

5. Peace negotiations in Europe

- In 2024, seven of the 52 peace processes in the world (13%) took place in Europe.
- Russia and Ukraine outlined positions and conditions for possible future negotiations, but their talks only focused on humanitarian issues.
- Some progress was made in the negotiating process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, whilst the Nagorno-Karabakh issue was completely excluded from the new negotiating framework.
- The negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo remained largely stalled and tensions rose between the parties and in northern Kosovo.
- Exploratory steps were taken in Türkiye in relation to the Kurdish armed group PKK that could lead to a new negotiating process.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2024. 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 2024.

Table 5.1. **Summary of the peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2024**

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors | Third parties |
|--|---|--|
| Armenia – Azerbaijan¹ | Armenia, Azerbaijan | EU, USA, Germany, Russia, Iran, Türkiye ² |
| Cyprus | Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus | UN, EU, guarantor countries (Türkiye, Greece and United Kingdom) |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) | Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia ³ | OSCE, EU, UN, USA, Russia ⁴ |
| Moldova (Transnistria) | Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria | OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA, EU ⁵ |
| Russia – Ukraine | Russia, Ukraine | UN, Türkiye, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, ICRC, IAEA, Vatican City, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Switzerland ⁶ |
| Serbia – Kosovo | Serbia, Kosovo | EU, UN, EEUU, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Italy |
| Türkiye (PKK) | Government, PKK, political parties of Türkiye | -- |

1 Starting with the 2024 edition of *Peace Talks in Focus*, this yearbook has stopped using the designation “Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)” to refer to the negotiating process between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan’s military offensive in 2023 resulted in the military takeover of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan gained full control over the region and the self-proclaimed administration of Nagorno-Karabakh ceased to exist in January 2024. In 2023, Armenia agreed to recognise the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. All this led to the final exclusion of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue from the negotiations between both countries.

2 The negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan are currently taking place without third-party mediation, but some international actors are facilitating and supporting one or both sides. Russia, Iran and Türkiye are part of the 3+3 regional platform, along with Armenia and Azerbaijan. This platform was launched in 2021 at Türkiye’s behest with the stated objective of promoting peace and cooperation in the South Caucasus.

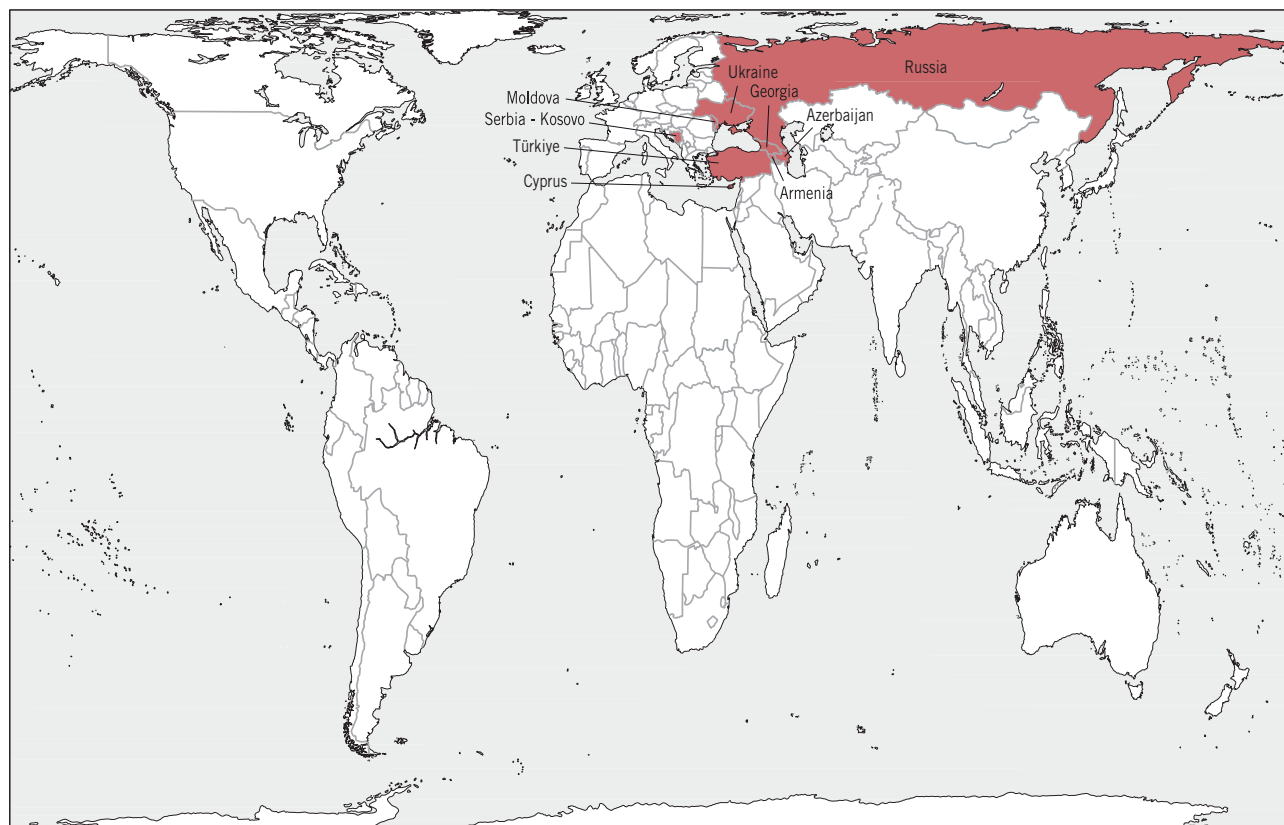
3 Russia’s status in the Georgian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

4 Ibid.

5 In 2024, the 5+2 conference format remained inactive. In the 5+2 conference Moldova and Transnistria were negotiators, the OSCE was a mediator, Ukraine and Russia were mediators-guarantors, and the US and the EU were observers. The OSCE-facilitated 1+1 format was active and was also attended by participants of the 5+2 format.

6 This table includes actors playing roles of mediation/facilitation and support in any of the areas of dialogue active between Russia and Ukraine in 2024. They are included regardless of the frequency or scope of their involvement. In addition to the actors included in this table, this chapter analyses and includes other actors that promoted dialogue during the year and are not considered third parties in this yearbook.

Map 5.1. Peace negotiations in Europe in 2024



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2024⁷

5.1. Negotiations in 2024: regional trends

This chapter analyses seven peace processes that took place in Europe in 2024 and that account for 13% of all peace processes worldwide in the last year. However, of those seven, the case of Russia-Ukraine only covered negotiations between the parties in limited areas in 2024, such as humanitarian issues, as well as dialogue between Ukraine and international actors for the rollout of the Peace Formula by Kyiv and peace initiatives of various governments. Moscow and Kyiv did not resume the political-military negotiations in 2024, although they outlined conditions and positions for possible negotiations. The number of negotiating processes in Europe increased from six to seven due to the start of exploratory talks between the Turkish government and the Kurdish armed group PKK. These talks provided hope for a resolution to the 40-year-long armed conflict, but there was also uncertainty about the potential for entrenchment due to internal and regional difficulties. In addition to the negotiating processes on Russia-Ukraine and Türkiye (PKK), which address armed conflicts, the other five dealt with socio-political crises of varying intensity in the Caucasus (Armenia-Azerbaijan and Georgia, in relation to Abkhazia and South Ossetia),

Eastern Europe (Moldova, in relation to Transdniestria) and Southern Europe (Serbia-Kosovo and Cyprus).

In all the processes analysed, at least one of the **negotiating actors** was the government of a country involved in the conflict. In addition to involving states, four of the seven negotiating processes also involved self-proclaimed states, of which only Kosovo has received broad international recognition.⁸ Two of the processes involved interstate dialogue (Russia-Ukraine, though only regarding humanitarian issues, and Armenia-Azerbaijan). Only one involved an active armed insurgency, the PKK. The weight, interests and agendas of regional and international actors were still evident in the dynamics of various disputes and negotiating processes in Europe, such as Türkiye's influence over the Turkish Cypriot Republic and Russia's influence over Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdniestria. The dynamics of continental and global confrontation between Russia and the West were projected on the processes in the region in different ways.

Third parties were involved in all the processes in the region, playing supportive roles that included mediation and facilitation, except in the case of Türkiye (PKK). The Turkish government and the PKK leader held exploratory talks throughout the year, but no information emerged

⁷ Russia-Ukraine is included due to the humanitarian talks, Ukraine's dialogue with international actors on parts of its Peace Formula and the initiatives promoted by various governments, though political and military negotiations between the warring parties were not resumed in 2024.

