

5. Peace negotiations in Europe

- 14% of the world's peace processes in 2019 (seven of the 50) took place in Europe.
- Progress was made in the peace process in Ukraine, with the resumption of the Normandy dialogue format, more robust ceasefires and the withdrawal of forces from various areas.
- The political crisis in Moldova slowed down the negotiating process on Transdniestria, without the parties to the conflict achieving a new protocol with confidence-building measures in 2019.
- The peace process in Cyprus remained deadlocked throughout the year and the informal meetings failed to generate enough agreement for them to be formally resumed.
- The dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia remained at an impasse amidst increasing tension and respective demands.
- Armenia approved its first national action plan for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, but this did not include specific mechanisms for participation in the peace process and focused on the security forces.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2019. Firstly, the main characteristics and general trends on the dialogue processes in the region are presented, followed by the analysis on the evolution of each specific context during the year, including in relation to the gender, peace and security agenda. In addition, at the beginning of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in Europe that hosted peace negotiations during 2019.

Table 5.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2019

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Armenia, Azerbaijan	OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by Russia, France and the USA; the remaining permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey)
Cyprus	Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus	UN, EU; Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom (guarantor countries)
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia ¹	OSCE, EU and UN; USA, Russia ²
Moldova (Transdniestria)	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria	OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU
Serbia – Kosovo	Serbia, Kosovo	EU, UN
Spain (Basque Country)	ETA (dissolved), government of Spain, government of the Basque Country, government of Navarre, government of France, <i>Communauté d'Agglomération du Pays Basque</i> (Basque Municipal Community), political and social actors of the Basque Country, Basque Political Prisoners Collective (EPPK)	Permanent Social Forum, Bakea Bidea
Ukraine (east)	Government of Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, government of Russia ³	OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia ⁴ also participate; Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ⁵)

5.1. Negotiations in 2019: regional trends

Seven peace processes were identified in **Europe** in 2019, the same number as in 2018. These account for 14% of the 50 total peace processes worldwide in 2019. Only one of these seven peace processes referred to an active armed

conflict: the war in Ukraine, which began in 2014. The other active armed conflict in Europe, which has pitted the Turkish government against the Kurdish armed group PKK since 1984, continued without negotiations since the

1. Russia's status in the Georgian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.
2. Ibid.
3. Russia's status in the Ukrainian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

last peace talks ended unsuccessfully in 2015, although in 2019 civil society actors continued to be involved in initiatives to promote dialogue in this context.⁶ The rest of the active processes address past armed conflicts or socio-political crises and, with the exception of Spain (Basque Country), all still occurred amidst socio-political crises, with different levels of intensity: medium-intensity socio-political crises between Serbia and Kosovo and Armenia and Azerbaijan around Nagorno-Karabakh, and low-intensity crises in Georgia in relation to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Moldova in relation to Transdniestria.⁷

Actors representing self-proclaimed entities such as states stood out as negotiating parties, despite enjoying little or no international recognition (Transdniestria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Northern Turkish Republic of Cyprus, the People's Republic of Donetsk and the People's Republic of Luhansk). An exception was Kosovo, which is recognised by more than one hundred countries. All of them participated in the negotiating tables in their various bilateral or multilateral formats, and mostly under the decisive influence of countries that exercised political, economic and military influence over them. The self-proclaimed state of Nagorno-Karabakh, which does not enjoy international recognition, did not play a formal

role in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan mediated by OSCE, although it was regularly consulted by the co-mediators. In 2019, the Armenian government again demanded Nagorno-Karabakh's participation in the negotiations, while Azerbaijan continued to reject that option and in 2019 responded by demanding the participation of the displaced population originally from Nagorno-Karabakh.

The armed conflict between Turkey and the PKK continued without a negotiating process, despite the urgent need for a negotiated solution amidst growing region-based violence

Moreover, Europe continued to stand out for having third parties in the negotiations taking place there. **All the peace processes involved external parties performing mediation and facilitation tasks.** Most of the mediators and facilitators were intergovernmental organisations. The OSCE was a mediator or co-mediator in four of the seven peace processes in Europe: Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Moldova (Transdniestria) and Ukraine (east). The EU was the main facilitator of the peace process between Serbia and Kosovo, a co-mediator in Georgia, an observer in Moldova and an "interested party" in the Cyprus peace process. The UN was the mediator of the long-running process in Cyprus and a co-mediator of the Georgian peace process. Through various functions, it also supported the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, facilitated by the EU.

Moreover, some states maintained a prominent role

Map 5.1. Peace negotiations in Europe in 2019



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2019

6. See the summary on Turkey (southeast) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) of Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.
7. For further information on the development of these crises, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.

as third parties, such as France and Germany in the Normandy format of the Ukraine peace process, which was reactivated in 2019 after being stalled since 2016 and in which Ukraine and Russia also participate. Both Ukraine and Russia also increased their standing among the international stakeholders calling for a way out of the deadlocked dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, as did the United States. Washington appointed a new special representative for the Western Balkans in August, Matthew Palmer, and in October it appointed a special envoy for the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, which was singled out in some media outlets as a sign of renewed US interest in the region. During the year, Kosovo argued that the United States must be included in the EU-facilitated negotiating. The United States was also an observer in the Moldovan peace process (Transdniestria), as well as a participant in the multilateral Geneva International Discussions (GID) that bring together Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia under the co-mediation of the OSCE, EU and UN. Russia continued to be an active facilitator in Europe, as a co-mediator in the dialogue between Moldova and Transdniestria and as a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group in the talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In that process, in addition to its actions under the umbrella of the OSCE, Russia carried out good offices on its own initiative, such as the meeting with Armenia and Azerbaijan that it convened in 2019. At the same time, its status in the Georgian and Ukrainian peace processes remained subject to different interpretations. Georgia and Ukraine continued to consider Moscow a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considered itself a third party in both processes. Finally, some mediators and facilitators carried out their work through specific structures, such as the OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by Russia, France and the US) in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, and the Permanent Social Forum in the Basque Country, where both organizations and individuals participate.

The formal negotiating processes in Europe continued to be characterised by non-inclusive formats, with only the parties to the conflict and the mediators involved in the negotiating tables. However, in some cases there were mechanisms of dialogue and consultation with civil society actors, although these were mostly non-institutionalised, with the exception of Georgia. Regular consultations took place in 2018 between Georgian government representatives and the local population, including women. However, despite the lack of institutional mechanisms, various kinds of civil society actors promoted and participated in peacebuilding initiatives in all processes, although their capacity to influence formal negotiations was limited.

The formal negotiating processes in Europe continued to be characterised by hardly inclusive formats, with only

All negotiating processes in Europe were supported by external third parties

the parties to the conflict and the mediators involved in the negotiating tables. One of the exceptions was the Kosovo negotiating delegation, made up of government, political opposition and civil society representatives, and appointed by the Kosovar Parliament in late 2018, although the Kosovo Constitutional Court ruled its mandate unconstitutional in 2019 because it overlapped with other institutions. However, various kinds of civil society actors promoted and participated in peacebuilding initiatives in all processes, although their capacity to influence formal negotiations was limited. In most cases, the spaces for dialogue and indirect talks between civil society and negotiators or facilitators were not institutionalised.

