

HANDOUT SHEET 1

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Each of you will receive the description of the particular role that you will play in this simulation. All of your role descriptions will contain a brief outline of the background of the conflict actor whom you will play, their situation and aims in relation to the conflict. You will need to spend time at home to prepare for the simulation, by thinking about how you will act in the role, perhaps including doing some research on your role on the internet, if it is not familiar to you.

You will take part in a mediated negotiations process focused on dealing with an armed conflict which is taking place in a fictitious region, on the European continent, in the present day.

Remember that to negotiate effectively, you need to try your best to do the following:

- Express your situation as clearly as you can – what you want, what you don't want and why; feel free to also show your emotions but make sure you try to constructively explain how you feel and why
- Do your best to understand the situation of other people, particularly those in conflict with you – ask questions, refrain from violence including personal verbal attacks, practice empathy, listen actively
- Think of how your relationships can help you – use the positive relationships which you already have as part of the simulation instructions, and try to develop new relationships during the simulation – conflicts can only be resolved if there is trust and people are interconnected
- Look for solutions, no matter how crazy they may seem, don't dismiss ideas, try to be creative and to come up with something that can make everyone satisfied, or even happy!

After an initial introduction by the facilitator of the simulation, the first 30 minutes of the 90-minute simulation will focus on the preparation stage, which must take place before any mediated negotiation. Use this time to have bilateral or small group conversations with other actors so that you can be as prepared for the negotiation as possible. You can talk to the mediation team to let them know about your needs and requests. You can talk to actors with whom you feel you are allied to coordinate your positions and joint negotiation strategies. You can talk to actors about whose positions you are uncertain, to try to get or exchange information and perhaps to identify common aims and form alliances. If you think this is possible and appropriate, you can even try to talk to some of your adversaries, to see if there is any potential for progress in the upcoming official negotiations – the actors on the opposite side of the armed conflict – but be careful how and where you do this, so that you do not face heavy criticism from your own allies; sometimes such risky conversations need to take place confidentially, away from the public eye.

After the 30 minutes of preparing for the mediated negotiation are over, you will be called to take seats at the table in the middle of the room, by the mediation team. The following 60 minutes will be spent in the mediated negotiation. It is possible that you or another participant may, at some point during the 60 minutes, call for the negotiation meeting to be adjourned, and if the mediation team agrees, you will then be able to leave the table to have more bilateral or small group conversations before returning to the mediated negotiation table once again when called upon by the mediation team.