⁸ Around 100 countries have recognised Kosovo as an independent state. In 2010, the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion establishing that Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence did not violate international law.

about third-party involvement. At the end of the year, the pro-Kurdish political party DEM was authorised by Ankara to visit the imprisoned PKK leader and meetings between the DEM and Türkiye's main political parties were planned for early 2025. In the previous dialogue process (2013-2015), the DEM's predecessor, the HDP, had played an intermediary role, whilst its role and the overall negotiation framework in this incipient initiative was still unclear.

The third parties involved were primarily intergovernmental organisations (EU, OSCE, UN) and states. The shrinking space for third parties in the Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiating process was notable in 2024, especially for Western ones. Baku prioritised direct negotiations with Yerevan, though some actors continued to play facilitation and support roles in the dialogue –such as Türkiye, Russia and Iran, as part of the 3+3 platform, and the US. In this dispute, Russian peacekeeping forces withdrew from the Nagorno-Karabakh region in 2024, which had been deployed in 2020 under the cessation of hostilities agreement of that year. Azerbaijan's definitive military takeover of the enclave in 2023 had given rise to a new regional scenario and disrupted previous negotiating formats. Moreover, the Joint Russian-Turkish Monitoring Centre, established in 2020 to monitor the cessation of hostilities over Nagorno-Karabakh, concluded in 2024. The negotiating process in Cyprus also saw developments in 2024. In January 2024, the UN Secretary-General appointed a personal envoy, former Colombian minister and government negotiator with the FARC, María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, to carry out good offices and seek common ground on how to move forward on the Cyprus issue. Due to a lack of agreement between the parties, her appointment was not extended after the first six months. Following his election as the new US president in November 2024, Donald Trump urged Russia and Ukraine to reach a ceasefire and negotiate and appointed a special envoy. The presidents of Ukraine and Russia both expressed their willingness to engage in dialogue with Trump.

The **negotiating agendas** were varied, reflecting both the specific characteristics of each process and the type of actors and specific demands of each. 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. The **use of force** was an issue in Türkiye (PKK). The Turkish government and its main allied party, the MHP, focused their approach on demanding the dismantlement of the PKK and the Syrian YPG/YPJ militias, which have ties to the PKK, employing counterterrorist rhetoric. As part of the open exploratory dialogue, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan conveyed the message that if the conditions were right, he was prepared to urge an end to the armed struggle. Thus, the steps taken in 2024 indicated a dialogue that seemed largely focused on the issue of the existence of the armed group and its future and the eventual end of armed violence. However, there was still uncertainty

about whether or not substantive issues underlying the conflict would be included in the process, such as linguistic and cultural rights, constitutional recognition of the Kurdish population, administrative decentralisation and guarantees of political participation. The negotiating process between Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia continued for another year, addressing issues such as the non-use of force, though the parties could not come to an agreement. In a new development, the Transdniestrian authorities presented Moldova with a proposed commitment document for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in 2024 and the two sides held discussions on the issue for part of the year. There were no ceasefire negotiations for Russia and Ukraine, though, as the US president-elect, Trump called on Russia and Ukraine to agree to an immediate ceasefire. Other actors, such as China and Brazil, also called on both sides to de-escalate the conflict in 2024 and to not expand the battlefield. Ukraine continued to discuss possible security guarantees with its international allies.

***Peace processes
in Europe in 2024
accounted for 13% of
all cases worldwide***

Other items on the agendas included the **normalisation of relations**, such as between Armenia and Azerbaijan and between Serbia and Kosovo, with different areas covered under that umbrella, such as the demarcation of the border in the dialogue between Yerevan and Baku and the status of Serbian-majority areas in Kosovo and the recognition of symbols and documents in the process between Belgrade and Pristina. On the other hand, the issue of the **status of the various disputed territories**, one of the root causes of many conflicts in Europe, continued to be absent or blocked in the negotiating processes. Negotiations at the highest level did not resume in Cyprus in 2024 due to disagreements over the framework for a solution (a bicomunal and bizonal federation or a two-state model), though talks did continue at other levels. The negotiating process in Georgia only covered security and humanitarian issues, without addressing the disputed status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Moldova and Transdniestria addressed many different issues, such as guarantees for the negotiating parties, human rights, freedom of movement, the importation of basic goods, access to land and vehicle registration. Regarding the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the self-proclaimed republic of Nagorno-Karabakh was effectively dismantled on 1 January 2024 following Azerbaijan's military takeover of the parts of the enclave that had remained under the control of Armenian forces in 2023. This led to the forced exodus of the Armenian population living there. Thus, the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh's status and the recognition of the Armenian population's identity was no longer part of the dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2024, having already lost weight in previous years following the 2020 war and Armenia's subsequent recognition of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

Several negotiating processes dealt with **humanitarian issues**. For example, Russia and Ukraine held talks on

exchanging prisoners and repatriating the dead, and to a lesser extent on the return of minors forcibly deported to Russia or areas under occupation. The issue of energy security became more prominent at various levels of the negotiating process in Moldova (Transdniestria), given the expiration in December 2024 of the contract between Ukraine and Russia that allowed the transit of Russian gas to Transdniestria, prompting emergency action to be taken.

All the negotiating processes encountered obstacles and problems, but there was no unified **trend** overall. On a positive note, a dialogue was opened in Türkiye to address the 40-year-long armed conflict between the government and the PKK. The previous negotiating process had ended in 2015. However, by the end of the year, uncertainty and difficulties persisted, such as the parties' conflicting approaches (Ankara's anti-terrorist rhetoric and focus on the dissolution of the PKK, which contrasted with calls for a peace process by Kurdish political actors) and the regional dimension stemming from the ties between the PKK and Syrian Kurdish militias, as well as the demands that Türkiye made on them. Another ambivalent case was that of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Both countries made progress on border delimitation, but they continued to hit snags elsewhere. Furthermore, the removal of the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh from the negotiations –both the historical political dimension and the humanitarian dimension related to the forced exodus of the Armenian population– was a setback from a human security perspective. The negotiating processes in Moldova and Georgia remained deadlocked, but in contexts of greater fragility and uncertainty due to the projection of regional and global geopolitical confrontation. Paradoxically, Russia took steps that could alienate the populations of both Transdniestria and Abkhazia in 2024 due to a lack of alternative gas supply routes for the former and its pressure on the latter to open up to Russian real estate investment. Meanwhile, the negotiating process in Cyprus remained at a standstill, with great certainty about the prospects for resuming, though some informal approaches did take place, with limited results. The negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo remained largely stalled and tensions rose between both sides and in northern Kosovo. Some analysts said that the level of trust between Serbian and Kosovar authorities was at an all-time low. The political and military negotiations between Russia and Ukraine that were suspended in 2022 were not resumed, but the election of Donald Trump as the new US president opened a new scenario that could force negotiations in 2025. Ukraine shifted from its previous precondition of demanding that Russia withdraw from its entire territory prior to any negotiations to a position of possibly temporarily relinquishing part of said territory, the return of which it would negotiate through diplomatic channels in the future. The issue of security guarantees remained one of the thorniest for any possible future negotiations.

Regarding **participation and inclusivity**, the negotiating processes in Europe lacked formats for the direct formal

participation of the civilian population. Civil society actors carried out initiatives and made calls for dialogue during the year, such as in Cyprus and Türkiye, and were involved in providing mutual support and humanitarian aid, like in Ukraine and Armenia. For various negotiating processes, the OSCE engaged in dialogue with parts of the population, such as in Moldova and Kosovo. Civil society and peacebuilding actors faced persecution and repression in various contexts. Authorities in Russia, Azerbaijan and Türkiye, for example, arrested anti-war activists, human rights defenders and peacebuilders. In Ukraine, more men tried to avoid military conscription.

All the negotiating processes encountered obstacles, but there was no unified trend overall

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 and lack of integration of the gender perspective in formal processes. Only the negotiating process in Cyprus had a gender-specific mechanism in the formal negotiating process, the Technical Committee on Gender Equality. According to the United Nations, this body met at a slower pace than other joint technical committees and required more political support to implement the 2022 action plan, aimed at promoting the integration of the gender perspective in the negotiating process and the substantive participation of women. On a positive note, the 12 technical committees enjoyed gender parity, according to UN data. In terms of informal architecture, the Women's Advisory Board for Sustainable Peacebuilding (WAB), launched by UN Women in late 2022, remained active in Moldova.