The issues on the **negotiating agendas** were diverse and the details on the various elements and status of discussions of each round were not always public. As in previous years, the substantive issues of many of the conflicts and dialogue processes, mostly the **status of the various territories in dispute**, remained missing or deadlocked. Some processes with this underlying issue, such as those in Serbia-Kosovo, Moldova (Transdniestria) and Cyprus, remained at an impasse or slowed down throughout the year. In Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), the discussion on status continued beyond the scope of the negotiations due to the lack of agreement to address it and the situation on the ground, which prioritised security issues. Meanwhile, Armenia and Azerbaijan maintained their fundamental disagreements over the resolution of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, while progress was made in other areas related to confidence-building and security measures. Instead there were more developments in Ukraine, where the new Ukrainian president announced his support for the Steinmeier formula at the end of the year. Proposed in 2016 by the OSCE chairperson-in-office at the time, the Steinmeier formula would simultaneously grant special status to the disputed areas of eastern Ukraine and hold elections in those areas as a way to facilitate implementation of the Minsk agreements and move the conflict towards a solution, which was already supported by Russia and the rebel actors. However, it was clear that this formula would require solving security-related issues, such as border control, which Ukraine demanded to settle before moving to the other steps.

The peace processes in Moldova (Transdniestria), Serbia-Kosovo and Cyprus remained at an impasse during 2019

Other topics on the agenda in Europe were related to **security**. In 2019, this included issues such as **incident prevention and ceasefire measures**. Armenia and Azerbaijan pledged to strengthen the ceasefire and the direct incident prevention response mechanism in 2019, with positive repercussions on the ground, as levels of violence fell. In Ukraine, the ceasefire was also renewed and expanded. Despite ceasefire violations, there were significantly less casualties in 2019 than in 2018. In Georgia, while the incident prevention mechanism for South Ossetia convened regularly, except for a short time, the one for Abkhazia remained cancelled

since June 2018, when Abkhazia abandoned it, and Georgia and the co-mediators urged Abkhazia to resume it during rounds of negotiations at the highest level (the Geneva International Discussions, or GID). The GID addressed other security issues, such as restrictions on freedom of movement, the closure of border crossings and militarisation measures carried out by either party to the conflict. In Ukraine, the **withdrawal of military forces and weapons** was addressed. In 2019, this was implemented in three pilot areas agreed in 2016 and there was further agreement to expand it to three other areas in 2020.

Confidence-building measures, including humanitarian measures, included swaps or releases of prisoners in Ukraine, between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Georgia (Abkhazia). In addition, Armenia and Azerbaijan authorised an exchange of visits by journalists from each country for the first time since 2001 and agreed to allow mutual access to prisoners by family members in each country's detention centers. In Cyprus, despite the fact that the peace process remained deadlocked at the highest level, progress was made in the joint technical committees, with confidence-building measures in the cultural, educational, economic and commercial spheres, among others. Meanwhile, Moldova and Transnistria failed to reach a new protocol of measures in areas of common interest before the end of the year.

Regarding the **evolution** of the peace processes, 2019 was a year of impasse in Moldova (Transnistria) due to the political upheaval in the country; the process in Serbia-Kosovo, paralysed since late 2018, had uncertain prospects of a resumption due to the demands and positions of each party; and the process in Cyprus held no formal meetings in 2019, although informal meetings were held amidst rising tension between Cyprus and Turkey over gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean. However, significant progress was made in Ukraine, with the resumption of the Normandy negotiating format (Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France) and Ukraine's support for the aforementioned Steinmeier formula, although there were still significant obstacles to resolving the underlying issues.

Regarding the **gender perspective**, the peace processes in Europe continued to be characterised mainly by low levels of female participation in the negotiating teams, as well as by the lack of mechanisms or gender architecture. Compared to 2018, there was still only one case that had a gender mechanism in the formal negotiating process in 2019: the Cyprus process and its technical committee on gender equality. While it remained stagnant in 2018, the restart of its activity was announced in 2019, focusing on issues of equality and climate change, although information on the committee was scarce for the rest of the year. None of the peace processes had mechanisms for the direct participation of female civil society activists in formal negotiations. Only one case, in Georgia, were there institutionalised mechanisms for indirect female participation in the peace

process. Thus, the government of Georgia upheld its practice of organising several consultations a year between Georgian government representatives in the negotiations and representatives of civil society and the population affected by the conflict, including women. This was supported by UN Women, which promoted the practice until it was internalised by the government, as reflected in Georgia's national action plan on UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. In contrast, the Armenian government approved its first national action plan in 2019, but it did not contain mechanisms for direct or indirect participation in the peace process by women's organisations or women affected by the conflict.

Facilitators held sporadic consultations with female civil society activists or with political and social actors involved in implementing the commitments related to Resolution 1325, such as meetings between the current OSCE chairperson-in-office's special gender representative and social actors and politicians in Ukraine. In addition, EU actors, including the head of the Regional Office of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, also participated in consultations between Georgian government representatives and civil society representatives, including women, in 2019. Spaces organised or supported by the UN and the EU were used by female activists to convey demands, including demands for greater participation in negotiating processes, like in Kosovo. In addition, in 2019 the EU approved its 2019-2024 action plan for implementing its new Strategic Approach on Women, Peace and Security (2018). After Slovakia ended its turn as the OSCE rotating chairperson-in-office in the opening days of January 2020, Albania took over, announcing the role of women in peace and security as one of the priorities of its term of office. However, the main intergovernmental organisations operating as third parties in Europe, the OSCE and the EU, provided no systematised data on the gender dimension of the processes in which they were involved or on the impacts or results of talks with female civil society activists.

At civil society level, women's organizations and activists carried out peacebuilding initiatives and established mechanisms and raised demands for female participation in the peace processes, as well demands on the substantive issues of the conflicts and dialogue processes. Examples in 2019 include the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN) in Cyprus, which includes female diplomats and civil society advocates. In 2019, the network announced that it was establishing the MWMN/Cyprus Antenna. In Georgia, civil society women's organisations began a municipal-level process to implement the national action plan of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in 2019, with international financial support. In Ukraine, women activists from different conflict zones gathered around a bridge that was being rebuilt as part of the confidence-building measures of the negotiating process in order to show their support for dialogue and to give visibility to the role of women in peacebuilding.

The peace processes in Europe continued to be characterised mostly by the lack of gender architectures

5.2. Case study analysis

Eastern Europe

Moldova (Transdnistria)	
Negotiating actors	Moldovan government, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdnistria
Third parties	OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU
Relevant agreements	Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova (1992), Memorandum on the Bases for Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transdnistria (The Moscow Agreement) (1997)

Summary:

Transdnistria is a 4,000 km² enclave with half a million inhabitants that are mostly Russian-speaking. Legally under Moldovan sovereignty, but with de facto independence, since the 1990s it has been the stage for an unresolved dispute regarding its status. The conflict surfaced during the final stages of the breakup of the USSR, when fears increased in Transdnistria over a possible unification between the independent Moldova and Romania, which have both historical and cultural links. Transdnistria rejected Moldovan sovereignty and declared itself independent. This sparked an escalation in the number of incidents, which eventually became an armed conflict in 1992. A ceasefire agreement that same year brought the war to an end and gave way to a peace process under international mediation. One of the main issues is the status of the territory. Moldova defends its territorial integrity, but is willing to accept a special status for the entity, while Transdnistria has fluctuated between proposals for a confederalist model that would give the area broad powers and demands full independence. Other points of friction in the negotiations include cultural and socio-economic issues and Russian military presence in Transdnistria. Since the beginning of the dispute there have been several proposals, partial agreements, commitments and confidence-building measures in the framework of the peace process, as well as important obstacles and periods of stagnation. Geostrategic international disputes also hover over this unresolved conflict, which has deteriorated due to the war in Ukraine.

