

# Building Enduring Peace in Colombia: How the EU Can Help

by César Castilla

## ABSTRACT

Colombia's civil conflict – which lasted more than five decades, killed thousands and displaced more – officially ended with the November 2016 peace agreement between the state and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. During the first years of the deal's implementation, significant problems have emerged, with organized crime and terrorist networks expanding to rural areas and violence rising. These challenges affect not only Colombia but also the wider region and actually reverberate as far as Europe, due to drug trafficking. For this reason, it is necessary to identify how EU support could be more efficient in building peace in post-conflict Colombia.

*Colombia | European Union | Conflict mediation | International security |  
Drug trafficking | Terrorism | Organized crime | Human rights*

**keywords**

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by César Castilla\*

### Introduction

In June 2016, the European Union released the EU Global Strategy (EUGS), which advocated a set of policies to be pursued in regions of interest not only due to geographical proximity but also in more distant ones. That could be also applied to Latin America – particularly, Colombia. The EU has been committed to the peace process in this country for more than 15 years. The implementation of the Peace Laboratories<sup>1</sup> and investment in rural development, local development and regional competitiveness are some examples of the EU's efforts and engagement there.

After the signing of the peace agreement between the central government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC), the EU created a Trust Fund for Colombia. This initiative can contribute to the stabilization of the country. But, during the first year of the agreement's implementation (2017) problems related to violence and the violation of human rights by terrorist groups, drug-trafficking gangs and the agents of organized crime have emerged. Given how damaging illicit trafficking and the organized-crime networks that thrive on it are to Europe's security, the EU should do more to help Colombia fight the drug plague – especially the trade in cocaine.

<sup>1</sup> On the Peace Laboratories project (2002-2012) see: Miguel Barreto Henriques, "Peacebuilding from Below' in Colombia: The Peace Laboratories' Case-study", in Raffaele Marchetti and Nathalie Tocci, eds, *Conflict Society and Peacebuilding. Comparative Perspectives*, New Delhi and Abingdon, Routledge, 2011, p. 149-177; Dorly Castañeda, *The European Approach to Peacebuilding. Civilian Tools for Peace in Colombia and Beyond*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 149-161.

\* César Castilla is Professor of International Relations at Universidad de Los Hemisferios, Quito.  
· Paper prepared for the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI).

## 1. Colombia's conflict and the peace deal with the FARC

Colombia became politically unstable in the 1920s, when clashes between landowners and advocates of industrialization intensified and politics became polarized along a Conservative–Liberal divide. In the 1940s, another political player gained strength: the Communist Party of Colombia (*Partido Comunista de Colombia*, PCC).<sup>2</sup> At the 1946 presidential elections, the PCC established an alliance with the Liberals. In April 1948, the murder of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a socialist-leaning member of the Liberal Party, took place. This event, known as the *Bogotazo*, could be considered the starting point of Colombia's civil conflict, as political violence in the country has never truly abated since then.

In 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 in an attempt to avenge another murder – this time, of a leading PCC figure by the Liberals. In May 1964, Colombia's president, Guillermo León Valencia from the National Front, a Liberal–Conservative coalition, framed the fight against the Marquetalia partisans within a larger Latin American Security Operation (LASO), whose overall goal was to curb the advance of socialism. It was at this time that leftist guerrillas emerged in Colombia: the FARC and the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, ELN) in 1964, and the M-19 group in 1970. Right-wing, paramilitary groups (the most important being the one that in 1997 became the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia – *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, or AUC), as well as the drug cartels of Medellín (established in 1976) and Cali (1977) also heavily influenced the political landscape during the 1970s. In the 1980s, the leftist guerrillas and the drug cartels became increasingly involved in drug-related criminal activities that brought death and destruction throughout the country.<sup>3</sup>

With the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, international support for left-wing guerrillas in Colombia collapsed, forcing them to reconsider their options. In October 1998, Colombia's president, Andrés Pastrana, decided to demilitarize large areas (42,000 km<sup>2</sup>) in the south of the country and cede them to the FARC in order to facilitate peace talks. But the FARC used their new-found control over these areas to strengthen their ties with drug-trafficking organizations. In February 2002, under pressure from the army, President Pastrana determined to retake these demilitarized zones.