The highest-level negotiating delegations of the conflicting parties in most negotiating processes in Europe were composed of men. A notable exception to this was in the new dialogue begun between the Turkish government and the PKK. The DEM delegation that visited PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and planned subsequent meetings in 2025 with Türkiye's main political parties included Pervin Buldan, a female DEM MP, the former co-leader of the HDP (DEM's predecessor) and an advocate for the human rights of women. Still, the role of the DEM in the new dialogue had yet to be more clearly defined. Moreover, third parties included a higher percentage of women than the negotiating parties. For instance, the OSCE team facilitating the negotiations between the chief negotiators of Moldova and Transdniestria had two women in senior positions (Head of Mission Kelly Keiderling and Deputy Head of Mission Sylwia Hartmann) and two to three men from the mission's Political office. Some actors with mediation and dialogue support roles were involved in consultations and activities with women's organisations. This was the case with the OSCE in Moldova, which interacted with the Women's Advisory Board for Sustainable Peacebuilding. However, according to the OSCE, the mission did not have the prerogative to propose items on the negotiating agenda of the parties to the conflict. In

this context, the process proceeded without addressing the issues from a specific gender perspective. In 2024, the EU appointed Magdalena Grono as the new EU Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, who took office in November 2024. The EU also appointed Bettina Patricia Boughani as the new Head of Mission for the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia. This expanded women's co-mediation and facilitation roles in the negotiating process in Georgia. The EU lost some of its ability to mediate in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan after Azerbaijan rejected the participation of third parties, especially Western ones. Women civil society activists in all countries with negotiating processes continued to be involved in different areas of peacebuilding. As part of this, a new women's initiative, the Bicommunal Women's Coalition in Cyprus, was created in Cyprus in 2024 to promote an inclusive solution to the conflict.

Finally, even though they are not covered in this yearbook because they are not considered peace processes, various kinds of other conflicts in Europe were subjects of political dialogue. For example, the rocky process towards normalising relations between Türkiye and Armenia continued. Envoys from both countries met at the border in July in the fifth round of negotiations since 2022. Furthermore, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met in September during the UN General Assembly and their foreign ministers held talks in Istanbul in October as part of the 3+3 platform (which includes Russia, Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and in which Georgia is a guest but does not participate). No specific headway was made, however, and the 2022 agreement, which provided for opening the border to third-country nationals and the resumption of air freight transport, remained unimplemented. Türkiye continued to subordinate the process to progress in the peace negotiations between Armenia and Ankara's ally Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, political dialogue between Türkiye and Greece, which had been relaunched since 2023, moved forward with various meetings at different levels throughout the year, though tension between the parties persisted. In September, Erdogan and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis met during the UN General Assembly and agreed to explore disputed issues such as the delimitation of their maritime border through dialogue. During a November meeting between their foreign ministers in Athens, both countries pledged to resolve their differences through dialogue.

Some progress was made on the political conflict over the status of Catalonia during the year, with the Congress of Deputies passing an amnesty law (177 votes in favour and 172 against). A demand of the independence movement, the approval of this amnesty law was part of the agreements reached in November 2023 between the

PSOE, the main party in the ruling coalition government in Spain, and the ERC, the governing party in Catalonia at the time, and between the PSOE and Junts, the opposition party in Catalonia. These agreements facilitated the investiture of the state government and included other aspects such as the creation of dialogue roundtables between the PSOE and the ERC and between the PSOE and Junts.⁹ The enacted amnesty law¹⁰ pardoned acts declared or classified as crimes or as conduct resulting in administrative or accounting liability committed between 1 November 2011 and 13 November 2023 linked to the consultation held in Catalonia on 9 November 2014 and the referendum of 1 October 2017. The Spanish government and the Catalan pro-independence parties ERC and Junts cheered the enactment of the law, whose final text added amendments made by Junts following its rejection of the previous text voted on in the Congress of Deputies in January, which failed to get enough votes. The Venice Commission had endorsed parts of the amnesty law in March, issuing a report arguing that amnesty is a legitimate resource for political reconciliation, but issued procedural recommendations for adopting it.¹¹ After the law was passed, its implementation was left to the judicial system. At the end of the year, Junts criticised the Spanish prime minister for failing to defend the law more vigorously. According to the anti-repression organisation Alerta Solidària, 193 people had received pardons by the end of the year, whilst 51 requests had been denied and 61 had been referred to other courts. Half the 193 people who were pardoned were police officers. According to the Public Prosecutor's Office, a total of 486 people were eligible to receive a pardon and the association Òmnium Cultural put this figure at 1,616. The Supreme Court of Spain and the High Court of Justice of Catalonia, the main opposition party in Spain, the PP, and PP-governed regional governments all filed challenges to the Constitutional Court, alleging that the law is unconstitutional. These challenges will have to be resolved by the Court starting in 2025.

The dialogue roundtables between the PSOE and the ERC and between the PSOE and Junts remained active in 2024, both resulting from the respective agreements of November 2023. The PSOE and the ERC stated that they had held discreet and regular meetings in Geneva with an international verifier. The November 2023 agreement between both parties also included a dialogue roundtable between the Spanish and Catalan governments in a quarterly negotiating forum begun in 2020 as a way to address the political conflict. However, in March 2024 the PSOE and the ERC agreed not to hold these intergovernmental discussions due to the upcoming Catalan elections in May 2024 and the European elections in June of that year. At the same time, the dialogue roundtable between the PSOE and Junts in Switzerland remained active, with a coordination

9 See the full text of the PSOE-ERC agreement and of the PSOE-Junts agreement.

10 Organic Law 1/2024, of 10 June, on amnesty for institutional, political and social normalisation in Catalonia.

11 Venice Commission, *Opinion on the rule of law requirements of amnesties, with particular reference to the parliamentary bill of Spain "on the organic law on amnesty for the institutional, political and social normalisation of Catalonia"*, CDL-AD(2024)003, 18 March 2024.

and verification mechanism through the Salvadoran diplomat Francisco Galindo Vélez. These talks between the PSOE and Junts also faced difficulties, however, including disagreements over implementation of the 2023 agreement.

5.2. Case study analysis

Eastern Europe

| Moldova (Transdniestria) | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria |
| Third parties | OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA, EU ¹² |
| 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 Russian invasion and war in Ukraine.

The negotiating process between the Moldovan and Transdniestrian authorities remained active, but it continued to hit snags in a complex regional context with geopolitical confrontation. On the positive side, the chief negotiators (1+1 format of political representatives) of the parties to the conflict continued to meet. At least

three meetings at this level took place in 2024 (January, May and November). Thus, despite the fact that the 5+2 format¹³ remained inactive (Moldova considers it null and void as long as the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues), Moldova and Transdniestria were still committed to direct dialogue. This was important, especially since Moldova underwent a complex electoral cycle in 2024, including a presidential election and a referendum to include EU integration as a strategic objective in the Constitution, accompanied by political tension and accusations of Russian attempts at interference. The 1+1 meetings were also held with the mediating actors and observers of the 5+2 format attending (OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, EU, USA) and were facilitated by the OSCE.

However, **the dialogue continued to face obstacles such as a lack of trust between the parties and disagreements on the subjects of discussion.** In a new development in 2024, **during the 1+1 meeting in May, Transdniestria presented Moldova with a draft declaration of commitment to peaceful methods of conflict resolution.** In the months that followed, the Transdniestrian authorities criticised Moldova’s refusal to sign the document, whilst media outlets reported that Moldova was preparing its own version of the declaration. During the 1+1 meeting in November, the parties discussed issues related to the wording of the declaration and agreed on the next steps to take. According to the Transdniestrian authorities, they would send Moldova a new draft text. For Transdniestria, the declaration has several objectives, including preventing deterioration in the negotiations and upholding the commitment to resolving the conflict peacefully. They also asked all actors involved in the negotiating process to sign the draft declaration.

The talks addressed other issues during the year, some of them historical ones in the negotiations such as obstacles to accessing land for Moldovan farmers in the Dubasari district and Transdniestrian pressure on Moldovan educational institutions located in the de facto independent region. Other issues included the issuance of neutral license plates for Transdniestrian vehicles, export limits on some Transdniestrian industrial products, Transdniestrian problems in importing pharmaceutical products, obstacles to the entry of journalists into Transdniestria and the situation of people detained in Transdniestria. The consequences of the reform of Moldova’s criminal code remained divisive since it was enacted in 2023. The reform criminalises separatism, which Transdniestria claims resulted in restrictions and pressure.