The negotiations encountered difficulties and slowed down due to an internal political crisis in Moldova, in contrast to previous years of progress on the measures known as “Berlin Plus”.⁸ Early in the year, the current chairperson-in-office of the OSCE (the mediating organisation for the process), Slovakian Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák, pointed out that plans for the negotiating process in 2019 included the completion of the Berlin Plus package of measures, including for telecommunications between Moldova and

The negotiating process between the authorities of Moldova and Transdnistria was negatively influenced by the political uncertainty in Moldova

Transdnistria, as well as the identification of new areas in which to make headway. However, the parliamentary elections in Moldova in February and the difficulties in forming a new government due to the lack of a clear majority delayed the negotiating process. In June, after three months of stagnation in the Moldovan political scene and against all odds, the pro-EU Action and Solidarity (ACUM) party and the pro-Russian Socialist Party agreed to form a coalition government with the leader of ACUM Maia Sandu as the new prime minister and the Socialist Zinaida Greceanii as the speaker of Parliament, whose objectives were to remove the Democratic Party of the oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc from power. The agreement occurred *in extremis*, on 8 June, with different interpretations on whether it met or exceeded the three-month constitutional deadline. A day later, the Constitutional Court declared the formation of the coalition government invalid, as it found that the deadline had passed. It also withdrew powers from President Igor Dodon, whom the Democratic Party accused of failing to dissolve Parliament, and Pavel Filip, of the Democratic Party, was appointed president instead. The new government obtained international support, Filip resigned in the middle of June and a day later the Constitutional Court revoked its previous ruling and recognised the new administration.

The temporary solution to the political crisis in Moldova reactivated the process in Transdnistria, albeit with difficulties. At the end of July there was a meeting between the main negotiators on both sides: the Moldovan Deputy Minister for Reintegration, Vasili Sova, appointed as the new chief negotiator in June, and the head of Transdnistrian Foreign Affairs, Vitaly Ignatiev. It was the first meeting at this level since the beginning of the year. Negotiations were held in the 5+2 format, which brings together the parties to the conflict, as well as the mediators (OSCE, Russia, Ukraine) and observers (USA and EU), in Bratislava (Slovakia) on 9 and 10 October. At the meeting, the delegations reviewed the situation regarding the Berlin Plus package and addressed new priorities for building trust. However, they failed to reach agreement on a new protocol. According to the OSCE, the parties were very close to a new agreement.

Some analysts pointed out in June that the new scenario of the coalition government led by ACUM represented a change in the approach to conflict resolution. ACUM was reportedly critical of the mediators' strategy to move forward with confidence-building measures, arguing that they gradually establish the sovereignty of Transdnistria and move away from Moldova's preferred solution of maintaining its territorial

8. “Berlin Plus” refers to eight measures around which the parties have been negotiating since 2016 and which are included in various protocols, such as the Berlin Protocol (2016) and the Vienna Protocol (2017). These measures include: the reopening of the Gura Bicului-Bychok Bridge, which connects the two banks of the Dniester/Nistru River; official certification by Moldova and the subsequent recognition of Transdnistrian university diplomas; guarantees of the continued service of Latin alphabet schools administered by Moldova, but located in Transdnistria; fixed and mobile telephone communications between Moldova and Transdnistria; the provision of Transdnistria vehicle registrations; freedom of movement for the population on both sides of the conflict line; access to farmland in the Dubasari district; and the termination of criminal cases against politicians of the parties to the conflict.

integrity and granting special status similar to that of the Gagauzia region in Moldova. Moldovan President Igor Dodon of the Socialist Party also reportedly expressed reservations about accelerating the political negotiations and was moving away from his previous positions in favour of a federal solution. In addition, according to some analysts, both government partners prioritise not putting the government coalition at risk. Speaking in July, the prime minister had denounced the illicit enrichment and economic corruption of Transdniestria actors related to the conflict. According to Sandu, it was necessary to re-establish order in the economic sphere to resolve the conflict. The Transdniestrian authorities accused the government of Moldova of non-compliance with previous commitments at different times of the year and blamed it for failing to reach a new protocol at the 5+2 meeting in October.

The negotiating process was affected at the end of the year by a new political crisis in Moldova due to the collapse of the coalition government in November, after it lost a censure motion promoted by the Socialist Party following disagreements over the procedure to appoint the attorney general. Some analysts highlighted the Socialist Party's reluctance to move towards an independent judiciary that could help to fight against corruption in the country. The Parliament approved a new government in the middle of the month led by the former Minister of the Economy and presidential advisor Ion Chicu, temporarily until new elections were held. The new government, half of whose members are former advisors of Dodon, won the support of the Democratic Party.

Gender, peace and security

The peace process continued without specific mechanisms for women's formal participation. Regarding gender balance in high-level positions, after the change of government in Moldova, the chief negotiator, Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration Cristina Lesnic, was replaced by a man, Vasili Sova. Likewise, the position of the OSCE's special representative for the negotiating process continued to be held by a man, the Italian Franco Frattini, who was re-elected for that position by the Slovakian OSCE chairperson-in-office.

In early September, the Moldovan capital hosted the Beijing+25 sub-regional forum for the countries of the Eastern Association and Romania, with experts participating, that analysed the course of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995. UN Women Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia Alia El-Yassir noted the need for countries in the region to move from legal commitments to practical results in gender equality. She also pointed out the need for intergenerational dialogues and for greater participation by civil society. During her

visit, El-Yassir met with new Moldovan Prime Minister Maia Sandu, who pledged to align the regulatory framework with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). In addition, a regional conference was held in Georgia to boost implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine as part of a project involving the Foreign Policy Association of Moldova that aims to encourage local and central authorities and civil society organisations to promote the role of women in negotiations and peace-building processes in the region.

Ukraine (east)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, government of Russia ⁹
Third parties	OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia ¹⁰ also participate); Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ¹¹)
Relevant agreements	Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group (Minsk Agreement) (2014), Memorandum on the Implementation of the Provisions of the Protocol on the Outcome of Consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group on Joint Steps Aimed at the Implementation of the Peace Plan (Minsk Memorandum) (2014), Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements (Minsk II Agreements) (2015)

Summary:

The armed conflict active in eastern Ukraine since April 2014 pits state forces against pro-Russian separatist militias backed by Russia over the status of those areas and is fuelled by many other contextual factors. It is the subject of international negotiations involving the Trilateral Contact Group (OSCE, Russia and Ukraine) and pro-Russian militias, as well as the diplomatic initiatives of some foreign ministries. Since the Trilateral Contact Group was created in May 2014, various agreements have been attempted, including a peace plan, a brief, non-renewed truce and a pact (Minsk Protocol) including a bilateral ceasefire supervised by the OSCE, the decentralisation of power in areas under militia control; as well as a memorandum that same year for a demilitarised zone, which completed the Minsk Protocol. New escalation of violence led to Minsk II agreement in 2015, but violence continued and disagreements between the sides hindered the implementation of the peace deal. The obstacles to resolving the conflict include its internationalisation, mainly owing to Russian support for the militias and the background of confrontation between Russia and the West projected onto the Ukrainian crisis. The armed conflict was preceded by a serious general crisis in Ukraine (mass anti-government protests, the departure of President Yanukovich and the annexation of Crimea by Russia), when there were also some attempts at negotiation between the government and the opposition.

9. Russia's status in the Ukrainian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

The peace process around the conflict in eastern Ukraine experienced progress, in contrast to the impasse in 2018, despite underlying difficulties in moving forward on the substantive issues of the conflict. During the year, the parties agreed to new ceasefires, as well as new agreements to withdraw military forces from various areas and confidence-building measures. Furthermore, at the end of the year, the Normandy negotiating format (Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France) was resumed, the highest-level political dialogue mechanism, which had been deadlocked since October 2016. Its resumption complemented the negotiations of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), facilitated by the OSCE. The process took place in a new political context in Ukraine, given Volodimir Zelenski's runoff victory in the presidential election in April. At his inauguration, Zelenski made achieving peace in eastern Ukraine a top priority, declaring that all necessary measures would be taken.