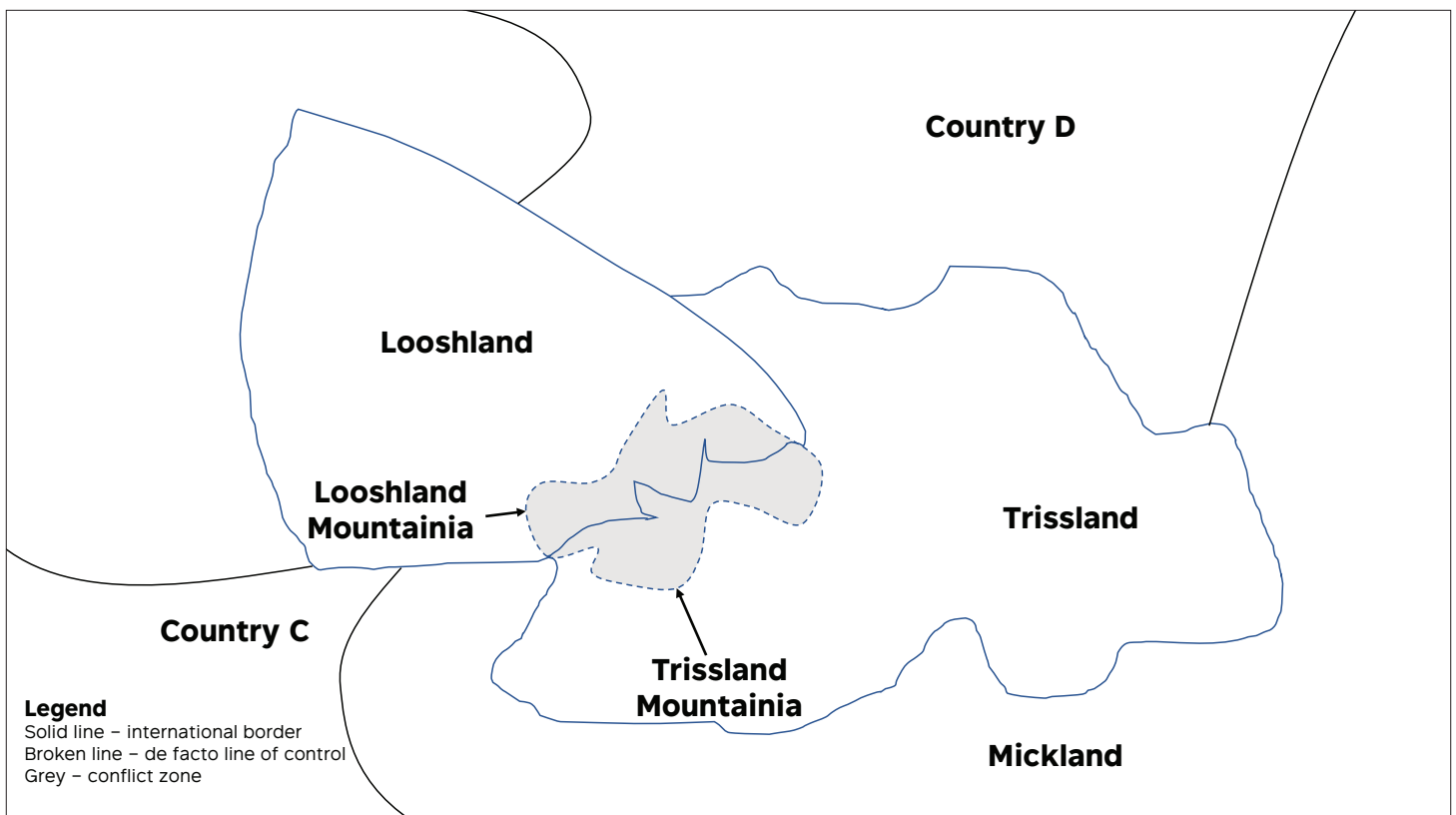
While it is possible that all actors will come to the mediated negotiation table each time, it is also possible that you may agree with other actors that not everyone needs to be at the big table each time. It is also possible that two negotiations may end up taking place at the same time in parallel, each mediated by a different member of the mediation team. For example, this can happen if everyone agrees that two different groups will deal with two different thematic issues in parallel and then reconvene to report on progress to each other. There can be many thematic issues in conflict, such as political, economic, military, human security, social, cultural, constitutional, legal, territorial, resource-related, rights-related and others.


During the simulation, it is up to you how to act so that you can make progress in the simulation – each person’s actions as an individual or as a group will affect the outcome of your simulation. The outcome which you should be trying to achieve in the mediated negotiation is to find a resolution to at least some aspects of your conflict. While searching for solutions, you need to make sure that you achieve the goals outlined for each of you in your role descriptions.

You can use all the inside and outside space with which you are provided for your simulation in the most effective way possible – feel free to walk away from other people, to find places to sit and talk, to search for and meet others, to use communications tools such as mobile phones and internet to talk to each other.

After the simulation, you will be led through a de-roling and a debriefing, where all of you together will be asked a series of questions which will help you to reflect on what happened and what you can learn from this simulation exercise.

Conflict Background





Looshland and Trissland are countries located on the European continent, which share a common border and an interrelated history. Since the beginning of 2017, they have experienced a complex armed conflict in a remote area on both sides of a part of their common border. Several thousand people have died on all sides, and the conflict has attracted international media attention not least because of the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons who have had to flee the conflict zone.