Representatives of the parties to the conflict also held meetings with international actors during the year, such as the OSCE rotating chairperson-in-office and the head

12 In 2023, the 5+2 conference format remained inactive, in which the OSCE was a mediator, Ukraine and Russia were mediators-guarantors, and the US and the EU were observers. The OSCE-facilitated 1+1 format was active and was also attended by participants in the 5+2 format.
13 Ibid.

of the EU Delegation in Moldova. The meetings with EU actors addressed issues relating to both the negotiating process to resolve the conflict and the integration of Moldova into the EU. The head of the EU Delegation in Moldova spoke about the importance of Moldova's accession to the EU after having reintegrated Transnistria, but added that the EU did not rule out the possibility of the disputed region joining the EU after the rest of Moldova. Energy issues were also discussed in the political talks in a context of risks to energy security. In December, Ukraine did not renew the contract with Russia that allowed gas to enter Europe, including Transnistria (which is dependent on subsidised Russian gas), pushing Moldova and Transnistria to take emergency action. Several meetings of the joint working groups were also held.

The negotiating process between the Moldovan and Transnistrian authorities remained active, but it continued to hit snags in a complex regional context with geopolitical confrontation

55 municipalities in the buffer zone on both banks of the Dniester River, in partnership with the CONTACT Centre and with support from the OHCHR, UNDP and UN Women. At the regional level, more than 80 women representing civil society organisations from Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia participated in a meeting in Chisinau arranged by UN Women and the UN Department of Political Affairs and Peacebuilding Affairs and the UN Department of Peace Operations in September, where they discussed ways to promote greater female participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Gender, peace and security

The 1+1 level of the negotiations continued to be led by two men, Oleg Serebrian and Vitaly Ignatiev. The OSCE team facilitating the meetings consisted of the head of mission, Kelly Keiderling, the deputy head of mission, Izabela Sylwia Hartmann, and two to three male members of the Political Office. Both the head of the EU Delegation, Janis Mazeiks, and the head of the division for Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus at the European External Action Service (EEAS), Dorota Dlouchy-Suliga, held meetings with the parties to the conflict. It was not reported that the 1+1 meetings incorporated a gender perspective. The topics for discussion were proposed by the parties, with no prerogative for the OSCE to propose topics. According to the OSCE, the mission met with Moldovan female negotiators in October to discuss lessons learned from a mission project to provide training in negotiations for female members of the joint working groups in the negotiating process.

Female civil society activists continued to be involved in peacebuilding. The informal Women's Advisory Board (WAB) for Sustainable Peacebuilding continued to operate with the support of UN Women. In 2024, the OSCE mission interacted with the WAB to advise its participants on engagement and advocacy with the chief negotiators to include issues identified by the WAB in the negotiating agenda. In addition, more than 230 women from Bender and other neighbouring cities created an informal platform as part of the "Dialogues for Women" initiative to build cooperation and trust between women from both banks of the Dniester River and to expand economic and personal skills, promoted by the Paragon organisation. This was part of a project to promote sustainable peacebuilding that involved 12 initiatives in

Russia – Ukraine

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Russia, Ukraine |
| Third parties | UN, Türkiye Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, ICRC, IAEA, Vatican City, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Switzerland ¹⁷ |
| Relevant agreements | Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports (22th July 2022, ended in July 2023) |

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

¹⁴ This table includes actors playing roles of mediation/facilitation and support in any of the areas of dialogue active between Russia and Ukraine in 2024. They are included regardless of the frequency or scope of their involvement. In addition to the actors included in this table, this chapter analyses and includes other actors that promoted dialogue during the year and are not considered third parties in this yearbook.

Russia and Ukraine outlined positions and conditions for possible future negotiations, but they did not resume their military and political negotiations, which had been terminated in April 2022, and only discussed humanitarian issues. The election of Donald Trump as the new US president in November prompted uncertainty about future scenarios. Russian President Vladimir Putin outlined his conditions in June. Russia demanded acceptance of the complete withdrawal of Ukrainian troops from the regions of Donbas, Lugansk, Zaporzhzhia and Kherson and the effective start of this withdrawal as a condition for negotiations to begin.

Moscow also called for Ukraine to accept a “neutral, non-aligned, non-nuclear status”, commit to “demilitarisation” (referring to limitations on the size of the Ukrainian Army and other restrictions), recognise the four regions and Crimea as part of Russia, undergo “denazification,” guarantee rights to Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine and lift all sanctions. According to Russia, once the crisis in Ukraine is resolved, a dialogue could begin on the creation of “an indivisible Eurasian security system that considers the interests of all states in Europe”.¹⁵

Ukraine rejected Russia’s conditions and warned that it did not trust its messages. The Ukrainian President unveiled his “victory plan” to Parliament in October. The plan had been revealed to the United States in September. Consisting of five points and three non-public annexes, the plan advocates an invitation to Ukraine to join NATO; the military strengthening of Ukraine; “non-nuclear strategic deterrence”; offers of financial and investment agreements to allies, including in “critical minerals”; and the replacement of US military units in Europe by Ukrainian forces. According to Ukraine, the plan was aimed at strengthening Ukraine in its negotiations with Russia.⁶ Ukraine also framed its invasion of the Russian region of Kursk as a way to bolster its negotiating position towards Russia.⁷

In November, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that Ukraine could temporarily give up part of its territory in exchange for security guarantees and that after a ceasefire, Kyiv could negotiate the return of land currently under Russian control through diplomatic channels. According to Zelensky, the occupied territory would not be recognised as Russian territory under any circumstances. This marked a change of position, as Ukraine had been demanding the withdrawal of Russian forces from its entire territory

(including Donbas and Crimea) as a precondition for a ceasefire since the negotiations broke down in 2022.

In the last few months of the year, political discussions in Ukraine and between Ukraine and its international allies focused primarily on the issue of security guarantees.

Ukraine said it was considering all possible forms of guarantees, but that in the absence of full guarantees, it would not accept any reduction in its military. It continued to advocate becoming a member of NATO, but it also referred to security guarantees “under the NATO umbrella”, which could take the form of guarantees from individual NATO countries. Specifically, it called for the US to be one of the countries providing security guarantees. European allies raised the idea of a possible peacekeeping mission after a future ceasefire, whilst some analysts warned of the risks.¹⁸

Discussions in Ukraine and between Ukraine and its allies were influenced by the military dynamics (including but not limited to Russian advances in the Donbas and Ukraine’s difficulties in mobilising men for combat) and by the election of Donald Trump as the new US president in November. During the election campaign, Trump threatened to end military aid to Ukraine and urged the parties to negotiate. After his election victory, in December, Trump called on Russia and Ukraine to immediately implement a ceasefire and begin negotiations. In December, analysts noted that various advisors had publicly presented ideas and proposals to Trump. Trump appointed retired general and former National Security Advisor Keith Kellogg as his special envoy for Ukraine and Russia. Kellogg had co-authored a peace plan for Ukraine that advocates freezing the front lines and pushing the parties to the negotiating table with incentives and pressure, whilst ruling out Ukraine’s entry into NATO.¹⁹ In December, Trump said his team was working on a plan to end the war. Zelensky said he was willing to work directly with Trump, whom he met in December at a meeting in Paris hosted by the French president and described as productive. Russian President Vladimir Putin said in December that he was willing to meet Donald Trump at any time.

Some diplomatic initiatives were launched during the year. Ukraine and Switzerland co-organised the Ukraine Peace Summit in Switzerland in June, which involved 92 countries and eight organisations and focused on Kyiv’s vision for a solution to the conflict. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, India, South Africa, Indonesia, Thailand, Colombia, Mexico and Brazil participated in the summit (Brazil only as an

Russia and Ukraine outlined positions and conditions for possible future negotiations, but direct negotiations were not resumed

15 See the conditions of Russia in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, *President of Russia Vladimir Putin’s speech at the meeting with senior staff of the Russian Foreign Ministry*, Moscow, 14 June 2024.

16 President of Ukraine, *Victory Plan Consists of Five Points and Three Secret Annexes*, October 2024.

17 See the summary on Russia-Ukraine in Chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) at Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025, Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria.

18 Charap, Samuel, “Think twice before committing to European boots on the ground in Ukraine”, *Financial Times*, 13 January 2025.

19 Kellogg, Keith and Fred Fleitz, *America First, Russia, & Ukraine*, America First Policy Institute, 9 April 2024

observer), but did not sign the final communiqué,²⁰ and China and Russia did not attend. The summit ended with mixed results.²¹ Ukraine postponed a second peace summit indefinitely. Russia warned that it would not participate. Meanwhile, China, Brazil, Hungary and Türkiye also floated ideas for addressing the conflict.²² In new developments, Narendra Damodardas Modi met with Zelensky in Kyiv in June, preceded by a meeting with Putin in Moscow in July. Modi said that India was ready to actively contribute to the search for peace.