During the year, **the ceasefire was renewed and expanded on several occasions.** On 8 March, under the TCG, the parties reached an agreement to renew the ceasefire, which led to a decrease in incidents in the days immediately following it, although in the following weeks there were new incidents. On 17 July, also as part of the TCG, the parties agreed to a complete, lasting and unlimited ceasefire, which prohibited all types of shooting. However, the Ukrainian authorities noted that it did not rule out the use of fire in response to attacks. The agreed ceasefire was accompanied by a ban on placing heavy weapons in or near populated areas, especially alongside civilian infrastructure and facilities, including schools, kindergartens and hospitals. The agreement significantly reduced the violence as soon as it went into force on 21 July and until the beginning of September.

Progress was also made in other areas during the year, such as the implementation of the withdrawal of forces agreed in 2016 in three pilot areas (Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske). Thus, the withdrawal into Stanytsia Luhanska, a key area, as it is one of the main transit points for civilians crossing between areas under government control and areas under rebel control, began and was completed in the final days of June. Furthermore, the parties agreed to repair the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, which had been damaged since 2015, in order to facilitate the movement of civilians with mobility difficulties. The bridge was cleared, repaired and opened on 20 November. Between the end of October and the beginning of November, forces and weapons were withdrawn from Zolote, an area previously affected by ceasefire violations. In early November, the forces were withdrawn from Petrivske. In addition, in September, Russia and Ukraine carried out an exchange of prisoners linked to the conflict, 35 from each side, including the 24 Ukrainian sailors detained by Russia amidst naval tensions in the Sea of Azov.

Progress was made in the peace process in Ukraine, with the resumption of the Normandy dialogue format, new more robust ceasefires and the withdrawal of forces from various areas

Progress was made in the final months of the year. In October, **the Ukrainian president announced his support for the Steinmeier formula**, floated in 2016 by German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (current President of Germany) during his term as the OSCE chairperson-in-office in order to move forward to hold elections in the disputed areas of eastern Ukraine and grant them special status. He proposed to combine both processes to break the impasse on his order, although it did not resolve the issue of Ukraine regaining control of the border. Zelenski said that he supported the Steinmeier formula, but warned that Ukraine must regain control of the border before elections were held in conflict zones under Ukrainian law. Russia had previously supported the Steinmeier plan. Meanwhile, the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France met in Paris in December under the Normandy format. Ukraine and Russia agreed to a full and comprehensive ceasefire by the end of the year, as well as the exchange of all prisoners related to the conflict. The withdrawal of forces and equipment from three other additional zones was also agreed for March 2020. The exchange of prisoners took place on 29 December. Though not total, it was extensive, with 124 people released by Ukraine, including five former members of the Ukrainian riot forces accused of killing activists during the 2014 anti-government (Maidan) protests, and 76 freed by the Donbas rebel authorities. In a phone conversation at the end of the year, Zelenski and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to address the possibility of a new prisoner swap, Ukraine reported. Furthermore, Ukraine and Russia reached a five-year agreement in late December for the continued transit of Russian natural gas through Ukrainian territory.

Gender, peace and security

Ukraine's negotiating process remained characterised by the lack of participation from women and civil society and the poor integration of the gender perspective at various levels, as reported by women's activists and organisations at different stages of the process. Meanwhile, the **special gender representative of the current OSCE chairperson-in-office, Melanne Verwee, made a trip lasting several days to Ukraine, in which she met with various political and social actors**, including with the representative of Ukraine in the Trilateral Contact Group's working group on humanitarian issues, as well as with other government representatives. The meetings focused on implementation of the Ukrainian government's national action plan on UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. It is a plan that prioritises the participation of women in security and defence, without mechanisms for the effective and sustained direct or indirect participation of women in the peace process. The meetings also addressed other issues such as the participation of women and civil society in the legislative reform processes. Furthermore, the OSCE also reported on the

special gender representative's meetings with members of civil society organisations in Kiev and Kramatorsk.

Some female civil society activists continued to carry out peace-building initiatives, which included providing services and promoting dialogue. To mark the International Day of Non-Violence, on 2 October, four female activists from both sides of the conflict gathered next to the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, which was being repaired at the time after being damaged in fighting in 2015. As part of her visit to Ukraine, Verveer met with some of them, who stressed the need for better conditions at checkpoints passing from either side of the conflict, an end to the violence and other aspects.

Some progress was made in the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, with the parties committing to strengthen the ceasefire and some humanitarian and citizen diplomacy measures

Russia and the Caucasus

Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Armenia, Government of Azerbaijan
Third parties	OSCE Minsk Group (Co-chaired by Russia, France and USA; other permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey)
Relevant agreements	Bishkek Protocol (1994), Ceasefire agreement (1994)

Summary:

The armed conflict going from 1992 to 1994 between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh – an enclave of Armenian majority belonging to Azerbaijan that declared independence in 1992 – ended with a cease-fire agreement in 1994, after causing more than 20,000 dead and one million displaced people as well as the military occupation by Armenia of several districts around Nagorno-Karabakh. Since then negotiations have been in place between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with several failed attempts to reach peace plans during the first years and a renewed impulse through the Prague Process, which started in 2004 and since 2005 has focused on negotiating some basic principles to base the discussions on a future agreement (withdrawal of Armenia from the occupied territories around Nagorno-Karabakh, granting provisional status to Nagorno-Karabakh, the right for displaced persons to return, an eventual decision on the final status of the territory through a binding expression of will, international security safeguards). The deadlock of negotiations since 2010 and the fragile cease-fire have increased the alert warning in a context of an arms race a bellicose rhetoric and a regional scenario of geostrategic tensions.

The negotiating process made some headway, building on the progress made at the end of 2018. This came amidst a change of leadership in Armenia, with Nikol Pashinyan assuming office as the new prime minister after the massive peaceful protests and parliamentary elections that year. The security situation around the line of contact also improved

in 2019.¹² Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Pashinyan met in Vienna in March under the auspices of the OSCE

Minsk Group co-mediators in a meeting praised by both leaders. They pledged to strengthen the ceasefire and the direct communication mechanism approved in 2018, as well as to develop humanitarian measures. The Armenian leader ruled out that the meeting marked a milestone, but noted that a new process had begun and that the meeting had been good for improving mutual understanding. The Azerbaijani leader also noted that the meeting marked a new beginning for the negotiating process. It was preceded by a meeting in Paris in January between the foreign ministers of Armenia, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, and Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov, with the co-mediators of the OSCE Minsk group and the personal representative of the current

OSCE chairperson-in-office. At the meeting, the parties agreed on the need to adopt concrete measures to prepare the populations of both countries for peace. Furthermore, on Russia's initiative, the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers met again in Moscow in April, with the OSCE co-mediators participating. They reasserted their desire to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict, pledged to further stabilise the line of contact, especially during the course of agricultural activities, and agreed on measures to mutually grant family members access to prisoners in detention centres. The ministers also expressed their willingness to start working on establishing contact between the populations, including through reciprocal visits by journalists.

In separate new meetings between the foreign leaders of both countries and the Minsk group (on a trip by the co-mediators to the region in May and in the US in June), the co-mediators expressed concern about incidents of violence that caused victims and called for the ceasefire to be respected. The ministers met again in New York in September, coinciding with the UN General Assembly, and separately with the co-mediators in the region in October. However, there was no significant progress in the last quarter of the year and there was some tension when the accusatory rhetoric between the parties escalated. Thus, the government of Armenia accused Azerbaijan of adopting a maximalist position in October. In November, the Azerbaijani president reaffirmed Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh and ruled out any possibility of independence for the territory. The foreign ministers of both countries met in December, with the OSCE mediating, but without significant results.

At various times of the year, the Armenian government advocated that Nagorno-Karabakh should become part of the negotiating format (its authorities are currently consulted by the co-mediators, but they do not have any formal status). According to Pashinyan, such a position was not a precondition, but was necessary. Following a visit to Armenia in November, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey

12. See the summary on Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.

Lavrov approved recognising Nagorno-Karabakh in the negotiations. Azerbaijan continued to reject the Armenian demand for a change in format and responded by calling for the participation of the displaced population from Nagorno-Karabakh in the process in November.