<sup>2</sup> From 1944 to 1947 it temporarily changed its name to Partido Socialista Democrático, PSD. In the elections of 1943 PSD "received 30,000 votes and won a senatorship, four posts as deputies, seventeen seats in Departmental Councils, and fifty posts as municipal councillors. However, soon after the decline of the Communists began [...] Its cause was the rise of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán as the new apostle of Liberalism". Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1957, p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), "War and Drugs in Colombia", in *ICG Latin America Reports*, No. 11 (27 January 2005), <https://www.crisisgroup.org/node/1773>.

By the early 2000s, the FARC were entrenched in the demilitarized zones – as well as in the drug-trafficking business. In 2008, however, the armed group suffered three blows that would weaken it considerably. The first occurred on 1st March, when Edgar Devia (aka Raúl Reyes), the FARC's second-in-command, was killed in an attack by Colombia's air force. The second was the death of commander Pedro Marín (aka Manuel Marulanda Vélez or Tirofijo), which reportedly occurred on 26 March. The third was the rescue in July 2008 of Ingrid Betancourt, a French-Colombian citizen and former leader of the Colombian Green Party, who had been a hostage for over six years and whose case was widely known well beyond Colombia's borders. The FARC continued to weaken in the following years. In November 2011, Colombia's armed forces killed the most important ideologue of the group, Guillermo León Sáenz Vargas (aka Alfonso Cano). After that, the FARC became open to talks about full demobilization and the transformation of the group into a legitimate political force.

Exploratory talks about a peace agreement took place in Cuba's capital, Havana, between February and August 2012, and the peace process was formally launched in the Norwegian capital, Oslo in October.<sup>4</sup> The process eventually produced the Cartagena Agreement, signed in September 2016, which was later put to a popular referendum for approval. In a vote that shocked most observers, 50.2 per cent of Colombians rejected the deal because they considered that it allowed the FARC to enjoy impunity.<sup>5</sup> Colombia's president, Juan Manuel Santos, and the leader of the FARC – Rodrigo Londoño, aka Timochenko – had to renegotiate the agreement. In order to facilitate the process, in September 2016 the EU suspended the application of its restrictive measures against the FARC.<sup>6</sup> Eventually, the two sides reached a new "Final agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace" in Bogotá on 24 November 2016.<sup>7</sup> The deal set the ceasefire terms and addressed rural reform, political participation, drug trafficking and victim compensation. The agreement would put an end to a conflict that had lasted for more than five decades.

<sup>4</sup> See the website of the Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: *Peace and reconciliation efforts in Colombia*, [https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/peace-and-reconciliation-efforts/norways\\_engagement/peace\\_colombia/id2522231](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/peace-and-reconciliation-efforts/norways_engagement/peace_colombia/id2522231).

<sup>5</sup> However, the referendum only saw a 37.4 percent turnout.

<sup>6</sup> Council of the European Union, *Colombia: EU suspends sanctions against the FARC*, 27 September 2016, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/09/27/colombia-eu-suspends-farc>. In November 2017 the EU agreed to remove Colombia's FARC from its official list of terror groups, on which it had appeared in the wake of the anti-terrorism push that had followed the 9/11 attacks in the United States. See Council of the European Union, *Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2072 of 13 November 2017...*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:32017D2072>. The EU had included the FARC in its list of terrorist organizations back in 2002: Council of the European Union, *Council Decision 2002/460/EC of 17 June 2002...*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:32002D0460>.

<sup>7</sup> Colombia's Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, *Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace*, 24 November 2016, <http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/Prensa/Paginas/2017/Mayo/El-Acuerdo-de-paz-en-ingles.aspx>.

