

**The European Union and the Colombian Peace Process:  
Normative Power beyond the European Borders?**

Jens Blom

6911609

Supervisor: Eleni Braat

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## **Abstract**

The European Union is renowned for its ability to transfer certain international norms and values to other countries, including democracy, respect for human rights and peace. This thesis analyzes the EU's normative influence in the Colombian peace process. It first presents the European Union as a peacebuilding force and the theory of Normative Power Europe (NPE) as coined by Manners. Then, the thesis evaluates the EU's involvement in the Colombian peace process, along the lines of Manners' six factors of normative power diffusion. Finally, it indicates to what extent the EU's policies have been normatively effective. This thesis concludes that despite a number of promising policy initiatives in support of peace, the European Union has not been able to truly establish a normative influence in Colombia, especially when compared to the United States.

## **Contents**

Introduction	4
Chapter 1: Normative Power Europe: The European Union as a Peacebuilding Force	10
Chapter 2: The European Union's Involvement in the Colombian Peace Process	17
Chapter 3: Effectiveness of EU Normative Influence in Colombia	25
Conclusion	35

## Introduction

On June 23, 2016, the Colombian government formally ended 52 years of civil war by signing a ceasefire deal with the country's largest left-wing guerrilla movement, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - FARC). At this historical event, Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos and FARC leader Timochenko shook hands in Havana, marking the end of one of the bloodiest and long-lasting civil wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The ceasefire paved the way for a full peace deal, theoretically bringing an end to the conflict between the government and the guerrillas. Due to excessive violence on both sides, and the increasing involvement of the FARC in illegal businesses such as the drug trade, gross human rights violations resulted from the civil conflict which cost the lives of over 200,000 people.

The European Union is renowned for its ability to transfer certain international norms and values to other countries, including democracy, respect for human rights and peace.<sup>1</sup> Within Europe, this normative influence has become visible on multiple occasions, for instance with the accession of new member states that are required to satisfy certain conditions before being accepted to the EU.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the EU's normative power has persistently been a topic of debate among academics. After Manners developed the concept of normative power Europe (NPE) in his famous 2002 article<sup>3</sup>, it has significantly influenced scholarly debates about the EU's role in international politics.<sup>4</sup> While most academics agree that the EU has a decisive impact in its own territory and its immediate neighborhood, it is unclear how successful it is in transferring its core values to countries far away from its borders, where incentives such as accession to the organization are absent. Therefore, this paper will further investigate the influence that the EU has in other regions, by assessing its ability of supporting peace in

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<sup>1</sup> Laura C. Ferreira-Pereira, "The European Union as a Model Power: Spreading Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in the Wider World," in *The Foreign Policy of the European Union: Assessing Europe's Role in the World*, ed. Federiga Bindi and Irina Angelescu (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2012): 293.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, "Accession to the EU: European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations," last accessed May 28, 2020, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/accession-eu\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/accession-eu_en).

<sup>3</sup> Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002).

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Diez, "Normative power as hegemony," *Cooperation and Conflict* 48, no. 2 (2013): 194; Tuomas Forsberg, "Normative Power Europe, Once Again: A Conceptual Analysis of an Ideal Type," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, no. 6 (2011): 1183-1204; Michael Merlingen, "Everything is Dangerous: A Critique of 'Normative Power Europe'" *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 4 (2007): 435-453; Michelle Pace, "The Construction of EU Normative Power," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 45, no. 5 (2007): 1041-1064.

Colombia according to the six factors of power diffusion that Manners introduced in his 2002 article. This leads to the following research question: In what ways has the European Union been able to use normative means of power in the Colombian peace process (2012-2019)?

Whereas the involvement of the European Union in various conflicts has been studied by academics,<sup>5</sup> the influence of the EU in the case of Colombia is underexposed. The civil war in Colombia that lasted for over fifty years violated many of the core values that the EU claims to protect, such as rule of law, respect for human rights and peace. Therefore there was an incentive for the European Union to intervene in the peace negotiations, to affirm its role as international guardian of these values.<sup>6</sup> Studying the EU's involvement in the peace process will give us an insight into the sincerity of the organization's presumable status as a protector of fundamental human rights. Additionally, it will increase our understanding of the organization's normative abilities in regions further removed from Europe. The Colombian civil war is one of the most prolonged armed conflicts in Latin America's modern history, leaving a decisive impact on the country's population. This makes it a fitting case study to evaluate the peacebuilding abilities of the European Union.

The EU's efforts in peacebuilding have not gone unnoticed, and academics have widely discussed the outcomes and effectiveness of the organization's involvement in conflicts throughout the world. Authors have elaborated on the EU's involvement in several countries, including Kosovo, Israel-Palestine and Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>7</sup> Regarding Latin America, Youngs has discussed the EU's democracy promotion initiatives, concluding that the EU's influence in Latin America has remained more nebulous than that of the United States, while European and U.S. policies in the region have both rivaled and complemented each other.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Gordon D. Cumming, "The European Union in Sudan: A Missed Opportunity?" *The Round Table* 104, no. 4 (2015): 473-488; Rok Zupacic et al., "The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo: An Effective Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building Mission?," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 20, no. 6 (2018): 599-617; Richard Whitman and Stefan Wolff, *The European Union as a Global Conflict Manager* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Sonia Lucarelli, "Introduction," in *The Search for a European Identity: Values, policies and legitimacy of the European Union*, ed. Furio Cerutti and Sonia Lucarelli (London: Routledge, 2008): 2; Marina Skordeli, "The European Union as a global power of values," *European View* 11, no. 2 (2012): 150.

<sup>7</sup> Anze Voh Bostic, "The Role of the European Union's Expert Assistance in the Process of Peace-Building: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 15, no. 2 (2010): 209-255; Richard Whitman and Stefan Wolff, *The European Union as a Global Conflict Manager* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012); Rok Zupacic et al., "The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo: An Effective Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building Mission?," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 20, no. 6 (2018): 599-617

<sup>8</sup> Richard Youngs, "The European Union and Democracy in Latin America," *Latin American Politics and Society* 44, no. 3 (2002): 111.

Similarly, Roy indicates that many obstacles, including disagreement regarding trade policies, prevent the EU from increasing its influence in Latin America relative to the United States.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, Domínguez has addressed the diffusion of EU norms in the cases of Mexico, Venezuela and Honduras. He argues that even though the European Union's transformative power in Latin America is limited due to the lack of incentives for EU membership, the organization still acts in the region with the aim of improving the quality of democracy in a number of countries.<sup>10</sup> According to the author, the diffusion of EU norms is constrained in Latin America because of limited EU linkages with the region in comparison to other dominant actors. He concludes that the EU's role in the region is overshadowed by the presence of the United States, limiting the organization's normative effectiveness.<sup>11</sup> The influence of the EU in Latin American when compared to the U.S. as highlighted by these authors will be incorporated into the analysis. Considering that the United States also played an important role in the Colombian conflict, this thesis will shed light on the relative positions of the EU and U.S. in this specific case. Additionally, the effectiveness of EU policy in Colombia will be addressed in the third chapter. These publications raise questions about the EU's ability to foster peace in specific conflicts in Latin America. For that reason, investigating the EU's influence in Colombia will increase our understanding of the organization's normative capabilities in this region.

In his 2002 publication, "Normative Power Europe, A Contradiction in Terms?", Manners argues that the EU represents a new kind of power, which pursues normative *aims* (as opposed to self-interested material gains) through predominantly normative *means* (as opposed to military and economic means).<sup>12</sup> Because acknowledging that the EU has a normative basis does not directly make it a normative power, Manners established six factors from which the EU's normative power stems. Accordingly, these factors can be used to identify the ways in which the EU uses normative means of power, and in this research they will be used to get a better understanding of the EU's involvement in the Colombian peace negotiations.

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<sup>9</sup> Joaquín Roy, "Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean: Competition or Cooperation with the United States?," in *The Foreign Policy of the European Union: Assessing Europe's Role in the World*, ed. Federiga Bindi and Irina Aneglescu (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2012): 237-246.

<sup>10</sup> Roberto Domínguez, "Diffusion of EU norms in Latin America: the cases of Mexico, Venezuela and Honduras," *Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series* 10, no. 1 (2010): 14.

<sup>11</sup> Domínguez, "Diffusion of EU norms in Latin America," 4.

<sup>12</sup> Manners, "Normative Power Europe," 239.

The FARC was originally founded in 1964 as the armed wing of the Colombian Communist Party. Due to political exclusion by the National Front, an institutional pact between liberals and conservatives in the country, some farmers saw an armed struggle as the only way to address societal issues and alleviate poverty in the countryside. Following Marxist ideology, they started fighting against the staggering levels of inequality in Colombia at the time. Founded by only 43 people, by 2001 the organization had grown to encompass an estimated 16,000 to 18,000 rebels, making it one of the largest and most influential insurgent groups in the world.<sup>13</sup> Since the 1950s, several armed groups have been active in Colombia, but few have maintained power as long as the FARC. During the 1980s, the organization started advancing from distant rural areas towards medium-sized cities and more important economic centers. In the process, the organization was able to build a system of roads, highways and waterways that connected the different war fronts. Obviously, more extensive financing was needed for all these advancements, and the FARC decided to become involved in the illegal drug business for the necessary funding.<sup>14</sup> Besides involvement in the drug industry, the FARC also used kidnapping and extortion to fund their operations and increase their territory.

