



Yerevan Press Club



YENİ NÖSİL  
AZƏRBAYCAN JURNALİSTLƏR BİRLİYİ

## ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN: SEARCHING FOR NEW MODELS OF DIALOGUE

*This research was funded through a Department of State Public Affairs Section grant, and the opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed herein are those of the Author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State.*



YEREVAN PRESS CLUB

[www.ypc.am](http://www.ypc.am)

Yerevan 2019

## **CONTENTS**

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>THORNY TRACK-2</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>DIFFERENT VIEWS ON COMMON PROBLEMS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FOCUS-GROUPS AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>ANNEX 2: METHODOLOGY OF THE MONITORING OF THE COVERAGE OF ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI RELATIONS</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>ANNEX 3: CHARTS OF THE MONITORING</b>	<b>54</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main purpose of this study was to consider the feasibility and prospects of revival of the Track-2 diplomacy and the development of appropriate recommendations. Although it was conceived and supported by the US government even before the political changes in Armenia, its relevance was confirmed by the intensification of the dialogue at the official level between Yerevan and Baku in the summer of 2018. Certain characteristics of the renewed interest in the informal communication was the visit of the Azerbaijani journalist Shahin Hajiyev to Yerevan in February 2019, and the interest of his Armenian colleagues towards the trip to a neighboring country.

The work in the framework of the study, including the preparatory period and the summarizing of the results, was carried out for 14 months. Its components were as follows:

- The “Historical background” (see Chapter “Thorny Track-2”), which reflected the path of “civil diplomacy” over the past 30 years (of course, it to some extent reflects the subjective hindsight of the project implementers, but in any case it allows to present the main trends of the process).
- Focus group discussions on a single list of issues (see Annex 1). Both in Azerbaijan and in Armenia, 4 focus groups were formed, which included representatives of NGOs, the expert community, journalists and the mixed group of the social network activists.
- In-depth interviews (on the same questionnaire as in focus groups) with representatives of official structures, opposition politicians, NGO leaders, experts and journalists. Both in Azerbaijan and Armenia, interviews were conducted with 20 respondents (40 in total).
- Monitoring of mass media of different political orientation. In each country, four media were selected, which were studied over two different time periods (from September 16 to October 15 and from November 16 to December 15, 2018) - to identify possible dynamics in approaches, in particular, taking into account the campaign for the elections to the National Assembly of Armenia on December 9, 2018, as well as different reactions to the results of the meetings of Azerbaijani and Armenian officials and international mediators (see the monitoring charts with quantitative data in Annex 3). The monitoring studied the frequency and attitude of each media to the 24 conditional statements related to the Karabagh conflict and formulated jointly by the project partners (see methodology and list of statements in Annex 2).

The last three components of the study formed the basis for the analytical notes, which became the main product of this project (see Chapter “Different views on common problems”).

The study confirmed that the intensity and content of the informal dialogue between the parties to the Karabagh conflict are currently at the lowest level since the beginning of the confrontation in 1988. Separate initiatives supported by international organizations and involving certain groups of Armenians and Azerbaijanis remain little known to the public. In contrast to the situation before, around, 2010, when the contacts and interaction between the non-governmental organizations and the journalists were carried out relatively autonomously from the official negotiation process, today their revival is directly dependent on the interest of decision-making personalities and structures at the state level. At the same time, as practice shows, the lack of communication in an informal format, adversely affects the nature of the official process of the problem resolution.

Distrust in matters regarding Nagorno-Karabagh largely determines the nature of relations not only between the representatives of Armenian and Azerbaijani societies, but also within each of them. Therefore, initiatives of a disruptive, challenging, “shock” nature, such as joint peace-making statements by the well-known public figures, or loud demonstrations rejecting stereotyped perceptions of each other, often lead to discrediting their initiators in the eyes of the public, or at best are ignored by the latter.

However, as the results of the study show, the parties depart from the total denial of the idea of Track-2 diplomacy, although they are not inclined to treat it with the enthusiasm inherent in the times after the end of the “hot phase” of the conflict in 1994. The linkage between the Track-1 and Track-2 does not imply the acceptability of artificial, manageable, manipulative forms of dialogue, such as so-called “civil platforms for peace” or meetings organized at the nomenclature level. Those were forgotten as quickly as sharply they had activated after the relative freezing of the vibrant interaction.

This does not mean giving up any formats of dialogue - be they initiated by absolutely independent organizations, “first ladies”, clerics or representatives of the Armenian or Azerbaijani diaspora - the main thing is that they are aware of the responsibility for any steps that can aggravate contradictions, and sincere interest in the modest but positive final result of their initiatives.

The study of different aspects of the conflict reveals which of them have a perspective in determining the content of the civil dialogue, and which are at risk zone and can hinder mutual understanding. Naturally, the factor of persons involved in the initiative with a specific content, as well as the degree of openness of the latter to the general public, is also important. At the same time, as the secondary analysis of the research data shows, preferences are given to the open contacts that send positive signals to the whole society.

One of the peculiarities of the study was the respondents' perception of their own role in it. Some of them, participating in the discussions or answering the questions, considered the problems regardless of their own affiliation to a particular party to the conflict, while the other part proceeded solely from their own national interests and aspirations. This difference of approaches has particularly affected the content of the thematic sections on the methods of settlement (peaceful or military), the formats of the negotiation process and, of course, the models for solving the problem. It is in these very sections that the most fundamental differences are recorded. And the conflict between the desired and the realistic, given the aspirations and capabilities of the other side, makes it difficult to find compromises.

Meanwhile, these disagreements are not the basis for the denial of the dialogue. The recognition of the priority of a peaceful settlement (even if a certain part of the societies allows war as an alternative in case of failure of negotiations) serves as a basis for at least attempts to find a common language. The mediation of the Minsk Group co-chairs, despite all the expressed discontent and preferences of other formats, is taken for granted and, at least, does not impede the dialogue. And actually the search for a settlement model is one of the tasks of interaction, therefore the temporary status quo despite the contradictions regarding its duration is another reality on the basis of which contacts can be built today. It should be borne in mind that any dialogue without a progress towards a solution to the problem sooner or later leads to fatigue. This factor, along with other obstacles, was one of the causes of the Track-2 crisis in the previous stages.

Another significant difference is due to the mutually controversial perceptions of the cause-and-effect relationships. For the majority of Armenian respondents, the involvement of the representatives of Nagorno-Karabagh in the frameworks of official negotiations and civil diplomacy, the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations, the removal of restrictions on various forms of contacts and other steps towards reducing tension are conditions for an effective settlement process. For their Azerbaijani opponents all these steps should follow the result of the progress in the agreements achieved at the official level.

A characteristic feature of the study was the relative proximity of opinions of different categories of Armenian respondents, as well as the media, which became the object of monitoring, on most issues, while in Azerbaijan the positions differed significantly. This has affected attitudes connected to the “war and peace” thematics, and the assessments of the international organizations activities.