Russia and Ukraine continued to discuss some humanitarian issues. In 2024, the United Arab Emirates mediated several exchanges of prisoners of war, including several hundred soldiers and some civilians. Analysts noted that Russia has turned the issue of prisoners into a weapon of war and that the exchanges have slowed down since 2023.²³ Russia and Ukraine also agreed on different exchanges of the remains of fallen soldiers, with the support of the ICRC. On a much smaller scale, they also negotiated and agreed on the return of some Ukrainian minors forcibly deported by Russia with Vatican City and Qatar mediating.

Gender, peace and security

In Ukraine, female civil society activists and women from different professional backgrounds were still involved in different areas of the civilian response to the invasion and the war. For instance, Daria Zarivna was the head of operations of the Bring Kids Back UA initiative for the return of deported children, which combines the efforts of the Ukrainian government, other countries, international organisations and experts in the issue. As part of this initiative, a task force was set up to develop international mechanisms for the return of deported children, co-chaired by Scottish lawyer Helena Kennedy and the head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, Andrii Yermak. On the other hand, at the regional level, more than 80 women representing civil society organisations from Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia participated in a meeting in Moldova arranged by UN Women and the UN Department of Political Affairs and Peacebuilding Affairs and the UN Department of Peace Operations in September, where they discussed ways to promote greater female participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

South Caucasus

| Armenia – Azerbaijan ²⁴ | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Negotiating actors | Armenia, Azerbaijan |
| Third parties | EU, USA, Germany, Russia, Iran, Türkiye ²⁵ |
| 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), cessation of hostilities agreement between Azerbaijan and the self-proclaimed republic of Nagorno-Karabakh (2023) |

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 ceasefire 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. Baku and Yerevan carried out various stages of negotiations, including around some basic principles (Madrid Principles, 2007) proposed by the OSCE Minsk Group for resolving the conflict (withdrawal of Armenia from the occupied territories around Nagorno-Karabakh, 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, corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh). Over the years, the negotiating process faced deadlock, a fragile ceasefire line, belligerent rhetoric, an arms race and geostrategic disputes. 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, with an Azerbaijani military offensive resulting in Baku's seizure of districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh and part of the enclave, a fragile ceasefire and the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces. In 2023, Azerbaijan seized control of all of Nagorno-Karabakh through military means, prompting its Armenian population to flee. The self-proclaimed republic was dismantled. The process between Baku and Yerevan moved to a focus on the normalisation of relations (the delimitation of borders, the recognition of sovereignty and territorial integrity, transport routes), influenced by Azerbaijan's position of hegemony in a regional and global context affected by the war in Ukraine and geostrategic competition.

20 *Summit on Peace in Ukraine: Joint Communiqué on a Peace Framework*, Bürgenstock, Switzerland, 16 June 2024.

21 See “Resultados ambivalentes de la cumbre suiza sobre la paz en Ucrania” at Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Escenarios de riesgo y oportunidades de paz. Julio 2024*, July 2024.

22 See Russia-Ukraine at Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Escenarios de riesgo y oportunidades de paz. Julio 2024*, July 2024; and Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Escenarios de riesgo y oportunidades de paz. Octubre 2024*, October 2024.

23 Kuzan, Oksana, “Russia’s Weaponization of Ukrainian Prisoner Exchanges”, *Lawfare*, 29 July 2024.

24 Starting with the 2024 edition of *Peace Talks in Focus*, this yearbook has stopped using the designation “Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)” to refer to the negotiating process between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan’s military offensive in 2023 resulted in the military takeover of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan gained full control over the region and the self-proclaimed administration of Nagorno-Karabakh ceased to exist in January 2024. In 2023, Armenia agreed to recognise the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. All this led to the final exclusion of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue from the negotiations between both countries.

25 The negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan are currently taking place without third-party mediation, but some international actors are facilitating and supporting one or both sides. Russia, Iran and Türkiye are part of the 3+3 regional platform, along with Armenia and Azerbaijan. This platform was launched in 2021 at Türkiye’s behest with the stated objective of promoting peace and cooperation in the South Caucasus.

Some progress was made in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, though no agreement was signed at the end of the year as hoped. The process focused on the normalisation of relations between both countries, with the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh having been definitively excluded from the negotiations since its military takeover by Azerbaijan in 2023, which forcibly displaced its Armenian population. In April 2024, the border commissions of Armenia and Azerbaijan reached a preliminary agreement on the demarcation of a section of the border around the northeastern Armenian region of Tavush and the northwestern Azerbaijani district of Qazakh, which was ratified in a protocol in May. The agreement sparked some protests in Armenia between April and June, but these have subsided. **Though delayed, the border commissions finalised the regulations on the commissions' joint activities in August, which came into force in November.** No further progress was made for the rest of the year.

In the overall negotiating process on normalising relations, both sides held meetings in various formats, exchanged draft peace agreements and expressed some optimism but they also faced difficulties and obstacles during the year. The process took place without external mediation, though some meetings took place under the umbrella of third-party facilitators, such as the USA and the 3+3 Platform.²⁶ Progress on border demarcation gave impetus to the overall process. **At various times, the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan said that they agreed on 80-90% of the draft peace treaty.** One of the points of contention was the issue of the “Zangezur corridor”, which links Azerbaijan to the Azerbaijani enclave of Nakhchivan via the Armenian province of Syunik. Azerbaijan has demanded that the corridor be opened without customs controls, inspections or any other restrictions on access and promoted supervision of the corridor by Russian forces. The 2020 ceasefire agreement, brokered by Russia, made Armenia the guarantor of the corridor's security and assigned Russia control over transport communications, though the wording was ambiguous.²⁷ Armenia proposed reopening communications with a project called the “Crossroads of Peace”, arguing that it, and not any third country, should guarantee the security of this and other corridors in its territory. Russia pushed to open the corridor under its supervision during the year. The issue of the corridor raised international tension due to its geostrategic and international trade ramifications. Iran voiced its opposition to the corridor again in 2024. Amid disagreements, in August **Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to remove the issue of transport routes from the current peace agreement under negotiation and to address it in later stages.** This helped the negotiations to move forward overall, but the issue was left unresolved. At times, Azerbaijan has threatened to use military force to settle it.

One obstacle during the year was Azerbaijan's demand for changes to the Armenian Constitution on the grounds that it mentions territorial claims over Azerbaijan. Armenia countered that the Constitutional Court has ruled that said references in the Constitution are not territorial claims. In May, the Armenian prime minister issued a decree calling for the preparation of a new Constitution by December 2026, and in August the government announced plans for a constitutional referendum in 2027, but Yerevan said that this activity was not connected to the negotiation process. At the end of the year, Azerbaijan repeated that the Armenian Constitution must be amended as a precondition for any peace agreement.

As another precondition, Azerbaijan demanded the formal dissolution of the OSCE Minsk Group, the OSCE mediation structure in the negotiating process for Nagorno-Karabakh. Co-chaired by the US, France and Russia, it had been established in 1994 and was inactive since the 2020 war. Russia supported Azerbaijan's position. Azerbaijan also demanded the withdrawal of the EU mission, calling it a “NATO mission”. Yerevan offered Azerbaijan a deal not to deploy third parties on the already demarcated parts of the border with Azerbaijan. Overall, the expectations raised about the possibility of an agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan during the COP29, held in Baku in November, were not met. By the end of the year, there was still no agreement on the thorny issues, though the parties did express their desire to reach one. The situation of the Armenian population displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh was also uncertain, with little prospect of them returning to the region.

Gender, peace and security

The negotiating process took place without the involvement of women negotiators or the integration of the gender perspective. There was no evidence that the negotiating actors or facilitators had mechanisms for the indirect participation of civil society or women's organisations. The EU appointed Magdalena Grono as the new EU special representative for South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia. Grono took office in November 2024, replacing Toivo Klaar. However, in 2024 the EU did not play a significant role as a facilitating actor, unlike in previous years. Outside the negotiating process, the EU mission in Armenia (EUMA) did meet with representatives of women's and human rights organisations to mark International Women's Day in March, with the deputy head of the mission, Marek Kuberski, attending. The EU reported that it had established a network of gender and human rights focal points in the mission and conducted “human security patrols” as part of its mandate to support confidence-building and human security in conflict-affected areas.

²⁶ The 3+3 platform consists of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Russia, Iran. Georgia is invited but does not participate.

²⁷ See point 9 of the 2020 ceasefire agreement.