For many years, the Colombian government maintained a policy of harsh military interventions against the FARC, often in cooperation with the United States. A major shift in political vision towards the civil conflict in Colombia occurred with the 2010 elections, in which Juan Manuel Santos was elected president. Santos argued that instead of following previous governments' course of fighting the rebels with military force, the civil conflict should rather be ended by means of a peace process. In November 2012, the Santos administration met with the FARC leadership in Havana to initiate peace negotiations. The United Nations Security Council supported the ongoing talks in Havana by unanimously adopting resolution 2261, underlining the organization's full commitment to the peace process and establishing a political mission in Colombia tasked with monitoring, verifying ceasefire and cessation of hostilities.<sup>15</sup> Even though the process was criticized by many Colombians, the government ultimately succeeded in signing a peace agreement with the FARC on September 16, 2016. The organization's members entered a process of disarmament, before

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<sup>13</sup> Bilal Y. Saab and Alexandra W. Taylor, "Criminality and Armed Groups: A Comparative Study of FARC and Paramilitary Groups in Colombia," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 6 (2009): 459.

<sup>14</sup> Kyle Johnson and Michael Jonsson, "Colombia: Ending the Forever War?" *Survival* 55, no. 1 (2013): 70.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2261," *United Nations Resolution*, January 25, 2016.

being placed in reintegration camps where they were prepared to be part of Colombian society again. President Santos was awarded with a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in the process.

In order to assess the ways in which the European Union has been able to use normative means of power in the Colombian peace process, this thesis is divided into three chapters with three distinct sub questions. The first chapter addresses the following question: How can Manners' criteria of normative power diffusion contribute to explain the EU's influence in Colombia? Considering that Manners' theory will be used for the analysis of this thesis, it requires a proper introduction. Accordingly, this theoretical chapter provides a conceptual overview of the European Union as a peacebuilding force, before introducing Manners' theory of Normative Power Europe (NPE) and indicating its applicability for this research.

Then, in the second chapter, I answer the following question: Which normative EU initiatives can be identified in the Colombian peace process? To understand the significance of EU involvement in Colombia, we should clarify which implementations the organization has undertaken. To that end, I will analyze the involvement of the EU in the Colombian peace process by assessing primary sources from the European External Action Service, European Commission and European Parliament. Official documents from European institutions are important for this research as they possibly enhance the public image of the European Union as a peacebuilding force. I will highlight three implementations that I argue have been most influential in the peace process, and show that the EU's involvement in Colombia corresponds to three of Manners' factors of normative power diffusion.

Subsequently, the third chapter concerns the following question: To what extent have the EU's normative actions in Colombia been effective? I incorporate an understanding of effectiveness which is twofold. First, the effectiveness of EU normative policy can be evaluated by assessing whether the EU has served as an example for other actors involved in the Colombian peace process. Secondly, it can be evaluated when looking at the extensiveness of and discourse in Colombian news outlets covering the EU's actions in the peace process. If the European Union has been successful in projecting an image of itself as a peacekeeping force, this should be visible in national media coverage. In this chapter, the three implementations as identified in the second chapter will be assessed to see if they served as an example for other actors involved in the peace process. Additionally, I will evaluate the publications in Colombian newspapers *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo* about the EU's policies

to indicate how the organization's involvement has been perceived by Colombian media. The assessment of media coverage is an expansion of Manners' NPE theory, and will be further discussed in the following chapter. Together, these two evaluations will contribute to our understanding of the effectiveness of EU normative influence in Colombia.

# 1. Normative Power Europe: The EU as a Peacebuilding Force

“With the Treaty of Maastricht we set as the common goal of our Union to contribute to peace, security and progress, not only in Europe, but in the wider world. And it was a revolution, think of that: it was the first time in history, in the history of the word, that building peace became the aspiration of a continent.”<sup>16</sup> These were the words of High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, during a speech at the “Thinking Europe Forward” conference in honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Maastricht. The speech clearly highlights the importance of peacebuilding as an objective for the European Union. In this theoretical chapter, the organization’s abilities to achieve this purpose will be further discussed.

I will provide a brief conceptual overview of the European Union as a peacebuilding force. Before starting with the actual analysis of the EU’s involvement in Colombia, it is important to touch upon the EU’s capabilities in peacebuilding, as well as to indicate how Manners’ theory of Normative Power Diffusion (NPE) can contribute to answer the research question. Therefore, the question that I will answer in this chapter is: How can Manners’ criteria of normative power diffusion contribute to explain the EU’s influence in Colombia? I will elaborate on the expansion of the EU’s foreign policy toolbox following the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht. Then, the theory in Manners’ 2002 article will be introduced, including its six factors of normative power diffusion that will be used in the analysis of the second chapter. Furthermore, an extension to Manners’ theory will be proposed with the inclusion of an analysis of Colombian newspapers *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*. This chapter lays at the foundation of the following analytical chapters, where Manners’ theory will be used to analyze the EU’s peacebuilding activities in Colombia.

Throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the European Union has been known for its activities in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.<sup>17</sup> The formal establishment of a Common Foreign and

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<sup>16</sup> European External Action Service, “Federica Mogherini’s speech at the Conference “Thinking Europe Forward” on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Maastricht,” *HR/VP Speech*, September 28, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Bostic, “The Role of the European Union’s Expert Assistance in the Process of Peace-Building: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina;” Ferreira-Pereira, “The European Union as a Model Power: Spreading Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in the Wider World;” Whitman and Wolff, *The European Union as a Global Conflict Manager*.

Security Policy (CFSP) with the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the organization's external action. Until then, the European Community (EC)/EU's external agenda was mainly composed of external trade, humanitarian assistance, regional cooperation and development cooperation.<sup>18</sup> The CFSP (later renamed the Common Security and Defense Policy, CSDP) added a security and defense element to the Union's profile, opening the way for the EU to develop operational capacities for the management of crises and conflicts, first within the European continent and later throughout the world. Over the past decade, the European Union has increased its role in building peace and resolving conflicts in its neighboring regions and beyond. Examples include the 2003 EU Military Operation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, operational since 2008, and the 2005-2007 EU Support to African Union Mission in Sudan.<sup>19</sup> Since 2003, the EU has launched over 30 CSDP operations and EU-representatives have taken part in hundreds of peace negotiations, often according to the UN's understanding of building sustainable peace through strengthening rule of law, restoring stability and supporting democracy.<sup>20</sup>

An important addition to the EU's external tools was the invention of the position of EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) in 1996. These EUSRs engage in conflict resolution on behalf of the European Union and therefore increase the organization's profile as an effective international actor.<sup>21</sup> For instance, in August 2019 the EU appointed Johann Sattler as the new Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. His mandate is based on the following objectives; continuing progress in the stabilization and association process, ensuring a stable, peaceful, multi-ethnic and united country that cooperates peacefully with its neighbors, and ensuring that the country is on track towards EU membership.<sup>22</sup> The EUSRs have been part of the EU's arsenal of foreign policy instruments ever since, being a very visible expression of

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<sup>18</sup> Carmen Gebhard, "The institutional nature of the EU as a global conflict manager," in *The European Union as a Global Conflict Manager*, ed. Richard Whitman and Stefan Wolff (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012): 23.

<sup>19</sup> Teresa Cierco, "European Union Security Policy in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: A Constructivist Approach," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 18, no. 3 (2013): 429-447; Gordon D. Cumming, "The European Union in Sudan: A Missed Opportunity?" *The Round Table* 104, no. 4 (2015): 473-488; Rok Zupacic et al., "The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo: An Effective Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building Mission?," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 20, no. 6 (2018): 599-617.

<sup>20</sup> Gëzim Visoka and John Doyle, "Neo-Functional Peace: The European Union Way of Resolving Conflicts," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 54, no. 4 (2016): 862.

<sup>21</sup> Dominik Tolksdorf, "EU Special Representatives: An Intergovernmental Tool in the Post-Lisbon Foreign Policy System?," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 18, no. 4 (2013): 474.

