

5. Peace negotiations in Europe

- In 2022, six of the 39 peace processes in the world (15%) took place in Europe.
- All the negotiating processes in Europe involved third parties in supporting roles.
- After Russia's invasion of Ukraine there were attempts at direct negotiations between both countries in the first few months, which failed, and the discussions were relegated to humanitarian issues, grain exports and the protection of nuclear infrastructure.
- Russia's invasion had various impacts on the negotiating processes in Europe, such as delays in the Georgian peace process, a less favourable geopolitical context for Armenia and international calls for Kosovo and Serbia to make progress in normalising relations.
- The Cyprus peace process remained stalled, with no resumption of formal, high-level political negotiations in a pre-election year.
- Women's organisations and civil society activists from Kosovo and Georgia called for women's effective participation in the negotiating processes.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2022. 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 2022.

Table 5.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2022

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Armenia, Azerbaijan	Russia, EU, USA, OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by Russia, France and the USA; the remaining permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey), Turkey ¹
Cyprus	Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus	UN, EU (observer at the Geneva International Conference); Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom (guarantor countries)
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia ²	OSCE, EU and UN; USA, Russia ³
Moldova (Transnistria)	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria	OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU
Serbia – Kosovo	Serbia, Kosovo	EU, UN, USA, Germany, France
Russia – Ukraine	Russia, Ukraine	Turkey, UN, Israel, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, IAEA, OSCE, Germany, France ⁴

5.1. Negotiations in 2022: regional trends

Six peace processes were identified in Europe in 2022. They accounted for 15% of the total peace processes in the world in 2022 (39 processes worldwide). Russia's invasion of Ukraine created a serious humanitarian

crisis and dismantled the previous negotiating process. Although it was accompanied by political and military negotiations for a few months, they broke down and only discussions on humanitarian and other issues

1. Turkey's status as a third party may be subject to dispute. It is included in this table due to the establishment by Russia and Turkey of a peacekeeping centre for monitoring the 2020 ceasefire. The establishment of the centre was ratified in a Memorandum between Russia and Turkey.

2. 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.

3. Ibid.

4. This table includes actors that have been involved as third parties in different spheres in 2022 both before the Russian invasion and in the phase following the invasion.

remained active. The other armed conflict in Europe, which has pitted Turkey against the PKK since 1984, continued without a negotiating process. This absence of dialogue was especially alarming amidst escalating regional tension between Turkey and the main Kurdish movement in Syria, as well as internal challenges. Four other processes covered socio-political crises of varying intensity (Armenia and Azerbaijan, regarding Nagorno-Karabakh as well the relations between both countries; Georgia, in relation to Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia; Moldova, over Transdniestria; Cyprus; and Serbia and Kosovo). The peacebuilding process in the Basque Country was no longer analysed in this edition of the yearbook due to its consolidation, which in 2021 commemorated the 10th anniversary of the definitive end of ETA's armed activity. Even if it is no longer analysed in this yearbook, local actors continued to take steps and work on areas such as coexistence and memory.

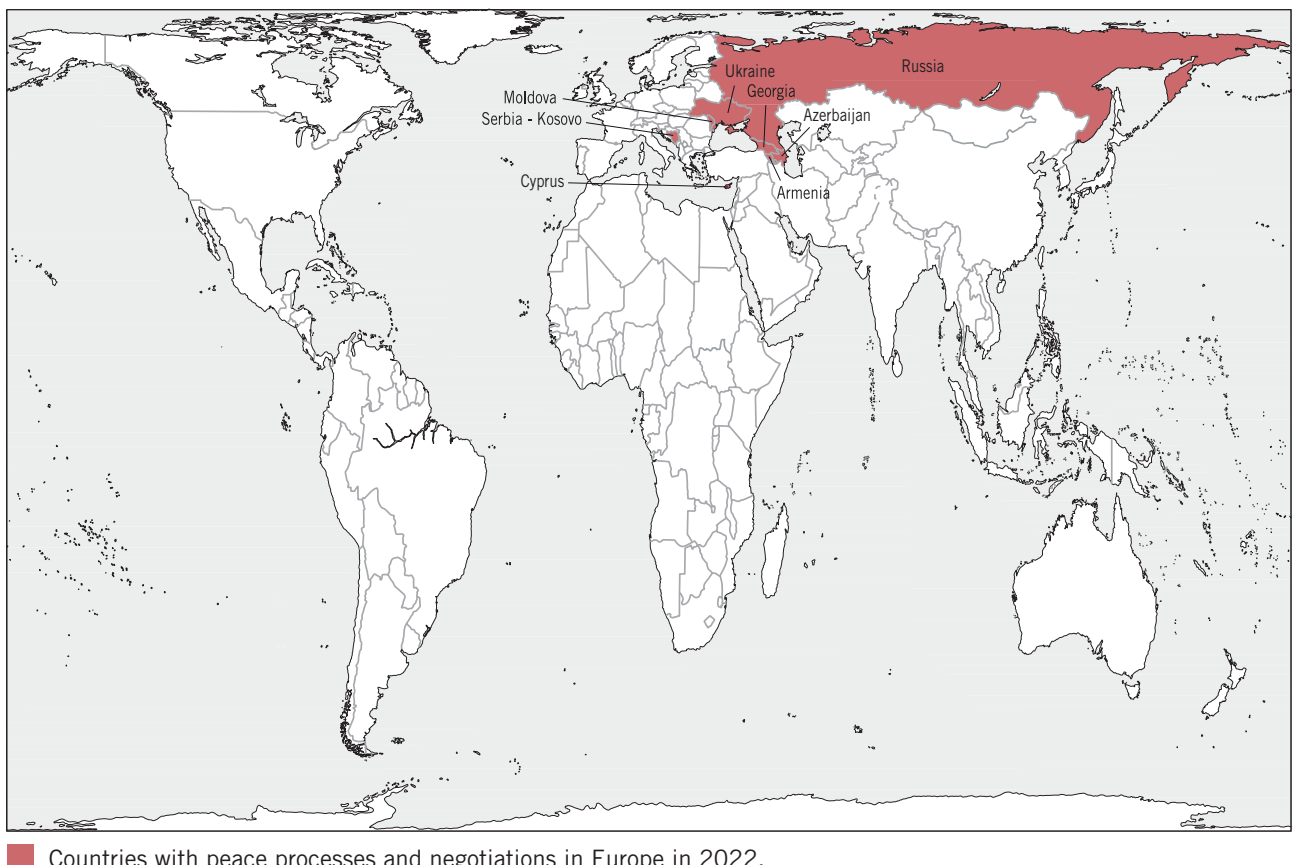
Regarding the **actors**, Russia's invasion of Ukraine set off an interstate conflict that went beyond the previous phases of the conflict (the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the war in eastern Ukraine since 2014, with protracted negotiations). In this new scenario, Ukraine and Russia negotiated directly for some months, with external facilitation. This transformed the previous situation during the Donbas war, in which Russia presented itself as a third party while it was considered by Ukraine as a party to the conflict due to its participation in support of the Donbas militias. Thus,

in 2022, two of the six processes involved interstate negotiations (Russia-Ukraine and Armenia-Azerbaijan).

In the negotiations around Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the format of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) brought together Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia with an ad hoc formula regarding the status of the participants. In all other negotiations, at least one of the negotiating actors was a state. One distinctive feature of Europe was the relatively high proportion of actors representing self-proclaimed states (Transdniestria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) participating in various formats under the decisive influence of countries exercising political, economic and military influence over them.

