

5. Peace negotiations in Europe

- In 2025, seven of the 53 peace processes in the world (13%) took place in Europe.
- In 2025, negotiations between Russia and Ukraine were resumed in different formats and with US government mediation, though they faced multiple obstacles.
- Armenia and Azerbaijan reached a peace and normalisation of relations agreement, though it had not yet been signed and was subject to conditions demanded by Baku at the end of the year.
- The peace process in Cyprus gained some momentum in 2025 through informal meetings and some confidence-building measures, but formal negotiations were not resumed.
- The peace process in Türkiye yielded some significant military-related results, such as the PKK's decision to dissolve and end its armed struggle.

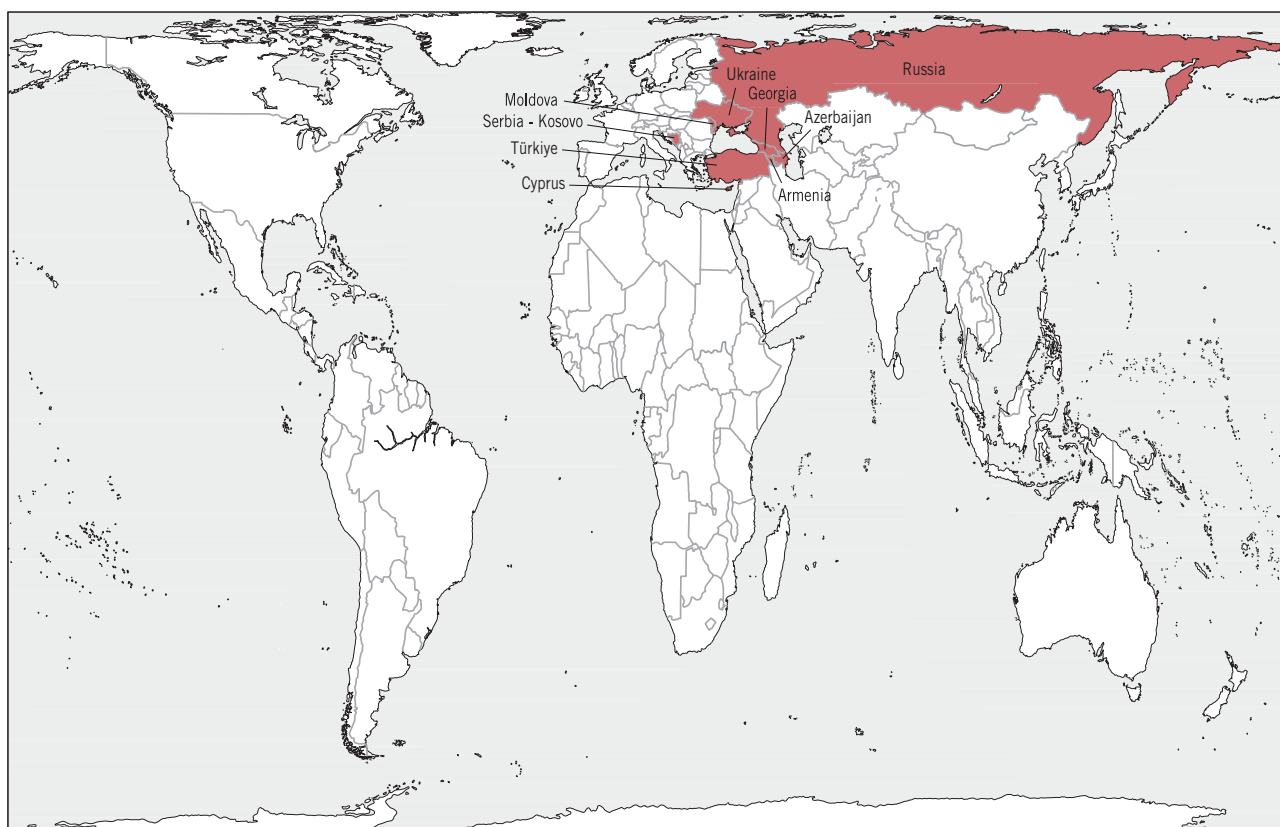
This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2025. Firstly, the main characteristics and general trends on the dialogue processes in the region are presented, followed by the analysis on the evolution of each specific context during the year, including in 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 2025.

Table 5.1. Summary of the peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2025

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Armenia – Azerbaijan ¹	Armenia, Azerbaijan	USA, EU 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 (Transdniestria)	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria	OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA, EU ⁵
Russia – Ukraine	Russia, Ukraine	USA, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, ICRC, UN, IAEA, Vatican City, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Switzerland ⁶
Serbia – Kosovo	Serbia, Kosovo	EU, UN, USA, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Italy
Türkiye (PKK)	Government, PKK, political parties of Türkiye	Political representatives from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq ⁷

1. Starting with the 2024 edition, this yearbook 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 in 2025 were conducted without third-party mediation at some levels/areas, whilst they received external support in others, including US mediation support in 2025.
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. Since 2023 the 5+2 conference format has remained inactive. In the 5+2 conference Moldova and Transdniestria were negotiators, the OSCE was a mediator, Ukraine and Russia were mediators-guarantors, and the US and the EU were observers. The OSCE-facilitated format between chief negotiators remained active. At least for a time, it 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. 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.
7. The dialogue process in Türkiye does not officially have third parties, but political representatives from the Iraqi Kurdistan Region have played roles in support of the process.

Map 5.1. Peace negotiations in Europe in 2025



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2025

5.1 Negotiations in 2025: regional trends

This chapter analyses seven peace processes that took place in Europe in 2025 and that account for 13% of all peace processes worldwide in the last year. Unlike 2024, the year was marked by the resumption of political-military negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, with US mediation. These talks complemented the dialogue on humanitarian issues, although both continued to face significant obstacles and no ceasefire was achieved. Furthermore, the peace process launched in 2024 between the government of Türkiye and the Kurdish armed group PKK developed in 2025 into a more consolidated negotiating process, yielding significant military-related results, including the announcement of the group's dissolution, though the future trajectory and scope of the process remained unclear. Alongside these two negotiating processes in Europe linked to active armed conflicts, the other five were related to situations of prolonged socio-political crises of varying intensity in the South 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).

Peace processes in Europe in 2025 accounted for 13% of all cases worldwide

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, five of the seven negotiating processes also involved self-proclaimed states (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transdniestria, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Kosovo) whilst only Kosovo has received broad international recognition.⁸ Two of the peace processes remained primarily interstate in nature (Armenia–Azerbaijan and Russia–Ukraine), whilst the process in Türkiye (PKK) continued to be the only one involving an active armed insurgency, although the armed group announced the end of armed struggle and its dissolution in 2025. The weight of regional and international factors remained evident in many negotiating processes, as did the influence of broader geopolitical dynamics, especially the confrontation between Russia and the United States, NATO and the European Union, which continued to project itself across several scenarios, particularly Moldova, Georgia and the Russia–Ukraine conflict itself.

With regard to **third parties**, all the processes in the region involved external parties to varying degrees in roles supporting the dialogue, including mediation and facilitation, including Türkiye (PKK), which included

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.

indirect forms of regional support. The authorities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq performed some supportive roles in Türkiye's peace process, in coordination with the Turkish government.

There was a trend towards greater variety in the types of third parties and a reduction in the space and resources of intergovernmental bodies in 2025. On the one hand, the EU, the OSCE and the UN continued to play leading roles in some peace processes. This was the case with the EU in the Serbia–Kosovo process and as co-facilitator in what are known as the Geneva International Discussions (GID), which involve Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia, along with its role as a stakeholder in the Cypriot dialogue. The OSCE continued to be the mediating actor in the Moldova–Transdniestria negotiating process and a co-facilitator in the GID. The UN continued to provide good offices in the Cyprus dialogue process, co-facilitated the GID and provided secondary support to the EU-facilitated Serbia–Kosovo process through the functions of the UNMIK mission. However, 2025 was the year in which Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to jointly ask the OSCE to dissolve the OSCE Minsk Process and its associated structures, a mediation architecture whose elimination Azerbaijan had been demanding. Furthermore, as part of the UN80 Initiative, a UN reform process leading to the reorganisation, merger and reduction of bodies and positions amid funding constraints, plans were made to shrink the Office of the United Nations Representative for the Geneva International Discussions (UNRGID).

In contrast, **the role of states as third parties increased in Europe in 2025.** The role of the US stood out. Under the administration of Donald Trump, Washington became involved in the Armenia–Azerbaijan process, which continued to have a relevant direct bilateral negotiating dynamic that it supported, as well as in the Russia–Ukraine peace process. In both cases, the US intervened by promoting its own state and private corporate interests, reflected in advantageous bilateral economic and commercial agreements reached with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine during the year. The US approach in the Russia–Ukraine negotiations included fluctuations in approaches and priorities and pressure directed mostly towards Ukraine. Overall, its involvement in these processes followed a transactional approach, in line with the emerging concept of 'transactional peacemaking', with the prioritisation of

bilateral, interest-based approaches –rather than values and inclusion– and with a focus on short-term deals.⁹ Other states were also involved in supporting dialogue in the Russia–Ukraine negotiations, such as Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Switzerland.