<sup>22</sup> Council of the European Union, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: EU appoints new Special Representative," *Press Release*, August 8, 2019.

the Union's international capabilities.<sup>23</sup> The Lisbon Treaty of 2007 brought further changes to the EU's foreign policy, by creating the position of the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, and by establishing the External Action Service (EEAS), tasked with supporting the High Representative and ensuring the consistency of the Union's external action.<sup>24</sup>

The EU as a peacebuilding force can be connected to the concept of Europe as a normative power. The idea of a Normative Power Europe (NPE) was coined by Manners in his renowned 2002 article, and has significantly influenced debates about the European Union's role in international politics ever since.<sup>25</sup> Manners introduced the concept of Normative Power Europe as "the ability to shape conceptions of "normal" in international relations."<sup>26</sup> He argued that the EU represents a new kind of power, which pursues normative *aims* (as opposed to self-interested material gains) through predominantly normative *means* (as opposed to military and economic means).<sup>27</sup> In 2007, scholars at the European Union Studies Association (EUSA) voted the article among the five most important and essential academic pieces published over the previous ten years, reaffirming its significance in academic terms.<sup>28</sup>

In his work, Manners identifies five core 'norms' as part of the EU's normative basis that have been developed through a series of declarations, treaties and policies, one of which is peace.<sup>29</sup> Accepting that the EU has a normative basis does not make it a normative power, so one should know how these EU norms are diffused. Therefore, Manners proposed that the EU's normative power stems from six factors: *Contagion* – diffusion of norms resulting from the unintentional diffusion of ideas from the EU to other political actors, for instance when

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<sup>23</sup> Cornelius Adebahr, "The EU Special Representatives as a capacity for conflict management," in *The European Union as a Global Conflict Manager*, ed. Richard Whitman and Stefan Wolff (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012): 155.

<sup>24</sup> Tolksdorf, "EU Special Representatives," 471.

<sup>25</sup> Giuseppe Balducci, "The limits of Normative Power Europe in Asia: The Case of Human Rights in China," *East Asia: An International Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2010): 35-55; Thomas Diez, "Normative power as hegemony," *Cooperation and Conflict* 48, no. 2 (2013): 194-210; Neve Gordon and Sharon Pardo, "Normative Power Europe and the Power of the Local," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53, no. 2 (2015): 416-427; Médéric Martin-Maze, "Unpacking Interests in Normative Power Europe," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53, no. 6 (2015): 1285-1300; Michael Merlingen, "Everything is Dangerous: A Critique of 'Normative Power Europe'," *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 4 (2007): 435-453.

<sup>26</sup> Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 293.

<sup>27</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>28</sup> Tuomas Forsberg, "Normative Power Europe, Once Again: A Conceptual Analysis of an Ideal Type," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, no. 6 (2011): 1184.

<sup>29</sup> Manners, "Normative Power Europe," 242.

the EU serves as an example for other international organizations, *Informational diffusion* - the result of the range of strategic communications such as new policy initiatives by the EU, and declaratory communications such as initiatives from the presidency of the EU, *Procedural diffusion* - the institutionalization of a relationship between the EU and a third party, *Transference* - diffusion through the exchange of goods, aid, trade, or technical assistance, *Overt diffusion* - the result of the physical presence of the EU in third states and international organizations, and the *Cultural filter* - affecting the impact of international norms and political learning in third states and organizations.<sup>30</sup> These six factors allow us to identify how the EU diffuses its peacebuilding efforts, and can accordingly be used for this research.

Following the explanation of these six factors of normative power diffusion, Manners assesses the EU's international pursuit of the abolition of the death penalty as a case study to explain which of the six factors have possibly played a role in this specific instance. He then argues that the case study demonstrates the way in which EU abolitionist policy is diffused through informational common strategies, procedural membership conditions and the overt role of EU delegations.<sup>31</sup> Manners concludes that rather than being a contradiction in terms, the EU should be seen as a normative power, being able to define what passes for 'normal' in world politics, which in his opinion is "the greatest power of all."<sup>32</sup>

Manners' publication brought about widespread scholarly debate in the field of European external action. In the next sections, I clarify the way in which I will use Manners' theory in this thesis, building upon the existing academic criticisms. Most importantly, I will limit my research to the question of whether or not the EU has been able to use normative *means* of power in the Colombian peace process, rather than to discuss the question of whether or not the EU *is* inherently a normative power, as can be seen in the formulation of my research question. I incorporate this limitation based on critiques regarding the conceptualization of NPE and the question of whether the EU corresponds to the image of a normative power.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Manners, "Normative Power Europe," 244-245.

<sup>31</sup> Manners, 252.

<sup>32</sup> Manners, 253.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe,'" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): 613-636; Tuomas Forsberg, "Normative Power Europe, Once Again: A Conceptual Analysis of an Ideal Type," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, no. 6 (2011): 1183-1204; Edward Newman and Cristina G. Stefan, "Normative Power Europe? The EU's Embrace of the Responsibility to Protect in a Transitional International Order," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 58, no. 2 (2020): 472-490.

The academic debate following Manners' publication can broadly be divided into two categories: practical and conceptual critiques of the essential theory of NPE and critiques based on specific case studies where NPE is arguably not applicable. Taken into account that the various conflicts where the European Union has intervened differ substantially in nature, I argue that for this research the more general practical and conceptual critiques are most relevant. In the following paragraphs, these critiques will be highlighted.

In his 2011 article, Forsberg conducts a general analysis of the concept of normative power EU, and argues that the frequent criticism of normative power Europe as an analytically poor and politically loaded concept mainly stems from the multiple meanings of 'normative' and 'power'. Based on this argument, the author believes we are left with two options for using the concept of normative power Europe; no longer calling the EU a normative power but making the far less ambitious claim that the EU has normative interests, uses normative means of power, and that it achieves normal ends when it does so, or comprehending normative power as an ideal-type.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Diez indicates that the discourse constructing NPE should be analyzed more systematically, particularly regarding forms of othering. Based on this notion, his article concludes with a call for more reflexivity in the representation of the EU as a normative power.<sup>35</sup>

Other criticisms are more practical, for instance indicating that the EU's current normative influence is questionable. According to Newman and Stefan, the normative influence and authority of the European Union in matters related to justice, human rights and human protection are arguably in decline. They stress that the European Union is increasingly prioritizing hard economic and security interests, and together with the desire to avoid political conflict with strategic partners and allies, norms such as the Responsibility to Protect have become something of a luxury rather than one of the inherent features of the organization. By assessing the broad challenges the EU is currently facing, Newman and Stefan raise doubts about the Union's capacity and desire to promote norms.<sup>36</sup> While Damro acknowledges that norms do contribute to the EU's identity, he argues that the EU has an important alternative basis, being economic and market-driven.<sup>37</sup> Based on this assumption,

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<sup>34</sup> Forsberg, "Normative Power Europe," 1199.

<sup>35</sup> Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others," 636.

<sup>36</sup> Newman and Stefan, "Normative Power Europe?" 485.

<sup>37</sup> Chad Damro, "Market Power Europe," *Journal of European Public Policy* 19, no. 5 (2012): 697.

the author proposes the conceptualization of the EU as Market Power Europe (MPE). Following a different approach, Wood indicates that while the EU displays normative and ethical features, the self-interested pragmatism of its member states is the crucial characteristic of its external relations.<sup>38</sup>

Wood and Damro incorporate different positions about the international identity of the EU, being a “Pragmatic Power Europe” or a “Market Power Europe.” These approaches could in turn be used as a theoretical foundation for further investigation into the EU’s external action. Despite these alternatives, I argue that Manners’ “Normative Power Europe” is the most fitting theoretical framework for this thesis. Even though several EU institutions are actively involved in the Colombian peace process, the self-interest of the individual member states does not seem to have a decisive impact on the EU’s approach in Colombia. As we will see, individual member states have participated in initiatives such as the EU Trust Fund for Colombia. However, most implementations have been activated by the European Commission, which promotes the general interest of the EU as a whole. Additionally, the EU’s involvement in Colombia cannot be explained through a market-driven perspective, as the costly programs do not financially benefit the European Union or its member states. Therefore, NPE is the most comprehensive theory to help explain the EU’s influence in Colombia.

To some extent, Manners already defended himself in his original work to some of the criticisms regarding the EU as a normative power, by indicating that his article is a statement of what is believed to be good about the EU, and a reflection of what the role of the EU *should* be in world politics.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, questions regarding the EU’s current ability or desire to promote norms, as proposed by authors such as Wood and Newman, become less important. By limiting myself to normative *means* rather than the normative nature of the EU, I also take into account the conceptual criticisms of the European Union as an inherently normative power. Besides this limitation, I will also add something to Manners’ theory by including the aspect of media coverage. In the third chapter I will analyze newspaper articles of *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador* about the EU’s involvement in Colombia to get a better understanding of how the EU’s actions have been perceived by Colombian media. This is important, as the frequency of media coverage and the discourse used in newspapers can be

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<sup>38</sup> Steve Wood, “Pragmatic Power Europe?” *Cooperation and Conflict* 46, no. 2 (2011): 256.

<sup>39</sup> Manners, 252-253.

instrumental for the popular opinion about the organization's efforts. If Colombian media extensively and positively describe the European Union's involvement in the country, this fosters the EU's image of a recognized peacebuilding force. Increased visibility and a positive image in turn enhance the possibility for the EU to effectively use its normative means of power, for instance by serving as an example for other actors.