The comparison of the results of this study with the statements of the authorities and other categories of the public of previous years allows us to conclude that the current “disposition” of many aspects of the conflict was formed in the last three years and it was largely influenced by the April escalation of 2016. To be precise, the most tangible changes caused by the four-day war occurred in the mood of the Armenian public, including in the circles most prone to compromise – they became much tougher. Whereas in Azerbaijan the effect of the war and the changes of positions caused by it are less noticeable. In fact, the difference in the level of uncompromising attitude to many problems in Armenia and Azerbaijan has been significantly smoothed. On the one hand, this greater polarization of views may be a cause for concern, but on the other, it creates an environment in which participants in a potential dialogue are ready (or, more precisely, not ready) for it to the same extent. And however paradoxical it may sound, we cannot exclude that the new “disposition” will allow a better understanding of each other...

In addition to the relations of the parties to the results of the April war, the study recorded several topics that appeared in Azerbaijan and Armenia in “different weight categories” both in the perceptions of respondents and in media coverage. In particular, the Armenian public information sphere was largely focused on the topics related to the mission and format of the Minsk Group, the implementation of agreements on the expansion of the monitoring on the contact line, which were of less interest to the public of the neighboring country. In turn, Azerbaijan, according to the study, attached importance to a number of topics that were of much less interest to Armenia - in particular, the intervention of external players in the settlement, different aspects of relations between Baku and Moscow in the context of the Karabagh problem.

One of the themes of the study, where opinions were divided not on the national, but on the world view border, was the role of democratic reforms in the settlement of the conflict. Here, the assessment of the importance of this factor depended on whether the introduction of the principles of democracy was considered in the context of the same social sentiments that exist in the two countries in the current realities, or whether democratization was supposed to affect the approaches of citizens and society to various problems, including the conflict resolution. Accordingly, the first category of respondents, both in Armenia and Azerbaijan, considered democratic transformation as insignificant or even an obstacle to reaching agreement. And the second category was inclined to believe that these changes are important, if not a prerequisite for a stable settlement.

The difference of these positions was also projected on the attitude of the respondents and the media to the “velvet revolution” in Armenia. Some believed that it would not change

anything in the negotiation process, while others pinned certain hopes on it. At the same time, on the Armenian side, the limited influence of internal political changes was caused by the absence of such changes in Azerbaijan. And the majority of respondents and media publications in Azerbaijan reacted to the changes in the neighboring country with a certain degree of skepticism.

According to the study, the positions of the parties regarding the role of third countries, except Turkey, in the settlement of the Karabagh conflict turned out to be quite close. If we present them in a simplified way (a more detailed analysis is presented in the Chapter "Different views on common problems"), they are as follows:

- Russia has the greatest influence on Armenian-Azerbaijani relations and the situation in the South Caucasus as a whole. This influence is not always positive, but it should be taken for granted. Moscow is actively using its integration projects (EEU, CSTO) to strengthen its dominant position in the region.
- For the US, the settlement of the Karabagh conflict is not a priority of its foreign policy. For this country, stability in the region is important at this stage, regardless of whether a final solution to the problem is found or not. However, changes in Washington's policy are not excluded.
- The European Union has no effective levers of influence on Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. At the same time, it does not even use the existing levers of influence on the situation. This is partly due to the internal problems of the EU and the different positions of the member states regarding the Karabagh conflict.
- Georgia's balanced position deserves respect, although there is little it can do to resolve the problem. As any other country would do in that situation, Tbilisi seeks to use the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in its own interests. The main role of Georgia is that it provides a space for dialogue between the parties.
- Turkey is viewed in Azerbaijan as an important factor in exerting pressure on Yerevan. In Armenia, Ankara's policy is regarded as destructive and impeding the solution of the region's problems.

All of the above research data and their detailed presentation in the relevant Chapter allow to more purposefully determine the agenda of Track-2 diplomacy, if better opportunities for its implementation are created than there exist now. Based on the answers of the focus group participants and the in-depth interviews in both countries, the following areas of cooperation can be identified as the most popular:

- humanitarian (providing assistance to the victims and those, who find themselves in a difficult situation due to the conflict, the joint solution of environmental problems, etc.);
- information (exchange of journalists, countering hybrid wars and formation of the image of the enemy, etc.);
- discussion at the expert level of the conflict resolution models. In particular, the joint analysis of the proposals put forward earlier (as the study showed, the ideas about them in Armenia and Azerbaijan, even at the expert level are quite different);
- studies allow to determine the sentiments of citizens, the impact on the process of settlement of the institutions, whose activities affect the conflict (political parties, civil society organizations, media, etc.).

The data of this study form the basis for the following recommendations of the project implementers:

1. All interested parties, structures and individuals are invited to consider the possibility of reviving the Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue at the informal level in the new circumstances. It is recommended to be cautious, take into account the experience of previous contacts and avoid repeating mistakes.
2. The agenda of the joint initiatives should take into account the content of the formal negotiations between the parties.
3. The parties to the negotiation process should take into account the fact that the freezing of the “dialogue of the second level” and the complete alienation of the societies from each other cannot but have a negative impact on the effectiveness of formal negotiations.
4. International mediators are encouraged to contribute to the inclusion in the documents, following the official meetings and negotiations, of the specific points on the support of civic initiatives relevant to the corresponding stage of the Karabagh conflict settlement process.
5. In determining the priorities of Track-2 diplomacy to pay special attention to the initiatives that have a positive impact on the general public, to give priority to the thematic areas of cooperation that receive the greatest support of the conflict parties.
6. In order to determine the most effective forms of Track-2 diplomacy, regular independent studies should be carried out to measure the pulse of this process and the perception of different aspects of the conflict by the societies.
7. To use different formats of dialogue, including the interested parties (international, diaspora and other circles) taking into account the effectiveness of the issues raised in each of them.
8. To pay special attention to the reflection of the settlement process in the media. Facilitating mutual visits of journalists to the neighboring countries and the conflict zone, obtaining first-hand information, discussing professional problems, monitoring coverage of the Armenian-Azerbaijani relations in order to identify trends and timely respond to them.
9. To support the initiatives to develop codes of conduct for the participants in dialogue initiatives both in the media and in other professional areas.
10. International organizations, including donors, should consider the interest of the Armenian and Azerbaijani representatives of the civil society, experts and journalists to take greater responsibility for the implementation of projects and, in certain cases, cooperate without intermediaries.
11. To combine the use of the experience of the participants of Track-2 diplomacy at the previous stages and the enthusiasm of the representatives of the Azerbaijani and Armenian youth, on the involvement of which depend the prospects of the dialogue at the official level and the settlement of the conflict as a whole.



## THORNY TRACK-2

With Nikol Pashinyan and his political team coming to power in Armenia, as in previous cases when the leadership in Yerevan or Baku changed, a different situation emerged stimulating certain expectations of new trends with regard to the Karabagh conflict. In 2018, there was an opportunity to restore bilateral contacts that were interrupted after the April war 2016, the mediators intensified their efforts. Meetings of the top leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia were held, negotiations between the foreign ministers intensified within the framework of the meetings under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs...

At the meeting of Foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia Elmar Mammadyarov and Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on January 16, 2019, the parties made an official statement, the most remarkable in which was the formulation about the need to prepare people for peace. Although it raises certain questions about the possibility of such preparation, when the parties do not even have a remote idea of what the peace should look like, its meaning is generally clear. In particular, an important element of the intentions, presumably, is to strengthen confidence-building measures and form a more positive perception by Azerbaijanis and Armenians of each other. One way to achieve this goal should certainly be the promotion of dialogue not only at the official level but also participation of the public in that. Possible implementation of joint projects in the humanitarian sphere was discussed after the meeting of Ilham Aliyev and Nikol Pashinyan on March 29, 2019.

