeting was followed by an intense mobilisation in favour of the respect for human rights in Colombia. A platform of organisations was established: the Organisation internationale pour les Droits de l'homme en Colombie (OIDHACO) in Brussels, Coordinadora Europa – Colombia in Bogota, and later Coordinadora USA-Colombia in the United States. Parliament's support for the transnational human rights network was instrumental in the network's advocacy efforts to push human rights onto Colombian President Samper's agenda. As a result of this pressure, the Samper government agreed to a compromise with civil society that saw the creation of the office of the UNHCHR in 1996. Equally, multiple actions – discussion tables and an international peace conference raising human rights issues – were organised, with European cooperation, by human rights organisations, in 2000. The efforts were labelled '*Paz Colombia*' (Peace Colombia) in opposition to the US' more militarised '*Plan Colombia*'.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ European Parliament, [MEPs want human rights pledge before backing trade pact with Peru and Colombia](#), Press release, 13 June 2012.

¹²⁵ Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru form a regional integration block called the Andean Community. The process of building relations with the EU began in 1969 (at which time Chile was also involved in the negotiations) with the signing of the Andean Pact, the aim of which was to create a customs union and a common market. The free trade area created by the four Andean Community members became fully operational in 2006, after Peru was fully incorporated.

¹²⁶ [EU trade agreement with Colombia and Peru European Parliament resolution of 13 June 2012 on the EU trade agreement with Colombia and Peru \(2012/2628\(RSP\)\)](#), OJ C 332E, 15 November 2013, pp. 52-57.

¹²⁷ Dorly Castañeda, *The European Approach to Peacebuilding: Civilian Tools for Peace in Colombia and Beyond*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2014, pp. 81-115.

¹²⁸ Castañeda, *The European Approach to Peacebuilding: Civilian Tools for Peace in Colombia and Beyond*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2014.

Parliament also conducted numerous visits to the country. In April 2011, an EP delegation visited Colombia to meet with the Colombian President, high-level officials, and business groups, and exchanged views with a former FARC-EP hostage, General Luis Menditeta Ovalle. In October 2013, another EP delegation visited Colombia and, in November 2014, President Santos met with EP President Schulz, in Brussels, to garner political support and financial aid for the peace negotiations with the FARC-EP.¹²⁹ In September 2016, Parliament sent a delegation to accompany the peace process and observe the referendum election on the peace. Apart from visiting polling stations during the vote and assessing the conduct of the election, Members held meetings with citizens supporting and opposing the peace agreement, with public authorities and representatives from civil society, academia and the media. They also visited symbolic locations of the long and violent conflict, such as Ibagué, Montes de Maria, Cartagena and Medellín.¹³⁰

In November 2016, a Colombian human rights delegation raised concerns about the El Cerrejón mining project; the Ríos Vivos movement, which seeks to protect rivers against the threat of dam construction; monoculture of crops such as bananas and African oil palm in the Lower Atrato; and the development of various port infrastructure projects in Buenaventura.¹³¹ According to experts, although there had been accusations that European businesses had violated rights affecting vulnerable groups of the population (farmers, indigenous people or people of African descent), these problems have not been addressed in the Sub-committee on TSD. A case in point is the El Cerrejón coal mine (a business benefiting from European capital) in La Guajira, which is one of the country's poorest departments. The Ministry of the Interior was accused of carrying out consultations that were allegedly deceitful because they did not include the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities directly affected by the plans to extend the mine and divert the Bruno stream.¹³² More recently, in February 2018, the delegation of the EP Committee for International Trade (INTA), visiting Colombia in the context of assessing progress in the implementation of the EU-Colombia/Peru/Ecuador Agreement, echoed Colombian civil society concerns, by stating that 'trade must serve all, and workers who are at the heart of our economies, must not be left behind'.¹³³

Members of Parliament, from across the political spectrum and at different moments of the Colombian conflict, have often raised their concerns regarding the protection of workers' rights in Colombia, in the context of the EU-Colombia trade agreement, and called for more support for respect for human rights through EU diplomacy and financial aid. With their approximately 170 questions on Colombia to the European Commission, Members of Parliament have systematically called for the protection of human rights defenders, trade union leaders, vulnerable groups (including indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians), and displaced women and children, who during the conflict have often been the victims of violence. They have raised awareness of the land restitution problem and have supported civil society concerns.¹³⁴ CSOs have saluted the INTA

¹²⁹ Dominguez, Roberto, *EU Foreign Policy towards Latin America*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2015, p. 109.

¹³⁰ European Parliament, [European Parliament delegation to observe Colombia's peace deal referendum](#), Press release, 27 September 2016.

¹³¹ European Parliament, [Human rights in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from María Teresa Giménez Barbat (ALDE), Ana Gomes (S&D) and Carolina Punset (ALDE) for written answer E-001448-17, 2 March 2017.

¹³² Isabel Alvarez et al., Implementation of the Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru: Ex-Post Evaluation, in Anna Zygierecz, [Trade agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru: European Implementation Assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, July 2018, p. 68.

¹³³ European Parliament, [We need improvement in labour rights, says Lange after Colombia, Peru visit](#), Press release, 19 February 2018.

¹³⁴ See, for example, European Parliament, [Monitoring the human rights roadmap following the implementation of the EU-Colombia Trade Agreement](#), Question by Jude Kirton-Darling (S&D) to the European Commission for written

committee's work, which they see as being able to compensate for the European Commission's insufficient monitoring of the EU-Colombia/Peru/Ecuador agreement. Nevertheless, CSOs have 'referred to the limited demands that Parliament has made in relation to the 'democracy clause' [in the FTA], as it has not made more pressing demands in the field of human rights'.¹³⁵

Since the signature of the peace accord, concerns have been raised as to its implementation.¹³⁶ With the election of Iván Duque, concerns regarding continuing violence – according to some, an increase in violence – and the enforcement of the 'special justice for peace', a key pillar of the peace accord, have been raised in Parliament.¹³⁷ The questions posed address individual cases, cases of specific ethnic and/or vulnerable groups, and human rights issues linked to deficiencies to governance or security. Similarly, in line with its monitoring of the implementation of the EU-Colombia trade agreement, Parliament's concern with human rights respect and protection in Colombia was made clear in a letter signed by 27 Members from seven countries and four parties, sent to the country's President, the Ministers and the Director of Public Prosecutions in March 2018. Members applauded the progress made in protecting human rights defenders and in investigating crimes against them. Nevertheless, they also emphasised the serious situation often faced by trade union leaders, the increasing violence against them, and the stigma they experience, sometimes even perpetuated by the state itself.¹³⁸

In 2017, under the EP's pilot projects and preparatory actions, the EU Delegation in Bogota allocated €1.5 million to economic empowerment for rural women in Cauca. This aimed to develop income generation strategies for rural women, increase their access to land and their participation in networks to improve market access in conflict affected areas, and provide financial resources and technical assistance. In December 2018, Parliament awarded an additional €1.5 million to turn the pilot projects that were deemed successful into preparatory actions.¹³⁹ On 29 May 2019, during his speech to the European Parliament, Colombian President Santos thanked the EU for its support for the peace process and the post-conflict phase in Colombia. He also referred to the Fiduciary Fund (with €62 million already committed) and to an additional €85 million for demining. EP President Tajani 'urged the EU to remain present and help with investment, so that Colombia can keep progressing towards peace and poverty reduction'.¹⁴⁰

answer E-003448-15, 3 March 2015; European Parliament, [Human rights and the EU-Colombia trade agreement](#), Question by Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) to the Commission for written answer P-003854-15, 11 March 2015; European Parliament, [VP/HR — Enforced disappearances in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Ernest Urtasun (Greens/EFA) for written answer E-013469-15, 2 October 2015; European Parliament, [Union action in respect of a coal exporting company allegedly involved in human rights violations in a third country](#), Question to the European Commission from Ignazio Corrao (EFDD) for written answer E-004676-17, 11 July 2017; European Parliament, [VP/HR — Human Rights Defenders in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Barbara Matera (PPE) for written answer E-004035-17, 19 June 2017.

¹³⁵ Isabel Alvarez et al., Implementation of the Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru: Ex-Post Evaluation, in Anna Zygierewicz, [Trade agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru: European Implementation Assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, July 2018, pp. 75 and 91.

¹³⁶ European Parliament, [The need to continue the peace process in Colombia](#), Question from João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-003319-18, 18 June 2018; European Parliament, [VP/HR — Failure to implement the peace agreements in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Javier Couso Permuy (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-002295-18, 25 April 2018.

¹³⁷ European Parliament, [VP/HR — Colombian peace process in jeopardy](#), Question from João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-001377-19, 18 March 2019.

¹³⁸ [Colombia: European parliamentarians express concern for the situation of human rights defenders in Colombia](#), World Organisation against Torture (OMCT), Geneva, 6 March 2018.

¹³⁹ Information received from the EU Delegation to Colombia, in Bogota, 16 April 2019.

¹⁴⁰ European Parliament, [Colombia: Santos thanks the EU for its support to the peace process](#), Press release, 29 May 2018.

The European Parliament commitment to peace and prosperity in Colombia is also addressed in the regular contact between Members of the European Parliament and Latin American members of parliament, which began with the first of 17 interparliamentary conferences in 1974. This was the first – and for many years the only – forum for institutionalised political dialogue between Europe and Latin America. In 2006, the joint Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat), the parliamentary institution of the 'Bi-regional Strategic Partnership', replaced these interparliamentary conferences. EuroLat consists of 75 Members from the European Parliament and 75 from Latin American sub-regional parliaments, including the Parlandino (Andean Parliament), which includes Colombian parliamentarians. Since 2006, EuroLat has held 11 ordinary plenary sessions to debate, monitor and review all questions relating to the partnership; its most recent meeting took place in September 2018. In its work, EuroLat has consistently put forward the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean's resolute commitment to 'a firmly multilateral approach to global governance, regional integration and interconnectedness as key elements for promoting peace, democracy, the respect for human rights, and prosperity, based on a model of inclusive and sustainable development and international standards of social, labour and environmental protection'. In their 2018 resolution, the rapporteurs stressed 'the indispensable role of parliamentarians and stakeholders, including civil society, trade unions and business organisations in the establishment of a fair global governance through the democratisation of international dialogue'.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ See, for example, [Resolution: The Governance of Globalisation](#) (rapporteurs: Adolfo Rodríguez Saá, from the Parlatino and Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero Fernández, from the European Parliament), EuroLat, Vienna, 20 September 2018, pp. 4, 6.

4. Colombia's fragile stability

This chapter focuses on the period since the signature in 2016, of the historic peace deal between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP, to assess whether the seeds of 'positive peace' have been sown in Colombia. It first outlines the main areas agreed upon in the peace deal, outlines the means and activities linked to EU support for post-conflict peacebuilding in Colombia, and analyses the approach of the current Colombian government to peacebuilding.

Numerous credible international actors and think tanks have attempted to measure the socio-political and governance situation in Colombia. The Fund for Peace has assessed that Colombia has steadily moved up on the Fragile States Index (ranked as 52nd in 2012, 60th in 2016 and 70th in 2019).¹⁴² The Global Peace Index (GPI) has seen Colombia's global peace ranking marginally improve since the signature of the peace agreement. Out of 163 countries, Colombia was ranked 147th in 2016, 146th in 2017, and 145th in 2018.¹⁴³ This is notable, considering that Latin America is the region of the four most peaceful regions in the world (the others being Europe, North America, and Asia-Pacific) that has recorded the greatest deterioration, with the largest overall decline on safety and security indicators (increase in the incarceration rate and impact of terrorism).¹⁴⁴ In addition, according to UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) value, which measures well-being and the freedom given to citizens to live lives they value, Colombia's score increased somewhat from 0.626 in 1995 to 0.719 in 2010, and to 0.747 in 2017.¹⁴⁵

Problems become evident when looking at more specific socio-economic aspects of democracy. For instance, the Inequality-Adjusted HDI and the Gender Inequality Index more specifically, reveal that Colombia still has much work to do to address income inequality, gender gaps, and the unequal distribution of outcomes in education and life expectancy.¹⁴⁶ Equally, the World Bank's Gini coefficient, which is used to gauge economic inequality by measuring income distribution among the population, shows only slight improvement in Colombia. Colombia's Gini coefficient has fallen (and therefore economic inequality has reduced) from 0.552 in 2008, to 0.535 in 2011, and to 0.507

Box 2 – What is 'positive peace'?

'Positive peace' creates an optimal environment in which human potential can flourish. It is transformational in that it is a cross-cutting factor of progress, making it easier for businesses to sell, entrepreneurs and scientists to innovate, individuals to produce and governments to effectively regulate.

In addition to the absence of violence, 'positive peace' is also associated with a number of other social characteristics that are considered desirable: stronger economic outcomes, higher resilience, better measures of well-being, higher levels of inclusiveness and more sustainable environmental performance.

Source: Institute for Economics & Peace, [Positive Peace Report 2018: Analysing the factors that sustain peace](#), Sydney, October 2018, p. 3.

¹⁴² [Fragile States Index \(FSI\)](#), The Fund for Peace, Washington DC, 2019. The FSI is a critical tool that highlights not only the normal pressures that all states experience, but also identifies when those pressures are outweighing a states' capacity to manage those pressures by analysing cohesion, political, economic, social and cross-cutting indicators.

¹⁴³ To put these scores into perspective, one needs to also take into account that the average level of global peacefulness has declined for the fourth consecutive year, falling by 0.27 % in 2017. The results of the 2018 GPI find that 92 countries deteriorated, while only 71 improved. [Vision of Humanity](#), Institute for Economics & Peace, Sydney, 2018 (accessed on 12 April 2019); Institute for Economics & Peace, [Global Peace Index 2018: Measuring Peace in a Complex World](#), Sydney, 2018.

¹⁴⁴ [Vision of Humanity](#), Institute for Economics & Peace, Sydney, 2018 (accessed on 14 March 2019).

¹⁴⁵ [Colombia](#), Human Development Reports, United Nations Development Programme.

¹⁴⁶ [Mixed results for LatAm in UN Human Development Index](#), The Economist Intelligence Unit, 15 October 2018.

in 2016.¹⁴⁷ According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), this drop in income inequality followed the increase of average income in Colombia, due to the growth in labour income, especially in lower-income populations.¹⁴⁸ Unemployment has remained rather stable, according to ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook, fluctuating at around 2.4 % in the 2012-2019 period (the lowest in 2015, at 2.1 %, and the highest in 2019, at 2.5 %). Meanwhile, employment has steadily increased from 22.3 % in 2012, to 23.8 % in 2016 and 24.5 % in 2019.¹⁴⁹ Despite the conflict and high extreme poverty rates, Colombia is considered to have fared relatively well in comparison to the rest of Latin America.¹⁵⁰ If progress has stalled, it is also due to the fact that levels of corruption have been fluctuating in Colombia. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index, Colombia has backslid on corruption, with its ranking moving up from 94th of 176 countries in 2012, to 90th in 2016, and up to 99th out of 180 countries in 2018.¹⁵¹ Perceptions of corruption have risen, despite new laws and monitoring mechanisms adopted to tackle this phenomenon.

The 2019 Normandy Index (NI), which was developed for the European Parliamentary Research Service by the Institute for Economics & Peace, aims to measure threats to peace and security in the world.¹⁵² As Figure 4 illustrates, this index goes beyond ranking aspects of peace to also contextualise the state of affairs on peace in Colombia, by comparing it to its South American¹⁵³ neighbours. This comparison shows that, in terms of security (i.e. the number of homicides, which remains very high), and environmental costs (i.e. climate change, which could also affect the comprehensive rural development) – both key pillars in the peace agreement – Colombia seriously lags behind in comparison to the rest of the region. Similarly, on correlated aspects, such as violence, the fragility of the state and terrorism, and resilience to disinformation, Colombia is below the overall average in South America. Therefore, despite the progress Colombia has made on cybersecurity, energy security, the reduction of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and even democratic processes, the challenges in security and rural development are so important that Colombia faces bigger threats to peace and security than the rest of the South American region. Colombia's overall NI score (at 5.89 out of 10) is lower than that for South America (7.01 out of 10), as Figure 4 illustrates.