All the processes in Europe involved external parties to varying degrees in roles supporting the dialogue, including mediation and facilitation

The **negotiating agendas** remained diverse, based on the circumstances and characteristics of each process and the demands of the different actors involved in the conflict. The issues on the negotiating agendas were diverse and the details on the various elements and status of discussions of each round were not always public. In both processes linked to active armed conflicts, Türkiye (PKK) and Russia–

Ukraine, the issue of **ceasefires and military-related topics** played a predominant role in 2025. In Türkiye, the PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire in March. In May, it announced the dissolution of its organisational structure and the end of armed struggle, and in the second half of the year it made symbolic disarmament gestures and withdrew its forces in Türkiye to northern Iraq. The government did not reciprocate with a formal ceasefire, but it did offer some military de-escalation, whilst demanding the dissolution of all armed groups linked to the PKK at the same time, including in Iraq and Syria. Some analysts noted that both actors kept up militarisation in northern Iraq.¹⁰ In any case, the peace process between the government and the PKK unfolded without transparency regarding the possible terms of negotiation on military issues. In the Russia–Ukraine process, the parties debated a potential ceasefire promoted by the US, though it was unsuccessful. In March, the US, Russia and Ukraine announced ceasefire agreements on energy infrastructure and safe navigation in the Black Sea, but these also failed. Subsequent attempts to negotiate a ceasefire ran aground and the US moved towards the Russian position of ruling out any need for a ceasefire in the negotiations. As part of the political and military negotiations resumed in 2025, Russia and Ukraine addressed issues related to the terms for an agreement to end the armed conflict, including **military, political and territorial issues**, in direct and indirect formats with US mediation.

Furthermore, 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. This was also an issue introduced in 2024

9. Hellmüller, Sara and Salaymeh, Bilal (2025). 'Transactional peacemaking: Warmakers as peacemakers in the political marketplace of peace processes'. In *Contemporary Security Policy*, 46(2), pp. 312–342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2024.2448908>.

10. See the summary on Türkiye (PKK) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2026! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2026.

in the Moldovan peace process, when Transdniestria called for reaching a written commitment on peaceful means of conflict resolution. No concrete results were achieved in this area in 2025. Moldova emphasised that any parameters for a settlement of the conflict can only be based on respect for Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity. As in previous years, Moldova and Transdniestria addressed a wide array of issues in meetings facilitated by the OSCE, including the energy crisis.

In other peace processes, the agendas were also varied. Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Serbia and Kosovo, negotiated different issues framed within processes seeking the **normalisation of relations**. From that perspective, Baku and Yerevan reached a peace agreement still pending ratification that included elements such as the recognition and respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the abstention from the use of force against territorial integrity and political independence, non-interference in internal affairs, the withdrawal of proceedings initiated in the judicial sphere and others. Supported by US mediation, they also addressed issues of rail, road, pipeline and gas pipeline connections. Serbia and Kosovo continued to tackle disagreements relating to the normalisation of relations. In the Cypriot process, the negotiations focused on the discussion of confidence-building measures in 2025. Several negotiating processes dealt with **humanitarian issues**. Among other cases, Russia and Ukraine held negotiations and reached some agreements on the exchange of prisoners and the repatriation of the deceased and, to a lesser extent, on the return of minors who had been forcibly deported to Russia or areas under occupation.

No uniform **trend** was observed in the negotiations. Ambivalent progress was made in Armenia-Azerbaijan and Türkiye and there was some renewed momentum in Cyprus. On a positive note, the agreement reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which is still pending ratification, stood out as a historic step towards the normalisation of relations after decades of conflict. Nevertheless, the agreement included problematic aspects from a human rights and transitional justice perspective, such as the withdrawal and removal of proceedings initiated in the judicial sphere, and omitted issues related to the impacts of the dispute on populations. The peace process in Türkiye (PKK) made progress in the military sphere, with the announcement of a ceasefire and dissolution of the PKK, the withdrawal of guerrillas from Türkiye to northern Iraq and symbolic disarmament gestures, indicating the start of a different phase in the conflict. However, the process was advancing slowly, heavily influenced by geopolitical dynamics in the region, with little transparency and with questions over the scope that the process will have in subsequent phases and whether it will include action related to the root causes of the conflict. At

the same time, the Cyprus case experienced some momentum, with the reactivation of informal contacts and the adoption of confidence-building measures. These helped to create a more constructive dynamic, although the process continued to encounter obstacles to the resumption of negotiations at the highest political level. In the case of Russia-Ukraine, the resumption of political-military negotiations in various formats was a significant new development compared to previous years, but the process advanced with great difficulties, shaped by antagonistic positions, demands from Russia considered maximalist and the persistence of armed confrontation, which reduced the prospects for a short-term agreement.

Other peace processes continued to be characterised by impasse or the lack of any substantial progress. The Serbia-Kosovo peace process remained largely deadlocked due to the persistence of structural disagreements, the lack of implementation of previous agreements and mounting tension, especially in northern Kosovo, which eroded trust between the parties. The processes in Georgia and Moldova also continued without making significant progress, framed in contexts of high political and geopolitical complexity, where the dynamics of confrontation between international actors and internal disputes limited the possibilities for progress.

The peace processes continued to be characterised by a lack of formal mechanisms for civil society **participation and inclusiveness**. Even so, civil society organisations continued to demand avenues for participation. Third countries took various approaches to their participation.

The UN was actively involved in consultations with civil society actors, as in Cyprus. OSCE representatives held meetings with civil society actors, although no information emerged on the degree of follow-up to the consultations and their impact. In contrast, the United States' mediation approaches focused on elites. In the Türkiye process, there were some opportunities for civil society involvement through hearings organised by the parliamentary peace process commission. Furthermore, in the Cypriot process, the possibility of creating a civil society advisory body was discussed.

Finally, with regard to the **gender perspective**, most processes continued to show significant shortcomings in women's participation and in the integration of this perspective into formal negotiating agendas. Only the negotiating process in Cyprus had a gender-specific mechanism in the formal negotiating process, the Technical Committee on Gender Equality. Nevertheless, this committee continued to face obstacles to the implementation of its action plan. In the peace processes in Europe the delegations of the parties to the conflict continued to have predominantly male leadership. In contrast, intergovernmental bodies did include various

Negotiating processes in Europe did not follow any uniform trend and made ambivalent progress in some cases, such as Armenia-Azerbaijan and Türkiye, and suffering impasse and failure in others

women in mediation or facilitation positions in different processes in the region. The negotiating agendas did not include aspects related to the gender impacts of the disputes, nor to the human rights of women and the LGBTIQ+ population. Women's organisations mobilised in different contexts to demand greater participation and to present demands on specific issues. Among many other cases, women from Armenia expressed concern about the lack of mechanisms for female participation in the peace process with Azerbaijan and the absence of transitional justice mechanisms, warning how Article 15 of the March agreement requires the parties to renounce the use of international justice mechanisms.¹¹ At the same time, women's organisations from diverse backgrounds participated in women's dialogue initiatives. For instance, Cypriot women's civil society organisations participated in actions aimed at strengthening alliances amongst themselves. There were also some closed-door meetings between Kurdish and Turkish politicians from different parties in Türkiye, promoted by the women's wing of the pro-Kurdish DEM party, as part of the negotiating process in the country. Furthermore, the DEM Women's Assembly organised meetings during the year in different parts of the country with different groups of women, including female journalists, women from different religious groups and women's organisations. The purpose was to broaden the spread of information and expand discussions on the negotiating process.

Finally, although they fall outside the scope of this yearbook as they are not regarded as peace processes, other conflict situations of various kinds across the continent were the scene of political dialogue. Fresh progress was made in the process to normalise relations between **Türkiye and Armenia** in 2025. Originally launched in 2022, it was driven by the rapprochement between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the impetus for regional connectivity with US support.¹² New meetings took place between the special representatives of Türkiye and Armenia, in addition to a historic visit by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to Türkiye, where he met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The parties addressed issues such as the possible future reopening of borders, the reactivation of railway connections and air connectivity. Nevertheless, Türkiye reiterated that it would not open its land border with Armenia until a final peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan was signed. In relation to **Türkiye-Greece**, dynamics of dialogue and episodes of tension continued to coexist in 2025. Throughout the year, political and technical contacts were maintained as part of the structured process initiated in 2023, aimed at reducing the risks of escalation

Negotiations in Europe continued to be characterised by the absence of formal mechanisms for civil society participation

and improving bilateral communication mechanisms. In relation to the political conflict in **Catalonia**, the Catalan independence party Junts, which was the governing Catalan party during the independence referendum and is currently in opposition, announced that it was breaking off its relations with the PSOE in October. The PSOE is the main party leading the coalition government in Spain, and the announcement came following a year of tension and criticism levelled by Junts against the PSOE for non-compliance with the November 2023 agreements. Before Junts ended its relations with the PSOE, both parties had held periodic meetings in Switzerland since late 2023 as part of the late-2023 agreement on a dialogue table and a coordination and verification mechanism through Salvadoran diplomat Francisco Galindo Vélez. According to media reports in 2023, this mechanism was linked to the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, though they were not officially confirmed.¹³ Media outlets reported that the rupture of relations with the PSOE announced by Junts implied the end of negotiations both in Switzerland and in the Congress of Deputies. According to the media, nineteen meetings had been held in Switzerland between December 2023 and the breaking off of relations in 2025.