Taken into account these parameters, I argue that the criteria of normative power diffusion as established in Manners' 2002 article can contribute to an explanation of the European Union's influence in Colombia. Despite the criticisms, Manners' theory of Normative Power Europe remains of paramount importance in the academic debate regarding EU external action, and serves as a solid foundation for this research. In the following chapter, I will identify the normative influence of the European Union in the peace process in Colombia, by analyzing the EU's involvement according to Manners' six factors of normative power diffusion. Based on official documents from the European External Action Service, European Commission, European Parliament and the Colombian government, I will elaborate on the EU's actions in and public discourse regarding the conflict to see if its involvement corresponds to any of these six factors.

## 2. The European Union's Involvement in the Colombian Peace Process

In May 2018, The European Commission announced to mobilize an additional €15 million for peacebuilding activities in Colombia. According to the official press release, the additional funding scaled up concrete actions, such as new programs to foster economic activity and social programs in conflict-affected areas. Upon the announcement, EU Commissioner Neven Mimica added that "The EU's additional assistance of €15 million will support the Colombian people in ensuring that the remarkable progress made towards lasting peace is continued."<sup>40</sup> Clearly, this was not the first EU initiative in support of peace in Colombia. Therefore, this chapter will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the European Union's peacebuilding activities in the country.

I will analyze the European Union's involvement in the Colombian peace process, by assessing official documents from various EU institutions. These sources show the EU's rhetoric towards and involvement in the peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC. The question that this chapter will answer is: Which normative EU initiatives can be identified in the Colombian peace process? In the previous chapter, I concluded that by limiting my research to the question of whether the EU has been able to use normative *means* of power in the Colombian peace process, Manners' theory of Normative Power Europe can be instrumental for this research. Accordingly, this chapter will analyze the EU's initiatives in Colombia along the lines of Manners' six factors of normative power diffusion.

I will touch upon the implementations that I argue have been most influential in the peace process, namely the deployment Eamon Gilmore as EU Special Envoy, the establishment of an EU Trust Fund for Colombia and two diplomatic implementations by the European Parliament and European Commission. The EU tools as an international actor as lined out in the previous chapter will return in the following analysis, namely the activation of Peace Missions and the deployment of EU Special Representatives. I will show that the EU's involvement in Colombia corresponds to three of Manners' factors of normative power diffusion: *overt diffusion*, *transference* and *informational diffusion*. These findings constitute

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<sup>40</sup> European Commission, "The European Union mobilises additional €15 million for peace building support in Colombia," *Press Release*, May 31, 2018.

an important aspect in finding out the ways in which the European Union has been able to use normative means of power in the Colombian peace process.

The analysis of this chapter mostly relies on primary sources from several EU institutions, including the European External Action Service, the European Commission and the European Parliament. Additionally, some sources from the Colombian government will be used. Analyzing these sources will give us a clear account of the European Union's implementations in Colombia, as well as of the way in which the organization might try to affirm its normative influence in public discourse. Taking into account that this thesis investigates the normative influence of the European Union, the public discourse of European institutions is of particular importance for the analysis. The idea of normative power is inherently based on the way in which public discourse has an influence on other actors in the international arena – the discourse itself *is* a major part of the normative influence. Therefore, official EU documents will give us a comprehensive image of how the European Union has attempted to portray itself in the context of the Colombian peace process.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, 2015, HR Federica Mogherini informed the European Parliament of the decision to appoint Eamon Gilmore as EU Special Envoy for the Peace Process in Colombia.<sup>41</sup> Before publicly revealing the decision, Mogherini met with Colombian president Santos on several occasions, ensuring his full agreement with the appointment of Gilmore for the mission. According to the EEAS press release, Gilmore was selected for the task due to his involvement in the peace process in Northern Ireland as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ireland from 2011 to 2014. He was assigned with relating to all parties in Colombia and facilitating the coordination of EU action and initiatives in support of peace. By working together closely with other key actors at the regional and international level, his aim was to contribute to the smooth implementation of the future peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC.<sup>42</sup>

The appointment of EU Special Envoys is a common EU foreign policy tool, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Having a representative from the European Union present in a

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<sup>41</sup> European External Action Service, "High Representative Mogherini appoints an EU Envoy for the Peace Process in Colombia," *Press Release*, October 1, 2015.

<sup>42</sup> *Idem*.

country is a very visible sign of the organization's involvement in a conflict.<sup>43</sup> As explained by former High Representative Javier Solana during the first EU Special Representatives' seminar in 2005: "You as EUSRs are the visible expression of the EU's growing engagement in some of the world's most troubled countries and regions. ... I am pleased that we have this network of EUSRs, present on the ground, in most of the conflict regions that matter most directly to the EU."<sup>44</sup> Ever since this seminar, EUSRs have been deployed throughout the world to represent the European Union in various conflicts. Current examples of Special Representatives outside of Europe include Alexander Rondos for the Horn of Africa, Susanna Terstal for the Middle East Peace Process between Israel and Palestine and Ángel Losada Fernández for the Sahel.<sup>45</sup>

On 11 November 2015, shortly after being appointed, Eamon Gilmore first appeared in a press conference together with the Colombian president. In his speech, president Santos expressed his approval of Gilmore as Special Envoy, based on his experience with the peace process in Ireland and elaborated on the general objectives of the Colombian government in accelerating the peace process with the FARC.<sup>46</sup> Before giving the floor to Gilmore, Santos indicated his appreciation for the European Union's support in the peace negotiations, pointing out that all of the EU's members have unconditionally been in favor of peace, and expressed the importance of the EU's presence in the process as well as the post-conflict phase to come.<sup>47</sup> In the following months, Gilmore made regular visits to Colombia and was present at various meetings with the Colombian president and during the negotiations with the FARC.

Besides his efforts in the peace process with the FARC and the implementation period that followed, Gilmore was also involved in the first peace dialogues with the Ejército de

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<sup>43</sup> Cornelius Adebahr, "The EU Special Representatives," 155; Dominik Tolksdorf, "EU Special Representatives," 457.

<sup>44</sup> Javier Solana, "Opening remarks," *Seminar with EU Special Representatives in Brussels*, June 29, 2005, last accessed May 29, 2020, [https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/opening\\_remarks\\_by\\_javier\\_solana\\_at\\_the\\_eu\\_special\\_representatives\\_seminar\\_brussels\\_29\\_june\\_2005-en-99752f2d-e395-491d-a8a0-0d24783668f8.html](https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/opening_remarks_by_javier_solana_at_the_eu_special_representatives_seminar_brussels_29_june_2005-en-99752f2d-e395-491d-a8a0-0d24783668f8.html).

<sup>45</sup> European External Action Service, "EU Special Representatives," *Overview of EUSRs Currently Deployed*, last accessed May 15, 2020, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage\\_en/3606/EU%20Special%20Representatives](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/3606/EU%20Special%20Representatives).

<sup>46</sup> Colombian Government, "Reunión con el Enviado Especial de la Unión Europea para la Paz, Eamon Gilmore," *Public Statements by Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and EU Special Envoy Eamon Gilmore*, November 11, 2015, last accessed May 25, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=983uZY9fCgg>.

<sup>47</sup> Idem.

Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army - ELN), the second largest guerrilla organization involved in the Colombian conflict. In November 2017, Gilmore paid his eighth visit to Colombia that year, also visiting Quito, Ecuador to meet with the negotiation teams involved in the talks with the ELN.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, peace negotiations with the ELN ultimately failed, which became painfully clear at the January 2019 car bombing in Colombia's capital Bogotá, killing 20 people and injuring 68 others at the country's National Police Academy.<sup>49</sup> Following the bombing, president Iván Duque Márquez announced on 18 January that the peace talks with the ELN were officially suspended. Despite the failure of the peace negotiations with the ELN, Gilmore's 2017 mission is a showcase of the continuous involvement and visibility of the EU in peacebuilding activities in Colombia.

Considering Manners' six factors of normative power diffusion, the concept of *overt diffusion* arguably is most fitting in the case of the appointment of Eamon Gilmore as EU Special Envoy. According to Manners, overt diffusion "occurs as a result of the physical presence of the EU in third states and international organizations", with examples being the role of European Commission delegations and embassies of member states, or the presence of foreign ministers or monitoring missions like the one deployed in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>50</sup> Eamon Gilmore has been a very visible expression of the European Union's involvement in the Colombian peace process, fostering the image of the EU as a peacebuilding force in international politics. Besides various public appearances together with the Colombian president, Gilmore was also present at the signing ceremony of the peace deal between the Colombian government and the FARC in Cuba on November 23, 2016. Colombia has honored him with the Order of San Carlos (Gran Cruz) for his work in the peace process, an order to honor citizens and foreign civilians who have made outstanding contributions to the nation of Colombia, especially in the field of international relations.

In addition to the employment of a Special Representative, the EU implemented a number of financial programs to support the Colombian peace process. Examples include pledged loans by the European Investment Bank, short-term actions and long-term projects related to

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<sup>48</sup> European External Action Service, "Enviado Especial de la UE para la paz, Eamon Gilmore, inicia nueva misión en Colombia y Ecuador," *Press Release*, November 30, 2017.