The landscape of actors in this conflict is a complicated one, in keeping with a recent international trend for conflicts which combine domestic and international elements and which involve grey zones of uncertainty, both geographically and politically. The ethnic Loosh have always formed a majority of the population of Looshland, with the ethnic Trissarians being a significant minority of up to 30% of the population before the Second World War. The situation has been almost a mirror image in Trissland, with the ethnic Trissarians making up 65% of the population before WW2, with ethnic Loosh accounting for the rest. Both the ethnic Loosh and the ethnic Trissarians used to be spread across both countries with more of each minority ethnic group closer to the respective border of their kin state but in the last 100 years with the two World Wars and other international political processes, high concentrations of each minority group have only remained in areas close to the border with the respective kin states. The cross-border Mountainia region on both sides of the internationally recognized Looshland-Trissland border, most of which is now in the conflict zone, has for hundreds of years been inhabited in a particularly mixed way. Before the beginning of the armed conflict in 2017, ethnic Loosh were a majority in the region of Trissland Mountainia, while ethnic Trissarians were a majority across the border in the adjacent region of Looshland Mountainia.

Notably, the historic mutual penetration of ethnic groups into the two states has led to nationalists on each side each laying rhetorical claim to the whole territory of the two countries.

The conflict zone, marked in grey on the map, is not controlled in a military sense by either Looshland or Trissland. An armed non-state group, called the Loosh Democratic Republic (LDR) and consisting mainly of ethnic Loosh, controls the majority of the conflict zone located in Trissland and a small part of the conflict zone in Looshland. Similarly, another armed non-state group consisting mainly of ethnic Trissarians, known as the Triss People's Liberation Union (TPLU), controls the majority of the conflict zone in Looshland and a small part of the conflict zone in Trissland. The complex and poorly defined lines of control are a result of complicated terrain in the conflict zone, including mountains, valleys, remote tracks over mountain passes and previously disused tunnels.

The LDR has a long front line running inside the internationally recognized territory of Trissland along which it periodically clashes with the government armed forces of Trissland. The TPLU has a similarly long front line running inside the internationally recognized territory of Looshland along which it periodically clashes with the government military forces of Looshland. Both these lines are marked on the map in dotted lines and are known informally as "Lines of Control" since no international body is ready to recognize them as fully fledged borders.

It is widely believed by international political analysts that the political elite of Looshland has strong and supportive links to the LDR and the political elite of Trissland has similarly informal connections to the TPLU. Predictably, this leads each country to accuse the other of interfering on its sovereign territory and even of backing illegal occupying forces.



The armed phase of the conflict was precipitated by a growing recent history of human rights abuses in relation to minorities in both countries, at times escalating in a tit for tat way, for example with one country moving to pass anti-minority legislation, being followed by the other country taking retaliatory measures against its own respective minority population. These human rights problems have included access to education in minority languages, access to security sector jobs for ethnic minorities, access to media in the respective minority languages, suppression of freedom of expression for those calling for autonomy or secession and government sponsorship of competing and exclusionary historical narratives.

After several years of growing tensions against the backdrop of a deteriorating global geopolitical climate, the armed phase of this conflict was precipitated by several episodes of the removal of historical statues and renaming of streets pushed through by the central authorities of Looshland in the Trissarian-majority region of Looshland Mountainia. In response, armed and self-organized Trissarians began to take over administrative buildings and key transport infrastructure, successfully pushing out Looshland police and special forces. A retaliatory process took place across the border in Trissland Mountainia, with elements of ethnic cleansing led by the ethnic Loosh as they were taking control of the region, and aimed at the ethnic Trissarians, many of whom were forced to flee to other regions within the country, mostly to the capital of Trissland. In the ensuing fighting, the LDR also clashed with the TPLU and some territory exchanged control on both sides of the internationally recognized border.