There was no detailed public information on the agenda or commitments of the 2025 meetings in Switzerland. In February 2025, Junts had withdrawn the processing of a motion of no confidence against Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez as a gesture of confidence towards Salvadoran diplomat Francisco Galindo. During the year, Junts focused on issues such as the lack of progress in making Catalan an official language in the EU, the failure to apply the amnesty law to its leader, Carles Puigdemont, and its demands for the delegation of powers in immigration matters.

Furthermore, talks continued between the PSOE and the ERC, a Catalan party that was a coalition partner in the Catalan government during the Catalonia referendum and currently in opposition. In 2024, both parties had temporarily suspended meetings involving an international verifier due to upcoming Basque, Catalan and European elections. Both parties maintained dialogue and negotiations during the year, including on issues that are part of the investiture agreement they reached following the 2023 state parliamentary elections, such as the transfer of the Rodalies commuter rail service, the financing system for Catalonia and the state's cancellation of a portion of Catalonia's debt. Some of these issues involved bilateral negotiations and negotiations with the Catalan government, but others were also addressed as measures for the autonomous communities as a whole. At the end of the year, the

11. See the summary on Armenia-Azerbaijan in this chapter.

12. See the summary on Armenia-Azerbaijan in this chapter.

13. Europa Press, "La fundación Henry Dunant, mediador en el desarme de ETA, será el verificador del PSOE y Junts en Ginebra", *EP*, 30 November 2023.

PSOE and the ERC were finalising the agreement on the new regional financing model. At the same time, dialogue and negotiations went on with the ERC expressing a certain degree of tension and discontent. In early January 2026, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and the leader of ERC, Oriol Junqueras, held a meeting at the presidency headquarters, at the ERC's request, in which they addressed the continuity of the legislature and the 2023 agreements, among other issues. It emerged that they had held two private meetings prior to that encounter. The January meeting was the first public meeting since Junqueras was released from prison in 2021 following a partial pardon of the ERC leader and other former ministers that year.

Furthermore, in 2025 the Spanish Constitutional Court upheld the amnesty law, approved in 2024 by the Congress of Deputies, with 177 votes in favour and 172 against. The court's ruling, with six votes in favour and four against, establishes that the amnesty law is consistent with the Constitution, is not arbitrary and responds to a legitimate, explicit and reasonable purpose. The ruling endorses the bulk of the law and rejects the appeal of unconstitutionality filed by the People's Party (PP) but partially upholds three precepts considered minor. During 2025, the Constitutional Court rejected other appeals filed against the law in 2024.

5.2 Case study analysis

Eastern Europe

Moldova (Transdniestria)	
Negotiating actors	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria
Third parties	OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA, EU ¹⁴
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 km ² 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.

In 2025, the negotiating process remained active at the level of chief negotiators and joint working groups, but no meetings were held between the political leaders. It continued to face difficulties, influenced by a regional context of geopolitical disputes. **A single trilateral meeting was held between the OSCE and the chief negotiators** in April, facilitated by the head of the OSCE mission in Moldova, Kelly Keiderling. The new special representative of the OSCE Chairpersonship, Thomas Lenk, also attended the meeting, in which differences and obstacles were noted. Regarding the commitment for a document on peaceful means of conflict resolution, introduced as a new development by Transdniestria in 2024, the Moldovan representative stated that the parameters for a settlement of the conflict can only be based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova. Furthermore, the Transnistrian delegation accused Moldova of blocking the resumption of the 5+2 negotiating format.¹⁵ Moldova raised other issues relating to the human rights situation in Transdniestria and the infrastructure of unauthorised posts within the 'security zone', amongst others.¹⁶ The OSCE special representative praised how the parties had interacted in the preceding months, including in relation to the energy crisis, and expressed confidence that this would pave the way for more stable dialogue between the chief negotiators, as well as the work of the joint

14. 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.

15. See the previous footnote.

16. See further topics addressed in the Government of Moldova, "Political and OSCE representatives discussed in Bender the most current topics that concern both banks of the Nistru River", 8 April 2025.

working groups. On a positive note, the parties agreed that the working groups would activate meetings in the short term. Prior to the April trilateral meeting, there were separate meetings between OSCE representatives and each of the parties, including visits to Moldova by the OSCE Chairperson, Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen, in January, and by the new OSCE special representative in February.

During the year, **the Moldovan government reaffirmed its refusal to resume the 5+2 negotiating format whilst the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues.** The Moldovan authorities stated that they were open to restarting dialogue between senior political leaders (1+1), either in person or virtually, provided that the meeting venues alternated and included the Moldovan capital, Chisinau, on the grounds that the meetings had taken place in Bender and Tiraspol in 2024 and 2025. Since 2023, the Transnistrian authorities have alleged a lack of guarantees, restrictions and pressure arising from the reform of Moldova's criminal code introduced that year, which provides for sanctions in cases of financing and incitement of separatism and conspiracy against Moldova. **No other joint meetings were held between the chief negotiators, nor were any meetings held between the political leaders.** The only meetings held were between OSCE representatives and each of the conflicting parties separately, with no concrete agreements reached. In July, the head of the OSCE mission, Kelly Keiderling, completed her mandate, and in the second half of the year the interim head of mission, Izabela Sylwia, assumed the main interlocutor role in these meetings. Some meetings of joint working groups were held, such as on education and economic affairs, for example.

The negotiating process was influenced by the general context of parliamentary elections in Moldova during the year, marked by divisions between pro-EU positions and approaches favouring rapprochement with Russia, within a broad electoral cycle (previous presidential elections in 2024 and a referendum that year on including EU integration as a strategic objective in the Constitution). The ruling Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) won the elections, carrying 55 out of 101 seats (50.1% of the vote), compared to the Patriotic Bloc –considered close to Russia– which obtained 24.2% in total, but was predominant in Transnistria and the autonomous region of Gagauzia. The elections were considered competitive by the OSCE, although its election mission noted an unprecedented level of hybrid attacks, including illicit financing, disinformation campaigns

and cyberattacks originating from Russia, as well as structural deficiencies in the Moldovan system and the relocation of some polling stations from Transnistria to territory under Moldovan control.¹⁷ **Following the elections and the formation of the new government, diplomat and former Moldovan ambassador to Ukraine Valeriu Chiveri was appointed as the new Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration,** a position that includes the functions of chief negotiator in the negotiating process.

At the end of the year, new Moldovan Prime Minister Alexandru Munteanu announced that **the Moldovan government was preparing a plan for the reintegration of the country and that it was being discussed with the EU and the US.** No details of the plan emerged, and Chiveri stated that work was underway and that the roadmap would be presented at the appropriate time. Analysts noted that the EU was pressuring Moldova to make progress on the reintegration of Transnistria into Moldova and that Brussels would no longer be willing to accept the country's integration into the bloc in two phases, in contrast to previous years when the EU left that door open.¹⁸

Gender, peace and security

The negotiating delegations of the parties to the conflict continued to be led by male chief negotiators, with Oleg Serebrian (until October) and Valeriu Chiveri (from October) for Moldova, and Vitaly Ignatiev representing the Transnistrian government. At the level of third parties, the head of the OSCE mission, Kelly Keiderling, completed her mandate and the interim head of mission, Izabela Sylwia, assumed the main interlocutor role. Thomas Lenk, the new special representative of the OSCE Chairpersonship, took over from the previous representative, Thomas Mayr-Harting. The informal Women's Advisory Board (WAB) for Sustainable Peacebuilding continued to operate with the support of UN Women. In January 2025, the WAB held a meeting with representatives of UN Women Moldova, in which they discussed challenges and opportunities for collaboration between populations on both banks of the Dniester River, as well as priorities for 2025, with the support of the Swedish Embassy. Furthermore, during her visit to Moldova in January, OSCE Chairperson and Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen held meetings with civil society actors, but the OSCE did not specify which organisations she had met with or whether they included any women's organisations.

17. ODIHR EOM, *Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*, 28 September 2025.

18. Solovoy, Vladimir, "Transnistria Reemerges as an Obstacle to Moldova Joining the EU", *Carnegie*, 12 December 2025.

Russia – Ukraine	
Negotiating actors	Russia, Ukraine
Third parties	UN, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, ICRC, UN, IAEA, Vatican City, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Switzerland ¹⁹
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.

In 2025, negotiations between Russia and Ukraine were resumed in different formats and with US government mediation, though they faced multiple obstacles. Nevertheless, at the end of the year, some progress was reported in the discussions. Overall, the return of US President Donald Trump brought about substantive changes in the process due to its push for a coercive diplomatic path, with fluctuations in approaches and priorities, whilst the armed conflict continued to have severe impacts.²⁰ At the beginning

of the year, US President Trump and his Vice President JD Vance publicly clashed with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during a meeting at the White House in February. The dispute led to the temporary suspension of US military and intelligence assistance, though it was partially lifted the following month. This contrasted with greater fluidity between the US and Russia, including a phone call between Trump and Putin and a meeting of delegations in Saudi Arabia in February. In the first few months of the year, the discussions focused on a possible 30-day unconditional ceasefire promoted by the US, which Ukraine accepted on 11 March following negotiations with the US in Saudi Arabia, whilst Russia rejected it and demanded conditions. Further calls took place between Trump and Putin and between Trump and Zelensky, as well as separate negotiations in Saudi Arabia from 23 to 25 March. On 25 March, the US, Russia and Ukraine announced ceasefire agreements on energy infrastructure and safe navigation in the Black Sea, but they did not succeed.²¹ Meanwhile, Russia continued to question the legitimacy of the Ukrainian government and presidency.