<sup>49</sup> Alanne Orjoux and Lauren Said-Moorhouse, "ELN claims responsibility for Bogota car bomb that killed 20 at a police academy," *CNN*, January 21, 2019, last accessed June 5, 2020, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/01/21/americas/colombia-car-bomb-eln/index.html?no-st=9999999999>.

<sup>50</sup> Manners, "Normative Power Europe," 245.

conflict resolution, making for an overall EU investment of over €645 million.<sup>51</sup> An important part of this package of measures is the EU Trust Fund for Colombia, to which, so far, 19 EU member states have contributed. The Fund was created in December 2016, to continue supporting Colombia in the post-conflict phase. Its activation was a response to the Colombian government's request to receive technical and financial support from the EU for the implementation of the Peace Agreement.<sup>52</sup> Besides seeing to the implementation of the Peace Agreement, the Fund aims at post-conflict stabilization of municipalities which have been affected the most by the conflict. It concentrates on rural development, supporting public administration reform programs and social participation.<sup>53</sup> Through its many projects, the Fund is stimulating economic activity and productivity, supporting the social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants and strengthening the legitimizing presence of the Colombian state, with the ultimate aim of securing a stable and lasting peace.

Interestingly, besides the 19 EU member states involved in the Fund, including Germany, Italy, France and the Netherlands, Chile can be found as the only non-EU country in the list of contributing countries. Beginning November 2018, Chile officially announced to be the first Latin American country to join two initiatives contributing funds for the post-conflict process between the Colombian government and the FARC: the United Nations Multi-Donor Fund and the European Union Trust Fund.<sup>54</sup> Whereas Chile's involvement in the UN's initiative makes sense based on the country's membership in this organization, I argue that the decision to join the EU Trust Fund is rather striking and could be seen as a showcase of the organization's normative influence beyond the European borders.

Returning to Manners' theory, the EU's financial aid to Colombia in the form of the EU Trust Fund for Colombia seems to be in accordance with the idea of *transference*: "diffusion which takes place when the EU exchanges goods, aid or technical assistance with third parties through largely substantive or financial means."<sup>55</sup> According to Manners, such transference

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<sup>51</sup> European External Action Service, "EU-Colombia Relations," *Fact Sheet*, September 6, 2019, last accessed May 20, 2020, [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/colombia\\_factsheet\\_revised2.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/colombia_factsheet_revised2.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> European Commission, "International Cooperation and Development - Trust Funds," *Overview of EU Trust Funds*, last accessed April 22, 2020, [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/trust-funds\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/trust-funds_en).

<sup>53</sup> European Union/Colombian Government, "Fondo Europeo para la Paz en Colombia," *EUTF Infographic*, last accessed March 24, 2020, [https://www.fondoeuropeoparalapaz.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/infografia\\_EUTF\\_General.pdf](https://www.fondoeuropeoparalapaz.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/infografia_EUTF_General.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Unión Europea destaca incorporación de Chile en Fondo Europeo para la paz en Colombia," *Press Release*, November 22, 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Manners, "Normative Power Europe," 245.

may be the result of the exportation of EU norms and standards. Taken into account that the fund was created after the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC was signed, it could be seen as a “reward” for Colombia based on its peacebuilding efforts in line with EU norms. This idea is confirmed when considering a 2016 statement by HR Mogherini, referring to the Fund following the adoption by the Colombian congress of the final agreement between the government and the FARC. In the statement, she indicates that the adoption of the peace agreement confirms the confidence the EU has always had in the peace process, before pointing out that “the constitutive agreement of the EU Trust Fund for Colombia will be signed in Brussels, to further strengthen the common commitment of the EU and of its member states to the success of the peace process.”<sup>56</sup>

Apart from the very practical implementations as outlined before, I highlight two more diplomatic actions that the European Union undertook in the wake of the peace agreement; the suspension of the FARC from the EU’s list of terrorist organizations and the European Parliament’s resolution in support of peace. On September 27, 2016, the European Council decided to suspend the application of EU restrictive measures against the FARC, following the official signing of the Colombian peace agreement the day before.<sup>57</sup> Since June 2002, the organization had been listed in the so-called “EU terrorist list”, imposing restrictive measures upon the group and its members and prohibiting EU persons and entities to make economic resources available to it. Lifting these restrictions opened the way for the re-integration of former FARC-members into society, and eased the organization’s transition from guerrilla-movement into political party. One month later on November 27<sup>th</sup>, the Council ultimately removed the FARC from its terrorist list. As HR Federica Mogherini explained, the move “enables us to support the post-conflict program, to the benefit of all people in Colombia.”<sup>58</sup> The suspension sent a clear signal of EU support to Colombia, indicating the organization’s commitment to a lasting peace agreement. In support of peace and reconciliation, the removal of the FARC from the list of terrorist organizations showed the ex-combatants that a new

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<sup>56</sup> European External Action Service, “Statement by High Representative Mogherini on the adoption by the Colombian Congress of the Final Agreement between the government of Colombia and the FARC-EP,” *Statement by the HR/VP*, December 1, 2016.

<sup>57</sup> Council of the European Union, “Colombia: EU suspends sanctions against the FARC,” *Press Release*, September 27, 2016.

<sup>58</sup> European External Action Service, “EU suspends FARC from terrorist list to support Colombian peace deal,” *Press Release*, November 27, 2016.

beginning was possible by re-integrating into the political system instead of continuing their armed struggle.<sup>59</sup>

Among Manners' six factors of normative power diffusion, I argue that the suspension of sanctions and the removal of the FARC from the EU's list of terrorist organizations fits into the category of informational diffusion: "... the result of a range of strategic communications, such as new policy initiatives by the EU, and declaratory communications, such as initiatives from the presidency of the EU or the president of the Commission."<sup>60</sup> The decision can be categorized as a form of declaratory communication, considering that HR Mogherini made it public in an official EU statement. In doing so, she sent a clear message to Colombia and the rest of the world about the European Union's position regarding the conflict and the prospect of a peaceful resolution.

A similar form of declaration can be found in the European Parliament's resolution of 20 January 2016 in support of peace in Colombia.<sup>61</sup> In the resolution, the EP stressed the importance of consolidating peace and democracy and respect for human rights, and sustainable development as part of the framework of close political, economic and trade cooperation between the EU and Colombia. The existing agreements between the government of Colombia and the FARC to achieve peace is welcomed, and the political effort as demonstrated by both parties is recognized. Additionally, the close relationship between the EU and Colombia in areas of international cooperation on multilateral issues of interest is emphasized, such as the struggle for peace and the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism. The resolution also calls on the ELN to commit without further delay to peace in Colombia and urges the guerrilla organization to enter into negotiations with the Colombian government.<sup>62</sup> This resolution also fits Manners' definition as a declaratory communication, and could therefore be seen as an attempt of the European Union to exert a normative influence in the Colombian peace negotiations.

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<sup>59</sup> European External Action Service, "Colombia: EU will continue to deliver political and practical support to peace process," *Press Release*, December 16, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Manners, "Normative Power Europe," 244.

<sup>61</sup> European Parliament, "European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2016 in support of the peace process in Colombia," *EU Resolution*, January 20, 2016.

<sup>62</sup> *Idem*.

I conclude that the European Union's involvement in the peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC meets a number of Manners' factors of normative power diffusion. The official EU documents and statements show that the EU's actions conform to the factors of *overt diffusion*, *transference* and *informational diffusion* as established by Manners in his 2002 article. However, pointing out that these factors can be identified in the Colombian case, does not necessarily mean that the EU has been effective in exerting its normative influence in the peace process. Therefore, the next chapter will be devoted to investigating the effectiveness of the EU's involvement in Colombia. The three EU implementations as identified in this chapter will be revisited to see whether they have been normatively effective. I will assess to what extent its policies have served as an example for other actors involved in the conflict and I analyze articles in newspapers *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo* to better understand whether the EU has been able to establish itself as a significant peacekeeping force in the Colombian case.

### 3. Effectiveness of EU Normative Influence in Colombia

During a European Parliament plenary debate in September 2019 on the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia, minister Tupparainen spoke on behalf of HR Mogherini. In her speech, she indicated that “Colombia and the countries from the region need more international support. And the European Union is doing its part, leading the way among the international community.”<sup>63</sup> This statement reaffirms the European Commission’s faith in the EU’s peacebuilding capabilities in Colombia. It also hints to the EU’s presumable leading role among the international community in its support of peace. In the previous chapter, I have analyzed the European Union’s policies in the Colombian peace process, using Manners’ factors of normative power diffusion. I concluded that based on the assessment of primary sources, the EU’s involvement in Colombia meets the factors of *overt diffusion*, *transference* and *informational diffusion*. Arguing that these factors can be identified is an important step towards answering this paper’s research question, but before arriving at a conclusion we should first consider the effectiveness of EU normative policy in Colombia. Therefore, the question we will answer in this chapter is the following: To what extent have the EU’s normative actions in Colombia been effective?