Meanwhile, the intensity of the informal dialogue today remains probably the lowest since the “combustion” of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict more than 30 years ago. In this sense, along with the study of the prospects of the settlement, including the mechanisms of “civil diplomacy”, which is the main subject of this project, it is of significant interest to turn to the history of the contacts in previous years. Moreover, the transformation of these contacts allows us to identify how the background of “big politics” can make adjustments to the so-called Track-2 diplomacy. The current formal process is also likely to experience “ups and downs”, and its reflection on the dialogue between the public representatives is easier to predict having in mind the prior experience and dynamics. And that experience shows, on the one hand, that abstract peacekeeping at the civil level is sooner or later doomed to failure, when there is no progress in the settlement process with the participation of the parties that take decisions. But on the other hand, the freezing of the Track-2 and complete alienation of societies from each other cannot but have a negative impact on the effectiveness of formal negotiations.

This kind of conclusions are made based on the previous studies on the prospects of dialogue carried out by different organizations in Azerbaijan and Armenia, in particular those carried by Yerevan Press Club, International Center for Human Development, “Region” research center and others. The history of civil initiatives designed to help resolve the conflict can be divided into following periods:

1. Initiatives of the Soviet period (1988-1991);
2. Contacts during the “hot phase” of the conflict (1992-1994);
3. Establishment of dialogue after reaching agreements on the ceasefire (1995-1997);
4. The period of the most intensive interaction and involvement of a large number of the public representatives in the joint projects (1998-2001);
5. “The fading inertia of regional interaction” (2001-2010);
6. “The Ice age” in civil diplomacy (2011 up to now).

Of course, the conventionality of the proposed chronology suggests blurring of boundaries between periods and the presence of different trends in each of them. Nevertheless, it contributes to the understanding of the changeable specifics at different stages when the representatives of the civil society and media were involved in the formation of the context of the Karabagh conflict.

It is widely believed that today, after 30 years, the parties are so far from each other that the dialogue between the societies is meaningless and unpromising. Meanwhile, in the period of the intensified national movements in the Soviet Azerbaijan and Soviet Armenia in the late 1980s when the main impetus for interaction was the worsening of the Nagorno Karabagh problem accompanied with outbreaks of ethnic violence, the contacts among the different circles of Azerbaijani and Armenian public were more intense. These contacts involved not only the Soviet nomenclature formats in which “the positive experience of cohabitation in the USSR” was preached, but also the opponents of the power. As unifying ideas of the latter, there was the desire for independence and getting rid of the Communist Empire. In particular, the dialogue between the representatives of the Armenian National Movement and the People's Front of Azerbaijan, which were coming to power, with the mediation of the democratic forces of other Soviet republics, primarily the Baltic ones, was quite intensive. And although the belief in the feasibility of compromises after the establishment of post-communist rule in Azerbaijan and Armenia was more inherent in the mediators than in the parties of the conflict, it largely determined the agenda of the contacts and their attractiveness for the participants.

Even in the early 1990s, when Baku and Yerevan began to acquire international subjectivity and the conflict has just been “internationalized”, and the confrontation was moving into the hottest phase, representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia maintained contacts in a variety of formats. In addition to the glimmering hopes for the possibility of resolving the conflict, there was also an interest in solving specific problems, exchange of information, understanding how the neighbors comprehend the processes. For example, in the editorial office of “The Republic of Armenia” daily, established in 1990 by the post-communist Armenian Parliament, regular telephone interviews of journalists with prominent Azerbaijani figures of the new wave were usual, when important events for coverage took place in the neighboring republic. Representatives of official Yerevan showed the same openness towards Azerbaijani journalists. With the final collapse of the Soviet Union, the mutual interest, however, began to quickly give way to the hostility of the new authorities to each other. During the 1992-1994 war, the contacts of human rights defenders on problems of prisoners of war, hostages, search of missing persons and return of bodies of the killed became actual. During this period, a number of Armenian and Azerbaijani public organizations were actively working with the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, other foreign humanitarian missions, as well as with the relevant state structures of the parties.

Naturally, the activities of the officials were rarely sincere and constructive, but the forced interaction with the international organizations and civil activists played an important role in the fate of many people. In particular, this work was done by the Larisa Alaverdyan's Armenian Foundation Against Violation of Law and Eldar Zeynalov's Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan. After the establishment of the ceasefire, the international working group on the search of prisoners and hostages was established which included human rights defenders from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Nagorno Karabagh, as well as from Russia and Georgia. However, this group could not avoid political manipulation from the outside. As a result, its activities used to be frozen and resumed until completely stopped. In the first half

of the 1990s, in parallel with the practical humanitarian work under the auspices of international organizations, the dialogue on peace between the Azerbaijani and Armenian human rights defenders was developing. The most significant event in this process was the presentation of the Olof Palme Prize (in 1992) to the representatives of the Azerbaijani and Armenian branches of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (HCA) Arzu Abdullayeva and Anahit Bayandur.

“Scandinavian accent” in the activities of the HCA was not limited to the prize of the Prime Minister of Sweden, killed in 1986. This was manifested in the familiarization of representatives of the civil societies of the conflicting parties with the model of the Swedish Aland autonomy within Finland. This model was considered among the peacekeepers as acceptable after war settlement for Nagorno Karabagh conflict. By the initiative of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly offices, officials were also involved in the “Aland process”, but this provoked an episode that raised a big question with regard to the opportunity to apply the Scandinavian experience in the South Caucasus. During one of the meetings in 1995, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the unrecognized Nagorno Karabagh Republic Arkady Ghukasyan outspoke in a mood that the model is wonderful, but the Azerbaijanis are not Finns. To this, Tofiq Zulfugarov, who at that time held the post of Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, parried “But neither are you Swedes, comrades Armenians!”

The agreements on the ceasefire regime signed in May 1994 by representatives of the leadership of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabagh, opened a window of opportunities for the implementation of various projects (in the logic of Track-2) by international structures, donors and non-governmental western organizations. Both intergovernmental (OSCE) and non-governmental organizations (Links, Institute of War and Peace Reporting, Conciliation Resources, International Alert and others) have taken the initiative. The dialogue platforms proposed by these organizations' partners in the South Caucasus opened door for local initiatives too. At first, the events were perceived by the participants of the region as a continuation of the war by other methods. They sought to prove the opponents their rightness and other's responsibility for the conflict, expecting full and unconditional surrender as a result of verbal battles.

The first pragmatic forms of interaction were found by the journalist organizations of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Realizing that the interest in what is happening in the neighboring country is high despite the hostile relations of the societies to each other, they used private contacts to establish professional interaction between the media. The “Internews” organized a series of thematic teleconferences, which, although held in the mode of “ideological wrestling” allowed Azerbaijani and Armenian audiences to learn about the lives of neighbors from “living people”. Yerevan Press Club and its partners in Azerbaijan took advantage of the desire of their countries to intensively fit into the world community, fulfilling certain obligations to move towards membership in the Council of Europe. In this sense, the exchange of experience in defending freedom of speech and information was of mutual interest.