Negotiations continued in multiple formats, including meetings that US special envoy Steve Witkoff held with the Russian president and the Russian negotiator and director general of the Russian Direct Investment Fund, Kirill Dmitriev, and discussions between representatives of the US, Ukraine and European countries. Ukraine also held talks with European partners on security guarantees under a 'coalition of the willing', though they were divided over a possible deployment of European troops in the event of a peace agreement. In April, the US presented an unpublished peace proposal that prevented Ukraine from becoming a member of NATO and provided de jure US recognition of Russia's sovereignty over Crimea, as well as de facto recognition of Russian control over the areas of the four regions occupied by Russia. According to some analysts, the plan did not offer US security guarantees to Ukraine but opened the door to the deployment of European forces. Ukraine and countries such as the United Kingdom, France and Germany expressed disagreement, especially over Crimea. Russia continued to demand sovereignty over all four regions in their entirety and opposed the deployment of European forces in Ukraine, amongst other points. Furthermore, the US and Ukraine signed an agreement in April on the extraction of rare earths and critical raw materials.

19. This table includes actors playing roles of mediation/facilitation and support in any of the areas of dialogue active between Russia and Ukraine. They are included regardless of the frequency or scope of their involvement. Beyond the actors included in this table, the chapter analyses and includes other actors that promoted dialogue during the year and that are not considered as third parties in this yearbook.
20. See the summary on Russia-Ukraine in Chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) at Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2026, Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria.
21. The ceasefires on energy and the Black Sea were announced in separate communiqués from the US (one concerning Russia and the other Ukraine), Russia and Ukraine. For more information on the negotiations, Russian conditions and difficulties around these agreements, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, "Rusia-Ucrania: Acuerdo de alto el fuego en el sector energético y el Mar Negro, pero persisten las hostilidades de alta intensidad" in *Escenarios de Riesgo y Oportunidades de Paz*, N° 6, April 2025; and Escola de Cultura de Pau, "Rusia-Ucrania: Moscú intensifica su ofensiva militar", in *Escenarios de Riesgo y Oportunidades de Paz*, N° 7, July 2025.

Delegations from Ukraine and Russia met in Istanbul on 16 May, in the first direct negotiations since 2022.

In a context of mistrust, they only agreed to a prisoner exchange of 2,000 prisoners of war and agreed to meet again and share their positions on a ceasefire in writing. In a second round in Istanbul on 2 June, they reached some humanitarian agreements and exchanged memoranda but made no substantive progress. The Russian memorandum defended international recognition of the annexed regions, Ukrainian withdrawal from these areas, neutrality with respect to NATO, limits on the Ukrainian Army and a prohibition on the deployment of foreign military forces in Ukraine, amongst other points.²² Furthermore, it made a 30-day ceasefire conditional on Ukrainian withdrawal, the suspension of military and intelligence assistance to Ukraine and the end of martial law, which precludes holding elections in Ukraine. Analysts described it as maximalist.²³ Ukraine submitted a memorandum that did not demand recovery of its internationally recognised borders.²⁴ Putin and Trump subsequently held a telephone conversation, but it yielded no specific results. A third round in Istanbul on 23 July ended without progress and with results only on the humanitarian front. Trump threatened Russia with secondary tariffs but then announced a summit with Russia as the date of his ultimatum approached.

In 2025, negotiations between Russia and Ukraine were resumed in different formats and with US government mediation, though they faced multiple obstacles

Trump and Putin met in Alaska with their political delegations in August. In their subsequent statements, they alluded to ‘agreements’ and ‘agreed points’, but without providing details.²⁵ Analysts noted that as a result of the summit, Trump abandoned his recent ultimatum position on a ceasefire and threats of sanctions against Russia, whilst instead moving closer to Moscow’s position that a ceasefire must be part of a wider agreement and not a prior step.²⁶ Trump reiterated that a ceasefire was not necessary again in a meeting with Zelensky at the White House days later. Both leaders met again during the UN General Assembly in September. The US president alluded to the possibility that Ukraine could recover all its territory with the support of the EU. There was another meeting between Trump and Zelensky at the White House in October, but it yielded no concrete results. It was preceded by a telephone conversation between Trump and Putin, in which they agreed to hold another bilateral summit that was ultimately cancelled. Amid the rising tension, Washington imposed sanctions on Russia’s two main

oil companies (Rosneft and Lukoil), justifying them because Russia refused to end the war. The US also returned to the idea of pressing for a ceasefire.

Diplomatic efforts intensified in the last two months of the year. In mid-November, it emerged that the US and Russia had drawn up a 28-point peace plan.

The proposal included points such as limits on the size of the Ukrainian Army and the explicit inclusion in Ukraine’s Constitution and in NATO’s statutes of Ukraine’s non-adherence to the Atlantic alliance. Other points included the recognition of Russia’s de facto sovereignty over Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk in their entirety; Ukraine’s withdrawal from the areas of those last two regions that it still controls and the establishment of a demilitarised zone that would nevertheless be recognised as part of Russia, in addition to the freezing of front lines in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. The proposal also included the prohibition of any deployment of NATO forces in Ukraine, ‘reliable security guarantees’ for Ukraine, elections in Ukraine within 100 days, the lifting of sanctions on Russia, full amnesty for the parties for their actions during the war and a commitment not to submit future claims or complaints.²⁷ The plan was criticised as being pro-Russian.

Following meetings between representatives of the US, Ukraine and European countries in Geneva (23-24 November), a new 20-point plan was reported, thought it was not published. Weeks of negotiations followed in different formats and cities (a meeting between Witkov and Putin in Moscow; meetings in Florida between Ukrainian negotiators and US envoys; meetings between Zelensky and European leaders in London and virtually; a summit in Berlin with Zelensky, European leaders and US envoys; indirect negotiations between Ukrainian and Russian delegations in Miami; and a meeting between Zelensky and Trump in Miami, including a telephone conversation with European leaders and NATO). In mid-December, a statement from several European leaders indicated their commitment alongside the US to work on ‘robust’ security guarantees, including a European multinational force, supported by the US, to assist the Ukrainian Army, protect Ukrainian airspace and support safe waters, as well as a binding legal commitment to respond, which could include the use of armed force in the event of a future attack on Ukraine.²⁸

22. Xinhua, “Russia’s draft memorandum calls for Ukraine’s neutrality, non-nuclear status”, Xinhua, 3 June 2026.

23. Baunov, Alexander, “Russia’s Show of Peace Talks is Designed to Please Putin –and Trump”, Carnegie, 6 June 2025.

24. Ibid.

25. President of Russia, “Joint news conference by the President of Russia and the President of the United States”, 16 August 2025.

26. Baunov, Alexander, “Alaska Summit Leaves Ukraine a Hostage to Russia’s Demands of the West”, Carnegie, 17 August 2025.

27. Shamim, Sarah, “Trump’s 28-point Ukraine plan in full: What it means, could it work?”, *Aljazeera*, 24 November 2025.

28. European Council, “Leaders’ statement on Ukraine”, 15 December 2025.

On 23 December, **Zelensky explained the 20 points of the modified peace plan supposedly agreed by Ukraine and the United States** and sent to Russia. The proposal included **‘robust’ security guarantees equivalent to NATO Article 5**, provided to Ukraine by the US, NATO and European countries, and elections to be held in Ukraine following the signing of the agreement, amongst other points.²⁹ There was no agreement on the territorial issue, nor on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. With regard to territory, the US proposed a demilitarised zone or a free economic zone in the areas of Donetsk still controlled by Ukraine. Kyiv agreed to study this but demanded Ukrainian oversight and a reciprocal withdrawal by Russia. Following the meeting between Trump and Zelensky on 28 December in Miami, Zelensky stated that both countries agreed on around 90% of the plan, with total agreement on US security guarantees, and that the joint strategy of US and European guarantees was nearly agreed. Russia continued to reject several aspects, including European guarantees, and alleged that the plan presented by Zelensky differed from the ‘understanding’ reached between Russia and the US in Alaska. Furthermore, Putin continued to demand total control of Donetsk.

South Caucasus

Armenia – Azerbaijan ³⁰	
Negotiating actors	Armenia, Azerbaijan
Third parties	USA, EU ³¹
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.

Armenia and Azerbaijan reached a provisional peace and normalisation agreement in 2025, although at the end of the year it was still pending signature and subject to conditions demanded by Azerbaijan. Following limited progress in 2024, **in March 2025 the two governments separately announced the completion of the final text of an agreement**, formally known as the Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and Interstate Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan. The full texts of the 17-point agreement³² was made public days after a trilateral summit on 8 August in Washington between Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and US President Donald Trump. At the meeting, **the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders signed a seven-point joint declaration that endorsed and ‘initiated’ the March agreement** whilst recognising the need for further steps for the final signing and ratification of the agreement, among other things.

The March agreement was achieved after months of bilateral negotiations between both governments.³³

29. See the 20-point proposal at: “Revised 20-point peace plan presented by President Zelenskyy, Dec. 23, 2025”; Harmash, Olena, “The 20-point peace proposal Zelenskyy will discuss with Trump”, Reuters, 28 December 2025.