Some confidence-building and humanitarian measures were launched during the year, such as an exchange of two prisoners in June, facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Likewise, following the commitment made by the parties at the high-level summit in March, **there was an exchange of visits by journalists from each country** in November. The trips took place out of the public eye, although they were revealed days later in the media. It was the first such initiative since 2001.

Gender, peace and security

The peace process continued to lack specific mechanisms for women's participation or the inclusion of a gender perspective and it also continued to shut out other parts of the civilian population. Regarding women's social perception of peace and the peace process, an investigation by the Swedish NGO Kvinna till Kvinna found that women in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh perceived their own society as more peaceful and tolerant than the others and that all of them felt resigned and lacked confidence in the peace process.¹³ In some cases, especially among women residing in areas near the border, greater militarisation was considered necessary. Most of the interviewees considered themselves to be outside the peace process, which they viewed as an elite male sphere, and did not consider themselves or women more directly involved in that sphere to be real peacebuilders.

Furthermore, the “Women for Peace” campaign, launched in 2018 by Anna Hakobyan, the journalist and wife of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, which aims to promote a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, was presented in Washington in March, months after its presentation in Moscow in 2018. Amidst international appeals and greater openness by the parties to the conflict to the implementation of confidence-building measures, some analysts identified a greater opportunity for promoting peacebuilding through women's initiatives. In addition, **in February 2019 the government of Armenia adopted its first national action plan on the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security** for the period 2019-2021. Azerbaijan remained without a national action plan for Resolution 1325. **The Armenian national action plan did not include any mechanism for women's organisations or women affected by the conflict to participate in the peace process directly or indirectly**, despite announcing in its preamble that the government attaches special importance to the active participation of women in all phases of the conflict.

The objectives of participation were specified in the plan in the form of promoting female participation and the gender perspective in the security forces, cooperation between government bodies and participation in the economic, social, educational and environmental spheres. The plan also addressed the situation of women affected by the conflict through the promotion of awareness campaigns and programs aimed at women's organisations affected by the conflict, as well as protection measures.

Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia ¹⁴
Third parties	OSCE, EU and UN; USA Russia ¹⁵
Relevant agreements	Agreement on Principles of Settlement of the Georgian–Ossetian Conflict (Sochi Agreement) (1992), Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces (1994) (agreement dealing with conflict on Abkhazia), Protocol of agreement (2008), Implementation of the Plan of 12 August 2008 (2008)

Summary:

The war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008, which began in South Ossetia and spread to Abkhazia and territory not disputed by Georgia, ended in a six-point peace agreement mediated by the EU. The peace plan included the start of international talks on security and stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two small territories in the northwest and north-central Georgia bordering Russia that are internationally recognised as regions of Georgia, though de facto independent since the end of the wars between Abkhaz and Georgian forces (1992-1994) and between Ossetian and Georgian forces (1991-1992) regarding their status. The 2008 agreement gave way to the start of talks known as the Geneva International Discussions (GID), which bring together representatives of Georgia, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Russia under international mediation (the OSCE, EU and UN, with the US as an observer). According to the agreement, the talks were supposed to focus on provisions to guarantee security and stability in the region, the issue of the refugees and displaced populations and any other issue agreed by the parties, so the disputed status of the territories was not explicitly addressed. Thus, after the 2008 war, Russia formally recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and established agreements and a permanent military presence there despite Georgian opposition. The post-2008 phase involved the dismantling of previous dialogue and observation mechanisms, including the OSCE and the UN missions, and replaced the previous separate talks with a single format covering both disputed regions. An EU observation mission was also authorised, though it was given no access to the disputed territories. The GID have two working groups (on security and humanitarian issues) and under its aegis one Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism was created for each region in 2009, facilitated by the EU and OSCE. Amidst a context of geopolitical rivalry between Russia and Western political, economic and military players (the US, EU and NATO) and chronic antagonism between the disputed regions and Georgia, the negotiating process faces many obstacles.

13. Kvinna till Kvinna, *Listen to Her – Gendered Effects of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh and Women's Priorities for Peace*, 2019.

14. Russia's status in the Georgian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

15. Ibid.

In 2019, the dialogue faced obstacles at both levels of the peace process: the Geneva International Discussions (GID), which is the highest political level, and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM). Four rounds of the GID were held in 2019 (April, July, October and December). **Russia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia again abandoned GID working group sessions on humanitarian issues, preventing them from addressing the issue of the displaced population.** In the security working group, the parties stuck to their opposing positions. Georgia emphasised militarisation by Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which conducted military exercises and erected barriers in border areas. It also denounced the violation of the rights of the Georgian population in areas under the control of the de facto independent regions, including the right to education in their mother tongue. Georgia also denounced illegal arrests and kidnappings. It called for an investigation into the deaths of several Georgian people, including a young Georgian man killed in police custody in Abkhazia in March 2019. It demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops in both regions and the establishment of international security mechanisms. Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia highlighted stability in the border area in the GID rounds in 2019. They denounced relations between Georgia and NATO and NATO exercises in Georgia as a security threat to the region. According to Russia, Georgia's insistence on withdrawing troops blocked the negotiations.

The GID were influenced by the regional and local context. The atmosphere in the July round of the GID was affected by Georgia's anti-government and anti-Russia protests in late June. More than 240 people were injured in clashes with the police as protesters tried to enter Parliament. The protests were triggered by a meeting of Orthodox MPs in Georgia during which a Russian MP took the seat of the speaker of the Georgian Parliament. There were hundreds of detainees and allegations of excessive use of force. In reaction, Russia imposed temporary measures, such as a ban on flights to Georgia. Some groups held daily protests in the following weeks, which were resumed more widely in September. In November there was a new wave of opposition demonstrations in Georgia, protesting the failure to approve a new electoral system, which broke the government's commitments made during the June crisis, and in December there were also opposition and pro-government protests. The GID also addressed the closure of border crossings, such as the Enguri bridge, closed by Abkhazia in June based on allegations of provocative Georgian protests in the nearby Zugdidi district, although it reopened in the October round. The rising tension in the area around Chorchana and Tselisi was also addressed in the October GID. Russia accused Georgia of starting a dispute by building a police checkpoint in the area, which led South Ossetia to issue an ultimatum for its withdrawal, to set up another and to impose the temporary closure of the border. The Georgian government denounced the mobilisation of military personnel and equipment in the area after the Ossetian ultimatum and warned of the risk of serious confrontation. The co-mediators urged containment. Russia blasted Georgia's refusal to delimit the border in the disputed areas. In early December, South

Ossetia eased some of the restrictions on the border, only for the departure of people who are retired or in serious health conditions, and released some Georgian people detained for crossing the border, including a well-known Georgian doctor. In the last round of the GID in 2019, held on 10 and 11 December, the co-mediators warned that the situation on the ground was deteriorating, especially in the Chorchana and Tselisi area. They also warned of restrictions on freedom of movement and the closure of the crossing points on the administrative border between Georgia and South Ossetia for more than five months.

The IPRM mechanism in Abkhazia remained cancelled since June 2018, abandoned by Abkhazia. The Georgian government and the co-mediators urged its resumption at the GID, without success. The South Ossetian IPRM, suspended between September and December 2018, was called regularly, although in late August the increase in tension led to its disruption, according to the EU EUMM mission. Topics addressed in the South Ossetia IPRM during the year included the security situation, crossing points, investigations into fatalities, the erection of barriers in border areas, the use of the direct lines of communication between the parties to manage incidents and reports of airspace violations.