Europe continued to stand out for the proportion of third parties involved in the negotiations. All the peace processes involved external parties performing mediation and facilitation tasks. In relation to third parties, 2022 was a year in which the OSCE became less relevant as a third party, both in the process between Armenia and Azerbaijan and in the new scenario in Ukraine after the Russian invasion. Even so, the OSCE continued to be a prominent third party as a co-mediator in the peace process between Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia and in the negotiating process between Moldova and Transdniestria. The EU raised its profile as a third party in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, a scenario where, in addition to being one of the facilitating actors, it

Map 5.1. Peace negotiations in Europe in 2022



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2022.

also deployed a new civilian observation mission in Armenia in 2022. The EU continued to be the main facilitating actor in the Kosovo-Serbia peace process, as well as an observer in the Moldovan negotiating process and an “interested party” in the stalled Cyprus process. The UN Secretary-General became involved in meetings with Ukraine and Russia to promote solutions to the conflict. The UN was also a co-facilitator with Turkey in talks between Kyiv and Moscow regarding the export of grain and fertilisers. As part of this, the UN participated in the Joint Coordination Centre (JCC), a mechanism created to coordinate and guarantee the implementation of the agreement on the export of grain, other food products and fertilisers, in which Turkey, Ukraine and Russia also participated. The UN also continued to be the mediating actor in the Cyprus negotiating process, as well as a co-mediator in the Georgian peace process, and provided support to the EU-facilitated talks between Serbia and Kosovo through various functions. In 2022, the IAEA joined as a third-party actor in Ukraine. Its director general engaged in talks with both parties to facilitate and promote agreements to protect nuclear infrastructure and particularly to establish a demilitarised zone around the Zaporizhzhia power plant. The IAEA also sent a technical mission and established a permanent presence at the plant.

In 2022, the role of different **states** grew in supporting negotiations, interventions influenced in part by the international and regional geopolitical context and their own agendas. This was the case with Turkey in the political, military and humanitarian talks between Ukraine and Russia. The US, Germany and France also stepped up their diplomatic activity regarding the peace process between Serbia and Kosovo to support the EU’s facilitation, a scenario in which a Franco-German proposal to normalise relations was presented and in which these Western actors urged the parties to move forward, appealing to the need to resolve bilateral and regional disputes in view of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Russia continued to facilitate the process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, although its influence faded because of its weaker position caused by the war in Ukraine, a certain level of Armenian discontent and pullback from Russia, as well as Azerbaijan’s military and economic predominance. Russia’s peacekeeping mission in Nagorno-Karabakh continued to be active in 2022 but faced further criticism and pressure.

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. **In 2022, political-military issues and those related to the state’s own attributes predominated, such as territorial integrity, powers related to state sovereignty and mutual recognition.** In face of **Russia’s** invasion of **Ukraine**,

which militarily questioned Ukraine’s sovereignty, the political and military negotiations between the two countries addressed issues such as territorial integrity, security guarantees for Ukraine and Ukraine’s position regarding NATO. In late March, media outlets reported that Ukraine accepted and offered permanent neutrality, not joining blocs or hosting foreign military bases and abstaining from developing nuclear weapons in exchange for legally binding international security guarantees and a proposed 15-year period to resolve the question of Crimea through diplomatic channels. However, the negotiations broke down in April and were not revived for the rest of the year. Ukraine stated its intention to recover its territorial integrity, among other aspects, as a requirement for resuming the negotiations, while Russia demanded recognition of its annexation of four regions. In the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, border demarcation, mutual recognition of territorial integrity and sovereignty and other related issues were addressed during the year. Despite focusing part of the year on managing the crisis surrounding their dispute over vehicle license plates, Serbia and Kosovo were urged by Western actors to make headway in negotiations to normalise relations.

Other items on the agendas included **ceasefires and troop withdrawals**. Ukraine and Russia negotiated humanitarian ceasefires, though they encountered many obstacles and were repeatedly broken by Russia. Ukraine also aspired to a withdrawal of troops by Russia, while Moscow persisted in its invasion. While they were still active, the negotiations laid out scenarios for the withdrawal of Russian troops to the positions prior to 24 February, though in later months Ukraine aimed at militarily recovering all territory within its internationally recognised borders and Russia demanded recognition of its annexation of four regions in Ukraine. For their part, Armenia and Azerbaijan reached a ceasefire agreement in September, following the most serious escalation since the 2020 war.

On the other hand, the issue of the status of the various disputed territories, root cause of many conflicts in Europe, continued to be absent or blocked in the negotiating processes. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine expanded the previous conflict in the Donbas. In September, Russia formally annexed four regions (Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, in addition to Crimea, which had been annexed in 2014) and demanded recognition of the annexation as a new reality to be taken into account if negotiations were resumed. Ukraine declared its intent to regain control of all its territory, including Donbas and Crimea, departing from previous positions it had held in the March negotiations regarding the possible compartmentalisation of the issue. In the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Baku warned that the Nagorno-Karabakh issue was internal and that

*Peace processes
in Europe in 2022
accounted for 15% of
all cases worldwide*

it would not negotiate with the Armenian government over it under any circumstances. Thus, for another year since the 2020 war, the previous negotiating framework appeared to have been dismantled. The previous process aimed at resolving the enclave's status through the balance of principles of territorial integrity and the right to self-determination. Other negotiating processes regarding conflicts over the status of territories remained stalled, such as in Moldova (Transdniestria), Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and Cyprus. As a whole, they also faced greater difficulties due to pressures in the local, regional and international contexts.

Regarding the **evolution** of the peace negotiations, 2022 was a year of serious obstacles and greater difficulties, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its effects on the peace processes in Europe, with greater uncertainty, geopolitical changes and the prioritisation of strategic objectives over negotiated solutions. Russia's invasion of Ukraine created a serious humanitarian crisis, questioned Ukraine's sovereignty, dismantled the previous failed negotiating process and revealed the lack of a shared security architecture in Europe. This had echoes in the negotiating process between Moldova and Transdniestria, where uncertainty and risks of the conflict expanding increased, although the parties did commit to a peaceful and negotiated solution to the conflict. The invasion also resonated in the South Caucasus. The international co-mediators delayed the Geneva International Discussions (GID) between Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia until October to "protect" it against any possible negative effects from the war in Ukraine. The process remained stalled under greater continental tension. Some progress was made in normalising relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, such as with the establishment of border commissions, but the volatility of the situation prevailed, as evidenced by the escalation of violence in September (the worst since the 2020 war), the blockade of the Lachin corridor and Iran's warnings against any change to the borders. Moreover, the possibility of a negotiated solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue deteriorated and was practically nullified amidst the imbalance of power between the two countries, with Azerbaijan ascendant militarily and economically, supported by Turkey and strengthened by its position as a gas exporter, including with gas agreements with the EU, as well as a decline in Russia's ability to influence the region. In this geopolitical context, Baku imposed its view of Nagorno-Karabakh as an internal issue not subject to negotiation. The negotiating process in Cyprus remained deadlocked, with no resumption of formal negotiations and a growing gap between the parties' positions. The negotiating process also continued to be affected by the regional tension in the eastern Mediterranean between Turkey and Cyprus and by the clear risks of greater militarisation on the island and in the surrounding area. Although agreements were reached on the dispute between Serbia and Kosovo

regarding license plate fees, the situation remained volatile. Both parties agreed to focus on negotiating a proposal to normalise relations, although the situation was affected by uncertainty in Europe, evident signs of the gulf between Pristina and Belgrade and the limits of encouragement of future entry in the EU.