## 2. The implementation challenges facing the peace deal

The peace deal with the FARC has confronted the Colombian Government with security, economic and social problems. Before signing the agreement, the FARC was “heavily reliant on coca/cocaine-related income”, as reported by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crimes (UNODC).<sup>8</sup> The FARC sought the support from drug cartels starting in the early 1980s in order to finance their armed struggle. The FARC 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.<sup>9</sup> FARC also strengthened their ties with other drug cartels in Peru and Mexico. These relationships with drug cartels remained a highly lucrative activity that demobilized FARC members may well look at with interest again, thus endangering the peace agreement.

The problem is that if the government does not adopt an effective anti-trafficking strategy, it is quite probable that demobilized FARC members will be recruited by Colombian and Mexican drug cartels.<sup>10</sup> The US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) recorded a significant increase in the growth of coca and cocaine production in 2016:

Despite significant reductions in many key Colombian coca cultivation and cocaine production indicators between 2007 and 2012, trends since 2013 reveal a remarkable increase in cocaine production, which poses an increasing threat to the United States. [...] Colombian coca cultivation and cocaine production in 2016 reached the highest levels ever observed.<sup>11</sup>

Obviously, there is a direct relationship between the increase in coca cultivation and that of cocaine production. It means that drug-trafficking organizations will expand logistics operations and hire more personnel. Demobilized FARC members could well consider this an attractive and lucrative source of employment.<sup>12</sup> It is also necessary to highlight the fact that this problem would affect not only

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Office for Drugs and Crimes (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, <http://www.unodc.org/wdr2017/en/drug-problem.html>.

<sup>9</sup> “Las FARC hacen parte del Cartel de Cali”, in *El Tiempo*, 6 February 1996, <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-365891>.

<sup>10</sup> John de Boer, Juan Carlos Garzón-Vergara and Louise Bosetti, “Criminal Agendas and Peace Negotiations. The Case of Colombia”, in *Crime-Conflict Nexus Series*, No. 6 (April 2017), p. 11, <https://cpr.unu.edu/criminal-agendas-and-peace-negotiations-the-case-of-colombia.html>.

<sup>11</sup> US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), “Colombian Cocaine Production Expansion Contributes to Rise in Supply in the United State”, in *DEA Intelligence Briefs*, August 2017, p. 2, <https://www.dea.gov/docs/DIB-014-17%20Colombian%20Cocaine%20Production%20Expansion.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> “According to the Office of the Ombudsman, as at 25 October [2017], some 800 former FARC-EP fighters (11 per cent of ex-combatants) had formed or joined other illegal armed or criminal groups”. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Annual Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Colombia* (A/HRC/37/3/Add.3), 21 March 2018, p. 5, <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/37/3/Add.3>.



Colombia but also the wider region – especially neighbouring countries such as Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela and Brazil.

The second problem that Colombia faces following the deal is politically motivated terrorism. Before the signing of the peace agreement, the country occupied 17th position in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), in 2015;<sup>13</sup> by 2017, it had slid (i.e. improved) to position 29.<sup>14</sup> In Colombia, there are still rebel groups, such as the ELN, that threaten the country's security.<sup>15</sup> The ELN and the Colombian Government have been negotiating a peace agreement in Quito (Ecuador) since February 2017. This notwithstanding, the ELN has continued to perpetrate attacks through its Urban War Front: in January 2018, for instance, a police station in Barranquilla, a large city on Colombia's Caribbean coast, was seriously damaged by an explosive device attributed to ELN forces.<sup>16</sup> In retaliation, Colombia's President Santos decided to suspend the peace negotiations.<sup>17</sup> Other rebel groups with political motivations are also sowing terror in Colombia – for example, the People's Revolutionary Movement (*Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*, MRP). This rebel group has carried out attacks, especially in Bogotá, through its Urban Commandos.<sup>18</sup> The most significant of these was the bombing of the Andino Commercial Centre in the capital in June 2017, when an explosive device killed three women, one of them a French citizen, and wounded a dozen more people.