The second half of the 1990s was the period when the Armenian and Azerbaijani media interaction became closer than ever. In Armenia, the rights of journalists and the pluralism of broadcasters were better protected, but in Azerbaijan, especially after the abolition of military censorship in 1998 and due to the economic growth, “the real media business” began to develop. Discussion on purely journalistic topics not only contributed to a better understanding of the problems, but also taught the participants to respect the opinion of the opponents. In the future, this contributed to better understanding when addressing issues related directly to the conflict.

The same can be said about the projects in other areas that have contributed to the professional and personal contacts bypassing the “mine fields” of the contradictions. Common concerns about social problems, environmental challenges, the progress of reforms in the field of education etc. helped to realize what brings together and unites the Armenian and Azerbaijani public. The increased interest of the international community in the South Caucasus region exposed in the mid-to-late 1990s, contributed greatly to the strengthening of ties in the thematic areas. It was due to the joining of the US and the European countries, as well as major companies to the infrastructural, first of all energetic projects.

Civil society organizations interested in regional formats readily took advantage of the situation. Trilateral projects (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) were most widely used due to the program “Synergy in the South Caucasus” (Cooperation in the South Caucasus) of the American “Eurasia” foundation launched in 1997. Thanks to it, dozens of non-governmental organizations gained experience working together with their partners from neighboring countries. Such a mass phenomenon in itself contributed to the erosion of the “image of the enemy” at least among the direct participants of the project activities.

Communication in the regional format made it possible also to compare different approaches to the conflicts and their possible resolutions in cases of unrecognized Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabagh. And one of the most advantageous project ideas was to study the prospects for the development of the region as a whole, in case the conflicts do not interfere with cooperation. At the same time, whereas the Armenian side at the official level was ready to consider the relevant opportunities prior to the settlement of the Karabagh conflict, Azerbaijan insisted on the recognition of its territorial integrity as a precondition for cooperation. Mutually exclusive approaches gradually reduced the relevance of regional initiatives involving all the countries of the South Caucasus in both economic and other spheres... This naturally affected Track-2, in which the topic of the conflict once again began to prevail over the idea of cooperation.

In this sense, the initiatives aimed at studying and familiarizing the Azerbaijani and Armenian audiences with interethnic conflicts in other regions of the world, were useful in the following years. Joint film screenings and comparative expert analysis of confrontations and attempts to overcome them in the Balkans, Cyprus, Palestine, South Tyrol, Northern Ireland and other parts of the planet - both successful and not - helped to find and discuss models that would work in the future in Nagorno Karabagh. Both the proposals of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs of the second half of the “zeroes” and the expert products reflected the extensive experience of peacemaking passed through the peculiarity filter of the Karabagh conflict.

The most dynamic was the dialogue process, concentrated in the three-year period between 1998 and 2001, when Azerbaijani participants visited Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh, and Armenians - Azerbaijan. They could communicate with politicians, ordinary citizens and make their own ideas about the transformation of the conflict. Among the pioneers here, along with some of the organizations mentioned above, were the German foundations of Friedrich Ebert and Friedrich Naumann, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, which carried out long-term projects implying Armenian-Azerbaijani activities not only in “neutral territory”. Moreover, the participants of several parallel projects of the late 1990s had a chance to meet with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan Robert Kocharyan and Heydar Aliyev respectively, as well as with other high-level officials from both sides.

The end to frequent travels was put in the autumn of 2001, when an incident first occurred in Baku with a group of media and civil society representatives from Nagorno Karabagh and Armenia. In particular, an act of aggression against the Chairman of the Helsinki Initiative-92 Karen Ohanjanyan in front of television cameras was displayed. The fact that the incident was not a random episode found its confirmation a month later: the visit of another group of Armenian journalists was very tense and accompanied by unfriendly media coverage. It became clear that hard times were coming for direct bilateral contacts.

The participants of the dialogue projects, which reached the peak of success, had to give up the illusion that civil diplomacy in the Karabagh conflict can play a significant role in the settlement process, regardless of the interests of the authorities. A lack of prospects in the dialogue on the official level led to the relative marginalization of the Track-2.

It is not excluded that there existed a direct link between the limitation of contacts among journalists and civil society representatives with the well-known talks of the two presidents - Robert Kocharyan and Heydar Aliyev in April 2001 in Key West (US). The negotiations lasted for a week, but did not result in the signing of documents. Aliyev and Kocharyan left, having received pep talks from the mediators to prepare their societies for reconciliation, but the opposite process followed. About 600 Azerbaijani organizations and public figures signed a National Charter on the principles of the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, which excluded any agreement between the parties before "the liberation of Azerbaijani lands" and return of refugees. The signatories of the Charter envisaged the status of "cultural autonomy" for the Armenians of Nagorno Karabagh. In their turn, all factions of Armenian Parliament made a joint statement, which excluded signing of any document suggesting the vertical subordination of Nagorno Karabagh to Baku.

The plan of the American politician Paul Goble (1996) on territorial exchange between Baku and Yerevan and the Dortmund Conference (2001-2007) stood out among other initiatives to resolve the conflict before and after the failure in Key West. Within the framework of the latter, the co-chairs of the working group, American and Russian diplomats Harold Sanders and Vitaly Naumkin, moderated discussions at 11 meetings of representatives of the public of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabagh, and tried to use the experience of the Camp David Agreements on the Middle East settlement. Both of these initiatives, however, can only be considered in a relative degree in the context of Track-2, as they by definition were not based on more or less broad civil support but rather on an advisory function for the formal negotiation process. In the future, similar but less ambitious steps were taken, which received a conditional definition of "Track-1.5".

Formation of strict national frameworks for the settlement, along with the adoption of measures to restrict the freedom of the media and civil society in Azerbaijan, brought to the gradual drawdown of bilateral and regional contacts. Such structures as the Caucasus Forum of Non-Governmental Organizations and "South Caucasus" Association of Journalists, which emerged at the peak of the cooperation, failed to realize their ambitious integration plans. Of course, the joint projects of Azerbaijani and Armenian non-governmental organizations continued to a reduced extent and without mutual visits. The work aimed at maintaining the existing contacts and countering the growing tendency to form the "image of the enemy" characterized the interaction between Yerevan and Baku Press Clubs and "Yeni Nesil" Journalists Union of Azerbaijan. In addition to the 1990s traditional format of participation of partners from three South Caucasian countries, these organizations found it interesting to look at bilateral relations in a broader context - involving partners and participants, apart from Georgia, from the unrecognized entities of

the South Caucasus, and Turkey. In particular, Stepanakert Press Club became an active partner in these projects.

Since 2001, regional cooperation has been increasingly focusing on the research component that allowed working at a distance. This is demonstrated by the titles of the publications - "Quality Media Reporting of Developments in the Countries of South Caucasus as a Factor of Overcoming Regional Problems", "Karabagh Conflict in the Mirror of Media and Public Opinion in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabagh". During this period, significant support to Yerevan and Baku Press Clubs and "Yeni Nesil" was provided by the Network Media Program of the Open Society Institute.