Regarding the gender perspective, the peace processes in Europe continued to be characterised mainly by low levels of women's participation in the negotiating teams, as well as by the lack of gender mechanisms or gender architecture. The political and military negotiations between Ukraine and Russia revealed this exclusion, though whether formally or informally organised, women's activists, women's organisations and the civilian population as a whole were fully involved in the civilian response to the crisis triggered by the invasion through many different humanitarian and community support initiatives. Some progress was made in formal negotiating processes, such as in Cyprus, where the technical committee for gender equality adopted an action plan to promote the participation of women in the peace process in response to the UN Secretary-General's call and as the result of decades of activity by women's organisations on the island. However, the plan was structured around recommendations, so its impact will depend on the degree of implementation. The deadlock in the negotiations partly limited their potential, though many of the recommendations did not depend on the resumption of negotiations at a high level. Another positive development in 2022 was the imminent launch of the informal Women's Advisory Board in the Transdniestrian negotiating process with the support of UN Women. This new body aims to issue recommendations for the resolution process. Moreover, women's organisations and activists in Kosovo and Georgia continued to demand women's participation in the negotiating processes.

5.2. Case study analysis

Eastern Europe

Moldova (Transdniestria)	
Negotiating actors	Moldovan government, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria
Third parties	OSCE (mediator), Ukraine and Russia (guarantor countries), USA and EU (observers) in the 5+2 format
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 Transdniestria (The Moscow Agreement) (1997)

Summary:

Transdniestria 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 Transdniestria over a possible unification between the independent Moldova and Romania, which have both historical and cultural links. Transdniestria 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 Transdniestria 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 Transdniestria. 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 negotiating process between Moldova and Transdniestria faced the risks of greater instability and expansion of the conflict in Ukraine due to the Russian invasion, although both parties affirmed their willingness to resolve the Transdniestrian conflict peacefully and through dialogue. The political, social and economic context in which the process took place deteriorated due to the crisis in the neighbouring country. The Moldovan Parliament approved the introduction of a state of emergency in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which remained in force at the end of the year. In April, Russian General and Deputy Commander of the Central Military District Rustam Minnekayev declared that Russia aimed to seize control of eastern and southern Ukraine in the second phase of the war, including the city of Odessa, and reaching as far as Transdniestria. In April, the Transdniestrian regime blamed several explosions and security incidents in Transdniestria on Ukraine. The Moldovan government considered this a provocation and in October it alleged that Russian missiles had invaded its airspace. However, the Moldovan authorities ruled out the immediate risk of spill over from the conflict and both parties to the conflict made statements ruling out the spread of armed violence and war and calling for a peaceful solution to the Transdniestrian conflict. Since Ukraine maintained control of Odessa, analysts also said there was a low risk of the conflict expanding to Transdniestria. Another factor reducing the likelihood of spill over is the high degree of Transdniestria's commercial integration with Europe. In addition, the European Union granted Moldova and Ukraine EU candidate country status in

In a year of uncertainty due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, both Moldova and Transdniestria called for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the Transdniestrian conflict

June. Uncertainty increased in the final months of the year alongside opposition demonstrations in September and October demanding an end to the sanctions against Russia and the resignation of the president and the pro-EU government. This came amidst a hike in gas prices and the Russian gas company Gazprom's threats to cut off supplies to the country.

Amidst the challenges caused by the war, diplomatic activity intensified between the government of Moldova and international actors such as European governments (including Ukraine), the EU, (including the High Representative), as well as with the Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine, Russia, the OSCE mission in the country and the special representative of the OSCE chairperson-in-office for the Transdniestria settlement process, United Nations agencies and the UN resident coordinator in the country. Various meetings took place during the year between senior political representatives of Moldova and Transdniestria, involving Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Reintegration Oleg Serebrian and Transdniestrian chief negotiator Vitaly Ignatiev, as well as representatives of the 5+2 negotiating format. **No significant agreements were reached in the process, but it was possible to maintain a fluid dialogue in a year of great uncertainty due to the war in Ukraine.** Also prominent was the parties' explicit commitment to prevent the conflict from expanding, including after the April incidents.

Some analysts said that Moldova tried to calm Ukrainian representatives' belligerent tone in relation to Transdniestria. One of the main topics of discussion in the format of Moldovan and Transdniestrian political representatives was the energy crisis. Throughout the year, there were also joint working groups meetings, including on social affairs and humanitarian aid, civil status and documentation, education, health, environmental issues, car transport and infrastructure development, customs issues and others. In late November, Moldova participated in a NATO meeting in Bucharest. The Moldovan foreign minister said that the country did not aim to join NATO and that neutrality is enshrined in the Moldovan Constitution, though he also said that Moldova needed to intensify relations with the Atlantic organisation.

Gender, peace and security

As part the negotiating process between Moldova and Transdniestria, the women participating in the joint expert working groups continued to enhance their mediation capacities. A positive development in 2022 was the imminent launch of the informal Women's Advisory Board in the Transdniestrian negotiating process with the support of UN Women to issue recommendations for the resolution process. On the other hand, in November, 16 women participated

in joint face-to-face training organised by the OSCE mission and the mediation support team of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, giving continuity to the 2021 training sessions. Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Reintegration Oleg Serebrian, who is also the country's chief negotiator, met at least twice with UN Women, including the organisation's representative in the country, Dominika Stojanoska, and its executive director, Sima Bahous, in April. A consultative seminar held in October was aimed at preparing the second national action plan on women, peace and security for the period 2023-2027 (after the completion of the first in 2021) and brought together institutional representatives, civil society organisations, international representatives and others. In this context, the UN Women representative in the country warned of the decline in women's rights and representation in recent years, as well as the possible rollback of gender equality due to the war in Ukraine. The representative pointed to risks of greater militarisation, increased financing for military equipment and a decrease in funds for social needs.

Russia – Ukraine	
Negotiating actors	Russia, Ukraine
Third parties	Turkey, UN, Israel, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, IAEA, OSCE, Germany, France ⁵
Relevant agreements	Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports (22th July 2022)

Summary:

Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, resulting in the military occupation of southern and eastern parts of the country and affecting other areas with bombings and attacks that had serious impacts on human security, such as mass forced displacement, extrajudicial executions, disappearances, sexual violence, food and energy insecurity and other crises. The invasion was preceded by previous cycles of conflict, including Russia's 2014 seizure and annexation of Crimea, the war in eastern Ukraine between Russian-backed local militias and Ukrainian security forces, and deadlocked negotiations, all following the change of government in Ukraine after the Maidan uprising between late 2013 and 2014. In contravention of international law, Russia's invasion and war targeted Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The antagonism between the US, the EU and NATO on one side and Russia on the other, as well as a failed security architecture in Europe, also influenced the context of the conflict and the prospects for resolution. Shortly after the invasion began, Ukraine and Russia began peace talks in various formats, addressing different topics. Facilitated by Turkey, the political and military negotiations reached a certain degree of rapprochement around a possible permanent neutrality agreement with respect to NATO, security guarantees and postponement of the Crimean issue, to be resolved through diplomatic channels in 15 years. However, the negotiations broke down in April.

Russia annexed four regions in September 2022, despite not controlling them in their entirety, and stated that any negotiations should recognise this new situation. Ukraine stated that it wished to regain control of the entire territory, including Crimea and Donbas. The talks on humanitarian issues, nuclear safety and grain exports continued.