Meanwhile, feminist and human rights activists from both countries continued to be involved in various peacebuilding areas and initiatives. More than 80 women representing civil society organisations from Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan participated in a meeting in Moldova arranged by UN Women and the UN Department of Political Affairs and Peacebuilding Affairs and the UN Department of Peace Operations in September, where they discussed ways to promote greater female participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Armenian and Azerbaijani feminists also issued a joint statement on 8 March that was highly critical of the approach of the leaders of both countries to the peace process and their disregard for the need for genuine reconciliation.²⁸

| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Government of Russia ²⁹ |
| Third parties | OSCE, EU, UN, USA, Russia ³⁰ |
| 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. 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), aggravated since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and chronic antagonism between the disputed regions and Georgia, the negotiating process faces many obstacles.

Little progress was made in the negotiating process involving Georgia, the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia, hampered by long-standing difficulties and the regional and global context of geostrategic divisions. Rising political and social tension also added to the uncertainty. In Georgia, this included post-election protests and heavy police repression. In Abkhazia, it entailed anti-government protests, the president's resignation and an economic and energy crisis. Three rounds of the main negotiating format, the Geneva International Discussions (GID), were held in April, June and November, though they did not yield significant results. In the GID working group on security issues, the parties continued to discuss the implementation of the 2008 six-point agreement and the issue of the non-use of force, though no solution was reached. In the group on humanitarian issues, they addressed issues related to the freedom of movement, detained persons, documentation, medical evacuations and missing persons. As in previous years, the issue of displaced persons and their right to return remained unaddressed, as Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia walked away from the negotiating table when it came up. The GID co-facilitators (EU, OSCE and the US) urged the parties to take constructive and innovative approaches to achieve progress and concrete results. In 2024, Moscow advocated changing the location of the GID, arguing that Switzerland was no longer a neutral country since it had imposed sanctions on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine. Abkhazia and South Ossetia supported Russia's position. No changes were made, however, and the rounds of the negotiations were held in Geneva during the year.

Meanwhile, the other format of the dialogue, the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs), remained partially active. Co-facilitated by the EU and the OSCE, the IPRMs bring together representatives of Georgia, Russia and South Ossetia. Specifically, the Ergneti IPRM was active during the year, but the Gali IPRM, which involves Abkhazia, was not, as it was suspended in 2018. **In the Ergneti IPRM, the parties agreed to open two border crossings in May for Orthodox Holy Week. The co-facilitators of**

28 Feminist Peace Collective, *A joint statement by Armenian and Azerbaijani feminists on the revolutionary March 8: Down with your patriarchal "peace"!*, 8 March 2023.

29 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.

30 Ibid.

the Ergneti IPRM praised the parties' cooperation on irrigation issues. They also agreed to a specific technical meeting in November to address lessons learned on irrigation and future steps in this area. Other issues such as restrictions on freedom of movement, the unilateral establishment of a physical border, security incidents, detained persons and more were also addressed within the framework of the IPRM. The Ergneti IPRM met six times in 2024. Georgia requested stepping up the frequency of IPRM meetings to avoid delays and gaps in resolving incidents in 2024. According to the head of the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM), the EUMM-managed hotline connecting the parties was used around 2,500 times per year. In view of the serious economic and energy crisis in Abkhazia, Georgian conflict resolution experts said that Georgia had an opportunity to get involved in supporting Abkhazia at the end of the year and needed to do so.³¹

Women took on more mediation and facilitation roles in the dialogue process between Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia

Meanwhile, at an election rally in September, Gori Bidzina Ivanishvili, the leader of the ruling Georgian Dream party, said that Georgia needed to ask the Ossetian population for forgiveness for the 2008 war, which he blamed on the Georgian government at the time, the United National Movement (UNM). Analysts in Georgia considered this a strategy to manipulate the elections. The leaders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia also linked the message to the elections and said that it should be accompanied by concrete steps. There were some protests in Georgia against Ivanishvili's statements.

According to the Council of Europe, **room for confidence-building initiatives and contacts between the population and organisations of the parties to the conflict increasingly shrank in Abkhazia and South Ossetia** due to political pressure, hostile rhetoric, legal uncertainty and administrative obstacles.³² Analysts also warned of the negative impact of the new "foreign agents law" passed by the Georgian parliament in May on trust-building, dialogue initiatives and peacebuilding organisations. The law requires NGOs and media outlets with more than 20% of their budget coming from international funds to register as "carriers of the interests of a foreign power" and is similar to Russian legislation.

Gender, peace and security

In relation to the presence of women in mediation functions, the EU appointed Magdalena Grono as the new EU special representative for South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia. She will take office in November 2024, replacing Toivo Klaar. Grono, the former chief diplomatic advisor to European Council President

Charles Michel and former co-facilitator of the GID Working Group on Humanitarian Issues, has extensive experience in conflict resolution. As part of her new role, Grono will co-lead the GID alongside UN Representative Cihan Sultanoglu and OSCE Representative Viorel Mosanu. In March, the EU also appointed Bettina Patricia Boughani as the new head of the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM), who as part of her role will co-facilitate the Ergneti IPRM alongside OSCE Representative Viorel Moşanu.

Female civil society activists remained involved in peacebuilding and in responding to the long-term impacts of unresolved conflicts, including forced displacement and gender-based violence. For example, the Women and Youth Peace Ambassadors Network, created in late 2023 as part of a UN Women project funded by the United Kingdom, was active in 2024. This network brings together 40 internally displaced and conflict-affected women and young women from 17 municipalities in Georgia. The network held various meetings during the year, both in person and online. At the regional level, more than 80 women representing civil society organisations from Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan participated in a meeting in Moldova arranged by UN Women and the UN Department of Political Affairs and Peacebuilding Affairs and the UN Department of Peace Operations in September, where they discussed ways to promote greater female participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Southern Europe

| Cyprus | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus |
| Third parties | UN, EU, Guarantor Countries (Türkiye, Greece and United Kingdom) |
| 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

31 Georgian-Abkhaz Context Platform, "Energy crisis in Abkhazia – what should Georgia do? View from Tbilisi", Jam News, 26 December 2024.
32 Council of Europe, *Consolidated report on the conflict in Georgia (April – September 2024)*, SG/Inf(2024)36, 20 November 2024.

island by Türkiye. 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. An international negotiating conference in Switzerland in 2017 ended without an agreement between the parties. Since then, the process has remained stalled at the highest political level.

The negotiating process remained at loggerheads at the highest political level and the parties remained opposed over the framework for a solution for the island. It was impossible to resume official direct negotiations between the island's top leaders, so the dialogue continued indirectly and at other levels. The efforts made by the UN Secretary-General's personal envoy on Cyprus, María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, stood out in the first half of the year. A former Colombian minister and former negotiator in Colombia's peace process with the FARC, Holguín Cuéllar was appointed to the post in January to carry out good offices to seek common ground on how to move forward on the Cyprus issue for a period of six months, as required by the parties to the conflict as a condition for their support. Holguín Cuéllar made three official visits to the island, meeting separately with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders and many political and social players. She also held consultations in Ankara, Athens, London and Brussels. The gulf between the positions of the two Cypriot leaders' positions was once again made clear during her mandate. The Greek Cypriot leader continued to advocate a bicomunal and bizonal federal republic solution, which has been the UN framework thus far. The Turkish Cypriot leader, Ersin Tatar, defended a two-state solution, for which he received Turkish support. Holguín Cuéllar's mandate ended in July. As the UN Secretary-General stated in his good offices report,³³ **despite his personal envoy's efforts, the parties to the Cypriot conflict failed to reach common ground on how to make headway to solve it.** In her open letter in July, Holguín Cuéllar stressed the importance of moving away from past solutions that led to unmet expectations, increased disagreement and frustration, and urged the promotion of new ideas.

Some informal approaches were made in the second half of the year, though with limited results. Greek

Cypriot leader Nikos Christodoulides and Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar met in October at an informal dinner in New York hosted by the UN Secretary-General, where they agreed to explore the possibility of opening new crossing points. They also agreed to meet informally later in a broader format.³⁴ Before the meeting, Tatar explained his demands and preconditions for resuming formal negotiations, which included accepting Turkish Cypriot sovereignty, establishing direct trade and flights, lifting the embargo and the obstacles participating in international sports and music events and holding international negotiations for the Turkish Cypriot side.³⁵ Tatar had expressed these demands on previous occasions, including to Holguín Cuéllar. In contrast, several Turkish Cypriot opposition political actors continued to call for a federation.