The topic of propaganda, which became particularly actual in 2014, prompted a group of media experts from Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia to conduct a study (with the assistance of Deutsche Welle Academy) on the methods of information wars in the South Caucasus. Azerbaijani and Armenian partners also participated in similar projects in the format of the six Eastern Partnership countries. Earlier in 2010, within the framework of a more extensive bilateral project of the Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Yerevan Press Club and "Yeni Nesil" compiled a so-called "Glossary of Hate Speech", which contained not only a set of negative stereotypes used in the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia, but also recommendations on how to avoid phrases that irritate the audience on the other side of the conflict without loss for the meaning of what was said. Although some journalistic circles in both countries were interested in applying the results of the research in practice, the general trend towards tougher information confrontation was immeasurably stronger.

Since 2005, the cooperation of the Armenian "Region" research center and the Azerbaijani Institute for Peace and Democracy, headed respectively by Laura Baghdasarian and well-known human rights activists and experts Leyla and Arif Yunusovs, was active as far as the accumulated difficulties could allow. In 2012 they created a joint website dedicated to the research of various aspects of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. After the arrest and emigration of the Yunusovs in 2016, the joint activities of the partners were temporarily suspended. However, two years later, the online discussions "The Karabagh Conflict in the Context of the Political Processes in Armenia and Azerbaijan" moderated by these partners were revived.

The risk factor accompanying bilateral cooperation, the criminal prosecution of Azerbaijani politicians, experts and journalists, as well as the difficulties created since the early 2000s for the visits of Armenians and Azerbaijanis to each other affect their representation in various regional forums. Thus, the traditional participant of the annual conferences on the regional problems held since 2000 in Armenia on the initiative of Armenian politician David Shahnazaryan and the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation was the Azerbaijani journalist Rauf Mirkadirov. However, his arrest and conviction in 2014, followed by emigration, was one of the reasons for the non-participation of representatives of Azerbaijan in these events for several years. However, in 2019, the Azerbaijani expert Rauf Rajabov was able to participate in another such conference, and it can be considered as a positive sign for the initiatives.

In particular, it may open new opportunities for the Caucasus Institute headed by Alexander Iskandaryan. For many years the Institute held meetings with the participation of Azerbaijani scientists, prepared publications devoted to the political and socio-economic situation in the South Caucasus countries, and to the perspectives of the Karabagh conflict. Scientists from the USA, Russia, Europe, Georgia have appeared in the annual

printed collections of articles, but in recent years the Yearbook of the Caucasus Institute has been published without articles written by Azerbaijani analysts.

The Track-2 “ice age” between Azerbaijan and Armenia resulted in special attention to youth initiatives. The impossibility of effective interaction under the current circumstances forced to rely on the new generation, to prepare it for dialogue and to seek ways to the settlement in the future, when, perhaps, the circumstances will be more favorable for this. In particular, such an approach is in the basis of the initiatives of the “Imagine” conflict transformation center, which yet in 2007 offered to Armenian and Azerbaijani activists a platform for dialogue, as well as of “Armenian Progressive Youth” NGO and their partner in Azerbaijan Nazim Ibadov developing the skills of protection against aggressive nationalist propaganda. Another example is Eurasia Partnership Foundation, which organizes more or less regular meetings for the youth of the two countries, and at the same time tries to create a peacekeeping platform for the participants of these meetings in new media and social networks. The Foundation also initiated activities of conflict transformation schools in Baku and Yerevan in 2017-2018. The project targets young Azerbaijanis and Armenians. It is expected that students will be taught critical thinking skills helping to develop new approaches to the conflict resolution.

Obstacles to the direct addressing to the topic of the conflict resolution prompted the initiators of the dialogue projects to turn to the language of creativity - literature and fiction, film and documentary. In 2003, the Caucasus Forum of non-governmental organizations published under one cover stories of the South Caucasus writers, including Azerbaijani and Armenian ones. The collection was titled “Time to Live” and became a kind of common environment for dialogue of writers of the region. Translations of contemporary works of modern writers of the two countries into Russian, English and national languages, and their presentation on the common Internet site “Litlab” (2006-2007) within the framework of the project of Baku and Yerevan Press Clubs, were designed to promote a better understanding of each other's societies in the condition of mutual isolation.

Quite popular was the book with the memories of the journalists who visited the frontline “Reporters in Karabagh War” published in 2002 with support of the Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations. It was not just live, but also very instructive publication - from the point of view of professional behavior - for the journalists working at war.

Short films (“Dialogue through Film”) about the human side of the Karabagh conflict, the experience of prisoners of war and refugees, the fate of mixed marriages, the “war games” in the Internet were shot by “Internews staff” of Azerbaijan and Armenia together with British organization “Conciliation Resources”. About 30 films for public viewing were shot in 2007 to 2013 period. Young directors were involved to work on these films in both countries.

As stated by the initiators of the event in Armenia called “Festival of Azerbaijani Films” in 2010, their task was to create a space for direct communication and resist the propaganda gaining momentum through “degeneration of humanistic ideas and denial of reason.” However, the reaction of the Armenian society and media in this regard was mainly negative, including the opinion that the festival of the Azerbaijani films would be an event aimed to restore trust between the citizens of the two countries provided the same initiative is implemented in Azerbaijan. The screenings were denied premises at three different addresses in Yerevan, and the events in Gyumri and Vanadzor caused a scandal and did not take place. This precedent raised the serious question of how effective the “shock” peacekeeping techniques are in cases, when a large part of the societies in the countries

involved in acute conflict are reluctant to take the first step towards reconciliation. In any case, it was during this very period when the “shock” of unilateral initiatives in Armenia (although there were significantly fewer restrictions on the activities of non-governmental organizations than in Azerbaijan) led to the loss of interest by many NGOs in dialogue with partners in Azerbaijan.

However, in general, we can conclude that this change of sentiments was not caused by failures of specific activities, but by the widespread conviction of the futility to search for peaceful solutions in the face of increased confrontation. The failure of “the football diplomacy” between Yerevan and Ankara had a certain influence on the development of this trend. For the Armenian public, it became an argument in favor of the impossibility to overcome historical contradictions with neighboring Turkic states. And for the Azerbaijani public - evidence of the risks in any step towards reconciliation with Armenia.

Once again, the intertwining of Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Azerbaijani contradictions was confirmed: in particular, Azerbaijan is much more aggressive in its rejection of the Armenian Genocide than Turkey itself, and Ankara, since the closure of its border with Armenia in 1993, has conditioned the normalization of relations with Yerevan by its unilateral concessions in the Karabagh issue. As the positions of all sides of the triangle became tighter, the trilateral dialogue had not only lost its attractiveness but also increased the caution of the partners towards each other.

Ideas that could have won public approval in the late 1990s became unacceptable to the majority 10-15 years later. Director of the Caucasus Center for Peacemaking Initiatives Georgy Vanyan, organizer of the above-mentioned failed film festival, together with Azerbaijani political scientist Zardusht Alizadeh became authors of another civil initiative in 2012-2015, the “Tekali Process” (the name of the Azerbaijani village in Georgia). It included “hearings” on various problems of the South Caucasus, with the participation of the well-known politicians and public figures of the region. However, the reaction to the “Tekali Process” not only in Azerbaijan and Armenia, but also in Georgia, was quite negative.