Russia's military invasion of Ukraine triggered a high-intensity armed conflict and a serious humanitarian crisis, while scrapping the previous negotiating process over eastern Ukraine. Attempts at direct negotiations in the opening months of the invasion failed and dialogue was relegated to humanitarian issues, including prisoner exchanges, grain exports and the protection of nuclear infrastructure. The military invasion was preceded by years of impasse in the negotiating process over Donbas, with substantive disagreements between the parties regarding the Minsk agreements, their scope and sequence. This was made worse in 2021, which saw a massive build-up of Russian military forces in April 2021 and again in the closing months of the year. Diplomatic activity intensified between December 2021 and February 2022, among different actors and in various arenas, including between the US and Russia, between NATO and Russia, within the framework of the OSCE, in the Normandy format and efforts by the German and French foreign ministries. Various actors engaged in consultations with Ukraine. The EU also engaged in dialogue with various actors. In December 2021, Russia presented two treaties to the US and NATO for them to sign that demanded that NATO cease enlargement, withdraw to its 1997 borders and guarantee not to deploy offensive weapons along its borders, among other points. The US and NATO responded with proposals to continue the dialogue on European indivisibility and on European security with respect to the right to choose foreign policy, though they ruled out the non-enlargement of NATO, as well as with proposals on some issues of arms control, risk reduction and transparency. Russian President Vladimir Putin considered them unsatisfactory. On 21 February, Russia recognised the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk and ordered troops to those territories, accompanied by a presidential speech in which Putin questioned the historical legitimacy of Ukraine as an independent country. On 24 February, Russia began its invasion with Putin's announcement of a "special operation" in pursuit of "demilitarisation" and "denazification". The invasion gave way to war and military occupation, which was still active at the end of the year and caused human, material and territorial devastation. In mid-December, according to OCHA data, 17.7 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, 5.59 million people were internally displaced and 7.83 million people were refugees. In response to the invasion, the US and the EU imposed coordinated sanctions, backed by other actors. Russia responded by imposing sanctions and measures of its own.

5. This table includes actors that have been involved as third parties in different spheres in 2022 both before the Russian invasion and in the phase following the invasion.

Over the course of the invasion, direct negotiations took place between Ukraine and Russia. The political and military dialogue was held between late February and April, and in May both parties considered it to be at a standstill. In contrast, discussions on humanitarian issues were on going at the end of the year, despite the difficulties encountered. In the political and military dialogue, the parties held face-to-face meetings in Belarus and Turkey and fundamentally by videoconference between negotiating delegations and working groups. Turkey acted as a facilitator, while there were also contacts and offers from other actors, such as Israel and the UN Secretary-General. Throughout the year, other actors offered their good offices, such as Switzerland (which Russia rejected) or prepared proposals, such as Mexico (which proposed a High-Level Caucus for Dialogue and Peace), which Ukraine rejected as being pro-Russian. As for the negotiating agenda and positions, in late March it was reported in the media that Ukraine accepted and offered permanent neutrality and that it would not join any blocs or host foreign military bases and abstain from developing nuclear weapons in exchange for legally binding international security guarantees and the right to take military action such as the closure airspace, the supply of weapons and the use of armed forces, if necessary, in case of future aggression. Ukraine offered to exclude Crimea and parts of Donbas from these guarantees, with the parties having to define the borders of those regions or agree to disagree, according to media reports. The Ukrainian position, later known as the Istanbul Communiqué, also proposed a 15-year period to resolve the Crimean issue through diplomatic channels, with the parties abstaining from using military action. The Istanbul Communiqué also proposed continuing the dialogue and consultations with guarantor states to prepare and agree on a security guarantee treaty, which would enter into force after a referendum in Ukraine on its neutral status, constitutional amendments and ratification of the treaty by the Ukrainian Parliaments and those of the guarantor countries. The proposal also considered continuing to negotiate types of ceasefires, withdrawing troops and other paramilitary forces and tackling humanitarian issues.

There was no agreement between the parties then or in subsequent months due to fundamental disagreements and because of how the development of the war influenced the parties' positions. In the meetings on 1 and 2 April, Russia maintained its position that Crimea was an integral part of its territory and defended the independence of the Donbas republics. In line with this position, in a face-to-face meeting on 11 April between

In contravention of international law, Russia's invasion of Ukraine created a serious humanitarian crisis and was rejected by a large majority in the UN General Assembly, which called for the troops to withdraw

Ukraine and Russia negotiated from the start of the invasion, including some rapprochement around an offer by Ukraine to remain neutral with respect to NATO and international security guarantees, but the talks broke down in April

the Austrian chancellor and the Russian president, the first with a European leader since the start of the invasion, Vladimir Putin said that resolving the conflict in Donbas on terms favourable to Moscow was more important for Russia than the impact of international sanctions. On 17 April, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy claimed that Ukraine would not give up Donbas to end the war.

On 20 April, Russia said that it had already responded to Ukraine's proposal from the last round of talks in Istanbul and that was waiting for a response from Ukraine. The Ukrainian and Russian chief negotiators, David Arakhamia and Vladimir Medinsky, held talks on 22 April, though no details were revealed. In late April, Russia reported that both countries' delegations maintained daily discussions via videoconference. However, there were clear disagreements and military means ended up prevailing. On 10 May, Ukrainian negotiator Rustem Umerov noted that Russian attacks on the Azovstal steel plant had slowed down the negotiations, and on the same day the Ukrainian foreign minister indicated that Ukraine's military objectives had changed and that they aspired to win the battle for Donbas. On 12 May, Ukrainian Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Mailar announced that a new phase of the war was beginning that involved mobilising and arming the Ukrainian forces. On 17 May, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko said that the political negotiating process was totally deadlocked. In late May, Podoliak confirmed the impasse in the negotiations, noting that no agreement was possible without the full withdrawal of Russian troops, and repeated Ukraine's position that it would not compromise its territorial integrity, describing it as a red line. At around the same time, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that Russia's primary objective was to control the entire Donbas and accused Ukraine of changing its position from what it had been in Istanbul, while Ukraine blamed Russia for the failure of the negotiations.

Despite the deadlock in negotiations with Russia, Ukraine continued to negotiate with potential guarantor countries regarding security guarantees. It established an international working group chaired by former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, which issued a report with recommendations called the "Kyiv Security Compact" in September. The report indicated that Ukraine's military defence capability was the main security guarantee. Based on that militaristic approach, it identified Ukraine's need for a highly prepared military force, massive military training, joint exercises, sea and land-based anti-missile systems, Ukraine's access to EU funding for the defence industry, and military capabilities and service for the entire civilian population over 18 years

of age. The report called for legal and political guarantees so that the guarantor countries can commit to Ukraine's military capabilities with financial support, direct investment and reconstruction funds, arms exports, technology transfer, intelligence cooperation and other areas spanning over decades. It also called for legal guarantees for expanded commitments of military and non-military support in the event of renewed aggression within its internationally recognised borders. The report made Ukraine's aspiration to join NATO explicit, and stating that the guarantees should not be established in exchange for neutral status or otherwise, nor with any obligations or restrictions imposed on Ukraine, including any limit on the size or capabilities of its armed forces. Russian negotiator Leonid Slutski said that Russia would never accept a list of guarantees such as those contained in the report of recommendations and complained that they implied expansion of Western countries' military infrastructure to Russia's borders, the entrenchment of sanctions against Russia and other actions.