¹⁴⁷ [LAC Equity Lab: A Platform for Poverty and Inequality Analysis](#), The World Bank. A country in which every resident has the same income would have an income Gini coefficient of 0. A country in which one resident earned all the income, while everyone else earned nothing, would have an income Gini coefficient of 1.

¹⁴⁸ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), [Social Panorama of Latin America](#), 2018, (LC/PUB.2019/3-P), Santiago, 2019, pp. 40, 43.

¹⁴⁹ International Labour Organization (ILO), [World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2019](#).

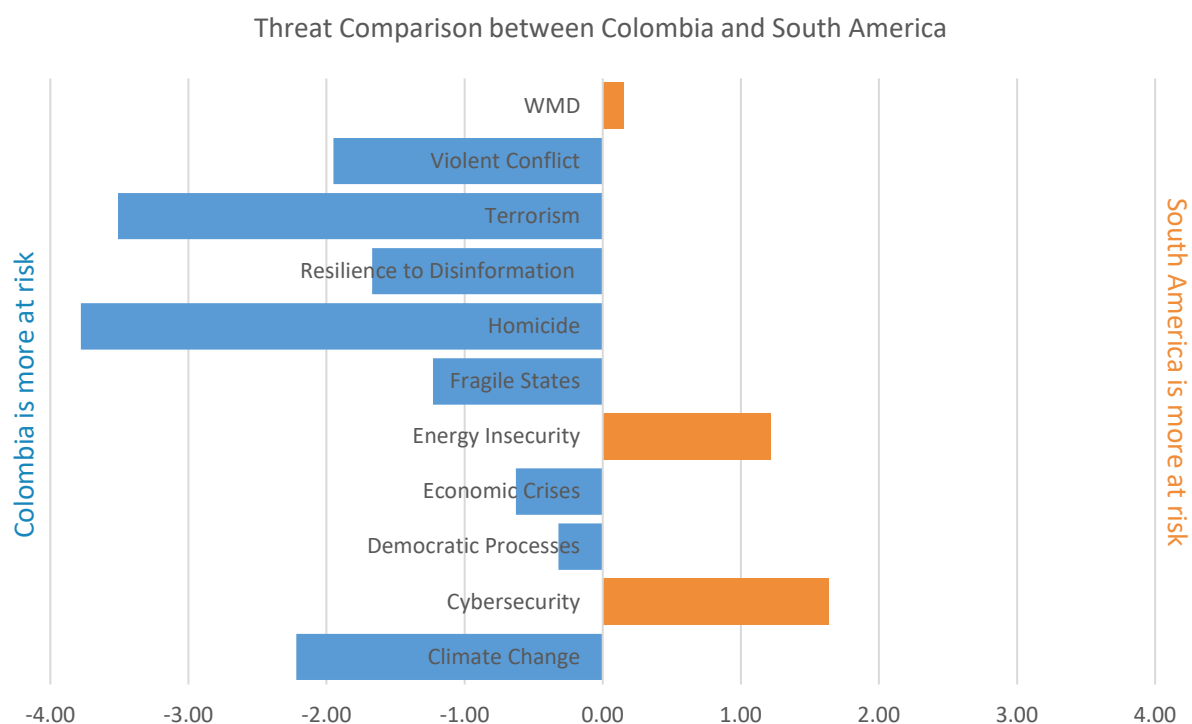
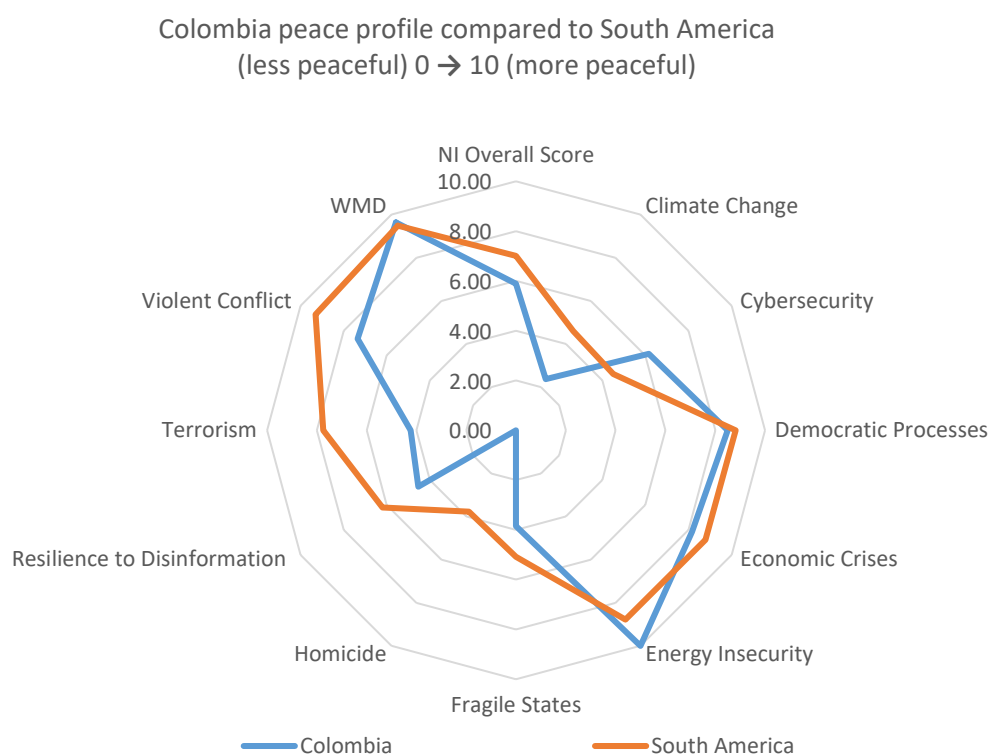
¹⁵⁰ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), [Social Panorama of Latin America](#), 2018, (LC/PUB.2019/3-P), Santiago, 2019.

¹⁵¹ [Corruption Perceptions Index 2017](#), Transparency International.

¹⁵² The Normandy Index aims to measure conflict around the world according to the 11 threats identified in the EU Global Strategy that have been benchmarked as the main challenges to peace and security. These are terrorism, hybrid threats, economic crisis, climate change, energy insecurity, violent conflicts, cybersecurity, disinformation/information warfare, fragile states, transborder crime, and WMDs. For an analysis of the Normandy Index, see Elena Lazarou and Philippe Perchoc, [Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide: Introduction to the Normandy Index](#), EPRS, European Parliament, May 2019.

¹⁵³ The countries included in the NI as belonging to South America are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Figure 4 – Colombia's profile according to the 2019 Normandy Index



Source: EPRS and Institute for Economics & Peace.

4.1. Elements of the peace agreement

The peace agreement concluded in 2016, between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP group is seen as a historic opportunity to put an end to one of the oldest internal conflicts in the world. In talks that began officially in Havana in September 2012, but in secret since 2010, right after the election of former President Santos, the two sides reached a wide ranging agreement that is ambitious in scope and aims at addressing the root causes of the conflict. It covers the following areas:

- comprehensive rural reform;
- political participation of FARC-EP members (the peace agreement gave 10 guaranteed seats to the FARC (5 in Senate and 5 in the House of Representatives);
- end of conflict by ensuring a ceasefire; the disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration (the FARC insist on the term 'reincorporation') of an estimated 7 000 fighters into civilian life; and security guarantees for FARC-EP and local communities;
- resolve the problem of illicit drugs through a national illicit crop substitution and rural development programmes, public health and consumption prevention strategies;
- address the grievances of victims through a comprehensive system of truth, transitional justice, accounting for the 'disappeared', reparations and non-repetition, including several new mechanisms/institutions under the Special Jurisdiction for Peace;
- implementation, verification and ratification.

Beyond the more technical elements, the accords in many respects are premised on a commitment to reconciliation – a hard sell in a country where the FARC-EP has been the enemy for so many years and violence has been perpetrated by a range of armed actors, including state security forces, paramilitaries, and regional elites. This is why the final agreement was a tremendous achievement crafted not only by the two negotiating teams and the international community that supported the talks, but also by the Colombian civil society that for decades pressed for a political solution. Women's organisations pushed hard for and secured two plenipotentiaries at the negotiating table. They also won a gender sub-commission to ensure that the accords would have a gendered perspective and consultations in Havana with 18 representatives of women's organisations and LGBTI organisations, as well as a dozen female ex-combatants around the world. Likewise, indigenous and Afro-descent groups were invited to the negotiating table at the last minute, to ensure that the peace accords do not exacerbate conflict in their regions or undermine collective and territorial rights. In that framework, ethnic delegations contributed to a special chapter regarding the territorial and collective rights of Afro- and indigenous groups. It was believed that the inclusion of such diverse groups – victims, women, LGBTI individuals, Afro-Colombians and indigenous people – in the negotiation process would give the accords legitimacy and make these groups active and powerful advocates for the peace accord.¹⁵⁴

The EU is named as a supporting actor in the peace agreement in three areas:

- rural development;
- reincorporation of FARC-EP members into civilian life;
- establishment of a Special Investigation Unit in the Prosecutor General's Office.

These are key areas, which as has been demonstrated throughout this study, are at the core of the Colombian conflict. The Comprehensive Rural Reform (*Reforma Rural Integral*, RRI) seeks to lay down the foundation for the transformation of rural Colombia, create the conditions to ensure the health

¹⁵⁴ Virginia M. 'Ginny' Bouvier, [Colombia Peace Deal Announced — What's Next?](#), United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 25 August 2016.

and well-being of the rural population and, in doing so, contribute to guarantee non-repetition of the conflict and the construction of a stable and long-lasting peace. The reintegration of the FARC-EP fighters is key to ending the violence (as it may push other groups to go down that road), but also for rural development (as rural areas have been the strongholds for the FARC-EP). The EU contribution to the Prosecutor General's Office is also crucial for 'positive peace'. This effort is embedded in the work on setting-up a comprehensive system for truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition, which includes the establishment of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace (*Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz*, JEP), designed to investigate and punish serious conflict-related crimes and to bring perpetrators to account.

4.2. Funding and implementing the peace agreement

The EU approach to supporting peacebuilding and the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement follows in the same steps as its support during the conflict, that is, one that favours dialogue (that can also act as leverage on the Colombian government for reform), coupled with substantial financial aid. In this context, the EU continues to raise human rights concerns in its relationship with Colombia and push for important reforms (the law on victims) and the respect of rights and liberties (land restitution). Since the signature of the Colombian peace agreement, the EU has reaffirmed its support to peacebuilding through the overall support package of almost €600 million.¹⁵⁵ This includes the EU's bilateral cooperation programme (€67 million for the 2014-2017 period), the EU Trust Fund for Colombia (approximately €95 million), funds from the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (€28 million) and loans from the European Investment Bank (€400 million).¹⁵⁶ Moreover, because of the migration crisis in Venezuela, the EU has also made approximately €55 million available in 2019 for emergency humanitarian interventions in neighbouring areas, for medium- and longer-term action. These funds can be used for conflict prevention in border areas and for integrating migrants in host communities in neighbouring countries. Colombia has also benefited from a number of these measures.¹⁵⁷ (See Chapter 6.)

Following a request from the Colombian government, the EU and its Member States confirmed their willingness to set up an EU Trust Fund (EUTF) in support of the peace process in Colombia at the highest level during the EU-CELAC Summit of 2015. The establishment of the EUTF per se sends a strong message of EU commitment. The EUTF seeks to enable effective and coordinated EU contribution to the implementation of the peace agreement, linking relief, rehabilitation and development activities for a more focused and joined-up response to Colombia's post-conflict needs and peacebuilding efforts. In an effort to help Colombia secure a stable and lasting peace and as envisaged in the Fund's Establishment Agreement,¹⁵⁸ this EUTF primarily focuses on rebuilding the social and economic fabric of the country, in particular at local level, with a focus on the most-affected rural areas, which are those that have suffered the most from illegal activities and violence. The pooling together of resources from different donors to enable a quick, flexible, and collective

¹⁵⁵ European External Action Service, [EU-Colombia relations, factsheet](#), 20 May 2018.

¹⁵⁶ European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission, EU funding for post-conflict Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-008846-16, 1 March 2017.

¹⁵⁷ European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the European Commission, Migration crisis in Colombia](#), Question from Monika Beňová (S&D) to the European Commission for written answer E-006077-18, 27 February 2019.

¹⁵⁸ European Commission, [Agreement establishing the European Union Trust Fund for Colombia, and its internal rules](#), 16 December 2016.

EU response was signed on 12 December 2016 and launched two years later, on 12 December 2018.¹⁵⁹

The EU Trust Fund is part of the Colombia in Peace Fund (*Fondo Colombia en Paz*), which also includes funds from the UN, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (with a combined allocation of almost US\$280 million), to which the resources from Colombia's general national budget are added as the fifth source.¹⁶⁰ When it comes the level of contributions of participating partners, 85 % of investment comes from the Colombian state through different channels. International contributions, which encompass the EUTF, account for almost 9 %, while private contributions make up just over 6 %.¹⁶¹ The EUTF is set to have close to €96.4 million at its disposal, from the EU budget and contributions from 19 EU Member States (Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom). Additional contributions could be made in the future.¹⁶² In accordance with the Constitutive Agreement of the Fund, only the Member States that are donors to the EUFT, the Colombian government or the European Commission (in charge of its management) can submit projects.¹⁶³ Potential actions are presented to the operational meeting for approval, but can be vetoed by the Colombian government.¹⁶⁴

In that context, projects operated either by the European Commission or its Member States have been launched in 11 departments, that concern 51 municipalities, including 25 municipalities receiving Development Programmes with a Territorial Focus (*Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial*, PDET) and 26 Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (*Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación*, ETCRs, or reincorporation spaces).¹⁶⁵ (See Figure 5.) These projects tackle, among other areas: territorial development through social innovation; preparation of a strategy for social and economic reincorporation for reconciliation; strengthening of local development and organisations supporting the social economy; support for the drafting of strategies on ecological restoration; capacity-building for psychosocial support; peace studies; and sustainable rural development.¹⁶⁶ Access to the EUTF is not conditional on reducing the presence of armed groups.

¹⁵⁹ See, [EU Trust Fund for Colombia](#), Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission (accessed on 23 March 2019).

¹⁶⁰ Government of Colombia, [Ya están en marcha iniciativas de desarrollo para financiar con Fondo Fiduciario europeo para el posconflicto: Presidente Santos](#), Press release, Presidency of the Republic, 12 December 2016.

¹⁶¹ Isabel Alvarez et al., Implementation of the Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru: Ex-Post Evaluation, in Anna Zygierewicz, [Trade agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru: European Implementation Assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, July 2018, p. 84.

¹⁶² European Commission, [EU Trust Fund for Colombia](#), 28 January 2019.