The third problem that Colombia is confronted with is organized crime. According to UNDOC, "[t]raditional, 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 – Colombia included.<sup>19</sup> Former members of the most important left-wing guerrilla movements, paramilitary groups and drug cartels have established or joined new criminal groups such as the *Clan del Golfo* (Clan of the Gulf), the Popular Liberation Army (*Ejército Popular de Liberación*, EPL), the Meta Bloc (*Bloque Meta*, BM) and the *Libertadores del Vichada*.<sup>20</sup> These

<sup>13</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2015*, November 2015, p. 10, <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/04/2015-Global-Terrorism-Index-Report.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2017*, November 2017, p. 10, <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2017.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), "Colombia's Armed Groups Battle for the Spoils of Peace", in *ICG Latin America Reports*, No. 63 (19 October 2017), <https://www.crisisgroup.org/node/5700>.

<sup>16</sup> Adriaan Alsema, "Urban ELN front claims responsibility for north Colombia terrorist attack", in *Colombia Reports*, 28 January 2018, <https://colombiareports.com/urban-eln-front-claims-responsibility-north-colombia-terrorism-attack>.

<sup>17</sup> On 10 May, Government and ELN resumed negotiations in Cuba following Ecuador's April announcement it would no longer host talks.

<sup>18</sup> Centro de Documentación de los Movimientos Armados (CEDEMA), Dossier People's Revolutionary Movement (MRP), *Colombia 2016-2017*, Valencia, CEDEMA, January 2017, para. 2, <http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=7530>.

<sup>19</sup> See UNODC website: *Organized Crime*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Adriaan Alsema, "Colombia's most important post-FARC drug trafficking groups", in *Colombia Reports*, 8 February 2017, <https://colombiareports.com/colombias-important-post-farc-drug-trafficking-groups>.

groups have an interest in drug trafficking, illicit mining and illegal logging. The consequence is that 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.<sup>21</sup> One of the most significant criminal groups along the Colombian–Ecuadorian border is the Frente Oliver Sinesterra, which counts among its members former FARC rebels who refused to demobilize. The Frente Oliver Sinesterra kidnapped and killed two journalists and a driver from the newspaper *El Comercio* in April 2018. This group also abducted an Ecuadorian couple in the same month.<sup>22</sup>

The peace deal with the FARC has also generated non-security (i.e. social and economic) problems. In the short term, the problems of this type that the Colombian Government must address concern the victims of the conflict; the expectations of social inclusion by demobilized FARC members; and, finally, inequality in rural areas.

The situation of the victims of Colombia's conflict has become a very serious and complex issue. These people were target of violence perpetrated by left-wing guerrilla groups, drug cartels, paramilitary forces and even the Colombian armed forces. They should be helped by the state in the case of a true reconciliation. According to Amnesty International,

The Unit for the Victims' Assistance and Reparation, created in 2011 by Law 1148, recorded a total 8,532,636 victims for the five-decade duration of the armed conflict. [...] Crimes against 31,047 victims of the armed conflict were recorded for the first time between January and October 2017. [...] In April Legislative Act No.1 of 2017 was adopted, to ensure Congress would pass legislation implementing Point 5 of the Peace Agreement. One of its provisions provided for the separate – and privileged – treatment of state agents before the law, to the detriment of the rights of victims of crimes by the state in the context of the armed conflict. The law also provided for the possibility that the state would not pursue criminal prosecutions in certain cases [...] potentially breaching the obligation of the state to investigate, prosecute and punish grave violations of human rights, undermining the rights of victims to truth and full reparation.<sup>23</sup>

It is necessary also to highlight that the native population was seriously harmed by Colombia's internal conflicts. Indigenous people account for 2.74 per cent of the population and for 3.4 per cent of the almost 3,900,000 internally displaced persons.

<sup>21</sup> Eduardo Álvarez Vanegas et al., "Crimen organizado y saboteadores armados en tiempos de transición", in *FIP Informes*, No. 27 (July 2017), p. 49, <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/59c3dc1155e69.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Evan Romero-Castillo, "Ecuador y el terror que viene del norte", in *Deutsche Welle*, 18 April 2018, <http://p.dw.com/p/2wIFy>.

<sup>23</sup> Amnesty International, "Colombia", in *Annual Report 2017/18*, London, 2018, p. 131 and 133, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1067002018ENGLISH.PDF>.