The prospects for restarting the negotiating process were complicated in September. Russia formally annexed the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions on 30 September, in contravention to international law, after independence referenda were held in late September in parts of those provinces under Russian military occupation. The Russian president issued new nuclear threats, claiming that he would use all forces and means at his disposal to "protect" those territories. In early August, the Ukrainian president had warned that holding referenda closed the doors to negotiations. Also on 30 September, Ukraine signed its application to join NATO by urgent procedure. Ukraine rejected international calls to negotiate on terms it considered unfair. Military means to resolve the conflict remained dominant and Ukraine regained control of the areas of Kherson to the west of the Dnieper River in a counteroffensive in November after recapturing the northeastern city of Kharkov in September. In November, Ukrainian chief negotiator David Arakhamia laid out the terms under which it would be possible to negotiate with Russia, which had been stated in previous months: the recovery of Ukraine's territorial integrity, compensation for damages, the prosecution of war criminals and effective guarantees so that no new aggressions take place in the future. **In November, the Ukrainian president unveiled what he called a 10-point Formula for Peace at the G20 summit.** These points refer to areas that need to be addressed for a lasting solution, including: nuclear and radiation safety; food safety; energy security; the release of prisoners of war and deportees; the implementation of the UN charter and restoration of territorial integrity; the withdrawal of Russian troops and cessation of

The continuation of the invasion and its serious impacts, Russia's annexation of four regions of Ukraine and Russian threats to use all means at its disposal to maintain those territories made it hard to reach a solution

Despite the impasse in the political and military negotiations between Ukraine and Russia, both countries continued to discuss the exchange of prisoners, the export of grain and the protection of nuclear power plants

hostilities; justice and a special court for prosecuting war crimes; action against ecocide and environmental protection, including demining; security architecture in the Euro-Atlantic space, including security guarantees for Ukraine, with an international conference on security architecture and the signing of the "Kyiv Security Compact"; and confirmation of the end of the war. **In the final months of the year, Ukraine sent its proposal to international actors such as the US, France and India. Russia rejected the proposal as a basis for negotiations and continued its offensive against Ukraine,** with an increase in massive air attacks against civilian infrastructure, including the power network, in the closing months of the year.

Meanwhile, discussions on humanitarian issues remained active. Partial ceasefire agreements were negotiated at various times to conduct humanitarian evacuations and deliver humanitarian assistance, but they were not honoured and obstructed by Russia. Evacuations of Mariupol, the Azovstal steel plant and other locations were negotiated. Starting in April, the UN became more widely involved in supporting these humanitarian discussions. After months of efforts and negotiations, and with Turkey and the UN participating, Russia and Ukraine reached an agreement on 22 July to resume the export of Ukrainian grain, other food and fertiliser from three Ukrainian ports (Odessa, Chornomorsk and Pivdenne) and through a humanitarian shipping corridor on the Black Sea. Exports had been blocked by Russia since the start of the invasion and their resumption led to some drop in global prices, which had specifically impacted countries in the global South dependent on grain imports from Ukraine and Russia. The agreement also included the export of Russian food and fertiliser to global markets as an exception to the sanctions imposed on Russia. In mid-November, Turkey announced a 120-day extension to the agreement. There were also exchanges of prisoners of war and of remains of the deceased throughout the year.

Another topic of discussion was the protection of nuclear infrastructure. Hostilities near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the largest in Europe and militarily occupied by Russia at the beginning of the invasion, caused damage and serious security risks. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) sent a technical mission to Ukraine in late August and established a permanent presence at the plant. The IAEA issued a report in early September that analysed the damage produced and described the situation as unsustainable. **The IAEA urged Russia and Ukraine to agree on a buffer zone under the aegis of the UN. The UN Secretary-General demanded that Russia withdraw its troops and that Ukraine refrain from seizing the plant militarily. The IAEA director general held separate talks with Russia and Ukraine aimed at**

reaching an agreement to create a demilitarised buffer zone, although at the end of the year there was still no agreement. Attacks on the power grid temporarily disconnected the plant, requiring the use of generators. The IAEA also became involved in the independent verification of Russia's allegations in October that Ukraine was preparing a "dirty bomb" attack and raised concerns in Ukraine and internationally about the risks of a Russian false flag attack involving the use of radioactive weapons. IAEA inspections at three locations found no evidence of undeclared nuclear material or activities.

Diplomatic initiatives and activity related to international justice began from the start of the invasion. The UN General Assembly passed several resolutions by using the mechanism of emergency special sessions. One was a resolution in March (141 votes in favour, five against and 35 abstentions) condemning the invasion and demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops (Resolution A/ES-11/L.1). Another in November urged Russia to pay war reparations to Ukraine (94 votes in favour, 14 against and 73 abstentions). In another April resolution, the General Assembly suspended Russia's membership in the Human Rights Council (93 votes in favour, 24 against and 58 abstentions). Separately, in March, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court began collecting evidence for an investigation into past and present alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity and genocide in Ukraine since 2013. The Human Rights Council also established a commission to investigate violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Ukraine. Ukrainian civil society organisations and the self-organised Ukrainian population became involved in the humanitarian response to the crisis and dealt with other aggravated problems, such as gender-based violence in the family, while also supporting nonviolent civil resistance and other peacebuilding activities.

Gender, peace and security

Women and the civilian population of Ukraine as a whole devised many different civil strategies to respond to the invasion by supporting evacuations, the distribution of basic goods, support for alternative accommodations, the search for missing persons, the documentation of war crimes and crimes against humanity and many other areas. Women's rights activists and organisations were also active in many different civil responses to the invasion, including by denouncing the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war against women and men by Russian forces in areas under occupation and in psychosocial, sexual and reproductive health and humanitarian assistance in the face of this and other forms of violence. Women's and women's rights

organisations continued to warn of gender violence at home, a problem that was aggravated by the context of the armed conflict and worked to support related initiatives.

Until they fell apart in April, the political and military negotiations between Ukraine and Russia took place without women participating in the negotiating delegations of both countries. Negotiations in the humanitarian sphere did involve women, including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories Irina Vereshchuk, who led the negotiations on humanitarian corridors and prisoner exchanges. Ukrainian Ombudsman for Human Rights Lyudmila Denisova also oversaw prisoner exchanges until May, when she was ousted and replaced by Dmytro Lubinets. In a joint open letter, activists and journalists from Ukraine had urged Denisova to refrain from sensationalism and victimisation when reporting on sexual violence and instead provide only verified information, avoid excessive detail, use the term "survivor" rather than "victim", consider survivors' privacy and safety and remind the population about networks offering legal support, human rights advocacy and psychosocial care.⁶

Russia and the Caucasus

Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Armenia, Government of Azerbaijan
Third parties	Russia, EU, USA, OSCE Minsk Group (Co-chaired by Russia, France and USA; other permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey), Turkey ⁷
Relevant agreements	Bishkek Protocol (1994), Ceasefire agreement (1994), Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation (2020)

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

6. IMI, "Female media workers call on Lyudmila Denisova to abstain from detailed descriptions when informing the public about rape", IMI, 25th May 2022.

7. Turkey's status as a third party may be subject to dispute. It is included in this table due to the establishment by Russia and Turkey of a peacekeeping centre for monitoring the 2020 ceasefire. The establishment of the centre was ratified in a Memorandum between Russia and Turkey.