The new Georgian president, Salome Zurbishvili, in office since December 2018, called for a higher political profile for the GID during the year, arguing that it was too technical. He advocated a more active and effective format to achieve a political solution. Likewise, during the year the Georgian government launched confidence-building measures aimed at the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as part of its plan "A step to a better future", announced in 2018. They included measures to recognise citizenship, provide subsidies and a launch a programme to facilitate the entry of students from the two regions into the Georgian university system.

Gender, peace and security

The Georgian government maintained its institutionalised practice of holding meetings between government representatives participating in the GID and the IPRM and the civilian population affected by the conflict, including women's organisations. This is an approach initiated by UN Women in 2013 that was later organised by the government, with the support of the UN agency. Meetings of this type were held regarding the IPRMs, such as those in Gori in April and in two locations in the Tslenjikhia and Zugdidi districts in June. The results of the IPRMs were discussed at these meetings and women's organisations, other parts of the affected population and experts shared priorities such as the need to address the security situation around the border demarcation line and barriers in the border area. They also called for improvements to motorway infrastructure, telephone and internet coverage, irrigation systems and health services, as well as more information on the direct communication system between the opposing sides to manage incidents. They also stressed the economic

difficulties in the border areas as a factor leading to the exodus of the population, especially young people, from these areas. The interruption of Abkhazian IPRMs and strategies for their resumption were also addressed.

Participants from Georgia and parts of the affected population, including women's organisations, also met in the GID in May, with the support of UN Women and the US State Department, in which the results of the 47th round of the GID held in April were discussed. The issue of women's participation in peace negotiations was addressed. According to UN Women, representatives of women's organisations and experts raised issues such as freedom of movement, environmental issues, cases of trafficking of women and strategies to prevent trafficking. They also noted the need to promote human rights instruments, especially for women and girls from Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Meanwhile, three organisations in Georgia (an association for internally displaced women called Consent, the Women's Information Centre and the Sukhumi Humanitarian-Cultural Fund), UN Women and the US State Department began a process to implement the national action plan on Resolution 1325 locally in 10 municipalities in Georgia, selected for their proximity to the border demarcation line and for their high concentrations of displaced people. The process includes meetings and consultations on local priorities. According to UN Women, the topics highlighted by the participants include problems of subsistence and accommodation, arrests of people crossing the border, human rights violations and the impacts of the closure of border crossings with Abkhazia.

The Mediterranean Women Mediators Network established an antenna in Cyprus

South-east Europe

Cyprus	
Negotiating actors	Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
Third parties	UN, EU; Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom (guarantor countries)
Relevant agreements	13 February agreement (2004)

Summary:

Inhabited by a Greek majority, a Turkish population and other minorities, the island of Cyprus faces a situation of long-lasting unresolved conflict. Preceded by the violence of the 1950s, followed by independence in 1960, Cyprus was affected by a crisis in which the Turkish Cypriot population was displaced from power, calling into question the distribution of power stipulated in the Constitution and triggering new violent incidents, which led to the deployment of the UNFICYP peacekeeping mission in 1964. There was an underlying confrontation between the aspirations of enosis (union with Greece) of the Greek Cypriot population and taksim (partition) by Turkish Cypriot population. A coup in 1974 with the aim of promoting unification with Greece triggered a military invasion of the island by Turkey. The crisis led to population displacement and the division of the island between the northern third under Turkish Cypriot control and two-thirds in the south under Greek Cypriot control, separated

by a demilitarised zone known as the buffer zone or "Green Line", supervised by the UN. Since the division of the island there have been efforts to find a solution, such as high-level dialogues in the 70s and initiatives in the following decades promoted by successive UN Secretaries-General. The Annan Plan for a bizonal bicomunal federation was approved in referendum in 2004 by the Turkish Cypriots and rejected by the Greek Cypriots. After the failure of the Christofias-Talat dialogue (2008-2012), a new phase of negotiations began in 2014, which has generated high expectations.

The peace process remained at an impasse, with informal meetings but without a formal resumption of negotiations, which have suspended since 2017, and amidst persistent tension between Turkey and Cyprus over gas exploration in the waters around the island and a rise in tension in the buffer zone (Green Line) in Cyprus. The UN Secretary-General's special representative, Deputy Special Advisor Elizabeth Spehar, met with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders Nikos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akinci in February and August in order to reach an agreement on the terms for restarting substantive negotiations regarding the conflict on the island. United Nations senior official Jane Holl Lute also conducted separate consultations with both leaders, with the guarantor countries (Greece, the United Kingdom and Turkey) and with the EU (observer at the Cyprus Conference). **UN Secretary-General António Guterres held an informal meeting with the two leaders in November. Guterres promised to work with the parties and the three guarantor powers to explore the possibility of an informal meeting in the 5+ format sponsored by the UN in November.** Throughout the year and at the meeting with Guterres, the parties reaffirmed their commitment to achieving a solution to the conflict based on the establishment of a bizonal and bicomunal federation with political equality, as well as their commitment to the Declaration of 2014 and the six points proposed by the UN in 2017 (territory, political equality, property, equal treatment, security and guarantees). Despite this commitment, the parties' public rhetoric continued to be divisive.

The parties to the conflict did make progress in the dialogue at the level of the technical committees and in the area of confidence-building measures. In February, the two leaders pledged to intensify the work of the committees and the previously paralysed working groups were reactivated during the year. Some were especially active, such as the working group on economic and commercial affairs, culture and education. In addition, a mechanism funded by UNDP and the EU was established to support the committees' activities. The confidence-building measures carried out included the implementation of the interoperability of mobile phones and the interconnection of electricity networks. Furthermore, the two leaders reaffirmed their agreement to demine in nine areas in each community. There was also an exchange of Greek Cypriot pictorial works of art that had remained under Turkish Cypriot control since the division of the island and of audiovisual recordings by Turkish Cypriot artists that had been in Greek Cypriot custody. A pilgrimage was made to a mosque in the port city of Larnaca, facilitated the UN

mission (UNFICYP) and the Religious Track, an initiative for dialogue between religious leaders on the island to contribute to the peace process, with the support of Sweden. For the first time since 1963, former Turkish Cypriot inhabitants of a town in the Nicosia district were able to pray in the mosque of that town, in the buffer zone, in a welcoming atmosphere provided by the Greek Cypriot inhabitants, according to the UN, whose peacekeeping mission ensured access to many other religious and commemorative events throughout the year.

The peace process took place amidst an international dispute between the Greek Cypriot government and the Turkish government over gas in waters near the island. Following the announcement in February of new findings of significant gas reserves by ExxonMobil in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Cyprus, delimited by Cyprus with neighbouring countries Israel, Egypt and Lebanon, the Turkish Cypriot government stated in April that it would conduct resource exploration activities in the EEZ with Turkey. Ankara also announced exploratory activity and deployed several ships in EEZ waters, escorted by warships and military drones. In response, the EU agreed on sanctions against Turkey in July. The Turkish government signed a deal in November with the internationally recognised Libyan government (GNA) on security issues and on the demarcation of the maritime border of its exclusive economic zones, overlapping with other countries and attributing to Turkey gas exploration rights over a wide area of the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁶ Cyprus, Greece and Egypt, which according to the Turkish-Libyan pact should obtain authorisation from Turkey to explore the disputed area, criticised the agreement, as did the EU. In general, Turkey rejects Cyprus' exploration and drilling activity given the unresolved conflict situation and calls for it to stop until there is a reunification agreement for the island. The Turkish Cypriot government also calls for a mechanism to share the revenue from exploiting these resources. Meanwhile, the Greek Cypriot government defends its sovereignty over the EEZ and alleges that part of the benefits will be delivered to the Turkish Cypriot side once a resolution agreement is reached.