A ceasefire agreement was signed a month ago between the Government of Looshland and the Government of Trissland. However, the agreement was not signed by the Triss People's Liberation Union (TPLU) nor the Loosh Democratic Republic (LDR) because of the refusal, in the case of the TPLU, by the Government of Looshland, and in the case of the LDR, by the Government of Trissland, to infer a recognition of any kind of official status on the rebel groups. Nonetheless, the TPLU has mainly adhered to the ceasefire viz a viz the Government of Looshland and the LDR has adhered to the ceasefire on their frontline facing the Government of Trissland.

The publicly stated aim of both Looshland and Trissland is to restore sovereign control and territorial integrity of their countries within their internationally recognized borders.

The publicly stated aim of the LDR (in control of conflict zone territory mostly in Trissland) is to gain an independent state for ethnic Loosh on territory previously sovereign to Trissland, and subsequently build strong political, military and cultural links between this newly independent state and Looshland.

The publicly stated aim of the TPLU (in control of conflict zone territory mostly in Looshland) is to gain political, economic and cultural autonomy within Looshland to ensure the security and development of ethnic Trissarians as a minority within Looshland. However, the TPLU also publicly state that given Looshland's poor democratic record and lack of interest in devolution of power to its regions, it is highly unlikely that a functioning autonomy of the kind that they need to feel secure and well-off will be granted to them. Hence, a more realistic preferred scenario for them is a military victory of Trissland over Looshland, with some of the conflict zone territory in Looshland being ceded to Trissland.

The key international stakeholders in this conflict are the global powers of Gegland and Mickland which are immediate neighbours of Looshland and Trissland respectively.



Because both of them are permanent members of the UN Security Council, both are also important members of the International Contact Group for the Peace Process in Mountainia. Both Gegland and Mickland have had long standing influential positions in the broader region surrounding Looshland and Trissland.

Gegland views itself on the global stage as an example of ‘modern foreign policy nationalism’, i.e. being a strong, self-interested country which forms short to medium term interest-based alliances with other countries and values sovereign stability more than globally interlinked democracy.


Mickland previously had a strong political relationship with Trissland, however in the last decade this relationship has grown weaker due to the deteriorating democratic record in Trissland and due to domestic electoral pressure in Mickland to invest less in foreign policy. Mickland views itself as one of the global leaders of the ‘international liberal democratic order’ and hence has a values-based ideological confrontation with Gegland.

It is important to note that members of the International Contact Group for the Peace Process in Mountainia in reality have unofficial veto rights over any solution to the conflict, because the ceasefire document stipulated the right for members of the International Contact Group to intervene with their militaries in a peacekeeping capacity “in the case that the conflict parties do not reach a solution and/or the security situation escalates to threaten a large number of human lives”.

The whole region of Mountainia, on both sides of the internationally recognized border between Trissland and Looshland, is rich in natural resources, including bauxite and uranium. Control over these natural resources and the related profits is a major interest for all sides.

The following conflict actors will take part in the simulation:

- Looshland Chief Negotiator (also a senior general)
- Looshland Businessman
- Trissland Chief Negotiator
- Senior Trissland General
- Trissland Businessperson
- LDR Field Commander
- LDR Chief Negotiator
- Trissarian Refugee Leader
- Trissarian IDP Leader
- Gegland Diplomat
- Mickland Diplomat
- Independent Mediator
- Independent Mediator’s Senior Adviser



Note on gender – several roles have been denoted as specifically male due to the more patriarchal nature of Looshland and the likelihood that in real life such positions in such a society would be held by men; one role has been designated as specifically female to ensure that a specific women’s perspective is integrated into the peace process as is the case in best-practice contemporary processes. However, all roles can be played by both females and males in the simulation. In fact, immersing oneself in an atypical gender role can be a useful learning experience for some.

Facilitator: Hand out the following role descriptions to participants – one per participant, according to the roles decided upon for each participant.