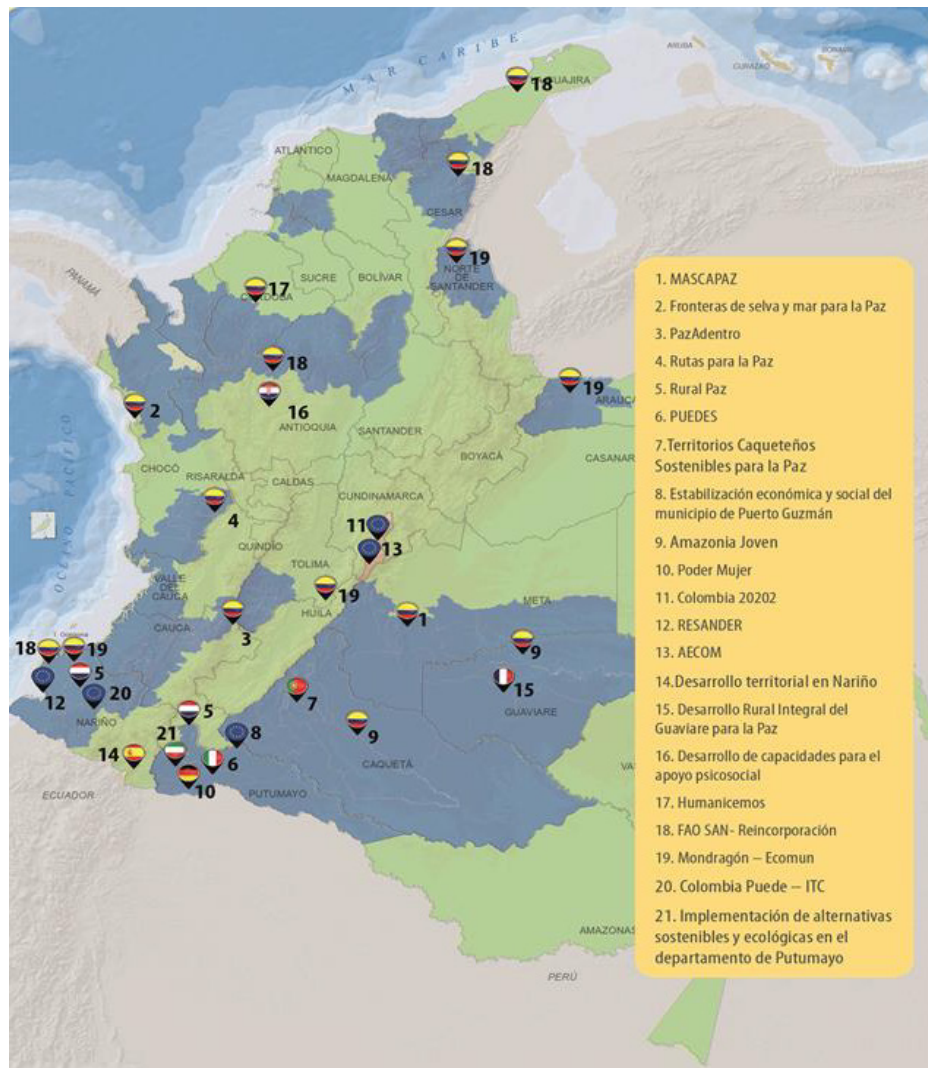
¹⁶³ European Commission, [Operational Criteria for the Submission of Proposals to the EU Trust Fund for Colombia](#), 17 May 2017.

¹⁶⁴ Sergio Carrera et al., [Oversight and Management of the EU Trust Funds: Democratic Accountability Challenges and Promising Practices](#), Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs, Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union, European Parliament, May 2018.

¹⁶⁵ European Commission, [EU Trust Fund for Colombia projects: State of Play](#), Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 30 November 2018.

¹⁶⁶ European Commission, [EUTF Colombia Projects](#), Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 29 January 2019.

Figure 5 – Areas where the EU Trust Fund for Colombia is being implemented



Source: [EU Trust Fund for Colombia projects: State of Play](#), Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission, 30 November 2018.

The EU Delegation to Colombia works closely with the Colombian government, the FARC, and the international community, to support the implementation of the agreement, in particular in the areas where the EU has a special role. On rural reform, the EU cooperates closely with the other actors nominated to support this point (the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, Vía Campesina and UNDP).¹⁶⁷ In that context, and in line with Colombia's National Development Plan 2014-2018, EU programmes implemented to enhance the capacity for applying the comprehensive rural reform have included, 'Transformation of the countryside', 'Green growth' and 'Territorial competitiveness' (a total sum of €119 million). Through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the EU supports the reception, medical and psychosocial assistance, and reincorporation of child ex-combatants and minors released by the FARC-EP, with the help of the United Nations Children's

¹⁶⁷ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR — Failure to implement the peace agreements in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Javier Couso Permyu (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-002295-18, 12 July 2018.

Fund (UNICEF) and Plan International.¹⁶⁸ The EU is also beginning a project to provide technical support to the new Special Investigation Unit in the Prosecutor's Office for the dismantling of organised crime and the protection of human rights defenders. It does so by monitoring the situation facing human rights defenders, and by strengthening the Prosecutor's Office capacity to charge, bring to justice and convict those responsible for attacks on and for killing human rights defenders. In addition, support is being provided to the Truth Commission (€4.5 million) and to the new Search Unit (€3.2 million), to support and enhance victims' participation.¹⁶⁹ The EU will also contribute to supporting human rights monitoring by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and to Colombia's Ombudsman's Office to strengthen human rights monitoring capacity, including regarding attacks on human rights defenders and social leaders.¹⁷⁰ The EU works jointly with civil society organisations and international partners, such as the UN Verification Mission, the Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (*Misión de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz en Colombia*) of the Organization of American States (MAPP/OAS), and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, to offer input for the Colombian government in the design and implementation of a public policy to better protect human rights defenders.¹⁷¹

The EU has emphasised results-oriented policies and measures that have a tangible impact. In particular, the EUTF has set 13 projects in motion, with a strong reincorporation component that will touch 60 municipalities. The EUTF has put a specific monitoring mechanism, evaluation and audit procedures in place to ensure efficient implementation of the projects. Other support measures funded under the IcSP also place emphasis on monitoring and results, in particular those benefitting the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana, USA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Ombudsman's Office, and the Special Unit of the General Prosecutor's Office to Fight Organised Crime.¹⁷² According to the 2017 report of the Management Board of the EUTF, during the first year of operation of the fund, internal control systems functioned effectively and provided sufficient assurance concerning the legality and regularity of operations.¹⁷³ The EU Trust Fund has shown progress on:

- Donor coordination: the Colombian government is an active partner of this EUTF, and to facilitate its involvement, the EUTF for Colombia Operational Committee meetings take place in Bogota. This Operational Committee has de facto become the coordination forum among EU Member States for shared matters linked to the peace process and to coordinate with other international trust funds.

¹⁶⁸ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR – International support by the EU for the peace agreements between the Government and FARC-EP \(the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army\) in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission by Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL), Estefanía Torres Martínez (GUE/NGL), Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) and Xabier Benito Ziluaga (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-003813-17, 8 September 2017.

¹⁶⁹ Information shared by the EU Delegation to Colombia, Bogota, 16 April 2019.

¹⁷⁰ European Commission, [Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini, European Commission, Protection of human rights defenders](#), Question to the European Commission from Monika Beňová (S&D) for written answer E-003396-18, 28 August 2018.

¹⁷¹ European Commission, [Reply, Political persecution of Huber Ballesteros](#), Question to the Council from João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-005879-18, 11 February 2019.

¹⁷² European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR – Delay in dismantling paramilitary structures in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Javier Couso Permyu (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-007729-17, 29 March 2018.

¹⁷³ European Commission, [2017 First Annual/AOSD Report to the Management Board](#), EU Trust Fund for Colombia, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 25 July 2018, p. 15.

- Flexibility: at the request of the Colombian government, and given the difficulties in the reintegration process of the ex-FARC-EP fighters, the EU Trust Fund is able to adjust its strategy in a matter of weeks to react to changing circumstances.
- Visibility: The EUFT has become a very visible instrument, ideal to highlight the efforts undertaken jointly by the Colombian government and the EU, showing the EU institutions and its Member States acting in a concerted and unified way.

Even if it is too early for tangible results under the different projects, some preliminary results are available on ongoing projects (worth €11 million) that focus on integrated rural development in four of the most conflict-affected areas of Colombia (Meta, Cauca, Choco, Valle del Cauca):

- 7 000 families in 17 municipalities are involved in processes of income generation and productive projects. Such issues as cooperatives, food security, commercialisation and access to financial assets are addressed.
- Peacebuilding initiatives have been strengthened among farmers, indigenous and afro-descendant communities, involving over 20 000 inhabitants.
- Environmental protection and recuperation of marine ecosystems in 13 municipalities (departments of Chocó, Valle and Cauca) has been addressed.¹⁷⁴

4.3. Current Colombian government approach

During his presidential campaign, Colombia's President-elect, Iván Duque, promised to 'modify' – but not abrogate – the historic peace deal with the FARC-EP.¹⁷⁵ His political party, the Democratic Centre, and its leader, former President Álvaro Uribe, were vociferous opponents of the peace accords and mobilised a wafer-thin majority to defeat a 2016 referendum on the peace deal. Many Colombians remain dissatisfied with the leniency that FARC-EP members received under the accords, especially avoiding jail sentences, and provisions allowing the guerrilla group to transform itself into a political party (former FARC-EP military commanders are now top party politicians).¹⁷⁶ Many were also opposed to the peace process, as FARC-EP were considered dramatically weakened under the hawkish Uribe government from 2002 to 2010. Nonetheless, the peace agreement with FARC-EP appears to be holding: despite growing disillusionment on both sides. For the first time in more than 50 years, the May 2018 elections were held in peace, and Colombians were relieved to be able to cast their vote in relative security after the signature of the peace agreement, now being implemented.¹⁷⁷

Until recently, negotiations were under way with the National Liberation Army (ELN), which had declared a ceasefire before and after the elections. Peace talks between the Colombian government and the ELN that began in Quito in February 2017, have suffered interruptions because of ELN violence. The talks resumed in Havana, Cuba (also a guarantor with Norway, Chile, Brazil and Venezuela). At the end of the 6th round of talks on 1 August 2018, the parties announced they had failed to reach a bilateral ceasefire. The ELN negotiation team remained in Havana. President Duque refused to resume talks until the ELN released all kidnapped victims, and ended all talks in January

¹⁷⁴ Sergio Carrera et al., [Oversight and Management of the EU Trust Funds: Democratic Accountability Challenges and Promising Practices](#), Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs, Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union, European Parliament, May 2018, p. 82.

¹⁷⁵ Yamid Amat, ["No acabaré con los acuerdos, pero sí haré modificaciones": Duque](#), *El Tiempo*, 2 June 2018.

¹⁷⁶ Ted Piccone, *The Geopolitics of China's Rise in Latin America*, Order from Chaos: Geoeconomics and Global Issues Paper 2, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, November 2016.

¹⁷⁷ For further information on the latest elections in Colombia, see Enrique Gómez Ramírez, [2018 elections in Colombia: A test for peace?](#), ERPS, European Parliament, May 2018.

2019, following ELN attacks against and killings at a Police Academy, in Bogota.¹⁷⁸ The EU continues to list the ELN as a 'terrorist organisation' and will not consider removing it from the terrorist list until it concludes a peace agreement with the Colombian government and disarms.

The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (*Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz*, JEP), also known as the peace court, and the Truth Commission and the Missing Persons Unit represent cornerstones of the peace agreement. The JEP now has 800 staff and is due to start delivering judgments later this year. In its first case relating to FARC-EP kidnapping, the JEP has registered 8 000 victims and has heard over 4 000 witnesses. However, it has come under sustained political criticism, which appears intended to question the JEP's independence and to weaken its authority. The EU has been consistent in supporting the JEP's independence and for it to be allowed to carry out its mandate. President Duque has objected to 6 out of 159 articles in the JEP Statutory Law, which provides the legal underpinning for its judges' decisions. Duque has also objected to a proposal for constitutional reform. The objections were rejected in Congress and are now awaiting to go through the Senate. The international community has advocated for the adoption of the Statutory Law as soon as possible, to ensure a strong and independent JEP. This issue is crucial, as the JEP must decide very soon whether FARC leader, Jesús Santrich, can be extradited to the United States for drug trafficking. The case of this reintegrated FARC-EP leader, who has been unable to take up his seat in Congress, has forced other ex-FARC-EP leaders into hiding.

Regarding the substitution of illegal crops, the previous Colombian government, under significant pressure to reduce the coca crop, intensified work on voluntary substitution programmes, which are slower to negotiate and implement. This placed the army and police in confrontation with local communities, who in turn are under threat from armed groups. The current Duque government has said it will honour voluntary substitution agreements already signed. It has announced a comprehensive approach to illegal crop cultivation, including forced eradication and fumigation.¹⁷⁹

The European Commission's position on the approach of the Duque government has been that although 'the new administration wants to revisit some key provisions of the agreement, the EU notes overall positive messages as regards the continuation peace process and very good engagement with the international community of the new administration both inside and outside of Colombia'. It states that the EU continues its engagement under the administration of President Duque, since the implementation of the peace agreement is continuing – while risks persist – and 'the process is mostly on track'.¹⁸⁰ A study of the measures announced by the Chancellery of Colombia as having been taken shows that the current government is implementing the final peace agreement.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Stephanie Nolen, '[Colombia at odds with Cuba over extradition of leftist group leaders](#)', *The Globe and Mail*, 28 April 2019.

¹⁷⁹ Information received from the EU Delegation to Colombia, in Bogota, 16 April 2019.

¹⁸⁰ European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the European Commission, VP/HR — Changes to the Colombian peace agreement by the Colombian Government](#), Question to the European Commission Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL), Ana Miranda (Greens/EFA) and Estefanía Torres Martínez (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-000509-19, 18 April 2019.

¹⁸¹ Government of Colombia, [Implementación del Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto. Un compromiso con acciones](#), Chancellery of Colombia, Bogota, 11 March 2019.

5. Assessing the implementation of the peace agreement

Under the terms of the Colombian peace accord, the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies has primary responsibility for technical verification and monitoring of implementation of this peace deal. Using the Peace Accords Matrix (PAM), this university-based research centre aims to measure the implementation of a peace accord in real time.¹⁸² According to this methodology, Colombia receives high marks on the short-term objectives. In parallel, however, other think tanks, international organisations, human rights organisations and NGOs have also been monitoring and assessing the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement. Using data provided by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies but triangulating it with other sources, this chapter analyses the degree to which the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement is advancing and identifies the key persisting challenges facing Colombia.

Overall, the results of the implementation of the peace accord in Colombia have so far been mixed and have led to frustration among the population.¹⁸³ As with other peace processes, the short-term priority objectives have been to end direct hostilities, build confidence, create verification and dispute resolution mechanisms, and establish the institutional and legal prerequisites for implementation. Mid-term objectives involve primary electoral reforms that should be implemented before the first post-conflict election. Long-term implementation objectives mainly deal with truth and reconciliation and alleviating root causes of conflict.¹⁸⁴ According to the Kroc Institute's latest monitoring report of the Colombian peace agreement, two thirds of the commitments are in progress or have been implemented, which is a comparable level of implementation to other peace agreements across the world. This means that as of February 2019, 23 % of the stipulations in the Colombian Final Accord had been fully implemented, 12 % had reached an intermediate implementation level, and 34 % had been minimally implemented. Of the commitments in the accord, 31 % have not been initiated.¹⁸⁵ It should be noted, however, that according to the Implementation Framework Plan (that includes timelines of up to 15 years for the fulfilment of elements of the final agreement), and the sequential logic of implementation, a subgroup of these commitments that have not been initiated (approximately 5 %) are scheduled to begin in 2019 or later.¹⁸⁶

5.1. Disarmament, but continued insecurity

The 2017 annual report on the implementation of the EU Trust Fund noted that there were several notable achievements in early implementation, including the disarmament and demobilisation of FARC-EP as a guerrilla group and its transition to a political party. The disarmament of FARC-EP was overseen by an innovative tripartite Mechanism for Monitoring and Verification (MMV), which consisted of the UN, Colombian military and FARC-EP members, and which concluded its work in

¹⁸² The [Peace Accords Matrix Project](#) tracks the implementation of 51 different types of provisions, including: Ceasefire, Decentralization/Federalism, Constitutional Reform, Military Reform, Media Reform, and Verification Mechanism. In this context, the methodology codifies the 300-page Colombian peace agreement into 558 actionable items clustered under 74 subthemes and 18 themes.

¹⁸³ Steve Hege, [Will Colombia's 2018 Elections Imperil Peace?](#), United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 13 April 2018.

¹⁸⁴ Madhav Joshi and Jason Quinn, [Implementation Progress in the Colombian Final Accord](#), *Peace Accords*, 11 October 2017.

¹⁸⁵ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [Actualización: Informe 3 del Instituto Kroc Hacia una paz de calidad en Colombia](#), Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, IN, February 2019.

¹⁸⁶ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement, Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, IN, 9 August 2018.