Over long years of uninterrupted conflict, indigenous people have preferred to flee to the big cities, with little possibility of voluntary return. In addition, some villages have agreed to accept indigenous people only in small areas of land, putting their cultural identity at risk and generating conflict with other local communities.<sup>24</sup> According to the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (*Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia*, ONIC), between 1958 and 2016, 105 indigenous people were victims of warlike actions, 2015 were victims of threats, intimidation or attacks, and 2,954 were victims of selective killing. Unidentified militias (30 per cent), paramilitaries (28 per cent), the guerrillas (26 per cent) and the state (16 per cent) carried out most warlike actions against indigenous peoples.<sup>25</sup> Children and adolescents affected by violence should be given priority – especially those who were orphaned or were recruited by now-demobilized leftist guerrillas or paramilitaries.

The second non-security problem is the social inclusion of demobilized FARC members.<sup>26</sup> This group faces stigmatization by society at large, which has perceived them as enemies for decades and now is expected to see them as citizens. As of August 2017, Colombia's Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP) recorded 11,345 FARC members. Of these, 8,322 were active soldiers and militiamen, 2,971 were in jail and 52 were foreigners.<sup>27</sup> During the peace talks, the idea of training demobilized FARC members or providing them with basic, secondary or technical education was discussed. But little progress has been made.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> Another example is the National Service of Learning

<sup>24</sup> UNHCR, *Colombia Situation: Indigenous People*, 2012, [http://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/RefugiadosAmericas/Colombia/2012/Colombia\\_Situation\\_-\\_Indigenous\\_people\\_2012.pdf](http://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/RefugiadosAmericas/Colombia/2012/Colombia_Situation_-_Indigenous_people_2012.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> "En contexto: vulneraciones contra los indígenas en el conflicto armado", in *El Tiempo*, 10 August 2018, <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/vulneraciones-contra-los-pueblos-indigenas-en-el-conflicto-armado-colombiano-254102>.

<sup>26</sup> Marie Delcas, "Colombie: 'Qu'est-ce que je regrette du maquis? Tout'", in *Le Monde*, 10 May 2018, [https://www.lemonde.fr/ameriques/article/2018/05/10/colombie-qu-est-ce-que-je-regrette-du-maquis-tout\\_5297165\\_3222.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/ameriques/article/2018/05/10/colombie-qu-est-ce-que-je-regrette-du-maquis-tout_5297165_3222.html).

<sup>27</sup> Colombia's Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, *Comunicado sobre los listados de nombres entregados por las Farc*, 25 September 2017, <http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/Prensa/Paginas/2017/Septiembre/comunicado-sobre-los-listados-de-nombres-entregados-por-Farc.aspx>.

<sup>28</sup> In November 2017, UN Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman was "concerned at the lack of an overall strategy for reintegration matched by concrete plans and resources to enable its success". See *Opening Remarks to the Press*, Bogotá, 15 November 2017, <https://www.un.org/undpa/en/node/184095>. In April 2018, the UN Security Council "underlined the importance of the full political, legal and socioeconomic reincorporation of the former FARC-EP members, including through progress on the application of amnesty provisions; the launch of productive projects involving former FARC-EP members; and access to land". Security Council Press Statement on Colombia, 19 April 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13310.doc.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> "Director de la UNP habla sobre el nuevo programa de escoltas para exguerrilleros", in *El País*, 31 July 2017, <http://www.elpais.com.co/colombia/es-normal-acoger-a-exguerrilleros-como-escoltas-director-de-la-unp.html>; Larisa Sioneriu, "Colombia's Senate approves 1200 bodyguard positions for demobilized FARC rebels", in *Colombia Reports*, 11 August 2017, <https://colombiareports.com/colombias-senate-approves-1200-bodyguard-positions-demobilized-farc-rebels>.



(SENA) – whose purpose consists of offering training in “soft skills” (leadership, teamwork, responsibility, creativity, honesty) and citizenship skills (technical and technological knowledge) – which also has reported few successes.<sup>30</sup> It is necessary to consider the fact that these people have for so long known only violence as a way of life, which makes social inclusion that much harder to achieve.