Gender, peace and security

The peace process' technical committee on gender equality, established in 2015, resumed its activity in March, following the impasse in 2018. This was announced by its co-leaders Xenia Loizidou and Mine Yücel, who indicated that the working group would focus on climate change issues. However, information from the committee was scarce during the rest of the year. In February, the UN Secretary-General's special representative and deputy special advisor highlighted the negative impact that the deadlocked negotiations have on society, including women, in terms of disappointment, while at the same time pointing out the need for a more inclusive peace process. The special representative

highlighted the work for peace done by women from both communities on the island and the potential in this area.

Furthermore, **the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN) announced the establishment of an antenna in Cyprus in May.** The announcement followed a meeting held in Cyprus in 2018 between around 30 women from both island communities, organised by the Cyprus Women's Lobby, with support from the MWMN, Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and UNFICYP. The purpose of the meeting was to address the situation, needs and demands surrounding the conflict and to identify opportunities for peacebuilding. The official launch of the branch in Cyprus in 2019 included a public event on the challenges of the effective participation of women in mediation and peacebuilding and a workshop on mediation.

Serbia – Kosovo	
Negotiating actors	Serbia, Kosovo
Third parties	EU, UN
Relevant agreements	Military Technical Agreement between the International Security Force (KFOR) and the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia (1999), First agreement of principles governing the normalization of relations between the republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia (Brussels Agreement) (2013)

Summary:

Since the end of the 1998-1999 war between Serbia and the Kosovar Albanian armed group KLA, with the participation of NATO, the status of Kosovo has remained in dispute. This Albanian-majority land has historically been part of the Ottoman Empire, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and more recently the Republic of Serbia in Yugoslavia (as an autonomous region and autonomous province, successively). Following an interim international administration for Kosovo with a mandate from the UN Security Council (Resolution 1244, of 1999), a process to discuss its status began in 2006 under the aegis of the United Nations. Kosovo supported the proposal made by the UN Secretary-General's special envoy, Martti Ahtisaari, entailing internationally supervised independence for Kosovo and decentralisation for its Serbian minority, though Serbia rejected it. This was followed by fresh attempts at dialogue facilitated by a troika (USA, EU, Russia) that also failed. In 2008 Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed its independence and pledged to implement the Ahtisaari plan. The start of a new process of dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo in 2011 under facilitation of the EU (Brussels Process) opened the doors to rapprochement on technical and political issues. Since its inception there has been significant progress, including the agreement to dismantle parallel political, judicial and security structures of the Serb-inhabited areas of Kosovo; as well as to create an association/community of Serb municipalities in Kosovo. However, there are still outstanding pending challenges, especially in the field of implementation of the agreements, reconciliation and the final resolution of the political status.

16. See the summary on Libya in chapter 6 (Middle East).

The peace process between Serbia and Kosovo remained at an impasse in 2019, with no meetings between its negotiating teams during the year and complex prospects for its resumption, given the parties' unwillingness to budge. The process had been suspended in late 2018 by Serbia in protest of Kosovo's imposition of 100% tariffs on products from Serbia in retaliation for what it considers to be Serbian obstacles to Kosovo's international recognition. Throughout 2019, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić insisted that striking down the tariff was an essential condition for restarting the negotiations. The Kosovar authorities insisted at various times that the tariff would remain in force unless Serbia changed its position on international recognition and that trade relations could not be dealt with separately from the political talks with Serbia. The prime minister hinted that the recognition of Kosovo was a starting point for continuing the talks, while the Serbian government noted that the outcome of the process could not be established in advance and questioned whether Kosovo was willing to negotiate.

International calls to resume the negotiations followed in the form of meetings, summits and political positions. EU High Representative Federica Mogherini called on the Kosovar authorities to scrap the tariffs on several occasions, including during a meeting she held with the Kosovar negotiating delegation in January. Germany and France increased their efforts to find a solution to the crisis during an informal summit on the Western Balkans in Berlin in April that had generated expectations for a chance at rapprochement between both sides. Although the leaders of Kosovo and Serbia agreed to continue efforts to implement the agreements reached thus far, the process was not resumed. The follow-up meeting scheduled to be held in Paris in July was cancelled. Furthermore, the Quintet (USA, Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy) urged Kosovo to strike down the tariffs in August and asked Serbia to end its campaign to withhold recognition from Kosovo. The UN Secretary-General called for the removal of all obstacles to dialogue, warning that the stalemate in the negotiations was slowing down progress towards normalising relations and posed a threat to stability. Kosovo argued that the United States be included in the negotiating format provided by the EU during the year. At the end of the year, the presidents of Serbia and Kosovo held an informal meeting under the auspices of French President Emmanuel Macron as part of an international summit on governance. Vučić reiterated that eliminating the tariffs was a necessary condition for resuming the talks. Kosovar President Hashim Thaci said he was ready to resume the talks quickly if Serbia did not set any conditions.

Furthermore, the process faced uncertainties regarding the Kosovar negotiating team. In June, the Kosovo Constitutional Court ruled that the mandate and powers of the Kosovar negotiating team were unconstitutional, as they overlapped with those of other institutions. In March 2019, the Kosovar Parliament had passed legislation on the negotiating team's responsibilities and powers without the Kosovo Serb MPs from the Serbian List participating. The team had been established in December 2018 and

composed of representatives of the government, the political opposition and civil society activists, without any Kosovo Serbs participating. The approved mandate established less leeway for dialogue with Serbia, for which it had been criticised by Kosovo Serb political representatives and the Serbian government. The Constitutional Court's ruling stripped the negotiating team of any effectiveness. The period after the ruling was shaped by the interim political situation in Kosovo following the resignation of Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj in July after he was summoned by the Specialised Chambers and the Specialised Prosecutor's Office, which investigate crimes against humanity, war crimes and other crimes committed between 1998 and 2000, and the early parliamentary elections held in October. In the period running up to the election, Kosovar Albanian political groups hardened their positions regarding the conditions for dialogue with Serbia. In this context, with the previous negotiating team having been legally annulled, Kosovo's new mandate, team and approach to the negotiations was subject to the position of the new government. In December, the leader of Vetevendosje and possible future prime minister, Albin Kurti, said that the negotiating process should not continue to be led by the presidents of both territories.

Gender, peace and security

Paralysed during 2019, the negotiating process still lacked specific mechanisms for the participation of women and civil society activists in Kosovo and Serbia. Furthermore, representatives of civil society, including women's organisations, called for the increased presence of women in high-level political processes in Kosovo during an event on the women, peace and security agenda co-organised by the UN and the EU in March. Other recommendations resulting from the event included the need for greater efforts to implement the law on gender equality, with special attention paid to women from non-majority communities; higher gender quotas in Parliament and the inclusion of women in advisory positions; the inclusion of the needs and concerns of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence on the agenda of political processes; and greater impetus for and acceleration of the initiative of the Regional Commission Tasked with Establishing the Facts about All Victims of War Crimes and Other Serious Human Rights Violations Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia (RECOM).

Furthermore, the Kosovar government commission charged with verifying and recognising the status of victims of conflict-related sexual violence and providing redress remained active. From its inception in February 2018 until mid-September 2019, it received 1,057 applications and recognised the survivor status of 406 people (394 women and 12 men). Various civil society events were held to raise awareness about the issue during the year. In his October report, the UN Secretary-General expressed concern about the limitations of the reparation process by failing to include cases of sexual violence shortly after the end of the war and victims of non-majority communities, so he

called for a fully inclusive approach. Some Kosovar NGOs indicated that the verification process was proceeding very slowly and that it did not include any supervisory bodies. The Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), which groups together 141 organisations, visited the commission in June and showed support for its work. Also in June, civil society representatives demonstrated in the capital before Parliament in support of victims of sexual violence during the war and in protest of the use of experiences of sexual violence as political tools. In Serbia, activists from Women in Black and other civil society organisations demonstrated in front of the Serbian Parliament in March to remember the Kosovar Albanian victims of the war and denounce institutional silence about them.