August 2017. Some 6 900 FARC-EP members were relocated to the 20 Transitional Local Zones for Normalization and six Transitional Local Points for Normalisation. In practice, FARC-EP combatants surrendered 7 132 arms to the UN verification mission – more per demobilised member than in any other previous disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration process in the world. After the FARC-EP completed their weapons handover in June 2016, the UN Mission in Colombia worked to extract weapons and explosives located in 779 hiding spots with the help of FARC-EP members and the police.¹⁸⁷

The UN Security Council approved the mandate for a second UN mission, launched on 26 September 2017, which was renewed for another year. This second mission's mandate is to verify commitments on FARC-EP's reincorporation, security of the demobilised guerrilla and the security and protection of local communities. The demobilisation zones were converted into areas for the training and reincorporation of ex-FARC-EP members.¹⁸⁸ Equally, the implementation report of the Kroc Institute for the period from December 2016 to August 2017, notes significant progress in short-term objectives such as establishing a bilateral ceasefire, laying down of arms, and setting-up verification mechanisms. 'Of the 35 stipulations in Theme 7 (Cessation of hostilities and laying down of arms), 89 % have been fully implemented, and 9 % are intermediate, meaning they are on track to be fully implemented'.¹⁸⁹

Colombia recorded improvements across a broad range of indicators in the safety and security domain, including violent demonstrations, the political terror scale, political instability and the incarceration rate. However, severe challenges remain, with Colombia scoring four out of a possible five on perceptions of criminality, access to small arms and intensity of violent crime, and five out of five on the homicide rate and refugees and IDPs.¹⁹⁰ Perceptions of citizen security have also deteriorated: the share of people who perceived citizen security as being good or very good decreased from 23 % to 16.6 % between 2010 and 2015.¹⁹¹ As recently as April 2019, 75 Colombian civil society organisation representatives, meeting in Brussels to exchange on an action plan for Europe, the United States and Colombia for the next three years, denounced the current Colombian government's 'failing in the application of the peace accord' because insufficient resources have been allocated. They held that this, and the lack of government support for the transitional justice system, have hindered the effective peaceful demobilisation of the FARC-EP. The activists also called on the European Parliament to make political 'statements on the critical situation of human rights in Colombia'.¹⁹²

As Figure 6 illustrates, territories in Colombia still face a context of increasing violence against and killings of social leaders and human rights defenders, particularly in rural areas. The Kroc Institute's monitoring report on the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement notes that 'various armed groups, criminal gangs, successors of paramilitary groups, the ELN and dissident elements of

¹⁸⁷ Bruce Bagley, [The Colombian peace process under duress](#), *News@TheU*, University of Miami, Miami, FL, January 2019.

¹⁸⁸ European Commission, [2017 First Annual/AOSD Report to the Management Board](#), EU Trust Fund for Colombia, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 25 July 2018, pp. 3-4.

¹⁸⁹ Madhav Joshi and Jason Quinn, [Implementation Progress in the Colombian Final Accord](#), *Peace Accords*, 11 October 2017.

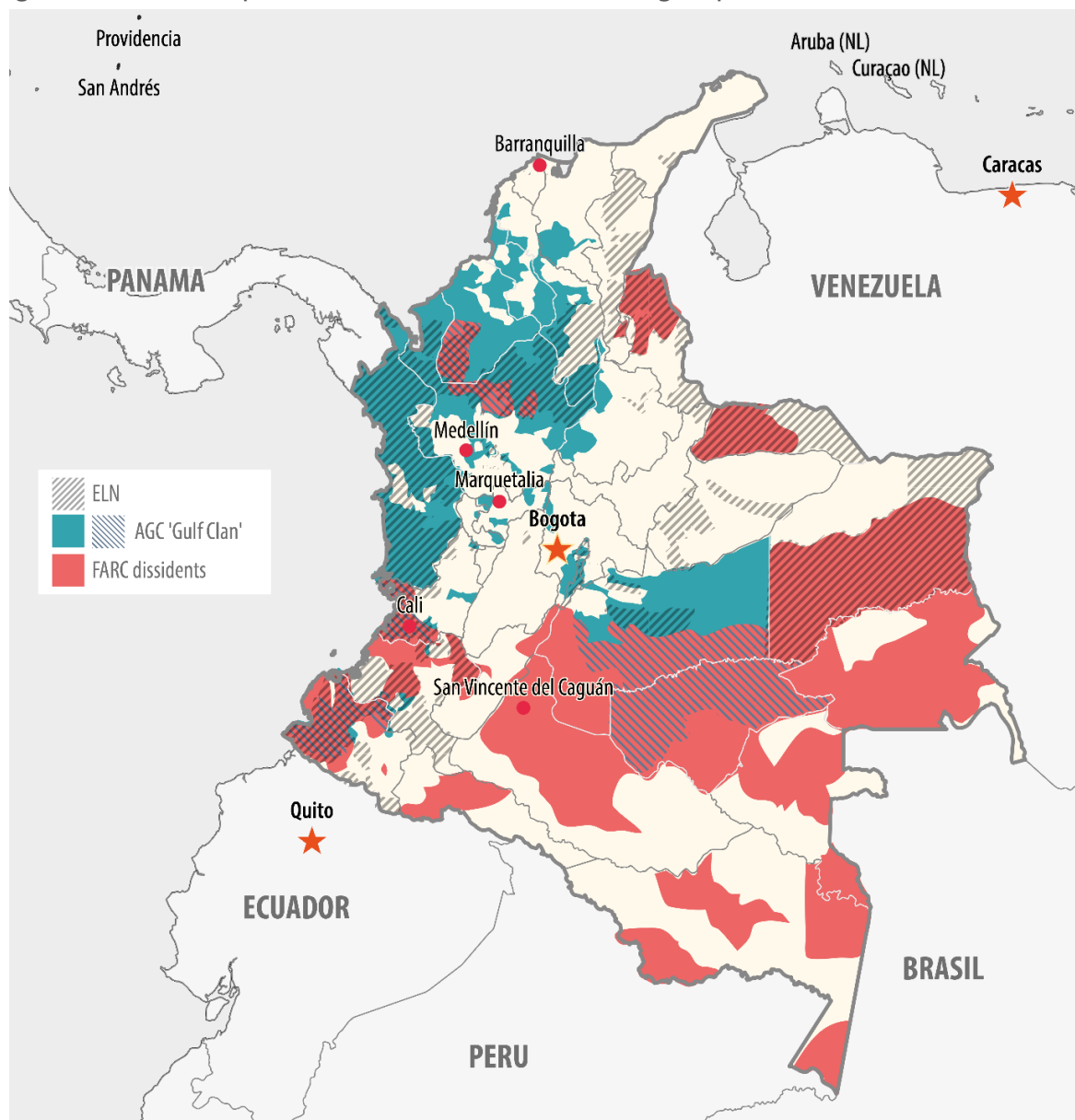
¹⁹⁰ Institute for Economics & Peace, [Global Peace Index 2018: Measuring Peace in a Complex World](#), Sydney, June 2018, p. 17.

¹⁹¹ OECD, [Latin American Economic Outlook 2018: Rethinking Institutions for Development](#), OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018, p. 234.

¹⁹² 'UE COLOMBIA (Entrevista) Organizaciones denuncian en Bruselas que Colombia falla en aplicar la paz', Agencia EFE, 6 April 2019.

FARC-EP are fighting for control of drug trafficking and other illicit economies'.¹⁹³ This also echoes statements by other Colombian CSOs. For instance, the Latin American Association of Development Promotion Organizations (ALOP) has denounced the escalation of violence against social leaders, arguing that this violence is sponsored by anti-peace political and economic factions whose own interests may suffer.¹⁹⁴ These observations are in line with the concerning human and labour rights assessment analysed earlier in this study, linked to the period preceding the signature of the peace agreement.

Figure 6 – Areas of operation of the three main armed groups active in Colombia in 2018



Source: EPRS with data from the Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz (INDEPAZ), ['Illegal armed groups' activity in Colombia \(maps\)](#), Colombia Reports: Data, 15 March 2019.

¹⁹³ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement: Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, August 2018.

¹⁹⁴ ['ALOP por la Paz de Colombia'](#), Agencia de Prensa IPC, 28 November 2016.

Some FARC-EP combatants have not accepted the terms of the final agreement or have refused to demobilise. Those FARC-EP members, especially key commanders, suspected of war crimes are presently waiting for their cases to be processed by transitional courts, which have moved very slowly. Most rank-and-file FARC-EP fighters had already been granted amnesty by August 2018. Nonetheless, there were clear signs in late 2017 and early 2018 of dissidence among at least six FARC-EP fronts and their commanders, especially in coca-growing regions. 'Evidence from Colombia's previous armed group demobilisations suggests that a 15 % to 20 % FARC recidivism rate over the first five years of the accord's implementation is entirely predictable'.¹⁹⁵ In the absence of FARC as an authority after the 2016 peace deal, however, the government has failed to fill the power vacuum that has emerged in rural Colombia. Today, those areas are largely contested by remaining guerrillas such as the Popular Liberation Army (EPL) and the ELN, now Colombia's biggest guerrilla group, which operates out of Venezuela and projects into Colombia through the Catatumbo region (in Norte de Santander). (See Annex II: Map of Colombia). Nevertheless, none of these groups has been able to establish control in the same way as FARC-EP.¹⁹⁶ Figure 6 only maps out the three largest armed groups in Colombia, and thus does not take account of the actions of Puntilleros, EPL (also known as Pelusos), Caparrapos, Oficina de Envigado, La Constru, Los Pachelly, Libertadores del Nordeste Presente (LDNP), and La Cordillera. Admittedly, this map cannot illustrate the complexity of these actions, as some of these armed groups fight each other and do not necessarily have aligned strategies.¹⁹⁷ In addition, the level of violence should not be construed as an absence of state institutions in all of these areas.

Before signing the agreement, the FARC-EP was 'heavily reliant on coca/cocaine-related income', as reported by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC).¹⁹⁸ The FARC-EP agreed to ensure protection of laboratories, crops and farms used by the drug cartels in exchange for a right to tax producers and traffickers of illicit crops (coca and marijuana) working in their territory. Thus, Colombia's cartels were able to operate with impunity, especially in southern Colombia. During the first years of the deal's implementation, significant problems have emerged, with organised crime and terrorist networks expanding to rural areas and violence rising. The fear is that if the government does not adopt an effective anti-trafficking strategy, it is quite probable that demobilised FARC-EP members will be recruited by Colombian and Mexican drug cartels. According to Castilla, Colombia's drug trafficking problem would not only affect the country and its neighbours (Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela and Brazil), but could also affect European interests. 'The country's drug cartels move massive quantities of cocaine to Europe, which in turn feeds a cycle of illicit activities – human trafficking, arms smuggling, etc.'¹⁹⁹

Equally, according to UNODC, 'traditional, territorial-based criminal groups have evolved or have been partially replaced by smaller and more flexible networks with branches across several jurisdictions, across the world, including in Colombia'.²⁰⁰ Former members of the most important left-wing guerrilla movements, paramilitary groups and drug cartels have established or joined new criminal groups, namely the Gulf Clan (Clan del Golfo), the EPL, the Meta Bloc (Bloque Meta, BM),

¹⁹⁵ Bruce Bagley, [The Colombian peace process under duress](#), *News@TheU*, University of Miami, Miami, FL, January 2019.

¹⁹⁶ Joshua Zakharov, [A Long Way from Havana: The Colombian Peace Process Stumbles](#), The Fund for Peace, Washington DC, 17 August 2018.

¹⁹⁷ See, ['Illegal armed groups' activity in Colombia \(maps\)](#), *Colombia Reports: Data*, 15 March 2019.

¹⁹⁸ United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), [World Drug Report 2017. Vol. 5: The Drug Problem and Organized Crime, Illicit Financial Flows, Corruption and Terrorism](#), New York, United Nations, May 2017, p. 37. See Annex II: Map of Colombia.

¹⁹⁹ César Castilla, [Building Enduring Peace in Colombia: How the EU Can Help](#), Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, October 2018, p. 14.

²⁰⁰ See the UNODC website: [Organised Crime](#).

and the Liberators of Vichada (Libertadores del Vichada).²⁰¹ These groups have an interest in drug trafficking, illicit mining and illegal logging. Equally, one of the most significant criminal groups along the Colombian-Ecuadorian border is the Frente Oliver Sinesterra, which counts former FARC-EP rebels who refused to demobilise among its members. In consequence, some regions in Colombia are marred by, among other things, violence, extortion, threats, mass displacements and selective killings, as these groups compete for control of territory.²⁰²

5.2. Political capacity-building but human rights violations

The Economist Intelligent Unit has classified Colombia as a 'flawed democracy' (ranked 51st out of 167) based on an analysis of its electoral process and pluralism, the functioning of its government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties.²⁰³ Equally, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), approximately 86 % of Colombians perceived corruption as being widespread in the country in 2016. This represents an increase of 13 % compared to 2006, placing Colombia above the regional average of 79 %. Likewise, the share of the population that expressed confidence in the national government fell from 48 % to 26 % over the same period. Only 25 % of Colombians expressed trust in the country's courts in 2016.²⁰⁴ Nonetheless, the presidential elections in May 2018 were conducted calmly and despite populist candidates running for office, mainstream candidates were ultimately successful. In fact, fear of populism is thought to have increased engagement and voter turnout, which significantly boosted Colombia's overall score for political participation, placing it just above the global average and ahead of other emerging regions.²⁰⁵ The indicators of the Institute for Economics & Peace go in the same direction: democratic political culture in Colombia improved by 8.7 % since 2012 and, in 2018, the country progresses across a broad range of indicators in the safety and security field, including violent demonstrations, political terror, political instability and the incarceration rate.²⁰⁶

The FARC-EP launched its political party on 1 September 2017, thereby confirming its commitment to politics by peaceful means. The party is called the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (Common Alternative Revolutionary Force), thus keeping the same acronym – FARC. The Colombian National Electoral Council ruled that the FARC had full authorisation to participate in the May 2018 presidential elections. The party announced that their leader, Timoleon Jimenez (alias Timochenko), would be their candidate, but he withdrew due to illness. Although the FARC registered low votes, not winning a seat in their own right, the party still benefits from five seats in each house because of the peace agreement.²⁰⁷ In recognition of its political transition, the Council of the EU suspended the application of EU restrictive measures against the FARC on 27 September 2016 (the day of the

²⁰¹ Adriaan Alsema, '[Colombia's most important post-FARC drug trafficking groups](#)', *Colombia Reports*, 8 February 2017.

²⁰² César Castilla, '[Building Enduring Peace in Colombia: How the EU Can Help](#)', Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, October 2018, p. 7.

²⁰³ Of Colombia's immediate neighbours, only Panama and Brazil ranked better: 45th and 50th respectively. To put this ranking into perspective, it should be noted that the United States, France, Belgium and Italy, to name a few, have also been classified as 'flawed democracies'.

²⁰⁴ OECD, '[Latin American Economic Outlook 2018: Rethinking Institutions for Development](#)', OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018, p. 234.

²⁰⁵ '[Democracy Index 2018: Me Too? Political Participation, Protest and Democracy](#)', The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019.

²⁰⁶ Institute for Economics & Peace, '[Global Peace Index 2018: Measuring Peace in a Complex World](#)', Sydney, June 2018, pp. 17, 68.

²⁰⁷ Information received from the EU Delegation to Colombia, in Bogota, 16 April 2019.

signature of the peace deal)²⁰⁸ and permanently delisted the group from the EU terrorist list in November 2017.²⁰⁹

Even before the signature of the final agreement, Colombia amended the legislative framework to fight corruption and strengthen rule of law by enacting a set of regulations on this matter. The government established the National Civil Commission for Fighting Corruption in 2011, which promotes civil society participation in fighting corruption. It also created the Transparency and Anti-Corruption Observatory, an interactive tool aimed at promoting transparency and combating corruption within the government.²¹⁰ In 2015, the Colombian government published the National Human Rights Action Plan, with huge potential positive implications for labour and trade union rights. With that, it agreed to apply the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to implement the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' framework.²¹¹ The fact that Colombia joined the OECD in 2018, demands that the government further emphasise international commitments on sustainable development, including on human rights, and labour and trade union rights.

Nonetheless, the Kroc Institute's report identified that legislative and regulatory adjustments needed in order to promote broad participation in democratic processes are still pending. Thus, although 10 seats in Congress are currently reserved for the members of the newly-formed FARC, only eight were sworn in because one representative, Jesus Santrich, was detained after being accused by the USA of participating in a drug trafficking network, and another, Ivan Marquez, refused to take his seat in the Senate as a form of protest against the violation of the peace accords, arguing there are no judicial guarantees for the demobilised guerrillas.²¹² Even through the Transitional Justice System is up and running and hearing cases, some accuse conservative law-makers in Congress of seeking to delay the implementation of as many of the peace deal's parts as possible. When it has not been possible to delay it, some in Congress have attempted to handicap the implementation with amendments and attempts to modify the peace deal.²¹³ Equally, Colombian civil society has accused the current government of lowering the assigned 2019 budget for the Special Jurisdiction for Peace by 28 %, compared to what was planned in the peace agreement.²¹⁴ This concern is also raised in the 2018 Kroc Institute report.²¹⁵

One of the most innovative features of the Colombian final agreement was to include a series of transversal themes and criteria of an equitable character that reflect a human rights-based approach to the process of building peace. However, as the Kroc Institute's second report on the implementation of the Colombian peace accord explains, guarantees of security and protection for

²⁰⁸ Council of the EU, [Colombia: EU suspends sanctions against the FARC](#), Press release, 27 September 2016.