The final non-security problem concerns inequality in rural areas. Addressing this is particularly challenging, as it requires comprehensive structural reforms. Latin America is one of the most unequal regions in the world, and Colombia is no exception to this trend. The problem is very old and directly related to the initial success of the FARC. In 1936, President Alfonso López Pumarejo decided to carry out a transformation of the old liberal state into a new one, more socially-oriented and very active in the economy, the regulation of the labour market and the provisions of welfare benefits.<sup>31</sup> With regard to agriculture, López Pumarejo did not consider a distributive policy of land ownership but promoted its transformation through an obligation to exploit the land.<sup>32</sup> Due to the failure of this measure, in 1964 the FARC adopted a Revolutionary Agrarian Policy that was meant to provide technical and infrastructure support, tools and livestock for proper economic exploitation of the land. This would raise the living standards of the peasantry, free of unemployment, hunger, illiteracy and endemic diseases that limit their ability to work, to liquidate the concentration of land, and to promote the development of agricultural and industrial production in the country.<sup>33</sup>

The Comprehensive Rural Reform is key to the structural transformation of Colombia’s land policy so that it benefits the rural population. It is also, of course, a critical building block in the endurance of the peace agreement with the FARC, as land issues and rural underdevelopment are among the main reasons for the FARC’s lingering popularity. Since the signing of the peace agreement with the FARC, the administration of President Santos has been concerned with creating a legal framework for dealing with rural issues.<sup>34</sup> That the background for the comprehensive reform, which defines the issue of ownership over land and the exclusion of the peasantry. It also recognizes rural territory as a socio-historical

<sup>30</sup> Simón Granja, “La estrategia del Sena para formar a los guerrilleros de las Farc”, in *El Tiempo*, 22 February 2017, <http://www.eltiempo.com/vida/educacion/formacion-de-sena-para-los-desmovilizados-de-las-farc-61170>.

<sup>31</sup> Pablo J. Cáceres Corrales, “Agosto 5 de 1936. La reforma de Alfonso López Pumarejo”, in *Semana*, 5 May 2014, <https://www.semana.com/especiales/articulo/agosto-1936-brla-reforma-alfonso-lopez-pumarejo/65871-3>.

<sup>32</sup> Apolinar Díaz-Callejas, “Guerra contra la reforma agraria”, in *Voltaire.net*, 19 April 2005, <http://www.voltairenet.org/article124772.html>.

<sup>33</sup> *Programa Agrario de los Guerrilleros de las FARC-EP*, Marquetalia, 20 July 1964, [http://www.archivochile.com/America\\_latina/Doc\\_paises\\_al/Co/farc/al\\_farc0007.pdf](http://www.archivochile.com/America_latina/Doc_paises_al/Co/farc/al_farc0007.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> Decree Law No. 890 of 28 May 2017 on the National Plan for the Construction and Improvement of Rural Social Housing; Decree No. 893 of 28 May 2017 on regional development programmes; Decree 902 of 29 May 2017 on measures to facilitate the implementation of the comprehensive rural reform provided for under the Final Agreement in relation to land, specifically the procedure for obtaining access to and formalizing landownership, and the establishment of the Land Fund.

environment with social and cultural diversity, also favouring urban-rural cohesion.<sup>35</sup> If the government wants to preserve the peace plan, it must start showing that its rural policy has made some progress soon. Otherwise, Colombia is likely to face again social unrest in the countryside. The new FARC party, the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force (*Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común*), should be highly engaged in the process. According to a report in the French newspaper *Le Monde*, the prevailing opinion among peasants of Lower Caguán, in Caquetá Department (southern Colombia) is that they were better off when the FARC controlled the area. The FARC set the price of coca and imposed taxes, fines and forced labour, but also provided order and security.<sup>36</sup>

### 3. EU support for post-conflict Colombia

EU support for Colombia has for years focused on addressing the root causes and consequences of the country's civil conflict. During 15 years of collaboration with the Colombian Government, the EU has invested 1.5 billion euro in peace-building activities.<sup>37</sup> Over the period 2007–13, the Union promoted projects on rural development; local, sustainable development; support for regional competitiveness; and human rights to a total of 163 million euro – and funding has increased since then. In the 2014–17 collaboration programme, the EU has invested 67 million euro in Colombia in an attempt, in particular, to help Colombian State to strengthen its presence in peripheral regions and to help the country overcome the legacy of the conflict.<sup>38</sup>