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 increased the alert warning in a context of an arms race a bellicose rhetoric and a regional scenario of geostrategic tensions. War broke out again in September 2020 and in November the parties reached an agreement that entailed a complete change of the status quo (control by Azerbaijan of the districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh and a part of Nagorno-Karabakh, along with the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces), but left the political status of Nagorno-Karabakh unresolved.

The governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan maintained contacts and dialogue around a new framework to normalise bilateral relations, while the peace process's approach prior to the 2020 war, which had addressed the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and had focused on the principles of territorial integrity and self-determination, was dismantled. This turnaround took place amidst an imbalance of power and Azerbaijan's military, political and economic dominance, as well as a geopolitical context influenced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which made the imbalance larger.

In March, it emerged that **Azerbaijan had presented Armenia with a five-point plan to normalise relations between both countries, which included their mutual recognition of territorial integrity and state sovereignty, the relinquishment of future territorial claims, border limitation and demarcation, diplomatic relations and the opening of regional transport routes.** It contained no direct reference to Nagorno-Karabakh. By submitting its plan, Baku proposed a negotiating framework focused on normalising bilateral relations and disconnected from the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, which it considered an internal matter and not debatable with any international actor. The Armenian government did not reject the Azerbaijani five-point proposal, but it did demand guarantees of rights and freedoms for the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh. According to the Armenian foreign minister in March, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was not a territorial issue but one of rights. In a speech given to the Armenian Parliament on 13 April, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that if the basis for negotiations in the past had been the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, from which guarantees of security and rights were to be derived, the basis now consisted of guarantees of security and rights and its status would stem from them. In November, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev warned that in no case would Baku accept a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan that included references to Nagorno-Karabakh and demanded a completely clear position on the matter from Armenia. Aliyev also confirmed that Azerbaijan was willing to speak with the population of Nagorno-Karabakh and that this process had already begun, but

ruled out doing so with Ruben Vardanyan, a Russian millionaire businessman of Armenian origin who took over as state minister of the self-proclaimed republic in November, nor with the government of Armenia. The leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh expressed their willingness to speak with Azerbaijan, but ruled out direct talks, calling for a format with international mediation.

Meetings between Armenia and Azerbaijan were focused on the normalising relations.

Meetings took place in different formats throughout the year (conversations at the leadership level, contacts between the foreign ministers and between border commissions, among others) and with the support of various actors as third parties, including the EU, the US and Russia. In the first half of the year, some steps were taken to bring the parties closer together. On 6 April, during a meeting in Brussels hosted by EU Council President Charles Michel, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev agreed to assign their foreign ministers to work on preparations for a peace agreement and expressed the desire to move quickly towards an agreement. They also announced in April that they would convene a bilateral border commission charged with defining the interstate border and guaranteeing security in the area. The parties established their respective border commissions in May and delegations from both bodies met for the first time on 24 May at the interstate border. That first meeting was preceded by a new meeting in Brussels on 22 May between the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders, facilitated by Charles Michel. According to the EU statement, in addition to agreeing on the first meeting of the border commissions, both leaders agreed on the need to restore transport connections in the

region and reached agreements on principles for border restoration and management techniques, customs, fees and security issues. They also agreed to move towards a peace treaty, maintain close contact and hold a new trilateral meeting in the summer. Various meetings took place in July, including one between the foreign ministers in Georgia, separate meetings between the US Secretary of State with both leaders and visits to the two countries by EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Toivo Klaar. On 31 August, the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders met again in Brussels, facilitated by the EU. According to the International Crisis Group, at that meeting they agreed that the foreign ministers would meet again within a month to work on the drafts of a possible peace agreement.

Despite these efforts, the dialogue and meetings were accompanied by difficulties, mistrust and security incidents in Nagorno-Karabakh and on the interstate border, as well as Azerbaijani military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh and in Armenia. Armenia denounced Baku's military seizure of some territory in the region and inside Armenia's borders. The Azerbaijani Army's

air offensive in September against parts of Armenia on the central and southern border resulted in the deadliest interstate escalation since the 2020 war, with 207 Armenian soldiers and 80 other Azerbaijanis killed, several civilian fatalities, dozens of civilians wounded and over 2,700 Armenian civilians displaced, among other impacts. Armenia and Azerbaijan announced a ceasefire on 14 September following an earlier failed truce promoted by Russia and international calls for a ceasefire and the resumption of negotiations. Pashinyan had expressed his willingness to reach an agreement with Azerbaijan if Baku recognised Armenia's territorial integrity, including 50 km² of Armenia taken by Baku in 2021 and 2022, adding that Armenia in turn would recognise the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. After his announcement, a few thousand people (according to some media outlets) protested against Pashinyan in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, as well as in the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, Stepanakert, and in Gyumri, against what they perceived as concessions.

The military escalation and truce in September were followed by new diplomatic moves and international calls for dialogue. Among other US efforts, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with the foreign ministers of both countries on 19 September at the same time as the UN General Assembly. During a meeting held alongside the Prague Summit of European countries on 6 October, the Azerbaijani president, the Armenian prime minister, the French president and the president of the EU Council agreed to deploy an EU civil observation mission on the Armenian side of the international border. The meeting's attendees also committed to mutual recognition of territorial integrity and sovereignty, based on the United Nations Charter and the 1991 Alma-Ata Protocol. It was deployed on 20 October and ended in December, with a mandate to help to build trust between the parties by monitoring compliance with the ceasefire and issuing reports to the EU for its work in support of the border commissions. At another trilateral meeting of the two leaders with Russian President Vladimir Putin on 31 October in Sochi, Russia, the parties agreed to refrain from using force and to negotiate problematic issues exclusively on the basis of recognition of territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders. On 30 October, thousands of people (40,000 according to local authorities) demonstrated in Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, rejecting the possibility of the region coming under Azerbaijani control. On that same day, the Nagorno-Karabakh Parliament, which organised the protest, issued a declaration in defence of the region's sovereignty and its right to self-determination and against any document or proposal that might question it.

The issue of the Lachin corridor, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, was a source of tension and a topic of discussion during the year. In August, Baku announced that it had completed its section of the

new route that will replace the Lachin corridor according to the 2020 ceasefire agreement and accused Yerevan of delaying its section. In addition to the incidents in August and the evacuation of the population from towns around the corridor, at the end of the year tensions rose due to the blockade of the corridor in December by Azerbaijani protesters opposed to mining activity in the region. The blockade hindered access to basic goods and generated the risk of a humanitarian emergency. International actors such as the US, the EU and the UN Secretary-General called for it to reopen. Armenia postponed a planned trilateral meeting with Azerbaijan and Russia in December, stating that its priority was the reopening of the corridor.

Gender, peace and security

The new negotiating framework for diplomatic contacts in various formats took place without the participation of women from civil society or the inclusion of the gender dimension, which marked continuity with their exclusion prior to the 2020 war. There were some peacebuilding initiatives by women or that involved female activists, such as anti-war protests in the Armenian capital in January and a statement from the Feminist Peace Collective (created in 2020 in response to the war that year) in protest against Azerbaijan's offensive in September, which was also critical of the male-dominated and elitist negotiations of both governments and appealed for unity, citizen diplomacy and peacebuilding.

Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia ⁸
Third parties	OSCE, EU and UN; USA, Russia ⁹
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

8. 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.
9. Ibid.

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.