The leaders met again informally in December in Nicosia at the customary end-of-year reception organised by the UN Secretary-General's Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus and the Office of the Special Adviser (OSASG). The reception was also attended by other actors, including chief negotiators and co-chairs of the technical committee. The deputy special adviser to the UN Secretary-General and head of the UNFICYP mission, Colin Stewart, said that following the informal meeting in October, both leaders of the island had discussed their interest in reaching an agreement on new crossing points as soon as possible. However, no concrete results had been made by the end of the year. In early January, some media outlets reported that a meeting between Tatar and Christodoulides would be held on 20 January to address the issue of crossing points. Stewart said that preparations were under way for a future informal meeting in an expanded format, including the guarantor countries (Greece, the United Kingdom and Türkiye). The meeting is expected to be hosted by the UN Secretary-General and involve discussions on how to move the process forward.

Even though formal negotiations were not restarted at the highest political level, dialogue did continue at lower levels. The deputy special adviser to the UN Secretary-General, Colin Stewart, held meetings with both leaders, as well as with the chief negotiators and with different local and international political, social and economic actors. The dialogue format between Greek Cypriot negotiator Menelaos Menalaou, Turkish Cypriot Special Representative Günes Onar and Stewart continued, with regular meetings. Dialogue was also maintained between the co-coordinators of the technical committees and within the technical committees themselves, though with mixed results.³⁶

33 UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus*, S/2025/7, 3 January 2025.

34 United Nations, “Readout of the Secretary-General's informal dinner with the Leader of the Greek Cypriot Community and the Leader of the Turkish Cypriot Community”, *UN Cyprus Talks*, 16 October 2024.

35 See Cyprus Mail, “Tatar repeats demands for sovereignty, direct flights, trade before Cyprus talks”, Cyprus Mail, 14 October 2024; Presidency of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, *President Ersin Tatar holds tête-à-tête meeting with María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General*, 13 June 2024.

36 For more information on the dialogue at the level of the technical committees, see: UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus*, S/2025/7, 3 January 2025.

Gender, peace and security

As part of the negotiating process, the UN Secretary-General's special envoy on Cyprus, María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, held meetings with women's organisations as part of her consultations with social actors during her mandate. However, the gender equality committee, one of the negotiating process' 12 technical committees, remained practically inactive until May, when it resumed its activities, according to the United Nations.³⁷ It only met twice between June and December, so it moved at a slower pace than other committees. The UN Secretary General's report indicated that the 12 technical committees had gender parity, but that the gender equality committee needed more political support to implement the action plan it adopted in 2022 with the support of both Cypriot leaders. This action plan is aimed at promoting the integration of the gender perspective and women's substantive participation in the negotiating process.³⁸

Women from both Cypriot communities continued to be involved in peacebuilding. In April, women on the island launched a new initiative, the Cyprus Women Bi-Communal Coalition (CWBC), to promote an inclusive solution to the conflict. In July, the CWBC warned of the impasse in the negotiating process and called on the UN Secretary-General to redesign it so it is not solely the responsibility of the two Cypriot leaders and takes a more participatory and transparent approach. This new initiative included various activities in the second half of the year, with support from the Irish Embassy.

| Serbia – Kosovo | |
|---|---|
| Negotiating actors | Serbia, Kosovo |
| Third parties | EU, UN, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Italy |
| 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), Agreement on the path to normalisation between Kosovo and Serbia (2023) and its associated annex (2023) |
| 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 was some 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, the negotiating process faces many problems due to substantive disagreements on pending issues and the failure to implement previous agreements. Other challenges include intercommunity tensions and strain between Kosovar institutions and the Kosovo Serb population, as well as shortcomings in transitional justice.

The negotiating process remained largely stalled, while tensions rose between Kosovo and Serbia and in northern Kosovo.³⁹ For example, one year after the serious events in Banjska/Banjskë,⁴⁰ a water canal supplying Kosovo's main power plants exploded, highlighting the urgent need for multi-level dialogue. Pristina accused groups led by Serbia, which denied any involvement. Some analysts described the trust between Serbia and Kosovo as having hit an all-time low.⁴¹

No meetings were held in the trilateral format (Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, Kosovar Prime Minister Albin Kurti and EU High Representative Josep Borrell) due to a lack of agreement in 2024. After a failed attempt to hold a trilateral meeting in June, Borrell restated the Kosovar prime minister's preconditions for resuming the trilateral format. According to Kurti, both sides had to sign and formalise the Brussels Agreement and Ohrid Agreement of 2023, a letter sent by former Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabic to the EU in December 2023 had to be rescinded, as it described the declaration resulting from the EU-Balkans summit as political, non-binding and only acceptable without de facto or de jure recognition of Kosovo, and Serbia had to hand several participants in the military ambush in Banjska/Banjskë over to the Kosovar justice system.

37 UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus*, S/2024/526, 5 July 2024.
38 UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus*, S/2025/7, 3 January 2025.
39 See the summary on Serbia-Kosovo in Chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025! Report on conflict, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
40 See the summary on Serbia-Kosovo in Chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025! Report on conflict, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
41 Morina, Engjellushe, *Cast no shadow: How the EU can advance the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue process*, European Council of Foreign Relations, 30 October 2024.

Though there was no trilateral meeting in June, there were separate meetings with the EU High Representative on 26 June.

In September, the president of Serbia outlined seven preconditions for progress in the negotiating process: elections in northern Kosovo, the implementation of Article 9 of the 2013 Brussels agreement⁴² and the return of Kosovo Serbs to the North Kosovo Police, the return of Kosovo Serb judges and prosecutors to their judicial functions, the withdrawal of special units of the Kosovo Police from northern Kosovo, the immediate establishment of the Community of Serb-majority Municipalities in Kosovo (A/CSMM), the implementation of EU and US guarantees made in December 2022 and the release of detainees arrested at protests and action to enable payments and postal services. Although trilateral dialogue at a high political level was not resumed, trilateral meetings between the chief negotiators did take place with EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajcak (the last one in December). Lajcak also met separately with other facilitating actors and representatives of the parties to the conflict.

Two of the main pending topics were Kosovo's entry into international organisations and the establishment of the A/CSMM. The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers did not include the issue of Kosovo's membership on the agenda in May and postponed the decision, despite the recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Quintet (the USA, Germany, France, Italy and the UK) had repeatedly called on Kosovo to take concrete steps towards the establishment of the A/CSMM. Before the Committee of Ministers meeting, the leaders of Germany, France and Italy issued a joint letter in May that urged Kosovo to submit the draft statute of the A/CSMM released by the EU special representative in 2023 to the Constitutional Court of Kosovo as a step forward in the process. They also rejected Kosovo's proposal to draft a different statute in consultation with the current mayors of the municipalities, since they currently lack Kosovo Serb representation.⁴³ Earlier in May, the Kosovar Prime Minister had rejected the creation of the A/CSMM as a condition for the Council of Europe's vote and argued that the EU's draft of the A/CSMM was not a formal document, alleging that Serbia had not accepted it. According to the EU, both Kurti and Vucic supported its proposal when Lajcak presented it in 2023. The issue of the A/CSMM remained deadlocked for the rest of the year.

The negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo remained largely stalled and tensions rose between the parties and in northern Kosovo

International actors (the UN, the EU and the Quintet) expressed concern about several instances of unilateral action taken by Kosovo in 2024 and urged Pristina to address the issues under the umbrella of the EU-facilitated dialogue process. This unilateral action had negative socio-economic effects on the Kosovo Serb population and triggered protests.⁴⁴ The EU special representative said that the tense situation led his team to engage in crisis management and de-escalation instead of focusing on the normalisation of relations.

Another flashpoint in the negotiating process was the Serbian government's adoption of a bill declaring Kosovo a "special protection zone" in October and another

draft law organising and granting powers to Serbian judicial authorities for the prosecution of crimes committed in Kosovo. Kosovo described the pieces of legislation as acts of hostility against its territorial integrity and sovereignty. The US, the EU and Germany urged Serbia to reconsider the bills, saying that they violated the obligations of the negotiating process, and called on Serbia and Kosovo to implement the 2023 Ohrid Agreement. Moreover, after the Central Election Commission initially refused to allow the Kosovo Serb party Serbia List to participate in Kosovo's 2025 parliamentary elections in December, the appeals panel reversed this decision and approved its participation. Serbia List, which withdrew from Kosovar institutions in November 2022 along with other actors, had decided to run in the elections. The EU and other actors had warned against the ban. Most of the topics of the negotiating process agreements remained only partially implemented or pending implementation.⁴⁵ On a positive note, in December the parties agreed on the terms of reference to establish a joint commission on missing persons.