30. Starting with the 2024 edition, 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.

31. The negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2025 were conducted without third-party mediation at some levels/areas, whilst they received external support in others, including US mediation support in 2025.

32. Version published by the [Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) and version published by the [Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).

33. See Escola de Cultura de Paz, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

The agreement designates the borders between the former USSR republics as the international borders of the independent states recognised by the international community and enshrines **recognition of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders and the political independence of both countries** (Article 1 of the agreement). The text also commits the parties not to make territorial claims against the other party; to refrain from the use or threats of the use of force against each other's territorial integrity or political independence; and not to interfere in the internal affairs of the other party (Articles 2, 3 and 4). The agreement also includes a commitment not to deploy third-party forces on their shared border (Article 7) and to withdraw and dismiss or resolve disputes and proceedings brought before the courts (Article 15). Analysts noted that Armenia's acceptance of these two articles (7 and 15), on which disagreements had persisted, had greatly facilitated the conclusion of the agreement.³⁴ The agreement also provides for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and stipulates that the parties may reach cooperation agreements in areas of mutual interest, such as the economy, transit and transport, the environment, humanitarian affairs and culture (Article 10).

Despite the milestone that the agreement represented, **the level of trust between the parties remained very low** ('close to zero', as the Azerbaijani president said in March). After the announcement, Armenia said it was ready to set a date and place to sign the peace agreement, whilst Azerbaijan put forward two further demands prior to ratification. These referred to conditions demanded by Baku in 2024³⁵ and include changes to Armenia's Constitution, as Baku believes that it contains territorial aspirations regarding Azerbaijan, and a demand for the dissolution of the OSCE Minsk Group, a structure co-chaired by the US, Russia and France under the umbrella of the OSCE that historically mediated in negotiations between the parties. Another area of disagreement, concerning transport and connection routes and particularly the establishment of a connection between Azerbaijan and its Nakhchivan enclave through Armenian territory, had been removed from the draft negotiations in 2024, with the parties agreeing to address it separately from the peace agreement negotiations in later phases.

The second major boost to the process came in the second half of the year. At a trilateral meeting in Washington on 8 August between Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and US

President Donald Trump, **the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders signed a seven-point joint declaration**.³⁶ The first point endorses and 'initiates the text of the March agreement and notes mutual recognition of the need for further steps towards its final signing and ratification. Other points of the declaration included a reference to the joint request by Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding the closure of the OSCE Minsk Process and its associated structures, and affirmation of the importance of opening communications between both countries on the basis of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the jurisdiction of states and, specifically, the connection between Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan enclave through Armenia. The text also sets out principles for the establishment of good neighbourly relations between both countries, including the inviolability of international borders, the rejection of the use of force for the acquisition of territory and the rejection of any 'attempt at revenge'. As a new development, the parties **agreed to resolve the issue of the connection between Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan enclave through a project called the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), to be operated and exploited by a US-Armenian consortium**. The TRIPP will include rail and road connections, oil and gas pipelines, fibre optic networks and electricity infrastructure. According to the implementation framework document released in early 2026,³⁷ the US and Armenia will establish a joint venture, in which the US will hold a 74% stake and exploitation rights and Armenia will hold the remaining 26% for 49 years. After that initial period has elapsed, the parties may extend the agreement for a further 50 years, during which Armenia's stake would reach 49%. Alongside the August declaration, bilateral memoranda were signed with the US on the economy, trade, border control and defence. Trump announced the end of the blockade on military cooperation with Azerbaijan.³⁸

In the final months of the year, both governments took further steps towards rapprochement, including meetings of the border commissions, meetings between the two political leaders at several international summits and Azerbaijan's lifting of restrictions on passage through its territory or exports of certain goods destined for Armenia, including Russian and Kazakh wheat and Azerbaijani petrol. The US and Armenia also held consultations on technical planning for the future construction of the TRIPP.

Some analysts assessed the steps taken in 2025 as historic breakthroughs in the region, but they also mentioned shortcomings, including the elitist nature of

34. De Waal, Thomas, "Armenia and Azerbaijan's Major Step Forward", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 17 March 2025.

35. See Escola de Cultura de Paz, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

36. See the Joint Declaration and other agreements at US Department of State, "United States Publishes Documents from Historic Armenia and Azerbaijan Meeting", 29 August 2025.

37. Full text of the implementation framework at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, *Joint Statement on the Publication of the Armenia-U.S. Implementation Framework for the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP)*, 14 January 2026.

38. See the Joint Declaration and other agreements at US Department of State, "United States Publishes Documents from Historic Armenia and Azerbaijan Meeting", 29 August 2025.

the process and the lack of attention paid to issues related to coexistence between the populations and the return of refugees.³⁹ In that regard, human rights organisations and independent analyses warned of Azerbaijan's continued criminalisation and persecution of activists and academics promoting peace and reconciliation with Armenia, human rights defenders and organisations and independent journalists. According to Human Rights Watch, the Azerbaijani government has intensified repression against these groups since 2023.⁴⁰ Analysts warned of further prison sentences and harassment in 2025.⁴¹ Furthermore, in relation to the prospects for the negotiating process, analysts noted the agreements' potential to advance the normalisation of relations and prevent the use of force, but also identified challenges related to the internal difficulties Armenia may face in a constitutional referendum process and risks associated with the geopolitical context.⁴²

Gender, peace and security

The negotiating process took place without the involvement of women negotiators or the integration of the gender perspective. The agreement reached in March and endorsed in the joint declaration of August did not include any clause or reference to the gender impacts of the conflict or to the participation of women in subsequent steps of the process. Whilst the Armenian feminist organisation Women's Resource Center (WRC) of Armenia welcomed any step aimed at ending the protracted conflict, it also voiced serious concerns about the peace process and the terms of the March agreement and the August joint declaration.⁴³ They criticised the lack of mechanisms for women's participation in the process, despite the role played by women in Armenia and Azerbaijan in conflict resolution and community reconstruction and the absence of transitional justice

mechanisms, and warned of how Article 15 of the agreement forces the parties to renounce the use of international justice mechanisms. In response to these shortcomings, they urged the Armenian government to negotiate the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms before ratifying the agreement. They also highlighted the importance of listening to women living in border regions, especially in the Syunik region, and raised doubts and warned of risks regarding US control of the future TRIPP for stability, in light of the consequences that US strategic involvement has brought in the past to other countries affected by conflicts.

At the institutional level, the Armenian government presented its third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. In its address to the 94th Joint Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation, which focused on the women, peace and security agenda, the delegation of the permanent mission of Armenia placed emphasis on gender equality in the defence sector, without addressing issues related to women's participation in the peace process.⁴⁴ There were also no references made in this area in the Armenian foreign minister's speech at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policy, though he did refer to women's participation in more general areas, such as diplomacy (44.4% of women in the diplomatic service) and Parliament (36%), among others.⁴⁵ Azerbaijan also approved a National Action Plan on Gender Equality (Equality of Women and Men) 2026–2028, whose implementation is led by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs. Among other aspects, the plan seeks to promote the formation of 'new' NGOs. In contrast, human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch continued to report state hostility against women and LGBTIQ+ people in Azerbaijan.⁴⁶

39. Shiriyev, Zaur and Gamaghelyan, Philip, "Strategic Directions for Building Sustainable Peace Between Armenia and Azerbaijan", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 4 December 2025

40. Geybullayeva, Arzu, "Trump Should Raise Rights Issues with Azerbaijan Leader", *HRW*, 7 August 2025.

41. Geybullayeva, Arzu "Handshake in Washington, handcuffs in Baku", *Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa*, 20 August 2025.

42. Caprile, Anna and Przetacznik, Jakub, *Armenia and Azerbaijan: Lasting peace in sight?*, European Parliamentary Research Service, octobre de 2025.

43. Women's Resource Center, "A Call for Inclusive and Justice-Centered Peace", 14 August 2025.

44. Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the OSCE, *Statement by the Delegation of Armenia at the 94th Joint Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council Security Dialogue: Women, Peace and Security Agenda: towards women's equal and full participation in peace and security governance*, 15 March 2025.

45. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, *Opening remarks by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policy*, 22 October 2025.

46. Amnesty International, "Azerbaijan" in *The State of the World's Human Rights 2025/2026*, AI, 21 April 2026; Geybullayeva, Arzu, "Azerbaijan's Imprisoned Women Journalists", *HRW*, 7 March 2025.

Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Government of Russia ⁴⁷
Third parties	OSCE, EU, UN, USA, Russia ⁴⁸
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.

The negotiating process involving Georgia, the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia remained active, but largely without any progress being made. The Geneva International Discussions (GID), co-chaired by the EU, the UN and the OSCE, remained the main

forum for the negotiating process, with three rounds in 2025 (the 63rd in March, the 64th in June and the 65th in November). All rounds took place in Geneva, despite criticism from Russia in 2025 and 2024 against Switzerland, alleging a supposed loss of Swiss neutrality after it imposed international sanctions against Russia linked to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The GID format maintained its two customary working groups: one focused on issues relating to security, stability and peace; and the other focused on humanitarian issues.