In September 2018, Vanyan and Alizadeh appealed to the Azerbaijani and Armenian public not to spend huge funds on the arms race but to direct them to the search for peace, restoration of mutual respect and mutual understanding. This was not the first such appeal. In 2010, within the framework of the initiative called “Independent Civil Minsk Process for the Settlement of the Karabagh Conflict”, the former head of the Secretariat of the President of Azerbaijan Eldar Namazov and former Ambassador-at-large of the President of Armenia David Shahnazaryan issued a statement on the occasion of the signing of a Declaration which, in particular, called on the heads of the two states “to put an end to the bellicose rhetoric, political and media actions aimed at the escalation of the conflict, to take urgent steps to strengthen the ceasefire and prevent armed incidents, to ensure the immediate withdrawal of the snipers from the line of contact”. However, it should be recognized that these initiatives did not have a significant impact on the settlement process, as they contradicted the trends prevailing in the negotiations at the official level.

Speaking about the actual trends in the Track-2, we can highlight some of them. Whereas before the early 2000s there was an increase of the direct interaction of the local organizations, in recent years like in the first post-war years, the key role has returned to the external players - the moderators of the contacts. From 2003 to 2009, the leading role in the Track-2 on the Karabagh settlement was actually taken over by the international



Consortium Initiative composed of international non-governmental organizations and supported by the British government. Since 2010 the initiative was continued by the European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno Karabagh (EPNK), which united several organizations and enjoyed the support of the European Union. Both initiatives were aimed at creating a favorable atmosphere in the societies of the conflicting parties, and it was within their framework that local Armenian and Azerbaijani organizations implemented some of the mentioned projects.

Large-scale attempts were made to describe and understand the Karabagh conflict. The most famous of them are the books “Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War” (2003) by Europe and Eurasia program researcher of Carnegie Foundation, journalist Thomas de Waal and “Karabagh Diary, Green and Black: Neither War nor Peace” (2008) by the expert of “Civilitas” Foundation Tatul Hakobyan. A contribution to deeper understanding of the problem (done in original genre) was made by the joint publication of political scientists Rasim Musabekov and Stepan Grigoryan, journalists Arif Aliyev and Boris Navasardian “The Karabagh Conflict: To Understand Each Other”, the brochure “Variants for a Solution of the Karabagh Conflict: Concepts and Reality” authored by Ali Abbasov and Harutyun Khachatryan, the analytical work of the director of “Turan” information agency Mehman Aliyev, the director of the Center for Regional Studies Richard Giragosian, associate of the Caucasus program of the “Conciliation Resources” British organization Laurence Broers and other experts.

The voices of those criticizing the authorities for “non-constructive policy” in the Karabagh issue in Azerbaijani and Armenian societies (in NGOs and media circles) are less and less heard. Much more audible is criticism for indecision and lack of consistent defense of national interests. This is caused not so much by the restrictions imposed from above (which is relevant in the case of Azerbaijan) as by the public sentiments which are less susceptible to the ideas of peacemaking. Mostly, the public in both countries showed no sympathy for their fellow citizens including the well-known ones who tried to find the roots of the conflict in their own society, leadership, and not in someone else's. The most striking example in this sense is the sharply negative attitude in Azerbaijan to the writer Akram Aylisli, author of the novel “Stone Dreams” (2012), dedicated to the events of the late 1988-early 1989 in Baku. In Armenia, sharp rejection in the certain circles of the society followed the criticism voiced by the Chairman of the Helsinki Association Mikayel Danielyan on the position of the authorities on the Karabagh conflict. At the same time, in some cases, alternative views on the problem were perceived as a consequence of dependence on foreign donors. In particular, such moods were spread by the pro-government media.

With an extreme shortage of independent initiatives aimed at real dialogue, the space is from time to time filled with purely propaganda-oriented projects. In 2007 and 2009, on the initiative of former Minister of Culture of Russia Mikhail Shvydko, ambassadors of Azerbaijan and Armenia to the Russian Federation, composers Polad Bulbuloglu and Armen Smbatyan, prominent representatives of Azerbaijani and Armenian intelligentsia participated in the highest level joint trips and meetings in Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert. In 2016 the Baku platform for Peace declared itself, and being discredited by the participants, who allegedly represented the Armenian side, was replaced in 2017 by the Armenia-Azerbaijan Civil Peace Platform, registered in Tbilisi. Contrary to the declarative peacekeeping intentions, these initiatives only aggravated relations between the parties of the conflict, as evidenced by numerous publications in the media. And, whereas in case of the initiative supported by Moscow the formalistic approach with no idea of the expected

result was evident, the Baku and Tbilisi platforms tried to solve quite a specific task of substitution and imitation of a true peace-making process.

Another trend characteristic of the “ice age” of the settlement by the mechanisms of the Track-2 was the involvement of religious figures. In April 2010, for the first time Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II visited Baku and participated in the World Summit of Religious Leaders, and in November 2011, the Chairman of the Caucasian Muslims Office Allahshukur Pashazadeh arrived in Yerevan to participate in the meeting of the Inter-Church Council.

From the first steps of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peacemaking process women's organizations played an important role in the dialogue, which are also one of the most important components in the framework of the European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno Karabagh. The dialogue in this format can rise on a new level if the spouses of President Ilham Aliyev and Nikol Pashinyan joined it. Both expressed their interest in this, but so far have taken mutually exclusive steps. On April 3, 2019, at the meeting with Azerbaijani military servicemen, Mehriban Aliyeva said: “In every village, in every city of Karabagh, the flag of Azerbaijan will fly,” which naturally provoked a sharp reaction in Armenia. Within the framework of the “Women for Peace” initiative, Anna Hakobyan organized a trip of representatives of the Russian public to Nagorno Karabagh, and this, in turn, caused extreme discontent in Azerbaijan. At the same time, the possibility of a more concerted action by these two women, who take active social positions, has considerable potential for the settlement process.

May 2019 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ceasefire agreement in the Karabagh conflict zone. The parties have proved that when they are interested in the observance of the truce, they are quite able to ensure it without external interference. Will this ability be extended to achieve a mutually acceptable model of peace after a quarter of a century? The answer should be given, first of all, by the resumed negotiations at the official level. However, as the above analysis shows, the participants of the Track-2 initiative can contribute to the effectiveness of the dialogue.

# DIFFERENT VIEWS ON COMMON PROBLEMS

## 1. WAR OR PEACE?

Assessing the answers to the questions about the alternative to peaceful settlement and the possibility of long-term stability in case of military solution, one should bear in mind the different approaches of both Armenian and Azerbaijani participants as a whole. Some of them considered the problem regardless of their own affiliation to particular party to the conflict, while the others proceeded solely from their own national interests and aspirations. This circumstance to a certain extent influenced the content of the answers. In particular, the Azerbaijani officials who participated in the study, conditioned the acceptability and belief in the sustainable result of the military solution with “historical justice”, which meant “restoration of territorial integrity” of their country. At the same time, some supporters of the military solution emphasized that the victory in the war should be followed by the development of the economy and civil society in the region, so that the new state of things would sooner or later become acceptable to the local population. For their part, some Armenian respondents expressed the opinion that the end of a hypothetical war by the “capitulation of Azerbaijan” could be an alternative to a peaceful settlement, ensuring a final or long-term solution. Even if it is not capitulation, the new status quo after the war may be stronger than the current one. In this sense, reference was made to “historical realities”, so to say, “if the military path was obviously ineffective, all world wars would periodically resume”.