Western Europe

Spain (Basque Country)	
Negotiating actors	ETA (dissolved), government of Spain, government of the Basque Country, government of Navarre, government of France, <i>Communauté d'Agglomération du Pays Basque</i> (Basque Municipal Community), political and social actors of the Basque Country, Basque Political Prisoners Collective (EPPK)
Third parties	Permanent Social Forum, Bake Bidea
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

Since the end of the Franco dictatorship in Spain, there have been several attempts to resolve the conflict involving the armed organisation ETA, created in 1959 to meet demands for self-determination of the territories considered Euskal Herria and for the creation of a socialist state. Throughout decades of conflict, multiple forms of violence were denounced, including deaths caused by ETA's violence (837 deaths), by security forces action (94) and paramilitary groups (73), as well as other human rights violations, including torture by security forces and ETA's economic extortion. Negotiations in 1981 and 1982 led to the dissolution of ETA political-military at the Seventh Assembly in 1982. The Conversations of Algiers in the late 1980s under the social-democratic PSOE-led government failed. The conservative PP-led government's approaches to ETA in the late 1990s, accompanied by truces, were also unsuccessful. During these decades the conflict continued in multiple expressions, including the violent activity of ETA and the GAL police organisation, protected by parts of the central government. The socio-political and military tension continued in the 2000s, with new attacks by ETA and the banning of the Batasuna party (2003), as well as the arrest and prosecution of other political and social actors alongside secret rapprochement between Basque socialist leaders and the Abertzale left, public calls for dialogue, new political proposals and a transformation in the Abertzale left in support of peaceful means. Exploratory meetings led to the formalisation of a new process in 2005, which included two parallel negotiations: one between political parties and the other between the government and ETA, which was backed by a new truce. The process failed amidst multiple hurdles and a new attack in late 2006. The following decade began with new initiatives and declarations, such as the Abertzale left's Alsasua Proposal (2009) and Zutik Euskal Herria (Euskal Herria on Its Feet) (2010), which included the Mitchell

principles of negotiation, and the Brussels Declaration (2010), signed by international figures. International facilitators called for ETA to observe a permanent, unilateral and verifiable ceasefire and civil society organisations called for a new push for peace, with international cooperation. Following the Aiete International Peace Conference, ETA announced the definitive end of its armed activity in 2011 and took new steps towards unilateral disarmament in subsequent years, with the involvement of civil society, and ETA's final dissolution in 2018. Stakeholders such as the International Contact Group and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (Switzerland) were involved as third parties in the negotiating process.

One year after ETA's historic announcement in 2018 that it was dissolving its structures for good, many challenges in memory, coexistence and prison policy persisted.

The committee on memory and coexistence of the Basque Parliament, a parliamentary forum that started in 2011, was interrupted at various periods by disagreements between political groups and restarted in 2017, without the participation of the Popular Party, experienced difficulties during the year due to disagreements between the parties PNV and PSE-EE in March regarding the non-public document summarising the work carried out. According to the media, some representatives of the PSE-EE stated that the document lowered the so-called "ethical ground", in reference to the agreement reached in 2012 between PNV, PSE-EE, PP, IU, UPyD and part of Aralar group to establish bases of democratic coexistence. Its leader, Idoia Mendia, demanded that the committee make it explicit that there were no reasons to justify terrorism or any violation of human rights. The parties participating in the committee took a few days to decide on the future of the forum. After a meeting behind closed doors on 15 March, the media reported that the committee was ongoing. However, the forum remained deadlocked in the following months. In October, it emerged that Podemos was willing to explore ways to find common ground through informal meetings with the groups.

In another development related to coexistence, in October the Basque Parliament passed a resolution rejecting "publicly ostentatious" events to recognise ETA prisoners who are released from prison, since they revictimise the victims of ETA and make coexistence that much harder to build. The text was supported by all parties except EH Bildu. In previous months, the leader of the Abertzale left, Arnaldo Otegi, argued that the events had no intention to humiliate anyone and asserted that they would continue to be carried out with all the prisoners. He also rejected the proposal of the Social Forum, a civil society initiative that promotes the peace process, that they be conducted in private, arguing that this format was not a solution. During the year, the Basque government demanded that the nationalist left not organise any more events of recognition.

In prison policy, early in the year the Spanish government and the Basque government announced the planned schedule of negotiations for the transfer of 33 pending matters, including control over Basque prisons. The schedule was to start in January and last 12 months. However, the political

instability in Spain made the dialogue and negotiations difficult and they were interrupted in April. At the end of the year, after the November general elections, as part of the negotiations between the PSOE and PNV to reach an investiture agreement, both parties achieved a 12-point deal that includes proceeding to negotiate and transfer pending statutory powers in 2020. Likewise, 85,000 people demonstrated in support of changes in prison policy in Bilbao and Bayonne in January. The march received support from all the unions in the Basque Country. That same month, Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska pointed out that since ETA had been dissolved, it was no longer necessary to maintain the policy of dispersing prisoners. According to Grande-Marlaska, it was an anti-terrorism policy and not a prison policy. He also said that they should be brought closer by enforcing legislation and in contact with the victims' associations. The prisoner support platform Sare welcomed Grande-Marlaska's statements about ending the dispersion policy and urged that it be implemented urgently. Some prisoners were relocated closer to their families during the year. According to the Social Forum, 27 prisoners out of a total of 210 (169 men and 28 women) imprisoned in Spain were transferred to prisons near the Basque Country between June 2018 and November 2019, of which 128 (61%) were in the first degree situation, compared to 204 (92%) before June 2018. The Social Forum highlighted that the conditions for a definitive solution were gradually being established. It also hailed the fact that between mid-2018 and late 2019, the institutional, political, unionist and social consensus on prison policy had consolidated around the application of ordinary legislation and a standardised prison policy. Furthermore, **after going missing for 17 years, the historical leader of ETA, José Antonio Urrutikoetxea, also known as Josu Ternera, was arrested in France in May in a joint operation conducted by the French General Directorate of Internal Security and the Spanish Civil Guard police force.** The Paris Court of Appeals released him under judicial control in June and hours later he was detained again, pending examination of the demands of the Spanish judicial authorities, including two Euro-orders

and extradition requests. The court rejected his lawyers' demand for his release in September.

In the social sphere, the Basque Country NGO on development platform, made up of about 80 organisations, apologised to the victims of ETA and of other expressions of violence for their position of "neutrality" against violence. The platform indicated that recognition of the damage caused to victims should be central and urged that the principles of truth, justice and reparation be guaranteed for all victims. The Basque government also postponed the launch of a teaching unit on ETA and on the Basque situation between 1960 and 2018 after criticism from ETA victims' associations and the parties PP and PSOE, despite support from the educational sector.

Gender, peace and security

Various peacebuilding initiatives with a gender perspective followed one another in 2019. The Pastoral Diocesan Theology Institute; Bakeola, a centre specialised in dealing with conflicts; and the Peace and Reconciliation Commission of the Diocese of Bilbao organised the course "Women Standing for Peace" in March. The initiative was based on the recognition that violence and human rights violations during a long period in the Basque Country have caused social trauma and unfair suffering for many victims. It hailed the collective and individual roles of many women in peacebuilding and the call to coexistence, and aimed to discuss, reflect and share their contributions to the achievement of peace in various spheres, including social, institutional, organisational and religious ones. Furthermore, the Gender Group of the Permanent Social Forum and the Feminist Justice Seminar organised a working day on feminist justice in June. The Feminist Justice Seminar is a work space where sectors of women from the feminist movement come together with groups linked to dealing with the consequences of the conflict in the Basque Country and peacebuilding, during which they address issues such as restorative justice and the role of the community in conflict management.