The parties maintained their positions and disagreements from previous years, including on the question of the non-use of force, addressed in Working Group I. Georgia demanded compliance with the points of the 2008 ceasefire agreement, whilst Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia called for bilateral agreements on the non-use of force between Georgia and each of the two disputed regions. In the June round, the co-mediators noted that there had been substantive exchanges on the question of the principle of the non-use of force, but no progress or specific results were announced in this regard. **Following the November round, the co-mediators stated in their subsequent communiqué that the parties had reiterated their willingness to explore a possible political statement on the non-use of force,** as a step that could reflect their commitment to that principle. Nevertheless, no concrete public results emerged.

In the 2025 rounds of the GID, the Georgian delegation condemned ‘illegal militarisation’ by Russia, criticising the construction of a Russian naval base in Ochamchire, on the Abkhazian Black Sea coast, the launch of an electric train between Abkhazia and Russia, a new maritime route between both regions and a Russian company’s reconstruction of the airport in the Abkhazian capital, Sukhumi, which subsequently reopened after having been closed since the war in the 1990s. In the March round, the Georgian delegation also criticised the presidential election held in Abkhazia and Putin’s meeting with Abkhazian leaders as steps towards annexation and a violation of Georgia’s territorial integrity. Furthermore, some analysts noted the complexity of Russian-Georgian relations, with Russia showing greater openness to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Georgia, alongside Moscow’s consolidation of its occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.⁴⁹ Georgia continued to make the resumption of relations conditional on Moscow reversing its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, and yet economic relations between the two countries increased.⁵⁰

As in previous years, **in the rounds of Working Group II (humanitarian issues), Russia, Abkhazia and South**

47. 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.

48. Ibid.

49. International Institute for Peace, “What Peace Means in the South Caucasus: Reflections on 2025 and Prospects for 2026”, *IIP*, 30 December 2025.

50. Ibid.

Ossetia blocked the parts of the session relating to the right of return of displaced and refugee populations. In the Working Group II rounds, the parties addressed different issues such as border crossings, documentation, cultural heritage, education, freedom of movement, external mobility and missing persons. According to the co-mediators, in the November round, drawing on discussions from previous rounds, the parties addressed in detail the issue of freedom of movement and external mobility and recognised the need to achieve practical solutions to guarantee mobility within and outside the region.⁵¹

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. The Ergneti IPRM continued to function regularly in 2025, with seven rounds (the 123rd to 129th) held during the year. The agenda was focused on practical issues that gave rise to disputes or possibilities for cooperation, including detentions, unilateral measures imposing the border line, freedom of movement, irrigation, wastewater, stray livestock, energy infrastructure, cultural heritage and the needs of communities near the Administrative Boundary Line. In several rounds, the IPRM co-facilitators (OSCE and EUMM) expressed concern about the continued practice of detentions. In the April round, the co-facilitators advocated for a relaxation of movement restrictions for Orthodox Easter, but no agreements on this matter emerged.⁵² However, in various IPRM rounds, the parties and the co-facilitators welcomed cooperation in the field of irrigation.

The negotiating process involving Georgia, the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia remained active, but largely without any progress being made

Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific and for Peace Operations. In his functions as co-chair of the GID, he will be supported by Kayoko Gotoh, the Director of the DPPA Division for Europe and Central Asia. This change is part of the UN reform process (the UN80 Initiative), which, amongst other elements, is leading to the reorganisation, merger and reduction of bodies and positions amid funding constraints. Within the framework of the UN80 Initiative, one of the actions envisaged was the ‘rationalisation of the Office of the United Nations Representative for the Geneva International Discussions (UNRGID)’, which includes ‘optimising staffing resources’ and ‘streamlining support structures’.⁵³ It remains to be seen how the reduction of

UNRGID staff will affect the promotion of the women, peace and security agenda in the negotiating process. Furthermore, the EU co-chair in the GID was Magdalena Grono, the EU representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, who took up her post in November 2024. On the OSCE side, the GID co-chair in 2025 was Christoph Späti, who was appointed in January as special representative for the South Caucasus of the OSCE Chairpersonship. He took over from the previous representative, Viorel Mosanu. In the Ergneti IPRM, this mechanism was co-facilitated in 2025 by the head of the EUMM mission, Bettina Patricia Boughani, and by the OSCE special representative for the South Caucasus, Christoph Späti.

On the other hand, the 2025 monitoring report published by UN Women on the 2022-2024 National Action Plan on women, peace and security noted that **civil society organisations consider that gender-balanced participation remains a challenge in both the GID and the IPRM**, and that women’s participation is often limited to the identification of specific needs, with low participation in decision-making processes.⁵⁴ According to the report, women and young people affected by the conflict continued to face socio-economic difficulties, such as limited or insufficient access to state resources and services. Likewise, analysts noted a **trend of restrictions and hostility against civil society by the government**, including through detentions and legislation that hinders the work of organisations.⁵⁵ Furthermore, in 2025 the Georgian government approved the removal of the terms ‘gender’ and ‘gender equality’ from all laws and abolished the Parliamentary Gender Equality Council, as reported by Human Rights Watch (HRW).⁵⁶

Gender, peace and security

In relation to the third parties in the negotiating process, **in 2025 the term of the GID co-mediator, Cihan Sultanoglu, who had held this role for seven years, came to an end.** Participants in the GID praised Sultanoglu’s performance. In January 2026, the co-chair functions of the United Nations in the GID were assumed by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), and specifically by Khaled Khiari, the Assistant Secretary-General for the

51. OSCE, “Press communiqué of the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions”, 12 November 2025.

52. OSCE, “124th Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism meeting takes place in Ergneti”, OSCE, 3 April 2025.

53. United Nations, *United to Deliver: UN80 Initiative. Action Plan*, 24 November 2025, p.48

54. UN Women, *Monitoring Report of the 2022-2024 National Action Plan of Georgia for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security*, 2025.

55. De Waal, Thomas, “Time for EU Decisions on Georgia”, *Carnegie Europe*, 4 September 2025; Human Rights Watch, “Georgia” at *World Report 2026*, 2026.

56. Human Rights Watch, “Georgia” at *World Report 2026*, 2026.

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 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.

A certain momentum was achieved in the Cyprus peace process in 2025, through informal meetings and some progress made on confidence-building measures, yet without the resumption of formal negotiations. One of the main events was an informal meeting on 17 and 18 March in Geneva (Switzerland), sponsored by the UN Secretary-General, which brought together Greek Cypriot leader Nikos Christodoulides and Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar, as well as representatives of the guarantor countries (Greece, the United Kingdom and Türkiye). It was preceded by preparatory visits in February by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, who held separate meetings with the parties to the conflict and the guarantor countries. The informal summit in March did not achieve agreements on the resumption of formal negotiations, but **the parties did agree on a package of confidence-building measures**, to include the opening of four border crossings, the establishment of a bicomunal technical committee on youth, environmental cooperation, demining and

cemetery restoration. Both the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders were pleased with the summit.

The commitments made at the March summit were followed up in the following months in subsequent meetings at different levels. In May, the bicomunal technical committee on youth was launched, the first new committee in a decade. Progress was made in agreed areas, such as the restoration of cemeteries. However, disagreements and difficulties on the issue of border crossings became evident, whilst tensions also increased between the parties due to differences on property issues.

In May, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reappointed María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar as his personal envoy for Cyprus. A former Colombian Foreign Minister and former negotiator in the Colombian peace process with the FARC, Holguín Cuéllar had previously held the position of special envoy between January and July 2024. She held separate meetings with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders in May, as well as with the foreign ministers of Türkiye and Greece, which served as preparatory work for a new informal meeting in an expanded format to follow up on the March summit. This new summit, convened by the UN Secretary-General, took place in New York in July (16-17), with the participation of the two leaders of the island, Türkiye, Greece and the United Kingdom. **Guterres said that the discussions had been constructive and that four of the six initiatives agreed in March had been achieved: the creation of the Youth Technical Committee, environmental and climate initiatives, restoration of cemeteries, and an agreement on demining**, although the latter point was pending technical details. According to the UN announcement, a common vision was reached for new initiatives at the informal July summit, including **the creation of a civil society advisory body, cultural exchanges, improved air quality monitoring and action against microplastic pollution**. However, no agreement was reached on new crossing points or on solar energy infrastructure in the buffer zone. Guterres announced that a new meeting in an expanded informal format was planned for the end of the year, though it did not ultimately take place in 2025. In September, the UN Secretary-General held a trilateral meeting with the two leaders of the island during the UN General Assembly, which had already been anticipated at the July summit. No concrete results from the meeting were announced, and it was preceded by separate meetings between the personal envoy and the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders.

A significant local change occurred in October with the election of Tufan Erhürman, an advocate of a solution based on federal reunification, as the new president of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Erhürman won with 62.8% of the vote in a ballot that saw 65% turnout. The outgoing leader, Ersin Tatar, an advocate of a two-state solution, carried nearly

36% of the vote. Despite the change in local leadership, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan maintained his firm defence of a two-state solution.