First, we should consider how we can assess the effectiveness of EU normative policy. Central to Manners’ definition of Normative Power Europe is the ability of the European Union to “shape conceptions of the normal”.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, as can especially be found in Manners’ explanation of contagion, diffusion of EU norms can occur when the European Union leads serves as example for other actors, for instance in exporting its experiment in regional integration.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, if we can get a better understanding as to whether the EU’s actions in the Colombian peace process have served as an example for other countries or international actors, we can draw a conclusion about the effectiveness of the EU’s normative influence in this case.

Additionally, in this chapter I will add a new aspect to Manners’ definition of normative power by including another factor of normative effectiveness in the analysis: the coverage of

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<sup>63</sup> European External Action Service, “Speech on behalf of High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini at the European Parliament plenary debate on the political situation and the implementation of the peace process in Colombia,” *HR/VP Speeches*, September 18, 2019.

<sup>64</sup> Diez, “Normative power as hegemony,” 195; Manners, “Normative Power Europe,” 244.

<sup>65</sup> Manners, “Normative Power Europe,” 244.

the European Union's actions in Colombian newspapers. To better understand whether the EU has been effective in depicting itself as a significant peacebuilding force in Colombia, we should take into account the way in which the organization's involvement has been perceived by the country's media. To that end, I will undertake an analysis of publications by the two Colombian newspapers with the largest circulation and highest web popularity: *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*.<sup>66</sup> The extensiveness of media coverage about the EU's actions in Colombia as well as the discourse used in the news articles will indicate how the media has depicted the EU's peacebuilding efforts. High levels of visibility and a positive image in Colombian media enhance the possibility for the EU to effectively use its normative means of power, as it increases its credibility as a peacebuilding force.

I will structurally revisit the three main EU implementations as identified in the previous chapter, namely the establishment of the EU Trust Fund for Colombia, the removal of the FARC from the EU's list of terrorist organizations and the employment of Eamon Gilmore as EU Special Envoy. For every implementation, I will indicate whether the EU has been normatively effective. Similar to the previous chapter, this analysis will rely on documents from political institutions including the European Union and U.S. government. These sources give the most accurate information about specific implementations or public statements related to the European Union's involvement in the peace process. Subsequently, I will assess newspapers articles from *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador* regarding these three EU implementations to see whether and in what manner they have been described.

First, we will take a closer look at the normative effectiveness of the EU Trust Fund for Colombia. Upon the signing of the Fund, High Representative Mogherini indicated that it would allow the European Union to turn its political support for the peace process to concrete support of the implementation of the peace agreement.<sup>67</sup> Importantly, as can be read in Article 3 of the official document, the Trust Fund's provisions exist of both contributions of the European Union and its member states, as well as from external donors.<sup>68</sup> This means that

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<sup>66</sup> International Media and Newspapers, "Top Newspapers in Colombia by 2019 Newspaper Web Ranking," last accessed May 13, 2020, <https://www.4imn.com/co/>; Media Landscapes, "Colombia," last accessed May 13, 2020, <https://medialandscapes.org/country/colombia/media/print>.

<sup>67</sup> European External Action Service, "Remarks by the High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini and President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, following the signature of the EU Trust Fund for Peace in Colombia," *Public Statements*, December 12, 2016.

<sup>68</sup> European Commission, "Agreement Establishing the European Union Trust Fund for Colombia and its Internal Rules," *European Commission Document*, December 12, 2016.

besides being an example for other international actors, the normative effectiveness of the Trust Fund can also be assessed when looking at the number or significance of external donors that were attracted to participate in the Fund. Therefore, when discussing the effectiveness of the Fund I will distinguish between its ability to serve as an example for other international actors and its ability to persuade external donors to contribute funds.

As far as the ability of the Fund to serve as an example goes, I have not been able to find any evidence of other actors involved in the Colombian peace process setting up similar funds following the European Union's initiative. The United Nations is the only organization that created a similar fund, in the form of the UN Post-Conflict Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Colombia. According to the UN, the main objectives of the Fund are increasing local community confidence in the state and local authorities, increasing confidence in the peace process, avoiding outbreaks of violence related to the conflict, managing community or social conflict situations and reaching early achievements in terms of security, justice and development.<sup>69</sup> In that sense, the objectives seem similar to that of the EU Trust Fund For Colombia, as outlined in the previous chapter. However, I should point out that the UN Trust Fund was launched in February 2016, 10 months earlier than the European Union's initiative which was made public only in December of the same year.<sup>70</sup>

Therefore, rather than serving as an example, I argue that the EU rather followed the example set by the UN in launching a Trust Fund for the post-conflict phase of the Colombian peace process. This indicates a lack of normative influence on the European Union's side.

Regarding the attraction of external donors, we can identify a more promising achievement. As we saw in the previous chapter, besides the participation of 19 member states, the EU has been able to include Chile in the list of contributors to its Trust Fund for Colombia, which is a showcase of the organization's normative influence beyond the European borders.<sup>71</sup> Besides being one of the most prosperous countries in Latin America, the Chilean government has been actively involved in the peace negotiations with both the FARC and ELN, so its participation in the EU Fund is indeed significant.

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<sup>69</sup> United Nations, "UN Post-Conflict MPTF For Colombia," *United Nations Document*, June 27, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> European External Action Service, "Remarks by the High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini and President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, following the signature of the EU Trust Fund for Peace in Colombia," *Public Statements*, December 12, 2016.

<sup>71</sup> Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Unión Europea destaca incorporación de Chile en Fondo Europeo para la paz en Colombia," *Press Release*, November 22, 2018.

Turning our attention to the media coverage in *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*, we can see that the developments surrounding the Fund have been well-documented in both newspapers. Articles anticipating the activation of the Trust Fund started surfacing in 2015 and early 2016, and both newspapers covered its official launch in December 2016.<sup>72</sup> Following the launch, articles were published about announcements of extensions to the fund<sup>73</sup> and evaluations of the Fund's performance and impact.<sup>74</sup> In an interesting publication by *El Tiempo* in August 2017, the editorial board speculates about the possible economic consequences for Colombia of Brexit, pointing out that a reduction in European funds could occur if the British government does not take responsibility for its part.<sup>75</sup> I argue that both the close attention these papers give to the Fund's developments as well as the concerns regarding Brexit indicate that the media attaches significant importance to the EU Trust Fund for the future of the peace process.

Therefore, when assessing the normative achievements of the EU Trust Fund For Colombia, we can identify mixed results. I have found no evidence of similar initiatives following or based on the EU Fund, and the earlier establishment of a UN Fund for Colombia hints to a more subordinate rather than a leading role for the European Union in this case. However, when discussing the attraction of external donors to the Fund, the participation of the Chilean government showcases the ability of the European Union in attracting external actors to the Fund. Additionally, developments surrounding the Fund have been well-documented by Colombian media, reaffirming its importance in the post-conflict phase.

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<sup>72</sup> El Espectador, "Colombia y UE crean el Fondo Fiduciario para el postconflicto," December 12, 2016, last accessed May 26, 2020, <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/colombia-y-ue-crean-el-fondo-fiduciario-el-posconflicto-articulo-670024>; El Tiempo, "El apoyo que le dio la Unión Europea al postconflicto en Colombia," December 12, 2016, last accessed May 26, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/europa/fondo-de-la-union-europea-para-el-posconflicto-34822>.

<sup>73</sup> El Espectador, "UE y Gobierno anuncian extensión del Fondo Europeo para la paz por cuatro años más," October 24, 2019, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/ue-y-gobierno-anuncian-extension-del-fondo-europeo-para-la-paz-por-cuatro-anos-mas-articulo-887689>; El Tiempo, "UA aportará más recursos para la paz de Colombia," November 21, 2018, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/congreso/union-europea-aportara-mas-recursos-para-la-paz-de-colombia-296176>.

<sup>74</sup> El Espectador, "Radiografía del Fondo Europeo para la Paz en Colombia," May 13, 2019, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/radiografia-del-fondo-europeo-para-la-paz-en-colombia-articulo-860260>; El Tiempo, "Unión Europea presentó avances en implementación de proyectos de paz," June 22, 2019, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/union-europea-presento-avances-en-implementacion-de-proyectos-de-paz-379426>.

<sup>75</sup> El Tiempo, "Brexit podría afectar presupuesto de ayuda de la UE para Colombia," August 31, 2017, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/europa/brexit-afectaria-presupuesto-de-ayuda-de-la-union-europea-para-colombia-125900>.

Then, let us turn our attention to the more diplomatic side of European Union action regarding the Colombian peace process, and more specifically to the suspension of restrictive measures and the ultimate removal of the FARC from the EU terrorist list. To understand the impact of this decision, we should consider the response of other important actors in the Colombian peace process. I would argue that besides the United Nations and European Union, the two most influential actors in the peace process have been the governments of Colombia and the United States. Whereas the involvement of the Colombian government in the peace agreement is obvious, with the Santos administration being the initiator of the peace talks with the FARC, the United States has historically played an important role in the Colombian conflict.<sup>76</sup> For many years, as part of their involvement in Latin America<sup>77</sup>, U.S. administrations have worked closely together with the Colombian government in the infamous “war on drugs.” This also involved the FARC due to the organization’s involvement in the illegal drug business. Rather than seeking a peaceful end to the conflict, the U.S. has mostly been involved in fighting the guerillas with military force. For a long time this has been the Colombian government’s policy towards the conflict, which was actively supported both politically and financially by the U.S. government.