²⁰⁹ European Commission, [2017 First Annual/AOSD Report to the Management Board](#), EU Trust Fund for Colombia, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 25 July 2018, p. 3.

²¹⁰ OECD, [Latin American Economic Outlook 2018: Rethinking Institutions for Development](#), OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018, p. 234.

²¹¹ Isabel Alvarez et al., Implementation of the Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru: Ex-Post Evaluation, in Anna Zygierewicz, [Trade agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru: European Implementation Assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, July 2018, p. 77.

²¹² Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement: Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, August 2018.

²¹³ Joshua Zakharov, [A Long Way from Havana: The Colombian Peace Process Stumbles](#), The Fund for Peace, Washington DC, 17 August 2018.

²¹⁴ 'UE COLOMBIA (Entrevista) Organizaciones denuncian en Bruselas que Colombia falla en aplicar la paz', Agencia EFE, 6 April 2019.

²¹⁵ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement: Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, August 2018.

human rights advocates and social leaders are inadequate. Although, according to the OECD, Colombia has created local citizen's councils to make governance more inclusive and participative,²¹⁶ the Kroc Institute report emphasises the difficulties faced in implementing gender, ethnic and territorial approaches that are key features of the Colombian peace agreement.²¹⁷ There is a significant gap between the commitments with a gender perspective that have not been initiated (51 %) and the proportion of those that have not been initiated (37 %). This represents an implementation gap of 14 %.²¹⁸ Although a Special High Level Forum for the Implementation of the Gender Perspective Approach Commitments and the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been set up, important commitments with a gender perspective have not been implemented yet. They include:

- the creation of a high-level body responsible for drawing up general guidelines aimed at indicative planning for land use, which will promote efficient use of participative and decision-making spaces in the planning of rural land use and territorial management and include equal representation of men and women;
- the establishment of a new rural land legal system that encompasses mechanisms guaranteeing access to justice, 'offering legal advice and special training for women regarding their rights and access to justice, together with specific measures for overcoming barriers that constitute obstacles to the recognition and protection of women's rights over land';
- the setting up of a system of education and training and of employment and social security that will include training programmes on the protection of women and the specific risks they face;
- In the context of the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics, include information on the risks and threats against women's participation and their political, social, and community representation;
- The implementation of specialised investigation methodologies in the Investigation and Prosecution Unit for the most serious acts of victimisation undertaken, among other, against women;
- Training to prevent gender-based violence associated with illicit drugs; and
- Evidence-based harm reduction actions aimed at minimising the negative impact of drug consumption on the drug user, their families, and their communities, prioritising the most vulnerable populations, such as women.

Commitments that have been fully implemented are the confirmation of the 11 commissioners of the Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Recurrence Commission, of which five are women; an assessment with a gender-based approach that identifies obstacles faced by the most vulnerable populations, including women, in the exercise of the right to vote; and inclusion and compliance with the rules of the ceasefire and the laying down of arms.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ The most notable success of local councils has been allowing marginalised and vulnerable groups to become involved in public decision-making that directly concerns them. These include indigenous peoples, women and even children who created their own council in Colombia. See OECD, [Latin American Economic Outlook 2018: Rethinking Institutions for Development](#), OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018, p. 180.

²¹⁷ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement: Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, August 2018.

²¹⁸ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [Special Report of the Kroc Institute and the International Accompaniment Component, UN Women, Women's International Democratic Federation, and Sweden, on the Monitoring of the Gender Perspective in the Implementation of the Colombian Final Peace Accord, Special Report December 2016 - June 2018](#), Bogota, 2018, p. 6.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 18-19.

According to the Human Rights Report 2018, human rights defenders, trade unionists, journalists, indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders, and other community activists still face death threats and violence, mostly from guerrillas and successor groups. Perpetrators of these abuses are rarely held accountable. While kidnappings and other incidents involving the FARC-EP have substantially decreased, the ELN and the Gaitanista Self-defence Forces of Colombia (AGC) (also known as the 'Gulf Clan'), have continued to be involved in serious abuses against civilians, including, for example, killings, forced displacement, and child recruitment.²²⁰ As of September 2017, the Attorney General's Office was investigating more than 3 600 alleged unlawful killings from 2002 through 2008, and had achieved convictions in cases against more than 1 200 mid- and low-level soldiers, including convictions against the same individual in different cases. Authorities have largely failed, however, to prosecute senior army officers involved in the killings and instead have promoted many of them through the military ranks. For example, in 2017, the Defence Ministry proposed to promote five officers against whom there is credible evidence of involvement in 'false positives'.²²¹

5.3. Socio-economic challenges

In terms of GDP, the economic costs of violence (deaths and injuries from conflict or terrorism, and population displacement) have placed Colombia among the ten most-affected countries globally, at 8th place with 34 % of the country's GDP.²²² Nonetheless, economic freedom has improved by 8.7 % since 2012. Equally, the same source notes that Colombia made large improvements in two key indicators of 'positive peace': regional integration improved by 33.3 % and press freedom improved by 32.5 % since 2012.²²³ These statistics show that the momentum for positive change preceded the signature of the peace agreement, that the negotiations were a precursor to improvement. Similarly, important steps were taken in the reconciliation process, such as the signature by President Santos, in June 2012, of the Victims and Land Restitution Law, despite the threats and violence in the country.

The development of a strategy and concrete plans for reincorporation of the FARC-EP have advanced very slowly, however. EU leadership on this point has been most useful to respond to security and stability concerns.²²⁴ The swift decision to adjust the EU Trust Fund strategic orientations to reinforce the reincorporation aspects was a welcome and concrete step.²²⁵ The social inclusion of demobilised FARC-EP members has also faced psychological and practical challenges. This group is in general stigmatised by society, perceived as having been an enemy for decades, but now expects to be considered ordinary citizens. As of August 2017, Colombia's Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP) had recorded 11 345 FARC-EP members, out of which 8 322 were active soldiers and militiamen, 2 971 were in jail and 52 were foreigners. Little progress has been made on the idea of training demobilised FARC-EP members or providing them with basic,

²²⁰ The AGC, which is considered Colombia's largest drug trafficking organisation, has been active in approximately a fifth of the country's municipalities. The group includes an estimated 7 000 members and has been accused of being involved in organised crime activities, and political and sexual violence. See, Adriaan Alsema, '[Colombia's largest paramilitary group to demobilize "in the coming days"](#)', *Colombia Reports*, 9 July 2018.

²²¹ Human Rights Watch, [Colombia: Events of 2017](#), World Human Rights report 2018, New York, 2018.

²²² Institute for Economics & Peace, [Global Peace Index 2018: Measuring Peace in a Complex World](#), Sydney, June 2018, p. 48.

²²³ Institute for Economics & Peace, [Global Peace Index 2018: Measuring Peace in a Complex World](#), Sydney, June 2018, p. 68.

²²⁴ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement: Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, August 2018.

²²⁵ European Commission, [2017 First Annual/AOSD Report to the Management Board](#), EU Trust Fund for Colombia, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 25 July 2018, p. 3-4.

secondary or technical education, as was discussed during the peace negotiations. A case in point is Colombia's National Protection Unit, which aims to recruit 1 200 men, but has so far lagged behind this target. Another example is the National Service of Learning (SENA), set up to offer training in 'soft skills' (e.g., leadership, teamwork, responsibility, creativity, honesty) and citizenship skills (technical and technological knowledge); this initiative 'has reported few successes'.²²⁶

Another shortcoming observed in post-conflict Colombia concerns inequality in the rural areas. Latin America is one of the most unequal regions in the world, and Colombia is no exception to this trend. The problem of inequality is very old and directly related to the initial success of the FARC-EP.²²⁷ The crop substitution programme to shift farmers from coca production to formal agriculture has seriously lagged behind (by the end of 2017, only 30 % of its targets had been met). As the government destroys coca plants without offering farmers a replacement, tensions between those farmers and the government have increased dramatically. According to the Ideas for Peace Foundation, killings have spiked by 45 % in areas where the Colombian government is trying to substitute coca production for other agriculture.²²⁸ In parallel, rural development has also been insufficient, and the President Duque planned to close many of the new agencies that Santos had established to administer rural development and fold them into the Ministry of Agriculture, which has a track record of resource theft and delaying development projects. Duque also plans to shift the focus of job creation in rural areas to large-scale agribusiness (historically a poor driver of job generation), rather than small, independent farmers.²²⁹

²²⁶ César Castilla, [Building Enduring Peace in Colombia: How the EU Can Help](#), Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, October 2018, p. 9.

²²⁷ In response to government failure, in 1964, the FARC adopted the 'Revolutionary Agrarian Policy' aiming to provide technical and infrastructure support, tools and livestock for proper economic exploitation of the land. The expected result was to raise the living standards of the peasantry; eliminate unemployment, hunger, illiteracy and endemic diseases that limit people's ability to work; liquidate the concentration of land ownership; and promote the development of agricultural and industrial production in the country. See, [Programa Agrario de los Guerrilleros de las FARC-EP](#), Marquetalia, 20 July 1964.

²²⁸ Juan Carlos Garzón et al, [¿En qué va la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos? Desafíos, dilemas actuales y la urgencia de un consenso](#), Informe 06, Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP), Bogotá, April 2019.

²²⁹ Joshua Zakharov, [A Long Way from Havana: The Colombian Peace Process Stumbles](#), The Fund for Peace, Washington DC, 17 August 2018.

6. Moving forward: Options for the future

The signature and adoption of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the biggest armed rebel group in the country, the FARC-EP, in November 2016, was a historic achievement that brought an end to a long and violent conflict that has had devastating effects on a large part of the population and to a large part of the territory. The implementation of the peace agreement has advanced when assessing it quantitatively according to the implementation of the stipulations of the peace deal. However, effective and qualitative implementation has had mixed results.

While progress has been made on short-term stipulations in the peace agreement, the foundations for meeting the medium to long-term goals are lagging behind. More specifically, objectives linked to ending the conflict and establishing verification and monitoring mechanisms, as outlined in the peace agreement, have been met. The Colombian government has made efforts to implement sensitive reforms in the country, such as on a number of prioritised areas related to ending hostilities, the cantonment process, the laying down of arms, and the creation of institutional and legal mechanisms for implementation and verification. Progress in these priority areas puts the foundations for implementing the medium to long-term objectives in the months and years ahead. Nevertheless, Colombia continues to face significant security challenges, such as drug trafficking, terrorism and organised crime. Non-security problems also persist: inequality between rural and urban areas, slow progress on concrete plans for reincorporation of the FARC-EP, absence of the state in the former conflict areas, lack of necessary investment in the country's developing rural areas.

The EU has been committed to the Colombian peace process for more than two decades through its civilian means, combining diplomatic relations, trade cooperation, and financial assistance to support the Peace Laboratories and regional integration, in particular in the rural areas. Since the signature of the Colombia peace agreement, the EU has redoubled its support for the implementation of the stipulations in the peace deal, by setting up the EU Trust Fund for peace in Colombia and appointing a special envoy to give visibility to and monitor the peacebuilding process. Despite some operational difficulties, the Peace Laboratories have been a precursor to the work that needs to be done now in Colombia in view of the application of the peace deal. To ensure effective peace in Colombia, the EU will need – in a concerted effort with the international community – to focus on the main areas where peace is lagging to ensure that a regression to violence does not occur. Areas requiring international attention include:

1. The need for an inclusive peace

Involving all sectors of society and listening to their proposals – rural communities, women's organisations, and indigenous groups – will be key. These communities were instrumental in the negotiation of the final peace deal. This is in line with the latest report by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, which calls for the implementation process to increase its focus on institutional and structural transformation, with greater emphasis on social inclusion and implementation in rural territories across the country.²³⁰ For that to happen, there is a need for a regulatory and legislative framework to ensure the strengthening of policy for democratic and participatory planning, guarantees and promotion of citizen participation, and guarantees for social protest and mobilisation. The Colombian government's economic vision of major infrastructure projects, extractive industries and agro-industry not only has not included popular consultation, but

²³⁰ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement: Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, August 2018.

is determined to roll out its plans regardless of resistance. This situation weakens the government's stability and hence the potential peace.

2. Keeping the momentum for reform

Considering that peace in Colombia has not yet been consolidated, it is important to show commitment for peace by continuing to implement reforms in a consistent manner. The Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies clearly warns that a lack of viable options for the effective civilian reincorporation of ex-combatants in a context of incentives for illegality could undermine the peace process and prompt some former fighters to return to armed violence.²³¹ The latest report, published after the Duque government came to power, calls for an acceleration of the rhythm of implementation of measures in the rural regions, that guarantee the transversal focus of human rights, gender, ethnic and territorial aspects and guarantee the centrality of victims in peacebuilding efforts. The same report emphasises that comparative studies from other peace processes show that the first two years following the signature of an agreement are key in ensuring the country does not return to full-blown conflict.²³²

3. Addressing threats to security

Threats to security will require sustained concrete action in the territories, better inter-agency coordination, and continued financial commitments. Alarming humanitarian conditions exist in Chocó, Cauca, Nariño, Guaviare, Putumayo, Córdoba, Valle del Cauca (particularly Buenaventura), Antioquia (Bajo Cauca and Urabá), and Norte de Santander (Catatumbo). (See Annex II: Map of Colombia.) Experts propose the creation of strong anti-drug-trafficking structures and close intelligence networks. Policy-makers should thoroughly consider the training of Colombian police and anti-narcotics officers in Europe (and vice versa), as it could provide invaluable expertise and personal connections. Prevention is also key in the consolidation of an efficient anti-drug strategy. The latter should entail educational programmes aimed, in particular, at children and teenagers in rural areas.²³³ In parallel, fighting corruption at the national level will be key. Fostering strong, independent and effective legal institutions is critical to hinder policy capture, corruption and impunity. Accordingly, to integrate anti-corruption policies, it will be important to strengthen the internal control system within public institutions, which would help establish an integrity culture.²³⁴

A failure to resolve these problems will have negative effects on the implementation of territorial peace. To overcome the security threats in the territories it will be necessary for security forces to adopt strategies and methods of human security and community protection.²³⁵ The recently adopted National Policy for Reincorporation should be put into operation as soon as possible, so that ex-combatants and their families have a clear long-term horizon for integrating into civilian life, including access to land to build their livelihood. The absence of a robust long-term reincorporation strategy that integrates the visions and considers the special needs of ex-combatants by rank and region has made the peace process more vulnerable. Peace negotiations with the ELN should push

²³¹ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement: Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, August 2018.

²³² Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [Actualización: Informe 3 del Instituto Kroc Hacia una paz de calidad en Colombia](#), Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, IN, February 2019, p.1-3.

²³³ César Castilla, [Building Enduring Peace in Colombia: How the EU Can Help](#), Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, October 2018, p. 11.

²³⁴ OECD, OECD Integrity Review of Colombia: Investing in Integrity for Peace and Prosperity, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017.

²³⁵ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement: Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, August 2018, p. 9.

forward. This will necessitate commitment from both sides. The ELN's refusal to halt kidnappings in advance of a truce has led to suspensions of the talks on several occasions.

4. Greater emphasis on reconciliation and real transitional justice

The biggest danger would be a failure to carefully and fully carry out a broadly accepted national reconciliation. That will mean addressing the reintegration of ex-combatants in a persistent and determined manner, through a robust long-term government strategy and effective commitment to it, while in parallel tackling the concerns of victims, and providing mechanisms for transitional justice. Almost every family in Colombia has suffered some kind of loss in the conflict and the polarisation is intense. To avoid revenge and future confrontation, and cycles of violence, reconciliation with political momentum is essential. This is why the transitional justice provisions and recognition of historical memory are so important.²³⁶ In that context, security guarantees, respect for human rights and providing effective mechanisms for transparency and accountability will be necessary.²³⁷ Striking a balance between the need for national reconciliation and ensuring justice for the victims will be a particularly difficult challenge. An important feature of the Colombian peace process so far has been the participation in the JEP of representatives of civil war victims, who have courageously testified about atrocities and confronted the perpetrators of the conflict.

