



EUROPEAN ORGANISATION FOR STRATEGIC POLICY

DIPLOMATIC PAPER · DP 02 / 2026

Quiet Channels, Credible Outcomes: Building European Track 1.5 and Track 2 Capacity

An institutional model for discreet dialogue, policy preparation and
responsible transfer to official diplomacy.

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An institutional model for discreet dialogue, policy preparation and responsible transfer to official diplomacy.

EXECUTIVE JUDGEMENT

Informal diplomacy creates public value when it is professionally designed, ethically governed and connected to realistic official decision pathways; convening without transfer mechanisms risks becoming dialogue without consequence.

KEY FINDINGS

- Track 1.5 and Track 2 processes are most useful where official contact is constrained but policy choices remain possible.
- Participant selection, confidentiality and mandate design determine whether a dialogue produces insight or merely access.
- A clear transfer protocol is needed to move tested options into official consideration without misrepresenting authority.
- Ethical safeguards must protect participants, avoid false promises and distinguish facilitation from representation.

When quiet channels add value

Informal dialogue is justified when it can clarify interests, test language, reduce misperception, preserve contact or prepare options that official actors cannot yet explore publicly. It should not substitute for accountable diplomacy or create the appearance of a mandate that organisers do not possess. Every process therefore requires a written purpose, a defined decision horizon and a realistic audience for its output.

Design before invitation

A credible process begins with conflict and stakeholder analysis, not a guest list. Organisers should identify who can contribute knowledge, who can carry ideas into relevant institutions and whose exclusion would undermine legitimacy. Confidentiality rules must be explicit, and records should separate attributed statements, non-attributed analysis and institutional recommendations.

From conversation to consequence

Dialogue becomes useful policy infrastructure when conclusions can be transferred responsibly. A protected memorandum can present areas of convergence, unresolved risks and options without claiming consensus. Follow-up should record whether officials considered the options and whether conditions changed. Evaluation must focus on improved understanding, preserved channels and policy movement rather than publicity.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 01 Require a written purpose, mandate and transfer pathway for every CERAX dialogue.
- 02 Use conflict-sensitive participant mapping and documented inclusion decisions.
- 03 Apply a standard confidentiality and records protocol across Diplomacy House.
- 04 Produce protected decision memoranda that distinguish evidence, options and judgement.
- 05 Evaluate outcomes through access, learning, de-escalation and policy uptake indicators.

DECISION AND MONITORING MATRIX

Priority	Decision horizon	Evidence of progress
Require a written purpose, mandate and transfer pathway for every CERAX dialogue.	0-90 days	Continuity of channels
Use conflict-sensitive participant mapping and documented inclusion decisions.	3-12 months	Diversity and relevance of participation
Apply a standard confidentiality and records protocol across Diplomacy House.	12-36 months	Policy uptake
Produce protected decision memoranda that distinguish evidence, options and judgement.	Continuous	Participant safety and trust
Evaluate outcomes through access, learning, de-escalation and policy uptake indicators.	Annual review	Continuity of channels

INDICATORS TO WATCH

- Continuity of channels
- Diversity and relevance of participation
- Policy uptake
- Participant safety and trust

SOURCES AND METHOD

This publication distinguishes verified institutional evidence from CERAX interpretation and forward-looking judgement. Principal public sources are listed below; all recommendations are the institutional judgement of CERAX.

- Council of the European Union, Concept on EU Peace Mediation
- United Nations, Guidance for Effective Mediation



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Independent analysis. Diplomatic judgement. European perspective.