In 2000, the Colombian and American governments implemented a new joined policy program, called Plan Colombia, with the objectives of eliminating the production of illegal drugs, ending violence and stimulating economic development. The main strategy of the program was the eradication of coca plantations by means of aerial spraying of toxic gasses and manual coca bush destruction.<sup>78</sup> Even though Plan Colombia was aimed at organized criminality, it severely impacted the FARC due to their increasing involvement in the illegal drug business. Plan Colombia did not yield the expected results, and the increasing number of insurgents fostered a shift in how the War on Drugs would be conducted. The September 11 terrorist attacks paved the way for Colombia’s newly elected president, Alvaro Uribe, to

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<sup>76</sup> Jaime Zuluaga Nieto, “U.S. Security Policies and United States-Colombia Relations,” *Latin American Perspectives* 152, vol. 34 (2007): 116; Jonathan D. Rosen, *The Losing War: Plan Colombia and Beyond* (New York: State University Press, 2014): 1.

<sup>77</sup> Roy, “Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean: Competition or Cooperation with the United States?”; Youngs, “The European Union and Democracy in Latin America.”

<sup>78</sup> Gerson Javier Pérez V., “Plan Colombia’s Onset: Effects on Homicides and Violent Deaths,” *Revista de Economía del Rosario* 17, no. 1: (2014) : 122-124.

introduce a new hardline approach to insurgency as terrorism, transforming the War on Drugs into the War against Terrorism.<sup>79</sup>

The new policies, supported financially by U.S. president George W. Bush, focused on equipping the Colombian military and engaging in an all-out war against the drug cartels and guerrillas. Despite its success in substantially decreasing the number of insurgencies in Colombia and weakening the guerrilla forces, Uribe's program was also criticized due to widespread human rights violations. As part of the plan, the government offered awards to soldiers based on their military accomplishments against the rebels. This led to a scandal known as Falsos Positivos, which involved Colombian soldiers killing civilians and dressing them up in guerrilla uniforms to falsely increase the body count of rebels. According to the International Federation of Human Rights, over 3,000 innocent civilians have been killed between 2002 and 2008 through this practice.<sup>80</sup>

Taking into account the role of the United States in Colombia, especially after president Uribe transformed the conflict into a War against Terrorism, it might have been challenging for the EU to serve as an example for the United States in removing the FARC from its terrorist list. And indeed, the FARC can still be found listed as one of the foreign terrorist organizations on the U.S. Department of State website.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, despite the EU's repeated call on the ELN to lay down their arms, also one of the points made in the European Parliament's resolution as discussed in the previous chapter<sup>82</sup>, the organization remains active in their armed struggle against the Colombian government. Finally, ever since the FARC vowed to lay down their arms, a number of former fighters have fled to bordering Venezuela, where the Maduro regime gives them a safe harbor to continue their illegal activities. This has led the Colombian government to continue including these so-called FARC dissidents on their list of terrorist groups, due to their terrorist activities and rejection of peace.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, based on these points we can say that the suspension and removal of the FARC from the European

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<sup>79</sup> Catherine M. Banks and John A. Sokolowski, "From War on Drugs to War on Terrorism: Modeling the evolution of Colombia's counter-insurgency," *Social Science Research* 38, no. 1 (2008): 146-148.

<sup>80</sup> Douglas Farah, "Security," in *Colombia: Peace and Stability in the Post-Conflict Era*, ed. Carl Meacham, Douglas Farah and Robert D. Lamb, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 14.

<sup>81</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," *List of Terrorist Organizations by the Bureau of Counterterrorism*, last accessed April 20, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>.

<sup>82</sup> European Parliament, "European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2016 in support of the peace process in Colombia," *EU Resolution*, January 20, 2016.

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Embassy in Colombia, "Statement on U.S.- Colombia Partnership to Combat Terrorism," *Public Statement by the U.S. Embassy in Colombia*, January 21, 2020.

Union's terrorist list has not yielded the desired results and shows the limitations of the EU's normative influence.

In both *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*, articles were published following the EU's decision to remove the FARC from its terrorist list. The initial publications mainly state the intention and eventual realization of the FARC's removal from the list, accompanied by statements of various EU officials.<sup>84</sup> Interestingly, in the following months and years, both newspapers seem to draw a similar comparison as I have done in the previous paragraphs, by touching upon the divide between the EU and the United States in their approach to this matter. A number of publications were released, highlighting that the FARC remained listed on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations.<sup>85</sup> *El Tiempo* reported as recent as January 2020 that the return to arms of some former FARC members could complicate the removal of the organization from the American list of terrorist groups.<sup>86</sup>

I argue that the persistent interest in the position of the U.S. government indicates the importance that both the Colombian government and media give to the United States as an ally in the conflict. Therefore, this does to some extent affirm a more subordinate role of the European Union in the Colombian peace process. This is in accordance with the arguments made by Youngs and Roy about the EU's subsidiary position in Latin America when compared to the United States.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, as both newspapers point out, the Colombian government did recently adjust its list of terrorist based on an adoption of the lists of the European Union and the United States, in which the FARC as an organization is no

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<sup>84</sup> *El Espectador*, "Unión Europea sacaría a las Farc de lista de grupos terroristas," September 25, 2016, last accessed May 23, 2020, <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/union-europea-sacaria-farc-de-lista-de-grupos-terrorist-articulo-656930>.

<sup>85</sup> *El Espectador*, "Departamento de Estado de EE. UU. no retira a las Farc de lista de grupos terroristas," September 19, 2018, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/departamento-de-estado-de-eeuu-no-retira-las-farc-de-lista-de-grupos-terroristas-articulo-813131>; *El Tiempo*, "Pese a proceso de paz, EE. UU. mantiene en lista de terroristas a Farc," September 19, 2018, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/eeuu-y-canada/farc-se-mantiene-en-la-lista-negra-de-terroristas-de-estados-unidos-270482>; Sergio Gómez Maseri, "Qué significa que Farc no salgan de lista de terroristas de EE. UU.?" *El Tiempo*, September 20, 2018, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/eeuu-y-canada/por-que-las-farc-no-salen-de-lista-de-terroristas-de-ee-uu-271004>.

<sup>86</sup> Sergio Gómez Maseri, "Por qué EE. UU. sigue considerando como grupo terrorista a las Farc," *El Tiempo*, January 20, 2020, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/eeuu-y-canada/por-que-estados-unidos-no-ha-sacado-a-las-farc-de-la-lista-de-grupos-terroristas-453780>.

<sup>87</sup> Roy, "Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean," 237-246; Youngs, "The European Union and Democracy in Latin America," 111.

longer included.<sup>88</sup> I argue that this is a showcase of the EU's ability to serve as an example, which does testify of the organization's normative influence in Colombia.

Finally, I should discuss the employment of Eamon Gilmore as Special Envoy to Colombia. Indicating to what extent Gilmore's role as a representative for the European Union has been effective is particularly challenging, considering that it is difficult to argue in what ways his personal involvement has affected other actors involved in the conflict. Gilmore currently serves as EU Special Representative for Human Rights, a task he assumed in February 2019. Because Gilmore's personal insights could be helpful to this research, I have attempted to contact him with the aim of asking a number of questions related to his position as a Special Envoy to Colombia. Unfortunately, I have not been able to get into contact. Therefore, this section will be limited to the coverage in *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador* about the employment and actions of Eamon Gilmore in Colombia.

From the onsets, both newspapers make mention of the appointment of Gilmore as special envoy as soon as the decision was made public by High Representative Mogherini. In the articles, reference is made to some of Mogherini's comments upon Gilmore's appointment, including his past experience in the Irish peace process as well as the objectives of his mission in Colombia.<sup>89</sup> On multiple occasions, *El Tiempo* conducted interviews with Gilmore where he answered questions related to his involvement in the peace process. In a March 2016 interview, he was asked specifically about the EU's pledged financial aid to Colombia, and in his answer Gilmore referred to the preparation of the European Trust Fund to be activated upon the signing of the peace agreement.<sup>90</sup> Another interview in December the same year mainly focused on the Special Envoy's role in the implementation of the accords. Interestingly, in this interview both the topics of the EU Trust Fund and the possibility of the

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<sup>88</sup> El Espectador, "Para el Gobierno Nacional, Farc no serán más un grupo terrorista," January 20, 2020, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/para-el-gobierno-nacional-farc-no-seran-mas-un-grupo-terrorista-articulo-900714>; El Tiempo, "Colombia saca a las FARC de lista de terroristas, pero EE. UU. no," January 20, 2020, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/terrorismo-gobierno-adopto-lista-con-79-grupos-453620>.