5. More on the respect for human rights

To ensure respect for human rights, and in particular labour and trade union rights, the Colombian government must commit to implementing the ILO Conventions in the whole territory of the country. The EU can offer to assist, under the TSD title of the EU-Colombia/Peru/Ecuador trade agreement. There also seems to be an opportunity to exploit the potential of the FTA to support the peace process in Colombia in creative ways, such as trade in goods produced by victims of the conflict, or promoting production projects in which victims and ex-combatants participate.

Referring to democratic governance, territorial governance also has implications, taking account of institutional weakness and the lack of laws, which intensify the occurrence of socio-environmental conflicts. An example could be the concessions for investments in oil or mining in territories where indigenous communities live, or to which they have a claim, in the mountains or rainforest. The EU and its Member States have a long history and experience in these issues, and could play a key role to jointly raise awareness of important good practices.²³⁸

6. Eradication of the cultivation of illicit crops in Colombia

More needs to be done to eradicate the cultivation of illegal crops, which have been at the heart of corruption, crime, violence, and trafficking in Colombia. During the last decades, the drug policy in Colombia has prioritised forced eradication of illicit crops, the reduction of drug consumption and punitive approaches, to the detriment of alternative development strategies, the reduction of risks and damages and guarantee of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. However, a joint report by a number of think tanks and prominent NGOs demonstrates the ineffectiveness of these strategies. Instead, it calls for a different policy that includes a focus on rights and public health, to

²³⁶ Virginia M. 'Ginny' Bouvier, [Colombia Peace Deal Announced — What's Next?](#), United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 25 August 2016.

²³⁷ Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement: Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, August 2018.

²³⁸ Isabel Alvarez et al., Implementation of the Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru: Ex-Post Evaluation, in Anna Zygierewicz, [Trade agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru: European Implementation Assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, July 2018, pp. 92-93.

contribute to the debates at international level on the way in which the problems related to illegal substances can be addressed.²³⁹

Addressing security concerns linked to the ELN is also important because this armed group has rapidly moved to replace the FARC-EP as one of the key actors in Colombia's continuously expanding illicit drug trade and has also seized control of lucrative illegal gold mining operations in various rural areas.²⁴⁰ Critics of the Colombian peace agreement and of former President Santos go as far as to argue that the agreement has 'led to a re-emergence of powerful drug traffickers' and could derail the US-Colombia relationship.²⁴¹ Implementation successes in this priority area could 'attract tremendous foreign investments that would significantly transform the Colombian economy'.²⁴²

7. Tackling the implications of the Venezuelan crisis

The growing authoritarianism of the Venezuelan government and the humanitarian crisis in the country have led to massive migration flows and could constitute a serious burden on Colombia's fragile peace. As of February 2019, Colombia hosted the highest number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, a total of over 1.1 million.²⁴³ This situation is particularly serious on the Colombian border, which 4 000 Venezuelans cross every day in search of food and medicine, for refuge within the country, or on their journey to another part of the continent.²⁴⁴ This migration phenomenon has created a humanitarian emergency and has led the Colombian government to request, for the first time, international assistance in responding to the crisis. Providing basic services is essential, as is ensuring that criminal groups, and particularly the ELN that has not agreed to a peace deal with the government, do not gain further influence in the border regions.²⁴⁵

In March 2018, EU Commissioner Stylianides visited the country to announce that new funds would be assigned to help persons affected by the crisis. In June 2018, the EU decided to step up its assistance to address humanitarian needs inside Venezuela and to respond to the challenges faced by Venezuelan migrants and their host communities in neighbouring countries with a total amount of €35.1 million. This humanitarian aid includes:

- science, research, innovation and technology;
- €5 million in the form of humanitarian relief to affected populations, including around €1.5 million for short-term humanitarian aid, mainly for life-saving assistance (water and sanitation for health, shelter, food and nutrition, health, protection), including in Colombia;
- €18.1 million allocated to longer-term resilience-building actions in Venezuela and in neighbouring host countries, including a regional project of €6 million with UN Habitat,

²³⁹ DDHH Elementa, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung-FESCOL, Dejusticia, CCDI Global, Centro de Pensamiento y Acción para la Transición (CPAT), Sisma Mujer, Transnational Institute (TNI), Humanas Colombia, TEMBLORES, and Temeride, [La experiencia de Colombia en materia de política de drogas en la última década](#), Informe sombra de la Coalición Acciones por el Cambio 62 periodo de sesiones de la Comisión de Estupefacientes de Naciones Unidas(CND), Vienna, March 2019.

²⁴⁰ Bruce Bagley, [The Colombian peace process under duress](#), *News@TheU*, University of Miami, Miami, FL, January 2019.

²⁴¹ Richard G. Miles, [Elephants in the Room: Does Trump Have a Plan for Colombia?](#), *Foreign Policy*, 27 April 2017.

²⁴² Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [Second Kroc Institute Report Shows Steady Progress of Peace Accord Implementation in Colombia](#), Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, IN, 9 August 2018.

²⁴³ [Migrant and Refugee Venezuelan Crisis: IOM Regional Response Overview](#), Reporting Period: April 2018-February 2019.

²⁴⁴ Megan Janetsky, [Here's Why Colombia Opened Its Arms to Venezuelan Migrants—Until Now](#), *Foreign Policy*, 14 January 2019.

²⁴⁵ Information received from the EU Delegation to Colombia, in Bogota, 16 April 2019.

- the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and International Organization for Migration in support of the most affected neighbouring countries, including Ecuador and Peru;
- €5 million to support the socioeconomic integration of migrants in Colombia and Brazil including actions aiming at reducing local tensions and violence towards displaced Venezuelans.

An additional €7 million are currently being mobilised for other short-term relief needs.²⁴⁶ Colombian experts have expressed their concern regarding the future implications for Colombia of what they perceive to be a permissive attitude by the Colombian government to allow the United States to use Colombian territory for military operations against Venezuela. They explained that a transnational armed confrontation would have disastrous consequences both for Colombia and the region.²⁴⁷ Additional actions are being planned in the border regions of Colombia and Brazil, to reduce local tensions and violence towards the displaced, with a specific focus on gender-based violence. The European Commission continuously monitors the situation closely, including through regular contacts with the Colombian authorities, and is currently reviewing the different instruments at its disposal to identify additional possibilities to increase support for those affected, including support in assisting the socioeconomic inclusion of Venezuelans and to enhance the resilience of host communities.²⁴⁸

This is a crucial moment for the Colombian peacebuilding process, one that will decide its future. The road to sustainable 'positive peace' that ensures resilience to conflict is long and winding. As with all peace processes it will take patience, persistence, and long-term commitment from the Colombian government, Congress and the armed groups for results to become tangible for the entire Colombian population. Although progress has been achieved in many areas of the Colombian peace accord, serious concerns exist regarding the lack of progress in areas that are critical for structural transformation and deep-seated institutional reform in Colombia. While some have said that former President Santos dreamed too small for this deal to bring peace to the country, others argue that peace will be built step-by-step. The focus on peace with the FARC-EP was a beginning that will need to go hand-in-hand with long-term political commitment from the parties to the peace deal to expand it to other armed groups and to address deep-rooted socio-political and economic problems affecting large parts of the Colombian territory and population. Lack of integrity in these processes could not only lead to ineffectiveness, but to a possible entrenchment of criminal actors, which are the biggest threat to sustainable peace in Colombia.

²⁴⁶ European Commission, Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the European Commission, [European Union aid for countries receiving migrants from Venezuela](#), Question to the European Commission Ramón from Jáuregui Atondo (S&D) for written answer E-004532-18, 6 December 2018.

²⁴⁷ Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz (INDEPAZ), [Carta a Iván Duque sobre Venezuela](#), 13 February 2019, p. 2.

²⁴⁸ European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Stylianides on behalf of the Commission, EU support to Colombia in the Venezuelan migrant crisis](#), Question to the European Commission from Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE) for written answer E-001772-18, 26 June 2018.

References

EU legal documents

Council of the European Union, [EU-CELAC Action Plan](#), 10-11 June 2015.

European Parliament resolution of 13 June 2012 on the [EU trade agreement with Colombia and Peru \(2012/2628\(RSP\)\)](#), OJ C 332E, 15.11.2013, pp. 52-57.

['Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Colombia and Peru, of the other part'](#), OJ L 354, 21.12.2012, pp. 3-2607.

European External Action Service, [XI Reunión de diálogo especializado de alto nivel sobre drogas Comunidad Andina - Unión Europea, Comunicado Conjunto](#), Quito, Ecuador, 31 October 2012.

Other EU Documents

Council of the EU, [Colombia: EU suspends sanctions against the FARC](#), press release, 27 September 2016.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the European Commission, VP/HR — Changes to the Colombian peace agreement by the Colombian Government](#), Question to the European Commission Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL), Ana Miranda (Greens/EFA) and Estefanía Torres Martínez (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-000509-19, 18 April 2019.

European Commission, Follow-up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on the implementation of the Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru (A8-446/2018), 16 April 2019.

European Commission, [Colombia](#), Directorate-General for Trade, 19 March 2019.

European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the European Commission, Migration crisis in Colombia](#), Question from Monika Beňová (S&D) to the European Commission for written answer E-006077-18, 27 February 2019.

European Commission, [Reply, Political persecution of Huber Ballesteros](#), Question to the Council from João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-005879-18, 11 February 2019.

European Commission, [EUTF Colombia Projects](#), Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 29 January 2019.

European Commission, [EU Trust Fund for Colombia](#), Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 28 January 2019.

European Commission, Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the European Commission, [European Union aid for countries receiving migrants from Venezuela](#), Question to the European Commission Ramón from Jáuregui Atondo (S&D) for written answer E-004532-18, 6 December 2018.

European Commission, [EU Trust Fund for Colombia projects: State of Play](#), Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 30 November 2018.

European Commission, [Commission Staff Working Document, Individual reports and info sheets on implementation of EU Free Trade Agreements, Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Implementation of Free Trade Agreements, 1 January 2017 - 31 December 2017, {COM\(2018\) 728 final}](#), SWD(2018) 454 final, 31 October 2018.

European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the European Commission, Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Hans-Olaf Henkel (ECR) for written answer E-003409-18, 20 September 2018.

European Commission, [Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini, European Commission, Protection of human rights defenders](#), Question to the European Commission from Monika Beňová (S&D) for written answer E-003396-18, 28 August 2018.

European Commission, [Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini, Impunity for human rights violations in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL), Estefanía Torres Martínez (GUE/NGL), Miguel Urbán Crespo (GUE/NGL), Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) and Xabier Benito Ziluaga (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-003439-18, 23 August 2018.

European Commission, [2017 First Annual/AOSD Report to the Management Board](#), EU Trust Fund for Colombia, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 25 July 2018.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR – Failure to implement the peace agreements in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Javier Couso Permy (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-002295-18, 12 July 2018.

European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Stylianides on behalf of the Commission, EU support to Colombia in the Venezuelan migrant crisis](#), Question to the European Commission from Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE) for written answer E-001772-18, 26 June 2018.

European Commission, [EU & Colombia: Key Partners for Peace](#), 20 June 2018.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR – Delay in dismantling paramilitary structures in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Javier Couso Permy (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-007729-17, 29 March 2018.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR — Duty of prior consultation to ensure respect of human rights in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Javi López (S&D) for written answer E-007689-17, 8 March 2018.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Anti-LGBTI hate crimes and intolerance in Colombia](#), Question by Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-004612-1, 13 October 2017.

European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Third Annual Report on the Implementation of the EU-Colombia/Peru Trade Agreement](#), COM(2017) 585 final, 10 October 2017.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Alleged involvement of European companies in human rights violations in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Clara Eugenia Aguilera García (S&D), Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero Fernández (S&D) and Carlos Zorrinho (S&D) for written answer E-003560-17, 13 September 2017.

European Commission, [Joint answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Union action in respect of a coal exporting company allegedly involved in human rights violations in a third country](#), Question to the European Commission from Ignazio Corrao (EFDD) for written answer E-004676-17, 16 October 2017.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR — International support by the EU for the peace agreements between the Government and FARC-EP \(the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army\) in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission by Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL), Estefanía Torres Martínez (GUE/NGL), Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) and Xabier Benito Ziluaga (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-003813-17, 8 September 2017.

European Commission, [Operational Criteria for the Submission of Proposals to the EU Trust Fund for Colombia](#), 17 May 2017.

European Commission, [Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission, EU funding for post-conflict Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-008846-16, 1 March 2017.

European Commission, [Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission, Follow-up on roadmaps under the EU free trade agreement with Colombia and Peru](#), Question by Maria Arena (S&D) to the European Commission for written answer P-002362-16, 31 May 2016.

[Colombia](#), Directorate-General for Trade, European Commission, 21 June 2016.

European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Second Annual Report on the Implementation of the EU-Colombia/Peru Trade Agreement](#), COM(2016) 58 final, 10 February 2016.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Continued attacks and killings in Colombia](#), Question from Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL), Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL) and João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-005509-15, 15 December 2015.

European Commission, [Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, VP/HR — Killing of trade unionists in Colombia](#), Question by Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-009627-15, 5 October 2015.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Monitoring the human rights roadmap following the implementation of the EU-Colombia Trade Agreement](#), Question from Jude Kirton-Darling (S&D) to the European Commission for written answer E-003448-15, 14 May 2015.

European Commission, [Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission, The EU-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and respect for human rights](#), Question to the European Commission from Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-003079-15, 14 May 2015.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Human rights and the EU-Colombia trade agreement](#), Question by Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) to the Commission for written answer P-003854-15, 2 May 2015.

European Commission, [Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission, Indigenous people in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Marlene Mizzi (S&D) for written answer E-011185-14, 19 March 2015.

European Commission, [Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Colombia and Peru, of the other part; Sub-Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development, Joint Statement](#), Bogota, 16-17 June 2015.

European Commission, [EU boosts support for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), 11 June 2015.

European Commission, [Réponse donnée par Mme Mogherini, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission, VP/HR — EU-Colombia Framework Agreement on participation in EU crisis management operations](#), Question from Javier Couso Permuy (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-008682-14, 17 March 2015.

European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Annual Report on the Implementation of the EU-Colombia/Peru Trade Agreement](#), COM(2014) 718 final, 4 December 2014.

European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the fulfilment by Colombia of the relevant criteria in view of the negotiation of a visa waiver agreement between the European Union and Colombia](#), 29 October 2014.

European Commission, [EU-Peru and Colombia Trade Agreement Sub-Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development, Joint Statement](#), Lima, Peru, 6 February 2014.

European Commission, [EU-Colombia trade agreement takes effect on 1 August](#), Andean Community, News archive, 26 July 2013.

European Commission, [Highlights of the Trade Agreement between Colombia, Peru and the European Union](#), Memo, 26 June 2012.

European Commission, [Colombia Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013](#), 28 March 2007.

European Commission, [Agreement establishing the European Union Trust Fund for Colombia, and its internal rules](#), 16 December 2016.

European Commission, [Cochabamba Declaration](#), 16 April 1996.

European Economic and Social Committee, [Joint Declaration of the Advisory Groups from the EU, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador](#), 4th joint meeting of the EU Domestic Advisory Group and representatives from the domestic mechanisms of Colombia, Peru and Ecuador and Civil Society Open Session, Ecuador, 11 December 2018.

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), [Summary of the discussion and key messages of civil society representatives and participants from the EU, Colombia and Peru \(Trade and Sustainable Development Title of the EU-Colombia and Peru Trade Agreement\)](#), Brussels-Lima-Bogota, 7 December 2016.

European External Action Service, [EU-CELAC relations](#), 16 July 2018.

European External Action Service, [EU-Colombia relations, factsheet](#), 20 May 2018.

European External Action Service and Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation, European Commission, [Multiannual Indicative Programme \(MIP\) 2014-2017: Colombia](#), 2014.

European Parliament, [VP/HR – Colombian peace process in jeopardy](#), Question from João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-001377-19, 18 March 2019.

[European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2019 on the implementation of the Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru \(2018/2010\(INI\)\)](#), P8_TA(2019)0031.