Gender, peace and security

Women activists from Serbia and Kosovo continued to be involved in civil society initiatives to promote dialogue and peacebuilding. Among other initiatives, peace activists from both territories met in Macedonia in November in a meeting supported by the Swedish organisation Kvinna till Kvinna to create a safe space for dialogue, address the challenges facing the region and take advantage of opportunities for peacebuilding.

New research by Inclusive Security and the Research Institute of Development and European Affairs (RIDEA)

42 See Article 9 in Brussels Agreement. First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations.

43 See the letter in Kossev, (AP) *France, Germany and Italy wrote to Kurti: Draft of the European Statute of the Sea Association/Council to the Constitutional Court, the ball is in your court*, 16 May 2024.

44 See the summary on Serbia-Kosovo in Chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025! Report on conflict, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

45 European Commission, *Kosovo* 2024 Report*, Brussels, SWD(2024) 692 final, 30 October 2024.

draws attention to the exclusion of women from the long-standing negotiating process and the need to promote their effective participation.⁴⁶ The report “Shaping Peace: Women’s Inclusion in the Kosovo-Serbia Peace Process” analyses reasons for the current stagnation in the process, studies issues related to women’s representation and inclusion in the process and makes recommendations. Among other obstacles to inclusion, it identifies social attitudes and expectations regarding gender roles, attitudes in institutions and the indifference of state and political actors and under-representation in formal negotiations and decision-making processes.

| Türkiye (PKK) | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Negotiating actors | Government, PKK, political parties of Türkiye |
| Third parties | -- |
| Relevant agreements | -- |

Summary:
Negotiating initiatives at different stages have tried to resolve the armed conflict between Türkiye and the Kurdish armed group PKK, which has been active since 1984. In the 1990s, the PKK evolved from a guerrilla group aimed at establishing an independent Kurdish state into an armed movement demanding decentralisation within Türkiye, cultural and political rights and constitutional recognition for the Kurdish population. The arrest and imprisonment of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999 intensified this transition and the search for ways to end the conflict. Turkish state actors held meetings with the PKK in the 1990s, but they yielded no results. Between 2008 and 2011, the government and the PKK held a non-public dialogue known as the “Oslo Talks”. This was publicly accompanied by the government initiative “Kurdish Opening”, which included limited measures such as the restoration of Kurdish place names and the lifting of some obstacles to using the Kurdish language. The Oslo Talks were cancelled, but between 2013 and 2015 a new phase of dialogue was publicly announced between the government, Öcalan and the PKK, with the participation of the pro-Kurdish political party HDP. The process was cut short in 2015 when the parties traded accusations. The breakdown was influenced by local and regional factors, including the war in Syria, the expansion of control of Syrian territory by Kurdish militias with links to the PKK (YPG/YPJ) and Türkiye’s position towards the Kurds of Syria, who established an autonomous regional administration. In later years, the armed conflict pitted Türkiye against the PKK (and related armed actors), primarily in northern Iraq and Syria. A new dialogue initiative began in Türkiye in 2024.

Exploratory steps were taken in Türkiye that could lead to a new negotiating process to end the armed conflict with the PKK, though there were difficulties and uncertainty about its future direction. The steps taken involved both exploratory dialogue with the PKK and plans for

consultations between political parties. In October, media outlets reported that exploratory talks were under way and subsequent reporting at the end of the year detailed that they had started in April.⁴⁷ The talks were between Turkish government representatives and PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan,⁴⁸ who has been in prison since 1999. According to these sources, the talks were aimed at possibly resuming negotiations with the group, and Öcalan had told the PKK leadership that it was time to discuss laying down their weapons.

Political developments in the last quarter included various speeches and some conciliatory gestures, authorisation for Öcalan to receive two visits (one from family members and one of a political nature) and plans for meetings between political parties. Key political actors said that this was a historic opportunity, though one with different approaches and nuances (anti-terrorist discourse and the Turkish government’s demand for the dissolution of the PKK and the allied party MHP, as well as Kurdish political actors’ focus on the need for a peace process). One of the triggers of the new impetus in the political agenda to address the conflict was a speech delivered on 22 October by Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of the Turkish ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and an ally of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Bahçeli launched the proposal to lift Öcalan’s isolation if he declared the end of armed activity and the dissolution of his organization. Prior to the speech, Bahçeli had shaken hands with MPs of the pro-Kurdish DEM party at the start of the parliamentary session on 1 October. Bahçeli had also made comments to the media about the beginning of a new period and the duty to establish peace in Türkiye. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan showed support for Bahçeli and announced the beginning of a new period of détente and a “historic opportunity to end terrorism”. According to Erdogan, these efforts were aligned with goals to dissolve the PKK and require that it lay down its arms unconditionally whilst allowing the political movement (referring to the pro-Kurdish DEM party) to operate as a full political party in Türkiye. The DEM, which has historically advocated a negotiated solution to the conflict, said that it was willing to embark on a peace process, but warned that the end of isolation was an absolute requirement. The main opposition party, the CHP, expressed cautious support, stressing the importance of addressing and resolving the conflict through parliament and not restricting the dialogue to Öcalan on the Kurdish side.

Other indications of a possible new initiative included the Turkish authorities’ permission for Öcalan to receive a visit from his nephew, DEM MP Ömer Öcalan, on 23 October, the first person to visit the PKK leader in 43 months. According to Ömer Öcalan, Abdullah

46 Research Institute of Development and European Affairs y Inclusive Security, *Shaping Peace: Women’s Inclusion in the Kosovo-Serbia Peace Process*, April 2024.
47 Zaman, Amberin, “Syria’s Kurds faced with all-out war as Turkey, Sunni allies target Kobani”, *Al-Monitor*, 10 December, 2024.
48 Zaman, Amberin, “Turkey mulls peace talks with Kurds amid fears of Israeli strike on Iran”, *Al-Monitor*, 10 December, 2024.

Öcalan conveyed the message that if the conditions were right, he held “the theoretical and practical power” to move the dispute from its current context of conflict and violence to the legal and political arena. In a particularly significant step, a DEM delegation was allowed to visit Abdullah Öcalan on 28 December. It included veteran Kurdish leader and MP Pervin Buldan and fellow MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder, both of whom were involved in the previous negotiating process. In their post-visit statement, the MPs outlined seven points of Öcalan’s stated approach, which included getting all political actors in Türkiye to set aside their short-term calculations and lend positive support to the process, with the Turkish Parliament playing a key role in that regard. It also said that the regional context added a sense of urgency to resolving the Kurdish issue and Öcalan claimed to have the “necessary competence” and determination to contribute to the “new paradigm” promoted by Bahçeli and Erdogan. The statement noted that the delegation would convey Öcalan’s approach to state and political actors. Significantly, it said that he was prepared to take the necessary positive steps and make “the necessary call”, referring to a potential call to end the armed struggle. The year ended with meetings planned for early January 2025 between the DEM delegation and parliamentary political parties to discuss the results of the visit to Öcalan and perspectives on the new scenario.

Despite these exploratory steps, various factors caused problems and uncertainty. These included the persisting mistrust between the parties, Ankara’s continued repression of Kurdish political and social actors

(including fresh dismissals of elected DEM mayors and their replacement by people appointed by the state), the risk of spoilers (with a new attack in Ankara in October for which the PKK claimed responsibility,⁴⁹ though the group disassociated it from the new dialogue initiative under way) and interrelations with the situation in Syria. In Syria, the toppling of the regime of Bashar Assad due to the HTS military offensive opened a scenario for a new transition in which the Syrian Kurdish issue was still pending.⁵⁰ Türkiye and Turkish-backed SNA factions intensified attacks on areas in northeastern Syria controlled by the Kurdish YPG/YPJ militias (predominant members of the US-backed SDF coalition, and with links to the PKK) and demanded their disbandment and disarmament. In December, the SDF acknowledged that there were PKK fighters in its ranks for the first time. The SDF initiated contact and dialogue with HTS, whilst maintaining indirect contact with Türkiye.

Gender, peace and security

The DEM delegation that visited PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and was scheduled to meet with Türkiye’s major political parties included Pervin Buldan, a female DEM MP and former co-leader of the HDP (DEM’s predecessor), as well as a women’s human rights advocate. In December, the Kurdish women’s movement, which is under the umbrella of the TJA, issued a statement welcoming the DEM delegation’s meeting with Öcalan and calling for “shared struggles” and alliances of democratic forces to end the wars. The TJA also demanded an end to Öcalan’s isolation.

49 See the summary on Türkiye (PKK) in Chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025! Report on conflict, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

50 See the summary on Syria in chapter 6 (Peace negotiations in the Middle East).