In general, both in focus groups and during in-depth interviews, about half of the Azerbaijani participants admitted the possibility of resolving the conflict by military means. Among the Armenian participants, preference was given to the preservation of peace both in the form of a settlement through negotiations and through the preservation of the status quo, including the regime of maintaining the ceasefire “until better times”. As arguments in favor of the exclusively peaceful process, the Azerbaijani supporters of the relevant approach cited the fact that the problem is internationalized and has acquired a geopolitical character, it is tied to the interests of too many players, so it can hardly be solved in a direct military confrontation between Azerbaijanis and Armenians. Among the opinions of the Armenian respondents, it should be noted that the priority should be given not to settlement of the conflict, but to the underlying problem, which can be achieved exclusively by peaceful means. The non-standard justification of the riskiness of large-scale military actions is also noteworthy, since they can lead to active latent inter-ethnic contradictions in Azerbaijan, and this, contrary to the widespread opinions in Armenia, does not come either from its interests, or from the security interests in the entire South Caucasus. Both the Armenian and Azerbaijani participants of the study, who spoke in favor of no alternative to a peaceful settlement, noted that in case of war, regardless of its outcome, the conflict will remain a “bleeding wound”, and the solution will be unstable. In particular, among those and others were respondents who stressed the inevitability of the desire for revenge as a factor that does not allow to count on sustainable peace after the war.

Among the Armenian participants, the representatives of civil society expressed the strongest opinion on the non-alternative settlement through peaceful negotiations and from the Azerbaijani side - the representatives of the opposition. And the military solution was considered acceptable, by the representatives of the expert community and the officials respectively. Although the ratio of “pros” and “cons” of a particular solution in Armenia and Azerbaijan is not very different, the motivation they have, as a rule, does not coincide,

therefore, it is impossible to speak about the closeness of positions on this issue. The “sector of coincidence” of views, which turned out to include a clear minority of Azerbaijani and Armenian respondents, was the inevitability of maintaining the status quo, since war is not considered by them as an alternative to peace negotiations, but at the same time the parties are not ready for a stable peace settlement due to the polarity of the maximalist positions, as well as geopolitical and regional realities, which do not contribute to the efficiency of the negotiations.

Media monitoring showed that the issue of peaceful settlement was a priority for the Armenian media. The main part of the materials containing references to this topic was devoted to the official meetings and announcements, where the Karabagh problem was discussed. There is a clear predominance of agreement with the assertion that a peaceful settlement through mutual compromises is the preferred and probable way. This trend was mainly characteristic of all Armenian media that became the object of the monitoring. In the studied Azerbaijani media this topic received significantly less attention and was in the fifth place among the conditional statements chosen for the monitoring in terms of frequency of references. Moreover, although the balance between consent and disagreement with the statement is also positive, disagreement with the preference and probability of a peaceful path was observed much more often than in the Armenian media. An even more fundamental difference was that the attitude to the statement in particular Azerbaijani media differed essentially. The two stages of monitoring in haqqin.az recorded 68 references with consent and only one with disagreement, whereas in “Yeni Musavat” the balance was significantly different - 66 and 39.

## **2. THE FORMAT AND METHODS OF SETTLEMENT**

As for the format of the negotiations, both individual Azerbaijani and Armenian participants of the study have a greater degree of unanimity than in the issue of “war and peace”. Thus, the average position of the Azerbaijani respondents can be expressed by the following formula: the OSCE Minsk Group (it should be understood here and further as the institution of co-chairs) is not effective enough and even, in a sense, has exhausted itself; negotiations under the auspices of the UN or directly without intermediaries would be a desirable alternative; however, changing the format is unrealistic, so changing the composition of the co-chairs should be considered - most often replacing Russia and France with Turkey and Germany was mentioned.

The average Armenian position is as follows: the composition of the co-chairs is optimal, we can talk about its change if there is a new international actor that can have a significant impact on the process; the mediators are ineffective, there is fatigue in their activities, but the reason is not in them, but in the depth of the contradictions of the parties and in the geopolitical factors that are not directly related to the negotiations; it should be borne in mind that in addition to the Minsk Group, in the context of the conflict there are countries such as Iran and Turkey that have some influence; no matter how irreplaceable the official format of negotiations is today, it should be supplemented with involvement in the dialogue of representatives of civil society.

On the issue of settlement methods, the Azerbaijani side has the most rigidly tuned officials. They clearly state that if a settlement through mutual compromises does not work, coercion by the international community must be used. In this regard, the representatives of the opposition, who almost unanimously supported mutual compromises as a priority method, are the least tough, followed by representatives of civil society, and the approaches of the expert community are the closest to the opinions expressed by officials.

Armenian respondents, in principle, unequivocally support mutual compromises as the most acceptable method of settlement. But at the same time, they are extremely skeptical about Baku's readiness to make real compromises, so they consider it pointless to talk about it at the moment. As a way out, the majority considers the conduct of negotiations, no matter how ineffective they may be, as long time as it would be needed to bring the positions closer together.

With regard to one of the main topics raised during the meetings that took place after the change of power in Armenia in May 2018 - the involvement of the representatives of Nagorno Karabagh in the negotiations - the positions of the parties radically differ. If Armenian respondents consider this as almost a prerequisite for the effectiveness of the settlement process, the Azerbaijani participants in the study mostly allow Stepanakert to be involved only if the Azerbaijani community of Karabagh is represented with the same status in the negotiations. The Azerbaijani side also expressed the opinion that the representatives of NK can be admitted to the negotiating table only if they recognize the sovereignty of Baku over themselves, or after RA and AR resolve all fundamental issues on a bilateral basis with the participation of mediators, and start discussions of the details related to the implementation of the agreement.

On the Armenian side, the idea of involving the Azerbaijani community on equal terms with the representatives of Stepanakert is rejected. As arguments, it is pointed out that the leadership of the Republic of Azerbaijan fully represents the interests of the Karabagh Azerbaijanis, while Yerevan cannot afford making a decision on behalf of the NK Armenians in many issues. In the same logic, participation in the negotiations makes sense only for those who have their own "zone of responsibility" in the settlement process, and much in this sense depends on Stepanakert, unlike the Karabagh Azerbaijanis,. At the same time, some Armenian respondents did not rule out that a variety of formats, including bilateral, comprising NK Armenians and Azerbaijani resettlers from the region, could be used to resolve specific issues.

The differences in the positions of Baku and Yerevan regarding the engagement in the negotiations of Nagorno Karabagh as a third party were reflected in the publications of the studied media. References to the conditional statement "The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible" turned out to be more relevant for the Armenian media (fourth in frequency): there were almost three times more such references than in the Azerbaijani media (seventh in frequency). The topic arouse media interest, naturally, due to the initiative of the RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. It is also natural that the attitude to this statement in the publications of the Armenian media was strongly negative, and in the Azerbaijani pieces - positive. A different point of view in both cases was recorded only when the position of representatives of the opposite side was cited without comment.