European Parliament, [The need to continue the peace process in Colombia](#), Question from João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL) to the European Commission for written answer E-003319-18, 18 June 2018.

European Parliament, [Colombia: Santos thanks the EU for its support to the peace process](#), press release, 29 May 2018.

European Parliament, [VP/HR — Failure to implement the peace agreements in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Javier Couso Permuy (GUE/NGL) for written answer E-002295-18, 25 April 2018.

European Parliament, [We need improvement in labour rights, says Lange after Colombia, Peru visit](#), press release, 19 February 2018.

[European Parliament resolution of 13 September 2017 on EU political relations with Latin America \(2017/2027\(INI\)\)](#), P8_TA(2017)0345.

European Parliament, [Union action in respect of a coal exporting company allegedly involved in human rights violations in a third country](#), Question to the European Commission from Ignazio Corrao (EFDD) for written answer E-004676-17, 11 July 2017.

European Parliament, [VP/HR — Human Rights Defenders in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Barbara Matera (PPE) for written answer E-004035-17, 19 June 2017.

European Parliament, [Human rights in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from María Teresa Giménez Barbat (ALDE), Ana Gomes (S&D) and Carolina Punset (ALDE) for written answer E-001448-17, 2 March 2017.

European Parliament, [European Parliament delegation to observe Colombia's peace deal referendum](#), press release, 27 September 2016.

[European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2016 in support of the peace process in Colombia \(2015/3033\(RSP\)\)](#), P8_TA(2016)0016.

European Parliament, [VP/HR — Enforced disappearances in Colombia](#), Question to the European Commission from Ernest Urtasun (Greens/EFA) for written answer E-013469-15, 2 October 2015.

European Parliament, [Human rights and the EU-Colombia trade agreement](#), Question by Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) to the Commission for written answer P-003854-15, 11 March 2015.

European Parliament, [Monitoring the human rights roadmap following the implementation of the EU-Colombia Trade Agreement](#), Question by Jude Kirton-Darling (S&D) to the European Commission for written answer E-003448-15, 3 March 2015.

European Parliament, [MEPs want human rights pledge before backing trade pact with Peru and Colombia](#), press release, 13 June 2012.

[European Parliament resolution on Plan Colombia and support for the peace process in Colombia](#), 1 February 2001.

[Resolution: The Governance of Globalisation](#) (rapporteurs: Adolfo Rodríguez Saá, from the Parlatino and Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero Fernández, from the European Parliament), EuroLat, Vienna, 20 September 2018.

Other governmental and intergovernmental organisations

Government of Colombia, [Implementación del Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto. Un compromiso con acciones](#), Chancellery of Colombia, Bogota, 11 March 2019.

Government of Colombia, [Ya están en marcha iniciativas de desarrollo para financiar con Fondo Fiduciario europeo para el posconflicto: Presidente Santos](#), press release, Presidency of the Republic, 12 December 2016.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), [Social Panorama of Latin America](#), 2018, (LC/PUB.2019/3-P), Santiago, 2019.

International Labour Organization (ILO), [World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2019](#).

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), [Latin American Economic Outlook 2018: Rethinking Institutions for Development](#), OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), OECD Integrity Review of Colombia: Investing in Integrity for Peace and Prosperity, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017.

Organization of American States (OAS), [Information on Colombia](#), Foreign Trade Information System, 2019.

United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), [World Drug Report 2017. Vol. 5: The Drug Problem and Organized Crime, Illicit Financial Flows, Corruption and Terrorism](#), New York, United Nations, May 2017.

World Organisation against Torture (OMCT), [Colombia: European parliamentarians express concern for the situation of human rights defenders in Colombia](#), Geneva, 6 March 2018.

Other documents

Alsema, Adriaan, ['Colombia's largest paramilitary group to demobilize "in the coming days"'](#), *Colombia Reports*, 9 July 2018.

Alsema, Adriaan, ['Colombia's most important post-FARC drug trafficking groups'](#), *Colombia Reports*, 8 February 2017.

['ALOP por la Paz de Colombia'](#), *Agencia de Prensa IPC*, 28 November 2016.

Alvarez, Isabel et al., Implementation of the Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru: Ex-Post Evaluation, in Anna Zygierewicz, [Trade agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru: European Implementation Assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, July 2018.

Amat, Yamid, ['"No acabaré con los acuerdos, pero sí haré modificaciones": Duque'](#), *El Tiempo*, 2 June 2018.

Bouvier, Virginia M. 'Ginny', [Colombia Peace Deal Announced — What's Next?](#), United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 25 August 2016.

Bagley, Bruce, [The Colombian peace process under duress](#), *News@TheU*, University of Miami, Miami, FL, January 2019.

BBVA, [Timeline of the Colombian peace process](#), 19 April 2016.

- Carrera, Sergio et al., [Oversight and Management of the EU Trust Funds: Democratic Accountability Challenges and Promising Practices](#), study for Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs, European Parliament, May 2018.
- Castañeda, Dorly, *The European Approach to Peacebuilding: Civilian Tools for Peace in Colombia and Beyond*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2014.
- Castañeda, Dorly, [The European Union In Colombia: Learning How to be a Peace Actor](#), Paris Papers no. 3, Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (RSEM), Paris, 2012.
- Castañeda, Dorly, '¿Qué significan los Laboratorios de Paz para la Unión Europea?', *Colombia Internacional*, vol. 69, 2009, pp. 162-179.
- Castilla, César, [Building Enduring Peace in Colombia: How the EU Can Help](#), Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, October 2018.
- Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo, [Organizaciones sociales y sindicales presentan manifiesto contra TLC con UE](#), Bogota, 23 March 2011.
- ['Colombia referendum: Voters reject Farc peace deal'](#), BBC, 3 October 2016.
- Dominguez, Roberto, *EU Foreign Policy towards Latin America*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2015.
- Human Rights Watch, [Colombia: Events of 2017](#), World Human Rights report 2018, New York, 2018.
- [Corruption Perceptions Index 2017](#), Transparency International.
- DDHH Elementa, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung-FESCOL, Dejusticia, CCDI Global, Centro de Pensamiento y Acción para la Transición (CPAT), Sisma Mujer, Transnational Institute (TNI), Humanas Colombia, TEMBLORES, and Temeride, [La experiencia de Colombia en materia de política de drogas en la última década](#), Informe sombra de la Coalición Acciones por el Cambio 62 periodo de sesiones de la Comisión de Estupefacientes de Naciones Unidas(CND), Vienna, March 2019.
- [Democracy Index 2018: Me Too? Political Participation, Protest and Democracy](#), The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019.
- Development Researchers' Network et al., [Evaluation of the Commission of the European Union's co-operation with Colombia, Final Report](#), Evaluation for the European Commission, Rome, October 2012.
- Development Solutions et al., [EU-Andean Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment, Final Report](#), Report commissioned and financed by Directorate-General for Trade, European Commission, October 2009.
- Francois, Joseph et al., [Assessing the Economic Impact of the Trade Agreement Between the European Union and Signatory countries of the Andean Community \(Colombia and Peru\)](#), Final Project Report, Prepared for DG Trade under implementing framework contract TRADE10/A2/A16, Centre for Economic Policy Research, London, July 2012, p. 39-43.
- Fundación Mundubat and PBI Colombia, [En los territorios la paz no se siente, la esperanza se mantiene. Informe de Misión Internacional de Verificación sobre la Implementación del Acuerdo de Paz con enfoque de género](#), Bilbao, 2017.
- Garzón, Juan Carlos et al., [¿En qué va la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos? Desafíos, dilemas actuales y la urgencia de un consenso](#), Informe 06, Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP), Bogota, April 2019.
- [GDP growth picks up in 2018](#), The Economist Intelligence Unit, 11 March 2019.
- Gómez Ramírez, Enrique, [2018 elections in Colombia: A test for peace?](#), EPRS, European Parliament, May 2018.
- Hege, Steve, [Will Colombia's 2018 Elections Imperil Peace?](#), United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 13 April 2018.
- Henriques, Miguel Barreto, [Peace Laboratory of Magdalena Medio: 'a peace laboratory'?](#), Documentos de CERAC No 6, Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos, Bogota, December 2007.
- Hudson, Rex, Country Profile: Colombia, A Report prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress under an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Defense, February 2007.
- Human Rights Watch, [Colombia: Events of 2017](#), World Human Rights report 2018, New York, 2018.

['Illegal armed groups' activity in Colombia \(maps\)](#), *Colombia Reports: Data*, 15 March 2019.

Institute for Economics & Peace, [Positive Peace Report 2018: Analysing the factors that sustain peace](#), Sydney, October 2018.

Institute for Economics & Peace, [Global Peace Index 2018: Measuring Peace in a Complex World](#), Sydney, June 2018.

Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz (INDEPAZ), [Carta a Iván Duque sobre Venezuela](#), 13 February 2019.

Ioannides, Isabelle, [The effects of human rights related clauses in the EU-Mexico Global Agreement and the EU-Chile Association Agreement](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2017.

Janetsky, Megan, [Here's Why Colombia Opened Its Arms to Venezuelan Migrants—Until Now](#), *Foreign Policy*, 14 January 2019.

[Joint letter to MEPs on behalf of ETUC, TUCA, ITUC and CGU about the European Union Free Trade Agreement with Colombia and Peru, 22 February 2012](#), European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Brussels, 22 February 2012.

Joshi, Madhav and Quinn, Jason, [Implementation Progress in the Colombian Final Accord](#), *Peace Accords*, 11 October 2017.

Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [Actualización: Informe 3 del Instituto Kroc Hacia una paz de calidad en Colombia](#), Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, IN, February 2019.

Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [Special Report of the Kroc Institute and the International Accompaniment Component, UN Women, Women's International Democratic Federation, and Sweden, on the Monitoring of the Gender Perspective in the Implementation of the Colombian Final Peace Accord, Special Report December 2016 - June 2018](#), Bogota, 2018.

Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, [State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement, Report Two, December 1, 2016-May 31, 2018](#), Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, IN, 9 August 2018.

[LAC Equity Lab: A Platform for Poverty and Inequality Analysis](#), The World Bank.

Landesberg, Celia, [A Bright Future for Colombia?](#), Colombia: Geopolitics, December 2013.

Lazarou, Elena and Perchoc, Philippe, [Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide: Introduction to the Normandy Index](#), EPRS, European Parliament, May 2019.

Maher, David, *Civil War and Uncivil Development Economic Globalisation and Political Violence in Colombia and Beyond*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2018.

Mass, Eva et al., [The EU and Colombia Climate Partnership Beyond Aid and Trade](#), Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague, August 2015.

[Migrant and Refugee Venezuelan Crisis: IOM Regional Response Overview](#), Reporting Period: April 2018-February 2019.

[Mixed results for LatAm in UN Human Development Index](#), The Economist Intelligence Unit, 15 October 2018.

Murillo, Mario A., *Colombia and the United States: War, Unrest and Destabilization*, Random House Publisher Services, New York, 2011.

Stephaie Nolen, [Colombia at odds with Cuba over extradition of leftist group leaders](#), *The Globe and Mail*, 28 April 2019.

Petras, James, 'Geopolitics of Plan Colombia', *Perspective*, 2000.

Piccone, Ted, The Geopolitics of China's Rise in Latin America, Order from Chaos: Geoeconomics and Global Issues Paper 2, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, November 2016.

Porrata-Doria Jr., Rafael A., 'Andean Community of Nations (CAN)', *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Comparative Constitutional Law*, Oxford Public International Law.

[Programa Agrario de los Guerrilleros de las FARC-EP](#), Marquetalia, 20 July 1964.

Rahim, Zamira, [Venezuela: Violent clashes break out as nation closes border with three countries amid escalating crisis](#), *Independent*, 23 February 2019.

Saura, Jaume, Estapà, '[Implicaciones de derechos humanos en el tratado de libre comercio entre Colombia y la Unión Europea](#)', *InDret*, Vol. 4/2013, Barcelona, October 2013.

Sullivan, Mark P. and Lum, Thomas, [China's Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean](#), Congressional Research Service, 18 September 2018.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee, [The Nobel Peace Prize for 2016](#), Press release, Oslo, 7 October 2016.

Tokatlian, Juan Gabriel, [The United States and Illegal Crops in Colombia: The Tragic Mistake of Futile Fumigation](#), University of California, June 2003.

Tvevad, Jesper, [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), Fact Sheets on the European Union, European Parliament, October 2018.

'UE COLOMBIA (Entrevista) Organizaciones denuncian en Bruselas que Colombia falla en aplicar la paz', Agencia EFE, 6 April 2019.

Workman, Daniel, [Colombia's Top Trading Partners](#), World's Top Exports, 14 March 2019.

Zakharov, Joshua, [A Long Way from Havana: The Colombian Peace Process Stumbles](#), The Fund for Peace, Washington DC, 17 August 2018.

Websites

European Economic and Social Committee: [The EU-Colombia/Peru/Ecuador Domestic Advisory Group](#).

Institute for Economics & Peace, [Vision of Humanity](#), Sydney, 2018.

The Fund for Peace, [Fragile States Index \(FSI\)](#), Washington DC, 2019.

United Nations Development Programme, [Colombia](#), Human Development Reports.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), [Organised Crime](#), 2019.

World Bank, [The World Bank in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), 5 April 2019.

Annex I: A chronology of the conflict in Colombia²⁴⁹

Guerrilla war: actors and key starting points of the conflict	
1940s	The Communist Party of Colombia (PCC) gains strength.
April 1948	Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a socialist-leaning member of the Liberal Party, is murdered. This event, known as the Bogotazo, is considered the starting point of Colombia's civil conflict.
1960	Marquetalia, a municipality located in the east of the Caldas department in north-central Colombia, would become the bastion of communist resistance, with many taking-up arms to avenge the murder of a leading PCC figure by the Liberals.
May 1964	Colombia's president, Guillermo León Valencia from the National Front, a Liberal-Conservative coalition, frames the fight against the Marquetalia partisans within a larger Latin American Security Operation, of which the overall goal was to curb the advance of socialism.
1964	Leftist (pro-Cuban) National Liberation Army (ELN) and Maoist People's Liberation Army (EPL) are founded.
1966	The (pro-Soviet) Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP), the armed wing of the PCC, is set up.
1970	National People's Alliance is formed as a left-wing counterweight to the National Front.
1971	Left-wing M-19 (<i>Movimiento 19 de Abril</i>) guerrilla group emerges.
1976-1977	The drug cartels of Medellín (established in 1976) and Cali (1977) also heavily influenced the political landscape during the 1970s.
1978	President Julio Turbay (Liberal) begins an intensive fight against drug traffickers.
1982	President Belisario Betancur (Conservative) grants guerrillas amnesty and frees political prisoners.

War against drug cartels stepped-up	
1984	The campaign against drug traffickers is stepped-up following assassination of the Colombian Justice Minister.
1985	11 judges and 90 other people are killed after M-19 guerrillas force their way into the Palace of Justice; the Patriotic Union Party (UP) is founded.
1986	Virgilio Barco Vargas (Liberal) wins the presidential elections by a record margin. Right-wing paramilitary groups begin a murder campaign against UP politicians, amid continuing violence by left-wing groups and death squads run by drugs cartels.
1989	Guerrilla group M-19 demobilises and becomes a political party (Democratic Alliance M-19, <i>Alianza Democrática M-19</i>), after reaching a peace agreement with the government. The Liberal and UP presidential candidates are murdered during the presidential election campaign, reputedly at the behest of drug cartels; Cesar Gaviria is elected on the anti-drug platform.
1991	The new constitution prohibits the extradition of Colombians wanted for trial in other countries and guarantees indigenous peoples' democratic rights, but does not address their territorial claims.

²⁴⁹ All locations mentioned in this chronology are indicated on the map of Colombia in Annex II: Map of Colombia.

War against drug cartels stepped-up	
1993	Pablo Escobar, Medellín drug cartel leader, is shot dead while trying to evade arrest.
1995	Ernesto Samper Pizano (Liberal) is elected president and is subsequently charged and cleared of receiving drug cartel money for his election campaign.
1997	The United Self-defence Forces of Colombia (<i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i> , AUC) are created and operate as a loose confederation of disparate paramilitary groups. ²⁵⁰

The peace negotiations	
1998	Andres Pastrana Arango (Conservative) is elected president and begins peace talks with guerrillas.
November 1998	Pastrana grants the FARC-EP a demilitarised safe haven of 42 000 km ² (approximately the size of Switzerland) in the south-east to help advance peace talks. This means the zone is off-limits to the Colombian army.
January 1999	The peace negotiations are formally launched but proceed in stop-start fashion. Pastrana and the FARC leader Manuel 'Sureshot' Marulanda meet. The FARC-EP use their new-found control over these areas to strengthen their ties with drug-trafficking organisations.