Here, however, a question arises: how could the EU's cooperation with Colombia be more efficient in a post-conflict scenario? Not only financial but also technical support is required, and the EU has valuable expertise in this regard. An important first step has already been made – namely, the creation of a 95 million euro Trust Fund for Colombia in December 2016. This trust fund, which will hopefully grow in the future, aims to assist Colombia's early recovery and post-conflict stabilization, as well as the rebuilding of its social and economic fabric, by focusing, in particular, on rural areas.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Colombia's Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, *Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace*, cit., p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Marie Delcas, "Après les FARC, 'on n'a eu que des promesses'", in *Le Monde*, 9 January 2018, [https://www.lemonde.fr/ameriques/article/2018/01/09/apres-les-farc-on-n-a-eu-que-des-promesses\\_5239238\\_3222.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/ameriques/article/2018/01/09/apres-les-farc-on-n-a-eu-que-des-promesses_5239238_3222.html).

<sup>37</sup> 550 million euro from the EU budget and 950 million from EU member states. See the European Commission website: *EU Trust Fund for Colombia*, [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eu-trust-fund-colombia\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eu-trust-fund-colombia_en).

<sup>38</sup> European Commission website: *Colombia*, [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries/colombia\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries/colombia_en).

<sup>39</sup> European Commission, *Agreement establishing the European Union Trust Fund for Colombia and its internal rules*, 12 December 2016, p. 34, <https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/114895>. See also European Commission, *The European Union mobilises additional €15 million for peace building support in Colombia*, 31 May 2018, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-18-3977\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3977_en.htm).

Another critical area for EU–Colombia cooperation is the ongoing fight against drug trafficking. Trafficking in cocaine, Europe’s second-largest drug market, is linked to other criminal activities such as the illicit trade in firearms, human trafficking, terrorism, corruption, money laundering and extortion.<sup>40</sup> Organized crime, which thrives greatly on drug trafficking, is thus one of the key challenges with which the EU is confronted – as was explicitly stated by the 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS).<sup>41</sup> As Colombia is the largest supplier of cocaine to Europe, cooperation with the country cannot but be a fundamental part of the Union’s anti-trafficking policies. Such cooperation should focus, in particular, on the creation of anti-drug-trafficking structures and close intelligence networks. The training of Colombian police and anti-narcotics officers in Europe (and vice versa) is a practice that policymakers should consider thoroughly, 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.

The EU could also provide help to enhance the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, which the Colombian Government launched in May 2017. According to a September 2017 report by the Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP), a Colombian think tank, the new crop substitution plan (*Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito*, PNIS) is not fulfilling its objectives. According to FIP, at the end of September 2017 PNIS had reached only 5 per cent of its annual goal, and the projection by the end 2017 was no more than 20 per cent (10,000 hectares).<sup>42</sup> FIP pointed to the protection of communities against forced eradication and the consolidation of the presence of the state as the main challenges to the PNIS implementation.<sup>43</sup> The EU could help by making use of the Trust Fund for Colombia conditional on respect for people’s rights within the framework of forced eradication. Similarly, the EU Trust Fund for Colombia could fund the construction of schools, hospitals and local institutions as a way of consolidating the presence of the state.

The EUGS has promoted an integrated approach to conflicts and crises that prioritizes early action and prevention before a crisis erupts.<sup>44</sup> But a post-conflict scenario presents similar risks to those of a pre-crisis situation. After the signing of

<sup>40</sup> European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and Europol, *EU Drug Market Report. Strategic Overview*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2016, p. 13, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/node/259>.

<sup>41</sup> European External Action Service (EEAS), *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy*, June 2016, <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/node/339>.

<sup>42</sup> Juan Carlos Garzón and Eduardo Álvarez Vanegas, “¿En qué va la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos? Principales avances, desafíos y propuestas para hacerles frente”, in *FIP Informes*, No. 2 (July–September 2017), p. 6, <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/5a0c456a3dd37.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18–35.