The negotiating process involving Georgia, the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia was influenced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The new conflict in Ukraine and global instability prompted the co-mediators to delay the Geneva International Discussions (GID) in order to “protect” the process and avoid any negative effect from the international context and the war in Ukraine on the planned round and the GID as a whole. However, Russia criticised the decision, accused the US, the EU and the OSCE of trying to freeze the negotiations and demanded that the GID be transferred to another location. Abkhazia and South Ossetia seconded Russia’s demands. Preceded by two trips to the region by the co-facilitators, the 56th round of the GID finally took place in October in Geneva, the first since December 2021. Despite the delay, the co-facilitators stressed that the paths for communication with the GID participants (Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia) had remained operational. The round addressed persistent issues in the process that had not yet been resolved. Among other issues, Georgia claimed that the internally displaced population and refugees had the right to return. Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia demanded bilateral agreements on the non-use of force between Georgia and each of the two de facto independent regions. Georgia, which already issued a unilateral commitment not to use force in 2010, maintained its position that such an agreement should be bilateral between Russia and Georgia, as it considers Russia the main party to the conflict. In the statement ending the round, the EU expressed concern about Russia’s continued military presence and its actions in the internationally

recognised territory of Georgia, its attempts to integrate the two disputed regions into its security and regulatory space, the gradual expansion of the territory under its control and the restrictions on freedom of movement. Despite disagreements and antagonism, the parties pledged to continue with the GID format. The co-mediators took another trip to the region in November.

The Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) remained active during the year, with meetings in September and November. It deals with South Ossetia and is co-facilitated by the EU and the OSCE. Moreover, South Ossetia reopened two of the five border crossings with Georgia, though only partially. The Gali IPRM remained non-operational, as it has been since 2018. However, the parties expressed their willingness to resume it in the last round of the GID in 2021 and in the October 2022 round, the parties repeated their interest in restarting it, though it was not reactivated.

The negotiating process took place in an unfavourable context, both due to the situation in Europe caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the political polarisation between the Georgian government and the opposition and social tension. Some opposition groups called on Georgia to regain control of the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by military means. Among other developments during the year, in June former Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili, who was president between 2004 and 2013, was arrested in 2021 after eight years outside the country and sentenced to prison for abuse of power, spoke on a social network in favour of offering the creation of a Georgian-Abkhaz federation to Abkhazia.

Gender, peace and security

The international gap continued between states’ commitments to the women, peace and security agenda and the limits of implementation, as denounced by Georgian female civil society activists. During a meeting between the co-facilitators of the GID and various Georgian women from civil society held in November, almost a month after the 56th round of the GID, ICCN director and GPPAC representative Nina Tsikhistavi-Khutsishvili warned of the lack of implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in Georgia.⁹ She said that the women from the civil society had not received any information that the round of the GID on 5 October would take place or anything about the agenda and added that the participation and duration of the subsequent consultation meeting was limited. Beyond that round and subsequent consultation, Tsikhistavi-Khutsishvili warned of the many limitations of the negotiating process in Georgia in relation to the four pillars of the women, peace and security agenda (participation, protection,

9. International Center on Conflict and Negotiation, “Statement to Georgia’s Peace Process Stakeholders”, ICCN, 13 November 2022; Tsikhistavi-Khutsishvili, Nina, “Implementing Women, Peace and Security in Georgia: Where do we stand?”, GPPAC, 23 November 2022.

prevention and assistance and recovery). She emphasised the underrepresentation of women in negotiation, mediation, monitoring and humanitarian roles, the lack of steps taken to ensure that their participation is substantive and able to influence the process and insufficient support for women's peace initiatives.

In contrast to the limitations identified by civil society groups, the co-mediator and UN representative to the GID, Ayşe Cihan Sultanoğlu, highlighted the co-mediators' commitment to implementing the women, peace and security agenda during the open symposium on women, peace and security in November. In September, a new meeting took place in Gori between representatives of the Georgian government participating in the IPRM and women's organisations and women affected by the conflict and displacement, with the support of UN Women. During the meeting and at other forums throughout the year, local organisations and directly affected population raised various issues, including but not limited to restrictions on movement, difficulties in accessing health care and other services, the poor condition of the buildings used as collective centres for the displaced population and the need for alternative accommodation and the road infrastructure situation.

South-east Europe

Cyprus	
Negotiating actors	Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
Third parties	UN, EU (observer at the Geneva International Conference); 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 no resumption of formal negotiations at a high political level. The UN Secretary-General's special representative, Colin Stewart, held separate meetings with Greek Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot President Ersin Tatar and their respective representatives, as well as with many local and international actors as part of the UN mission of good offices. Moreover, the UN Secretary-General's Advisor for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, Miroslav Jenca, held separate meetings in November with both leaders. There were no joint meetings, although both leaders met twice during the year: in April for the launch of the action plan to promote the participation of women in the peace process and in December at a reception organised by the UN at the end of the year. There was an exchange of letters between both leaders. In his letter in June, Anastasiades called to resume the negotiations on the same basis as the previous negotiations. In his reply, Tatar said that the negotiations based on a federation solution had run their course and demanded confirmation of equal sovereignty and equal status for a restart of the negotiating process. During the year, Anastasiades confirmed a solution based on a bizonal and bicomunal federation (the framework in which the negotiating process has been conducted), while Tatar demanded a solution of equal sovereignty and two states. As in recent years, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan defended a two-state solution and ruled out reunification. At the end of the year, the conditions for restarting the negotiations were still not in place. The predictions for the presidential elections in Cyprus, Greece and Turkey in 2023 suggested that the difficulties in restarting the process would continue in the short term. In any case, at the reception at the year's end, Stewart said that the parties had made headway in proposals for cooperation and trust-building during the year.

Despite the disagreements between the parties regarding the conflict's underlying issues, there was some progress and cooperation in the discussions between the joint technical committees, including in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The UN Secretary-General and the Deputy to the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus hailed these developments, favoured by the framework of permanent dialogue and the weekly trilateral meetings between the Special Adviser and the representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, Menelaos Menelaou and Ergun Olgun, respectively. Stewart also highlighted the boost in trade between both communities on the island at the end of the year. However, as a whole, the prospects for resolving the conflict continued to be affected by regional tension, including disputes over the exploitation of oil in the Mediterranean and the multidimensional crisis between Greece and Turkey, which confronts both countries along various lines, including the divided island of Cyprus, which escalated in intensity at certain times of the year. Furthermore, Washington's decision to lift restrictions on arms sales to the Greek Cypriot

administration and the Greek Cypriot announcement to increase its defence budget prompted Turkish and Turkish Cypriot criticism, warnings of reciprocity and an announcement by Ankara to increase its military presence in the island. Furthermore, the UN Security Council renewed the mission of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus in July. According to the media, the Turkish Cypriot authorities presented a draft agreement to the UN in September to formalise the presence of the UN mission. Until then, the mission personnel operated in the northern part of the island with the approval of the Greek Cypriot administration. In October, they again demanded a direct agreement with the Turkish Cypriot authorities, with warnings that the mission would have to leave the northern part of the island without it.

Gender, peace and security

The Cyprus peace process' technical committee on gender equality adopted a series of recommendations in the form of an action plan to promote women's participation in the process, addressed to the political leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities of the island. This was agreed in response to previous calls from the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary-General amidst women's chronic underrepresentation in the peace process. The committee's recommendations include a ceiling of two-thirds representation of either gender in all delegations as well as members and co-chairs of the working groups and technical committees of the peace process. Another pillar includes recommendations that the technical committee for gender equality should engage regularly with civil society, women's and youth organisations and collect their opinions on various issues of the process in coordination with the process' negotiators, including through seminars. They also recommend that the main delegations include a gender expert and that enough financial and human resources be earmarked to implement the plan. The UN Security Council endorsed the plan in UNSC Resolution S/RES/2618 (2022) of January 2022.