Plan Colombia followed by more violence	
July 2000	Pastrana's 'Plan Colombia' results in almost US\$1 billion-worth of primarily military aid from the USA to fight drug-trafficking and rebels who profit and protect the trade.
September 2000	The government freezes talks, alleging that the FARC-EP have harboured a hijacker of a plane that was forced to land in the safe haven. Later, the FARC-EP refuses to resume talks and accuses Pastrana of not stopping paramilitary groups.
February 2001	The FARC-EP return to the negotiation table following a meeting between 'Sureshot' and Pastrana. Pastrana extends the demilitarised area for eight months.
June 2001	The FARC-EP rebels free 359 police and troops in exchange for 14 captured rebels. The FARC-EP are accused of using the safe haven to re-arm, prepare attacks, and conduct drug trading.
October 2001	The government and the FARC-EP sign the San Francisco Agreement, committing themselves to negotiate a ceasefire. Pastrana extends the life of the safe haven until January 2002.
January 2002	Pastrana accepts the FARC-EP ceasefire timetable and extends the safe haven until April 2002.

²⁵⁰ The AUC were the country's largest paramilitary organisation, formed by vigilante anti-guerrilla groups and defectors from Pablo Escobar's Medellín cartel; it included an estimated 30 000 fighters. They fought the guerrilla groups and were accused of terrorising farmers and human rights workers suspected of supporting or sympathising with guerrilla groups. Members of these paramilitary groups were also sometimes in the pay of drug cartels and landowners and backed by elements in the army and the police.

Peace talks fail	
21 February 2002	Pastrana breaks off three years of tortuous peace talks with the FARC-EP rebels, following the high-jacking of an airplane. He orders rebels out of the demilitarised zone. Government declares a war zone in the south after rebels step-up attacks.
23 February 2002	Ingrid Betancourt, a French-Colombian politician who had been a Presidential candidate with the Oxygen Green Party in the 2002 elections, and Clara Rojas from the same party, are captured by the FARC-EP on their way to the demilitarised zone of San Vicente del Caguán. The then French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin made the liberation of Betancourt a national issue.
May 2002	Independent candidate Alvaro Uribe wins a first-round presidential election victory and promises to crack down hard on rebel groups.
2002 August	Moments before Alvaro Uribe is sworn in as president, suspected FARC-EP explosions rock Bogota. Twenty people are killed. Days later, Uribe declares a state of emergency.
October 2003	Fourteen out of 15 of President Uribe's planned austerity measures and political reforms are rejected by voters in a referendum. Three Ministers and the national police chief resign.
November 2003	Fighters from the right-wing United Self-defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) begin to disarm. ²⁵¹
May 2004	FARC-EP's Ricardo Palmera, the most senior Colombian guerrilla ever captured, is jailed for 35 years.
July 2004	The right-wing AUC and the government begin peace talks. AUC leaders address Congress.
January 2005	A bitter 15-day dispute erupts with Venezuela over the capture of a FARC-EP leader on Venezuelan soil. This affair is resolved during talks in Caracas, in February 2005.
June 2005	A new law offers reduced jail terms and protection from extradition to paramilitaries who turn in their arms. Rights groups argue that the legislation is too lenient.
December 2005	Exploratory peace talks with the ELN, the second biggest left-wing rebel group, begin in Cuba.
February 2006	Colombia and the United States sign a free trade agreement, which is in effect since May 2012.

Uribe's second term: continued violence	
March 2006	Parties loyal to President Uribe win the Parliamentary elections overwhelmingly.
May 2006	President Uribe wins a second term in office.
November 2006	The Court investigates possible ties between high-ranking politicians from the Sucre department in the Caribbean region of Colombia and right-wing paramilitaries.
December 2006	Detained paramilitary leaders claim to be pulling out of the peace process. The government reacts by insisting that the demobilisation of right-wing groups will continue.
January 2007	Ecuador appeals to the Organization of American States (OAS) to address the challenge it faces regarding Colombia's coca crop-spraying programme along their common border.

²⁵¹ The AUC was listed as a terrorist organisation by the United States and the European Union in 2002, shortly before the group agreed to demobilise under President Uribe between 2003 and 2006.

Uribe's second term: continued violence	
June 2007	The government releases dozens of jailed FARC-EP guerrillas, hoping that rebels will reciprocate by releasing hostages. However, the FARC-EP rejects the move saying it will only free hostages if the government pulls back its troops and sets up a demilitarised zone.
July 2007	Hundreds of thousands protest in Bogota against the kidnappings and the conflict in the country.

Venezuelan mediation for the release of hostages	
September 2007	In his role as mediator, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez agrees to invite rebels for talks on the hostage release deal.
November 2007	Colombia sets 31 December 2007 as a deadline for President Chavez to reach a deal with the guerrilla forces on a prisoner swap.
November 2007	President Chavez withdraws his country's ambassador to Bogota, in a row over his role in the negotiations between the Colombian government and rebel forces.
January 2008	The FARC-EP releases two high-profile hostages, Clara Rojas (kidnaped in 2002) and Consuelo Gonzalez (kidnapped in 2001), as a result of President Chavez's mediation. Venezuelan President Chavez calls on the United States and EU governments to stop treating Colombian left-wing rebel groups as terrorists, but Colombian President Uribe rejects the idea.

Weakening of the FARC-EP	
1 March 2008	A Colombian cross-border strike into Ecuador kills the FARC-EP's second-in-command Edgar Devia (alias Raul Reyes) and sparks a diplomatic crisis with both Ecuador and Venezuela. This is the first blow to the FARC, and would weaken it considerably.
26 March 2008	The death of FARC-EP commander Pedro Marín (alias Manuel Marulanda Vélez or Tirofijo), marks a second blow to the FARC-EP's control.
May 2008	Colombia extradites 14 paramilitary warlords to the United States to stand trial on drug trafficking charges. The United States hails the move as evidence that Colombia deserves a trade deal. For its part, the Colombian opposition complains that the extraditions mean that the militia leaders will not reveal their alleged links to political allies of President Uribe. The FARC-EP announces the death of its leader and founder, Manuel Marulanda.
June 2008	Colombia renews low-level diplomatic relations with Ecuador.

Ingrid Betancourt and other hostages freed	
July 2008	The Colombian army rescues the country's highest-profile hostage, Ingrid Betancourt, held in captivity for six years by the FARC-EP. She is among 15 hostages freed in an operation in the south-central region of Guaviare. This is the third blow to the FARC-EP's strength.
November 2008	The sudden collapse of pyramid investment schemes, used by some of the poorest savers, triggers violent protests. Several towns are placed under curfew.
February 2009	The FARC-EP rebels free six high-profile hostages, including a former provincial governor held since 2001.

Ingrid Betancourt and other hostages freed	
March 2009	The FARC-EP releases a Swedish man thought to be the group's last foreign hostage, Erik Roland Larsson. President Uribe proposes the resumption of peace talks to the FARC-EP rebels if they halt 'criminal activities' and declare a cease-fire.
July-August 2009	Relations with Venezuela deteriorate again after the revelation of plans to allow US troops to use Colombian military bases as part of a drive to curb drug-trafficking. As a result, Venezuela withdraws its ambassador from Bogota and freezes relations after the Colombian government accuses Caracas of supplying arms to FARC-EP rebels. Venezuelan President Chavez accuses Colombia of carrying out a military incursion into his country.
October 2009	Colombia and the United States sign a deal giving US military access to seven Colombian bases.
November 2009	Venezuelan President Chavez urges his armed forces to be prepared for war with Colombia and orders 15 000 troops to the border, amid growing tensions. Former army General Jaime Humberto Uscategui is given a 40-year jail sentence for his role in killing of unarmed civilians by right-wing paramilitaries.

Continued violence: alliances among rebel groups	
December 2009	The Marxist guerrilla groups – the FARC-EP and the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN) – announce that they intend to stop fighting each other and concentrate on attacking the armed forces.
July 2010	Venezuela cuts diplomatic ties with Colombia after being accused of harbouring FARC-EP rebels.
August 2010	Juan Manuel Santos (Social Party of National Unity; centrist/social liberal) becomes Colombia's new President, having won an easy victory in the run-off election in June 2010. He responds to a FARC-EP offer for talks by insisting that the rebel group first release all the hostages it still holds. Colombia and Venezuela restore diplomatic ties.
September 2010	The FARC-EP steps up its campaign of violence. The Colombian army kills senior FARC-EP commander, Mono Jojoy, in an air strike in the Macarena region.
February 2011	The FARC-EP releases a number of hostages, in a unilateral 'gesture of peace' to the government.
May 2011	The Colombian Senate approves a law to compensate victims of civil conflict and return land to millions of displaced people.
August 2011	President Santos outlines new tactics against rebels who have increasingly been resorting to hit-and-run raids.
September 2011	Former intelligence chief Jorge Noguera, a close ally of former President Alvaro Uribe, is sentenced to 25 years in prison for collaborating with paramilitary death squads.
October 2011	The US Congress passes the long-delayed free trade agreement with Colombia, despite concerns over the country's poor record on labour relations. The agreement comes into force in May 2012.
November 2011	The Colombian military kills the FARC-EP's most important ideologue, Guillermo León Sáenz Vargas (alias Alfonso Cano), who succeeded founder Manuel Marulanda in 2008. Timoleon Jiménez (alias Timochenko) becomes the new leader of the guerrilla group. This is the fourth big blow to the FARC-EP. After that, the group becomes open to talks on full demobilisation and its transformation into a legitimate political force.

New push for peace	
February-August 2012	President Santos states exploratory talks are under way with the FARC-EP, in Havana, Cuba. The ELN armed group has also indicated a readiness to talk. The Colombian Congress approves a law providing for peace negotiations to take place in June 2013.
June 2012	The EU-Colombia/Peru trade agreement is signed in Brussels, after several rounds of negotiations. It enters into force with Colombia on 1 August 2013.
November 2012	The FARC rebels declare a two-month ceasefire as peace talks focusing on integral rural development begin with the government, in Cuba. The FARC announce a first unilateral ceasefire until January 2013, and the government and the FARC-EP agree to open up a space to allow civil society to participate in the peace process.
November 2012	The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague rules that a group of disputed Caribbean islands belong to Colombia, not Nicaragua, but expands the disputed maritime border in favour of Nicaragua.
June 2014	President Santos wins another four-year term in office.
January 2015	President Santos says that government is ready for a bilateral ceasefire with the FARC-EP, after welcoming the FARC-EP's December unilateral ceasefire.
February 2015	The United States announces the dispatching of a representative to Cuba to take part in the peace process.
July 2015	The FARC-EP announce a new unilateral ceasefire.
September 2015	The government and FARC-EP to set up special courts to try crimes committed during the conflict, as well as a truth commission and an amnesty law.
December 2015	The two sides sign a key deal on paying reparations and ensuring justice for victims of the conflict.
January 2016	The United Nations lends its support to the peace process and agrees to oversee the end of the war.
March 2016	The government and the FARC-EP delay the signing of a final agreement, citing remaining differences during the negotiations, and will seek a deal by the end of 2016. The government says it is starting formal peace talks with the ELN armed group.

Peace agreement	
June 2016	The government and the FARC-EP sign a definitive ceasefire and disarmament agreement, a precursor to a comprehensive peace deal.
September 2016	The government and the FARC-EP sign a historic peace accord, the Cartagena 32 Agreement, which formally brings to an end to 52 years of armed conflict. The EU suspends the application of its restrictive measures against the FARC-EP, taking it off the 'EU terrorist list', on which it had been listed since June 2002.
October 2016	Voters in a national referendum reject the government's peace deal with the FARC-EP by a narrow margin of 50.2 %. President Santos vows to continue talks with the rebels. He is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to bring the long-running conflict to an end.
November 2016	On 24 November 2016, the government and the FARC-EP sign a revised peace deal, the 'General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace', amid objections that the initially negotiated deal, rejected by referendum, was too favourable to the rebels.

Peace agreement	
	The House of Representatives unanimously approves the plan on 30 November 2016, and the following day, the Senate also backs the deal.
February 2017	The government and the ELN start peace talks in Quito, Ecuador, after more than two years of exploratory negotiations.
June 2017	The FARC-EP rebels formally end their existence as an armed group, after a campaign lasting half a century.
June 2017	However, other rebel groups continue their violent attacks in Colombia. For example, the People's Revolutionary Movement (<i>Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo</i> , MRP), was responsible for the bombing of the Andino Commercial Centre, in Bogota, when an explosive device killed three women, one of them a French citizen, and wounded a dozen more people.
September 2017	Days before Pope Francis' visit to Colombia, the parties agree to hold a bilateral ceasefire between October 2017 and January 2018. The ELN also agrees to stop certain abuses, including recruiting children under the age of 15 and using antipersonnel landmines.
September 2017	Dario Antonio Usaga (alias Otoniel), leader of the Gaitanista Self-defence Forces of Colombia (AGC), Colombia's largest paramilitary successor group, says he is willing to negotiate the cessation of the group's crimes.
October 2017	A temporary ceasefire between the government and the rebel ELN comes into effect after more than 50 years of conflict.

Continued violence, despite the peace deal	
November 2017	A year after the peace treaty was signed with the FARC militants, dissidents of the rebel group continue to fight the armed forces.
April 2018	The Frente Oliver Sinesterra group (former FARC-EP rebels), operating on the Colombian-Ecuadorian border, kidnaps and kills two journalists and a driver from the newspaper <i>El Comercio</i> in April 2018. The same group also abducted an Ecuadorian couple in the same month. As a result, Ecuador withdraws as host and guarantor country for the talks between the Colombian government and the ELN.
May 2018	The peace talks resume between the government and the ELN rebel group.
June 2018	Ivan Duque (Democratic Centre Party, centre-right) wins the presidential election.
January 2018	The ELN continues to perpetrate attacks through its Urban War Front and seriously damages, for instance, a police station in Barranquilla, a large city on Colombia's Caribbean coast, using an explosive device. In retaliation, President Santos decides to suspend the peace negotiations.
February 2019	Violent clashes break out at the Venezuelan border with Colombia, amid growing tensions after a crowd tried to clear a barricade in an effort to access humanitarian aid, including food and medicine.

Source: Adapted from '[Colombia profile - Timeline](#)', BBC News, 8 August 2018; César Castilla, [Building Enduring Peace in Colombia: How the EU Can Help](#), Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, October 2018; Zamira Rahim, [Venezuela: Violent clashes break out as nation closes border with three countries amid escalating crisis](#), Independent, 23 February 2019; [Colombia: Events of 2017](#), World Human Rights report 2018, Human Rights Watch, New York, 2018; [Timeline of the Colombian peace process](#), BBVA, 19 April 2016.

Annex II: Map of Colombia



This second thematic study in the Peace and Security series focuses on European Union (EU) peace support efforts in Colombia. The series will make an annual evaluation of EU performance in the field of peace and security in a specific geographical region.

This study evaluates EU engagement during the 50-year conflict in Colombia, and focuses on peacebuilding since the historic 2016 final agreement between the government and the main armed group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP). This is a country where the EU has mobilised a large spectrum of civilian instruments: bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; humanitarian and development aid; and trade relations. After placing the conflict in its geopolitical context, this evaluation analyses the EU approach to and implementation of support to peace in Colombia, the European Parliament's contribution, risks since the signature of the peace agreement, and ways to mitigate them.

A parallel study, published separately, provides an overview of current EU action on peace and security and introduces the 2019 Normandy Index. The studies have been drafted with a view to their presentation at the Normandy World Peace Forum, in June 2019.

This is a publication of the Ex-Post Evaluation Unit
EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

This document is prepared for, and addressed to, the Members and staff of the European Parliament as background material to assist them in their parliamentary work. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of its author(s) and any opinions expressed herein should not be taken to represent an official position of the Parliament.



PE 631.746
ISBN 978-92-846-4832-0
doi:10.2861/833005