<sup>44</sup> EEAS, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe*, cit., p. 28–32; EEAS, *From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy. Year 1*, June 2017, p. 16–20, <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/node/576>.

the peace agreement in November 2016, collateral problems have emerged related to increasing violence by illegal groups such as La Mano que limpia, La Nueva Generación, Gente de Orden, Águilas Negras and the Clan del Golfo. The areas most affected by these new criminal dynamics are three large subregions. The first lies along Colombia's Pacific coast from Tumaco (Nariño Department) to Riosucio (Chocó Department). The second runs from the Panama–Colombia border to the south of Córdoba and Bolívar. Finally, the third is located in the country's eastern plains.<sup>45</sup> Amnesty International has reported that the situation of human rights in the department of Chocó continues to be worrisome; indigenous people and Afro-descendants there are the most affected by violence and attacks against human-rights defenders, forced collective displacements, confinement and other violations of human rights.<sup>46</sup> The EU should adopt its integrated approach to the case of Colombia and direct its cooperation efforts at children and teenagers from these regions, offering comprehensive crime-prevention and social-rehabilitation programmes.

Another critical component of the EUGS is its focus on state and societal resilience, which the EU commits to strengthening by supporting good governance and accountable institutions, and by working closely with civil society. The EUGS also points to humanitarian aid, investment in job creation, access to education, health and climate-change mitigation, and support for private investment in fragile areas with the European External Investment Plan.<sup>47</sup> Again, Colombia presents features that fit this picture. The EU should take action to empower new leaders in fragile areas and to apply a gender-aware approach in order to strengthen the role of women, providing them with equal opportunities and better work facilities as they are often the sole source of household income.

### Conclusions

After the signing of the peace agreement between its government and the FARC in November 2016, Colombia continues to face such significant security challenges as drug trafficking, terrorism and organized crime. Non-security problems have also emerged – in particular, a lack of investment in the country's developing rural areas.

Colombia's problems, especially drug trafficking, 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. Europe

<sup>45</sup> León Valencia Agudelo (ed.), *Terminó la guerra, el postconflicto está en riesgo. A un año del acuerdo de paz*, Buenos Aires, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO), November 2017, p. 11, [https://www.clacso.org.ar/libreria-latinoamericana/libro\\_detalle.php?id\\_libro=1314](https://www.clacso.org.ar/libreria-latinoamericana/libro_detalle.php?id_libro=1314).

<sup>46</sup> Amnesty International, *The years of solitude continue. Colombia: The Peace Agreement and Guarantees of Non-Repetition in Chocó*, November 2017, p. 14-19, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr23/7425/2017/en>.

<sup>47</sup> EUGS website: *State and Societal Resilience*, <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/node/334>.



has, therefore, an interest in promoting a more politically stable and prosperous Colombia. Given its expertise in post-conflict scenarios, the European Union can provide significant help. Equipment, training and intelligence sharing are the three main areas of potential cooperation as far as Colombia's security issues are concerned. As regards social and economic issues, EU financial support would be an important asset for the victims of the conflict. This needs to be accompanied by an improvement in the performance of Colombian institutions, where both governance and social cohesion point to the general welfare of society. Since this requires a long-term solution, the EU should focus on Colombia's children and adolescents, also applying a gender-aware approach in order to improve the lives of those people who have been most severely affected by the conflict.

The EU has the experience and resources necessary to help build a new peace that brings prosperity and well-being to Colombian society. The ingredients for this new peace, in which the EU already has an assured participation, are good governance, whereby political actors work together on the basis of consensus; socio-economic cohesion that ensures the reintegration of demobilized FARC members; and, finally, territorial cohesion that aims to achieve the sustained development of rural areas. In this way, Colombia could become a more inclusive country – thereby reducing the risk of a new, structured conflict.

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Via Angelo Brunetti, 9 - I-00186 Rome, Italy

T +39 06 3224360

F + 39 06 3224363

[iai@iai.it](mailto:iai@iai.it)

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