<sup>89</sup> El Espectador, "Eamon Gilmore, el enviado especial de la Unión Europea para el proceso de paz," October 1, 2015, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/eamon-gilmore-el-enviado-especial-de-union-europea-el-p-articulo-590035>; El Tiempo, "Unión Europea nombra a enviado especial al proceso de paz en Cuba," October 1, 2015, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16392287>.

<sup>90</sup> El Tiempo, "El proceso de paz llegó a un punto en que es irreversible," Marzo 22, 2016, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16543821>.

EU removing the FARC from its list of terrorist organizations are touched upon, indicating the role that Gilmore has in spreading information about EU implementations in Colombia.<sup>91</sup>

In a November 2017 interview by *El Espectador*, Gilmore answered more detailed questions about the removal of the FARC from the list of terrorist organizations and its consequences for the organization's future as a political party.<sup>92</sup> In another interview by the paper a few months earlier, Gilmore was asked about the EU's efforts in the implementation phase of the peace agreement, and more specifically about the protection of social leaders which historically are vulnerable in Colombia. In his answers, the Special Envoy expressed the EU's concerns relating to this issue and indicated which implementations the organization planned to carry out to better defend this group.<sup>93</sup> I argue that Gilmore's participation in these interviews has most likely fostered the visibility of the European Union in the peace process, which, as we saw, is one of the main objectives of the EUSRs.<sup>94</sup>

Besides his participation in interviews, the Special Representative's visits to Colombia have been regularly documented in both newspapers. The articles pay attention to the places Gilmore visited in the country, as well as to the events he attended related to the peace negotiations. For example, a 2016 article in *El Tiempo* clarified the objectives of Gilmore's fifth visit to Colombia, pointing out that he would meet with church representatives, analysts in conflict and government officials, as well as with community leaders to broaden the European Union's understanding of the conflict.<sup>95</sup> Likewise, in a February 2018 publication, *El Espectador* provided readers with an extensive overview of Gilmore's upcoming visit to the country, indicating that accompanied by EU ambassador Patricia Llombart he would travel to the cities of Tumaco and Quibdó to meet with local communities and ex-FARC

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<sup>91</sup> El Tiempo, "Nos concentramos en las zonas afectadas por la guerra," December 17, 2016, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/entrevista-con-eamon-gilmore-enviado-de-la-union-europea-al-proceso-de-paz-47965>.

<sup>92</sup> Carolina Ávila, "Farc será tratada como cualquier partido político": Unión Europea," *El Espectador*, November 15, 2017, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/farc-sera-tratada-como-cualquier-partido-politico-union-europea-articulo-856015>.

<sup>93</sup> Susana Noguera, "Líderes sociales deben tener máximo nivel de protección: Eamon Gilmore," *El Espectador*, May 27, 2017, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/politica/lideres-sociales-deben-tener-maximo-nivel-de-proteccion-eamon-gilmore-articulo-855442>.

<sup>94</sup> Cornelius Adebahr, "The EU Special Representatives," 155; Dominik Tolksdorf, "EU Special Representatives," 457.

<sup>95</sup> El Tiempo, "Enviado especial de Unión Europea, de visita en el Urabá antioqueño," July 6, 2016, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16637766>.

combatants.<sup>96</sup> The detailed reports of Gilmore's visits to the country hint to the significance of the Special Representative and the EU in general in the Colombian peace process.

Based on the assessment of primary sources and the analysis of the Colombian newspapers of *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo*, I conclude that while a mixed record can be identified, the European Union has not been able to truly excel as a peacebuilding force in Colombia. Even though the EU Trust Fund for Colombia has attracted 19 of the EU member states and the Chilean government as donors, it has not inspired similar initiatives to be set-up. At the same time, the Fund's developments have been well-documented by both newspapers, indicating the importance attributed to the initiative. The EU has not been able to serve as an example for the United States in removing the FARC from its terrorist list of organizations, something *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo* paid significant attention to. This indicates some limitations to the EU's normative influence in the Colombian peace process. On the contrary, based on the extensive documentation of his activities in the Colombian newspapers and the various interviews Eamon Gilmore participated in, we can say that the Special Representative has been rather successful in fostering the EU's visibility as a peacebuilding force in Colombia. By highlighting the specific EU implementations in his correspondence with the newspapers, Gilmore has contributed to a comprehensive image of the EU's efforts in the country.

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<sup>96</sup> El Espectador, "Eamon Gilmore, enviado especial de la Unión Europea para la paz, llega a Colombia," February 26, 2018, last accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/eamon-gilmore-enviado-especial-de-la-union-europea-para-la-paz-llega-colombia-articulo-741367>.

## Conclusion

After 52 years of civil conflict, signing a peace-agreement with the FARC was an important milestone for the Colombian state in its quest to end the violence. From the onsets of the peace negotiations with the guerrilla organization, the international community has been actively involved to foster a climate for peaceful resolution. Most prominently, the United Nations and the European Union have been supporting the peace-talks between both parties. The scale and longevity of the Colombian civil war makes it a fitting case study to assess the EU's peacebuilding capabilities, considering that many of the EU's core values were violated. This thesis shows that despite a number of important policy initiatives in support of peace in accordance with Manners' factors of normative power diffusion, the European Union has not been able to truly solidify its normative influence in Colombia, especially when compared to the United States.

I have touched upon the EU's implementations that I argue have been most important in the Colombian case. I identified the appointment of Eamon Gilmore as EU Special Envoy, the establishment of a EU Trust Fund for Colombia and two diplomatic implementations in the form of the removal from the FARC from the EU list of terrorist organizations and the European Parliament's resolution of January 2016 in support of peace in Colombia. I showed that these actions correspond to three of Manners' factors of normative power diffusion: *overt diffusion*, *transference* and *informational diffusion*. Subsequently, we saw that the European Union has not always been effective in serving as an example for other actors involved in the conflict, suggesting limited normative influence.

The media coverage in *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo* indicates that the European Union's actions in Colombia have been closely monitored. Although these articles have been written with close attention to facts and lack outspoken opinion, the continuing interest in the EU's policies shows that the organization has established itself as a recognized actor in the peace process and the post-conflict phase. On the contrary, despite the relief of sanctions and the ultimate removal of the FARC from its terrorist list, the emergence of FARC dissidents in Venezuela and the unwillingness of the ELN to lay down their arms shows serious limitations to the EU's normative influence. Ever since the January 2019 bombing in Bogotá, peace talks with the ELN have been suspended and military operations against the organization have been reactivated. As recent as May 16 of this year, five guerrillas were killed in an operation,

including a member of the ELN's national directorate.<sup>97</sup> This suggests the inability of the EU to facilitate peace negotiations with the ELN, and ultimately hints to a deviation from the path of peaceful resolution.

Altogether, much work remains to be done for the European Union in Colombia if it truly wants to establish itself as a peacebuilding organization that is able to “shape conceptions of the normal.” Even though the EU's efforts in Colombia cannot be overlooked, and some substantial advances have been made, the recent return to military intervention indicates clear limitations to the organization's current initiatives. Time will tell if the Colombian government can find the momentum to re-activate peace negotiations with the ELN in an attempt to end the violence that has been affecting the country and its population for more than half a century.

Whereas the use of Manners' theory of Normative Power Europe in this thesis has contributed to a better understanding of the EU's influence in the Colombian peace process, it has limited the scope of this research. As becomes evident in the scholarly debate, various authors question the sincerity of the European Union's current ability and desire to spread norms and values.<sup>98</sup> Contrarily, these authors highlight the EU's market-driven basis and the interests of the individual member states. By limiting myself to using the NPE theory as a framework, I have chosen not to further pursue these strains of thought about the European Union's non-normative interests. Additionally, the analysis of public documents from various EU institutions has given us an extensive account of the organization's public discourse regarding the Colombian peace process. However, it is challenging to find out the underlying motives of public statements or declarations, which constitutes a limitation to this research.

The inclusion of newspaper coverage as an indication of normative power has given us new insights into the way in which the EU's actions have been perceived by Colombian media. For instance, it has indicated the importance of a special representative and reaffirmed the more subordinate role of the EU in Latin American when compared to the United States. The U.S. has been the Colombian state's historical ally in the conflict, a role that the EU has not

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<sup>97</sup> El Tiempo, “En operativo contra el Eln cayó un jefe de la Dirección Nacional,” May 16, 2020, last accessed June 1, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/conflicto-y-narcotrafico/operativo-contra-el-eln-cayo-gallero-uno-de-los-jefes-de-la-direccion-nacional-496214>.

<sup>98</sup> Damro, “Market Power Europe,” 697; Newman and Stefan, “Normative Power Europe?” 485; Wood, “Pragmatic Power Europe?” 256.

been able to take upon itself. This corresponds with the views of Roy and Youngs about the more influential position of the U.S. in Latin America.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, for future research into the EU's normative influence and external action I suggest that the role of the media is an important additional parameter to take into account. Investigating media coverage in other conflicts where the European Union has intervened can increase our understanding of the organization's normative influence in regions further removed from Europe.

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<sup>99</sup> Roy, "Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean," 237-246; Youngs, "The European Union and Democracy in Latin America," 111.

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