Christodoulides and Erhürman met for the first time in November and agreed to work towards reactivating talks under UN auspices. The new Turkish Cypriot leader set out a document with four points that he considers prerequisites for the resumption of the formal process: explicit guarantees of political equality, a negotiation methodology with a defined timetable, respect for past agreements and guarantees that it cannot return to starting positions that threaten continuity or equality once the process has begun. Erhürman also presented a package of 10 confidence-building measures to create favourable conditions to restart negotiations.⁵⁷

In December, the two leaders held a trilateral meeting with the Secretary-General's personal envoy. **According to the UN, the two leaders agreed that the objective is a solution to the Cyprus question with political equality, based on the provisions of Security Council resolutions.**⁵⁸ Likewise, the leaders agreed to prioritise reaching agreements as soon as possible on confidence-building measures, including on new crossing points, amongst others.⁵⁹ In the UN statement following the meeting, it noted the leaders' commitment to participating in a forthcoming informal meeting in an expanded format, their willingness to meet as often as necessary and the instructions given to their representatives to continue meetings at that other level.

Gender, peace and security

The presidential elections in the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus brought to power a new male elected leader, Tufan Erhürman. At the end of the year, no chief negotiator had yet been designated by the Turkish Cypriot side, although Erhürman appointed the diplomat and Deputy Presidency Minister Mehmet Dâna as supervisor of the process. Thus, **the peace process continued to be led by two male presidencies and two male chief negotiators/supervisors.** Furthermore, the new bicomunal technical committee on youth, which was launched in May, had 32 members from different backgrounds and achieved gender parity. Overall, **the bicomunal technical committees as a whole**

maintained gender parity (52% men, 48% women, with a total of 200 members), according to UN data.⁶⁰ The UN noted that the Technical Committee on Gender Equality faced difficulties in implementing its action plan.⁶¹ This observation had previously been made in 2024. Regarding third parties, María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar was reappointed as the UN Secretary-General's personal envoy for Cyprus. During her previous term in this role between January and July 2024, Holguín Cuéllar was notable for her participatory approach to her mandate, with consultations across broad sectors of civil society, including women's organisations. Furthermore, the Special Representative and head of the UNFICYP mission, Colin Stewart, was succeeded by another man, Khassim Diagne, as the new representative in September.

A certain momentum was achieved in the Cyprus peace process in 2025, through some progress made on confidence-building measures, yet without the resumption of formal negotiations.

Women's civil society organisations were active during the year in advocating for the resumption of the peace process and for the equal and substantive participation of women. In February, women's organisations submitted recommendations to the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, in a joint meeting held during DiCarlo's visit to the island. The meeting was attended by organisations such as the Cyprus Women's Bicomunal Coalition (CWBC), the Centre for History and Gender

Equality, the Gender Advisory Team (GAT), Hand Across the Divide, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (Cyprus Branch) and Women Walk and Talk. The recommendations submitted by the CWBC included that a bicomunal women's group should have its own seat at the negotiating table to broaden dialogue, bring new perspectives and strengthen the legitimacy of any eventual agreement; formal channels for civil society and, specifically, for women's groups to provide input on security, governance and human rights; and mechanisms to guarantee progress in negotiations and prevent setbacks, amongst others.⁶²

That meeting led to a follow-up meeting, with the participation of women's organisations and various UN representatives (the Special Representative and head of UNFICYP, Colin Stewart; the senior political affairs officer, Sherry Holbrook; and the political affairs officer of the Office of the Special Adviser on Cyprus, Solveig Knudsen). According to the CWBC, **the organisations presented their consolidated joint recommendations, including the integration of a gender perspective at all**

57. See the list of the 10 trust-building measures in Greek Cypriot media and Turkish Cypriot media.

58. UN, "Press Statement By The Un Spokesperson In Cyprus", UN, 11 December 2025.

59. See other areas agreed as priorities in UN, "Press Statement By The Un Spokesperson In Cyprus", UN, 11 December 2025.

60. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus*, S/2025/448, 3 July 2025.

61. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus*, S/2025/448, 3 July 2025.

62. Cyprus Women Bi-Communal Coalition, "Specific recommendations submitted by the Cyprus Women Bicomunal Coalition (CWBC) during the meeting with UN USG Rosemary DiCarlo", CWBC, 10 February 2025.

levels of negotiations to contribute to a lasting solution to the Cyprus question. The meeting also aimed to strengthen alliances between women's organisations and articulate steps to ensure female participation in the peace process. Amongst many other activities during the year, Hand Across the Divide organised a 'Peace Bus', with a bicommunal bus trip to the town of Potamia, which has both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot populations.

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 stalled, affected by the opposing positions of the parties in the dialogue, as well as by tensions between Serbia and Kosovo and in northern Kosovo. **The process unfolded in 2025 mainly at the level of chief negotiators**, with Besnik Bislimi for Kosovo and Petar Petković for Serbia, under the facilitation of Danish diplomat Peter Sørensen as the new EU Special Representative (EUSR). Sørensen was appointed as the new EUSR in January, replacing Miroslav Lajčák, with an initial mandate of 13 months.⁶³ Local and regional contextual dynamics dampened the process. On the one hand, Kosovo continued unilaterally to dismantle parallel structures and institutions funded by Serbia in areas with a Serbian majority in northern Kosovo, as it had already done in 2024.⁶⁴ In 2025, such actions included the closure of post offices, social and sports centres, pension funds, health insurance funds, employment services and water supply in some places. **The Serbian government heightened its criticism of Kosovo over these unilateral actions and accused it of seeking to spread terror among the Serbian population in Kosovo and to displace them from the territory.** Amongst other expressions of protests, Serbia did not send its chief negotiator to the first meeting of the commission on missing persons in Brussels in January.

Kosovo's unilateral actions drew criticism from the EU and the UN. The Special Representative and head of UNMIK, Caroline Ziadeh, warned of their impact on the daily lives of the population in the Serbian areas of Kosovo and the risk of further erosion of trust between Kosovo and local communities. The EU and the UN urged Kosovo to address the issue of parallel structures in the EU-facilitated dialogue. **The negotiating process also deteriorated following the arrest in July by the Kosovo police of Igor Popović, the Deputy Director of the Serbian Office for Kosovo and Metohija, accused of inciting hatred** for describing the former armed group, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), as 'terrorist' and 'criminal'. Serbia condemned the situation as unacceptable and warned of serious consequences for bilateral relations. In August, Popović pleaded guilty and his six-month prison sentence was commuted to a fine. Serbia denounced pressure by Kosovo on Popović. Bilateral tension eroded the climate and prospects of the negotiating process throughout the year.

In 2025, the EU Special Representative held several separate meetings with the chief negotiators, both in the capitals and in Brussels. The first took place in March, during exploratory visits in which he met with Prime Minister Albin Kurti and President Vjosa Osmani; and, in the case of Serbia, with President Aleksandar Vučić, Foreign Minister Marko Đurić and the Director of the Serbian Office for Kosovo and Metohija, Petar

63. Council of the EU, “Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: EU appoints a new Special Representative”, *Council of the EU*, 27 January 2025.
 64. See the summary of Serbia–Kosovo socio-political crisis during 2024 in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025! Report on conflict, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

Petković. Kosovo demanded full implementation of the 2023 agreement and the Ohrid Annex through a sequencing that was fair. Osmani also rejected the draft statute of the Community/Association of Serbian-majority municipalities, considering it unconstitutional. **Serbia expressed concern over the situation of the Serbian population in northern Kosovo in light of Kosovo's unilateral actions and defended the creation of the Community of Serbian Municipalities as a precondition** for the start of substantive normalisation relations with Kosovo.

In addition to the bilateral meetings between the EU Special Representative and the chief negotiators, **two trilateral meetings were held at that level, in June and September in Brussels, but achieved no positive results.** The parties maintained their disagreements. Serbia continued to demand the implementation of the Community/Association of Serbian-majority municipalities in Kosovo. Kosovo maintained the preconditions it had set out in 2024: 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 Milan Radojcic, who pleaded guilty to the 2023 military ambush in Banjska/Banjskë over to the Kosovar justice system. **The disagreements prevented the resumption of negotiations at the highest political level. Stalemate and mutual accusations predominated.** The political crisis in Kosovo produced uncertainty for virtually the entire year due to the inability to form a government following the parliamentary elections in February and the situation in Serbia of a caretaker government until April. At the end of the year, the EU announced the gradual lifting of sanctions imposed on Kosovo following the 2023 crisis,⁶⁵ justifying this by the local elections held and the peaceful transfer of power in the Serbian-majority municipalities in the north.

Gender, peace and security

The dialogue process continued without formal mechanisms for civil society participation, including women's organisations. Furthermore, the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation of Relations between Kosovo

and Serbia (2023) and its associated annex (2023), around which the current negotiation revolves, do not include specific clauses on the gender dimension, women's participation or women's rights, and only contained a general reference to 'the protection of human rights and non-discrimination' as principles of the UN Charter (alongside others, such as the sovereign equality of all states, respect for their independence, autonomy and territorial integrity and the right to self-determination) that guide the parties in the negotiating process.⁶⁶

At the same time, **analysts noted that there has been no monitoring related to the implementation of the women, peace and security objectives of the EU's Kosovo plan** (the EU Country Level Implementation Plan for Kosovo 2021-2025, CLIP) derived from the third Gender Action Plan (GAP III). The CLIP country plan recognised the underrepresentation of women in the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue and established the promotion of the women, peace and security agenda as one of the thematic areas of EU engagement, to take place through political dialogue and programmes.⁶⁷ **There was no evidence of regular meetings by the EU Delegation or the EU Special Representative and co-facilitator of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue with women's organisations related to the development of the negotiating process in 2025, but only occasional meetings.** In October, Peter Sørensen met with the chair of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe (RWLSEE), Edita Tahiri. According to the RWLSEE, they discussed the importance of women's participation in the formal peace process and implementation processes. The organisation also noted that Sørensen gave his support to the RWLSEE's monitoring of the implementation of the agreements through a mechanism that the organisation planned to establish.⁶⁸

Türkiye (PKK)	
Negotiating actors	Government, PKK, political parties of Türkiye
Third parties	Political representatives from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq ⁶⁹
Relevant agreements	--
Summary:	Negotiating initiatives at different stages have tried to resolve

65. See the summary of Serbia–Kosovo socio-political crisis during 2024 in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2024! Report on conflict, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2024.