Serbia – Kosovo	
Negotiating actors	Serbia, Kosovo
Third parties	EU, UN, USA, Germany, France
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.

The negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo faced obstacles and was affected by the spike in tension between the parties amidst instability and war in Ukraine, while international actors called for intensified effort to reach an agreement to normalise relations.

One of the main challenges facing the process during the year was the dispute around reciprocity measures on vehicle registrations and identity cards. The 2021 provisional agreement on license plates expired in April 2022. In late June, the Kosovar government announced that it would require Kosovar license plates starting on 30 September, as well as temporary identity documents issued by Pristina to people with Serbian identification to enter Kosovo starting in August. The announcement received harsh criticism from Serbia and Kosovar Serb representatives and was followed by barricades and violent incidents that lasted several days. The Kosovar government blamed the Serbian government for the blockades and protests. Amidst international calls, Pristina postponed the implementation of the identification documents to 1 September. A meeting held on 18 August at the highest political level (between the Serbian president and the Kosovar prime minister, facilitated by the EU's High Representative for Foreign Policy) and described by the EU as a crisis management meeting, did not lead to an agreement and was followed by new consultations that involved the special envoys of the EU and the US. **On 27 August, the Serbian and Kosovar leaders reached a freedom of movement agreement whereby Serbia agreed to abolish its entry and exit documents for people with Kosovar**

identification and Kosovo agreed not to incorporate the reciprocal requirement. The Serbian government made it explicit that the agreement was due to practical issues, related to facilitating freedom of movement based on the 2011 agreement, but added that it was in no way a recognition of Kosovo.

On 1 September, the Kosovar prime minister announced a two-month deadline for the replacement of Serbian license plates with Kosovar ones on vehicles entering Kosovo, until 31 October. Amidst a climate of escalating tension, with new incidents of violence and international calls to delay the deadline, in October Kosovo postponed the notice period for drivers until 21 November, while delaying the entry of the full reciprocal requirement. The situation was further aggravated by the mass resignation in early November of hundreds of Kosovo Serb civil servants and officials, including police officers, mayors, judges and prosecutors from northern Kosovo, customs officials and Serb MPs to the Kosovar Parliament to protest the suspension of a regional director of the northern Kosovo police service for deciding not to issue tickets to vehicles with Serbian license plates. **The parties reached an agreement in extremis on 23 November in a meeting between the chief negotiators facilitated by the EU, preceded by an unsuccessful round on 21 November between the Serbian president and the Kosovar prime minister. The deal provided for Serbia to stop issuing license plates with the names of Kosovar towns and for Kosovo to cease all actions requiring vehicle registration. According to the EU, the parties also agreed to focus on negotiating a proposal to normalise relations presented by the EU facilitator and supported by France and Germany in September.** In addition, according to what the EU stated after the meeting, the parties to the conflict understood that all the agreements reached throughout the process should be implemented. Despite the freedom of movement agreement, tension continued in northern Kosovo, with some violent incidents against electoral facilities and the erection of barricades, which led Pristina to postpone until April 2023 the local elections scheduled in northern Kosovo for 18 December after mayors and public officials resigned en masse. The main party of the Kosovo Serb population, Serb List, which backs the positions of the Serbian government, rejected the elections and some civil society organisations and international governments (including the “Quintet” of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and USA) had called for a delay in the elections. The prolongation of the barricades led the EU special envoy to hold new meetings with the Kosovar and Serbian leaders in their respective capitals on 13 and 14 December, with the US special envoy participating. At the end of the month, the Serbian president announced that the barricades

Kosovo and Serbia reached an agreement on the dispute over vehicle license plates in a year of escalating tension and international actors urged them to move forward in normalising relations through a Franco-German proposal

would be removed, noting that a response had been given to Kosovar Serb demands. Kosovo had denied the existence of lists of Kosovar Serb citizens to be arrested or prosecuted for the protests and the Kosovar Serb police officer whose arrest triggered part of the protests was placed under house arrest.

Alongside the negotiated management of the license plate crisis, one of the most prominent developments of the year was the reinvigoration of international support for a final agreement to normalise relations through a Franco-German proposal, part of whose content circulated in the media in September. Previously, in May, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz had held separate meetings in Berlin with the Kosovar prime minister and the Serbian president in which he called for an agreement between the parties and pledged Germany’s support for the process. That same day, the EU special envoy met the two leaders in the German capital. In early September, the French president and the German chancellor sent joint letters to the Serbian and Kosovar leaders urging them both to step up their dialogue in a context they described as critical for security in Europe and stability in the Western Balkans region, as bilateral and regional disputes had to be resolved in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The letters also announced that their advisors Emanuel Bono and Jens Pletner would give direct support to EU special envoy Miroslav Lajcak in the negotiating process. Bono, Pletner and Lajcak travelled together to Pristina and Belgrade a few days later. In mid-September, the *Albanian Post* reported

that there was a proposal for an agreement that laid out a first phase in 2023 that included Serbia’s acceptance of Kosovo as an independent state and a subsequent 10-year scenario in which the EU would be willing to integrate the Western Balkans and in which the parties would accept mutual recognition, a prerequisite for entry. The plan also included aspects such as Kosovo’s entry into international organisations, such as the UN and the EU, through various phases. The Kosovar and Serbian leaders declined to comment on the information published in the media, stating that the proposal was not public, although Vucic said that Serbia would not accept Kosovo’s entry into international organisations. Kurti said that there was no final proposal, but there were various ideas under discussion, including a Franco-German initiative to strengthen EU facilitation and US support for the negotiating process. The US special envoy for the Western Balkans, Gabriel Escobar, said in October that Serbia would probably recognise Kosovo at some point, but that along the way Kosovo had to focus its efforts on achieving recognition from the five EU countries that have not yet recognised it and on the process of integrating into international structures. He also said that a prominent part of the agreement to

normalise relations should be the association of Kosovo Serb municipalities, which was already signed in the past but has not yet been implemented by the Kosovo government. In November, as part of Germany and France's renewed support for the negotiating process between Kosovo and Serbia and amidst lingering tensions in northern Kosovo, the French president met in Paris with the Serbian president and with the Kosovar prime minister and president at the same time as the Paris Peace Forum. The High Representative of the EU also met jointly with the parties in the same forum. As part of the dialogue facilitated by the EU, Kosovo and Serbia agreed on a roadmap for the implementation of the 2013 and 2015 energy agreements, which remained pending full implementation. In December, Kosovo applied to join the EU.

Gender, peace and security

Kosovar female civil society activists continued to demand participation in the negotiating process, as well

as in the consultations that the EU is conducting with actors in the country. Specifically, the Kosovar Women's Network (KWN, a platform that brings together more than 150 women's civil society organisations in Kosovo, including women from ethnic minorities in the region) sent a letter in February to EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue Miroslav Lajcak expressing concern that neither the KWN nor any other women's rights organisation had been invited to the meetings held by Lajcak that month with civil society representatives, nor did they receive any information about the schedule. The KWN's letter criticised the lack of female participation and the lack of attention to the gender dimension in the EU-facilitated negotiating process and reminded the special representative of the commitments made and obligations assumed by the EU in relation to women's participation in the peace processes. The platform was again willing to provide names of women who could participate in the process, as well as to support consultations.