66. See the full agreement at EEAS Press Team, “Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Agreement on the path to normalisation between Kosovo and Serbia”, EEAS, 27 February 2023; and see the associated Annex at: EEAS Press Team, “Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Implementation Annex to the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation of Relations between Kosovo and Serbia”, EEAS, 18 March 2023.

67. European Union Office in Kosovo and European Union Special Representative, *Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025 Country Level Implementation Plan for Kosovo*, Ref. Ares (2021)5675782 - 16/09/2021

68. Regional Women's Lobby in Southeast Europe, “Edita Tahiri, RWLSEE Chair met Peter Sorensen”, *RWLSEE*, 1 December 2025.

69. The dialogue process in Turkey does not officially have third parties, but political representatives from the Iraqi Kurdistan Region have played roles in support of the process.

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.

The steps initiated in 2024 led to a negotiating process between the government and the PKK in 2025, making it the first since the failed attempt of 2013-2015. The process produced some significant military results, whilst suffering from a lack of concrete measures relating to the historical causes of the Kurdish issue, such as guarantees of political, linguistic and cultural rights for the Kurdish population. The process adopted a non-transparent architecture, with no official negotiating table, but with non-public conversations between state representatives and PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, in prison since 1999, which also involved the PKK leadership. The process also included meetings between a delegation of the pro-Kurdish DEM party and Öcalan, and subsequent rounds of consultations between that delegation and political parties with parliamentary representation. Regarding the architecture, a multi-party parliamentary commission on the process was also established in August. One of the difficulties of the process was linked to the regional dimension of the conflict, due to the links between the Kurdish militias in Syria (YPG/YPJ, the main actor in the SDF coalition, supported by the US) and the PKK, and Türkiye’s demands for the total disarmament of all actors linked to the PKK, including the Kurdish militias in Syria, whilst the SDF and YPG/YPJ held their own talks with the Syrian transitional government. The process in Türkiye had no official third parties, although actors from the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq became involved in supporting it.

Regarding the conceptualisation of the process, the government and its main ally, the ultranationalist MHP party, framed it as an initiative to eradicate terrorism in Türkiye that did not involve concessions. The Kurdish movement presented it as an initiative for peace and for a democratic society. No mutually agreed roadmap with clear phases and timelines came to light. The steps taken were mainly in the military sphere, largely through PKK measures, which Türkiye responded to in the second half of the year through a de facto policy of détente. Analysts pointed to a pattern of reciprocal, coordinated steps, although milestones came through action taken by the PKK.

Among the steps taken this year, in a historic move in February, Öcalan called for an end to the armed struggle and urged the PKK to convene a congress, lay down its arms and voluntarily dissolve, citing changes in the historical context and an atmosphere favourable to the negotiating process.⁷⁰ **The PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire on 1 March.** The SDF said that Öcalan’s call did not apply to their group. The Turkish government warned that all groups linked to the PKK must dissolve, including its “extensions” in Syria. **Despite the unilateral ceasefire, Türkiye maintained military pressure on the group and affiliated militias.** Despite the attacks, **on 12 May the group announced its decision to dissolve its organisational structure and end the armed struggle**,⁷¹ explaining that it had reached a point where the Kurdish issue could be resolved through democratic politics. However, it noted that the implementation of its decision required recognition of Öcalan’s right to participate in democratic politics, solid legal guarantees in the process, a responsible role for the Turkish Parliament in the process and other considerations. The Turkish president described the announcement as a key milestone in advancing towards a “country without terrorism” and said that he expected the dissolution to encompass all extensions of the group, especially in northern Iraq, Syria and Europe. Following its announcement, the PKK temporarily began using the name Kurdistan Freedom Movement.

The PKK began its disarmament in a symbolic act in which 30 fighters destroyed their weapons on 11 July in Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan. In subsequent months, pro-government media reported some further steps in the disarmament, under the supervision of the Turkish intelligence services and the Turkish Army. However, no details emerged about the disarmament roadmap or about the amounts or types of weapons surrendered by the end of the year, nor was any substantial information disclosed about independent supervision or verification. Analysts noted in early 2026 that only symbolic disarmament had taken place and that an uncertain situation prevailed due to the crisis in Syria and Iran. In October, **the PKK announced the withdrawal of its**

70. Full text at “Call for Peace and Democratic Society”.

71. Statement full text.

forces from Türkiye and its retreat to northern Iraq. In November, it moved its forces in northern Iraq areas even further from the border to avoid clashes and protect the peace process, according to the group. During 2025, the PKK demanded that the Turkish government release Öcalan and called for a legal framework to resolve the situation of PKK members and political and constitutional democratisation reforms that address the Kurdish issue. Ankara responded to the steps taken by the PKK in the second half of the year, with few violent incidents in northern Iraq from August onwards.

A parliamentary commission was established in August. Named the National Solidarity, Brotherhood and Democracy Commission, it was given a mandate to provide recommendations on political and legal reforms concerning the process, including in relation to disarmament. All parliamentary parties except İYİ participated in the commission, though with different expectations and priorities. The pro-Kurdish DEM party called for democratisation and made demands related to rights and freedoms for the Kurdish population, including education in the Kurdish language. It also called for the release of Öcalan, the regulation of disarmament and reintegration, the release of political prisoners and other issues. Between August and early October, the commission held hearings with representatives of different groups (officials from the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defence and the intelligence services, under confidentiality and sealed records for 10 years for these specific cases; victims' relatives, veterans associations, human rights, peace and humanitarian organisations, legal associations, trade unions, business organisations, former speakers of Parliament and academics). These were closed-door sessions. The use of the Kurdish language was prohibited in these sessions, a move heavily criticised by pro-Kurdish and human rights actors, and there were tensions over some testimony deemed re-traumatising. A multi-party delegation from the commission met with Öcalan in November (comprising the ruling AKP, its ultranationalist ally MHP and the DEM party, as the main opposition party, the CHP, refused to participate). The political parties submitted their reports with proposals to the commission. The AKP's report highlighted the need to create a mechanism to verify disarmament and for judicial oversight, and that disarmament must encompass what the AKP considers to be extensions of the PKK in Syria and Iraq. It also recommended a temporary and specific legal framework for the process. In its report, the DEM party recommended the immediate release of Öcalan, the adoption of a peace law and wide-ranging legislative changes and democratisation measures. In December, the commission's mandate was extended for a further two months to agree on a final report.

Gender, peace and security

The negotiating process took place in a political and social context in Türkiye in which UN rapporteurs and human rights organisations warned of the criminalisation of women human rights defenders, women's organisations and LGBTIQ+ people.⁷² Regarding the process and the actors involved, the DEM delegation that held meetings with the PKK leader and with Türkiye's political parties from 2024 and throughout 2025 had a composition that varied according to the type of meeting, but Pervin Buldan was present in all of them. Buldan is a DEM MP, a former co-leader of the HDP (DEM's predecessor) and a women's human rights activist. Buldan also formed part of the HDP delegation that participated in the previous peace process (2013-2015). **Some closed-door meetings took place between Kurdish and Turkish female politicians from different parties.** Media outlets reported on a meeting between a women's delegation from the DEM party and a women's delegation from the AKP party in March. The DEM Women's Assembly said the meeting had gone very well because of a lack of 'grandiloquent politics'. That DEM body stated in March that they had also met with women from the CHP, Saadet, DEVA, Gelecek, TIP and EMEP, and that they planned to meet with the MHP as well, whilst the İYİ party had not responded to them. Furthermore, the DEM Women's Assembly organised meetings during the year in different parts of the country with various groups of women, including female journalists, women from different religious groups, women's organisations and other groups.

In its statement announcing its dissolution and the end of its armed struggle, the PKK referred to the leadership of women and young people, the defence of women's freedom and the involvement of all parts of the population in the peace process, including women. Furthermore, the PKK's symbolic disarmament act in July involved the burning of weapons by 15 male combatants and 15 female combatants. Under the umbrella of the TJA, the Kurdish women's movement issued statements in support of the dialogue and with its own demands. In an August statement, they called for the need for a peace process that involves grassroots parts of the population and demanded an end to the practice of dismissing elected mayors and imposing state-appointed figures, the abolition of the anti-terror law, the release of all political prisoners (especially the sick and elderly), the decriminalisation of politics and a return to the Istanbul Convention.⁷³ They also mentioned the importance of a new constitution and a constitutional debate involving all parts of the population, including women.

72. *Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls*, AL TUR 8/2025, 7 August 2025. See the response of the government of Türkiye in Permanent Mission of the Republic of Türkiye to the United Nations Office in Geneva, *Information note in reply to the communication from the Special procedures (Reference: AL TUR 8/2025)*, 6 October 2025.

73. See the [statement](#) released in August.