In general, with regard to the topic of the format and methods of conflict resolution, we can talk about partial agreement with the role of the Minsk Group as a mediator. Whatever the dissatisfaction with the activities of the MG co-chairs, the parties are ready to reckon with the lack of real alternatives. Ideally, both Azerbaijani (to a greater extent) and Armenian (to a lesser extent) are ready to accept the regime of pre-agreements without intermediaries, but they realize that the depth of contradictions at this stage of the settlement could lead a purely bilateral format to an impasse. In other aspects of the topic the points of contact of the views are not palpable. This also applies to the settlement on the basis of mutual compromises: although the majority of the study participants on both sides support this

method, the ideas about the compromises expected from each other are so different that it is inappropriate to talk about the proximity of positions.

In the media, the differences of opinion regarding the mission of the Minsk Group co-chairs were more pronounced, although the attention to the topic was quite comparable - the third place among the 24 conditional statements chosen for monitoring in the Azerbaijani media and the fifth place in the Armenian media. The Armenian media recorded the dominance of consent with the MG as a mediator in the settlement process, while in the Azerbaijani media disagreement with this statement significantly prevails over consent. Critical attitude to the mission showed “Yeni Musavat” and “Zerkalo” and, rather, positive than negative haqqin.az and Turan. In this sense, the Armenian media studied, despite the difference in political orientations, were generally unanimous on this issue.

### **3. THE LESSONS OF THE APRIL ESCALATION**

The answers of the participants to the questions related to the four-day April war of 2016 show that it had a more profound impact on the Armenian society than in Azerbaijan. Armenian respondents from different categories note that as a result of the war, the positions of the parties have become tougher, skepticism about the effectiveness of the negotiation process has increased, and distrust towards each other has deepened. The dialogue at the informal level has also become more complicated, many representatives of civil society, who participated in peace initiatives before, began to speak with uncompromising positions, joined the information war. These initiatives themselves, according to the Armenian respondents, to an even greater extent than before, acquired an imitation character, including the creation of manipulative “dialogue” formats such as the Baku and Tbilisi Platforms for Peace. The younger generation, for whom the war of the early 1990s is a distant history, actualized the perception of the neighboring country as an enemy. The most categorical respondents claim that, in fact, what was achieved during the years of the truce was all crossed out, and the parties returned to the atmosphere of the beginning of May 1994.

The results of the war are evaluated differently in Armenia. One part of the study participants believed that at the expense of blood their country strengthened its international prestige. Some Armenian respondents see the positive side of the war in the failure of Baku's attempt to change the status quo and “to break” the will of the Armenians. A view was expressed that the illusions entrenched in the two societies that developments in the military course were excluded (in Armenia) and that the conflict could be resolved by blitzkrieg (in Azerbaijan) were dispelled. People realized that the war never stopped and everyone should always be ready for the aggravation of the situation on the front. Some Armenian participants of the study also attached importance to the fact that the international community got convinced that Nagorno Karabagh with its current population could not be part of Azerbaijan. In addition, the war revealed problems with the defense capacity of the Armenian sides, the failure of the former regime, and after April 2016 the agenda of internal political changes in Armenia became actual.

Another part of the Armenian respondents see the results of the April war as mainly negative phenomena. They believe that the Azerbaijani leadership has convinced its public of victory, and also claim that, although the territorial loss in this case is not very significant in itself, if such short-term military actions are repeated from time to time in the coming years, they will create serious threats to the security of Armenia and the NK. One of the participants of the study came to the conclusion that in April 2016, the scenario agreed in the Moscow-Baku-Yerevan triangle was implemented, and the fighting was supposed to

just take place within 4 days. Another Armenian respondent, assessing the reaction to the April events in Azerbaijan, is of the opinion that in the neighboring country too, many victims caused shock and rejection of the war, but this will not bind the hands of Baku authorities if they decide to resume hostilities.

The position of the majority of Azerbaijani respondents does not coincide with the last assessment. They, in general, positively perceive the results of the four-day war, noting the improvement of Azerbaijan's negotiating positions, the signal of the international community that Baku will not accept the status quo and the occupation of its territories. Most of the study participants adhere to the point of view that Azerbaijan has demonstrated its military superiority, the April war returned confidence in Azerbaijan and showed that there would be no peace without the restoration of its territorial integrity. Although here there was an opinion that the war complicated the negotiations.

In general, in comparison with the Armenian participants of the study, Azerbaijan recorded a greater divergence of views among different categories of respondents. In particular, some officials here believe that the war has intensified dialogue at the expert and civil levels. They connect it with the strengthened understanding that without finding ways to settlement, there is a threat of resumption of large-scale military actions. Representatives of other categories of respondents do not agree with this, arguing that both the negotiation process and the civil dialogue have become much more difficult.

Among the Azerbaijani respondents who are least optimistic about the outcome of the war, there were active users of the social networks. They note that the rhetoric has become more aggressive on both sides, Azerbaijan and Armenia arm themselves more intensively than before. Many differences were recorded in the responses of Azerbaijani experts involved in the study on the consequences of the events of April 2016. In particular, they expressed an opinion that the war had a greater impact on the internal political processes, primarily in Armenia, rather than on the Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, and that it served to strengthen the leadership of the Russian Federation among the mediators in the conflict. Baku and Yerevan demonstrated, as one of the experts noted, that everything depends on Moscow.

Respondents in Azerbaijan do not attach much importance to the agreements achieved in Vienna and St. Petersburg in May-June 2016 on the expansion of the international monitoring mission on the line of contact, the withdrawal of heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures, and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric. In particular, they emphasize that such agreements are often violated in one way or another and cannot be durable, given the lack of progress in the negotiation process. These measures are ineffective, temporary and half-done. However, some participants of the study noted that although aggressive rhetoric has not been softened, the number of losses from sniper bullets as a result of the agreements has decreased. (Probably, the latter opinion referred rather to the results of the informal meeting of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Dushanbe in June 2018, than Vienna and St. Petersburg agreements in 2016). Representatives of the civil society, in particular, who participated in the study also spoke about the importance of the Dushanbe meeting in reducing tensions on the line of contact.

On this issue, Different categories of Azerbaijani respondents, in contrast to the assessments of the April war, have the same positions on this issue, which lead to the fact that the control over the observance of the truce can only be part of a comprehensive settlement plan. Otherwise, the effect of it can only be short-term. The same expert, whose

statement about Russia's role in the four-day war was cited above, confirmed his position, noting that the Vienna and St. Petersburg agreements, as well as other important steps aimed at settlement, are blocked by Russia in different ways.

Different attitudes to the conclusions that should be made based on the outcomes of the April war have also affected the media references to the conditional statement "Implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric is an important condition for an effective negotiation process". If in the Armenian media monitored this topic was among the three most relevant (345 references expressing consent with the quoted statement, with 7 neutral and no disagreement), then the number of publications in Azerbaijan, where it was covered, was 11 times smaller. From this we can conclude that in Azerbaijan no importance is attached to the Vienna and St. Petersburg agreements and, if the media turn to them occasionally, it is rather a consequence of attention to them in the neighboring country.

Armenian and Azerbaijani respondents, noted that unlike Vienna and St. Petersburg agreements, the informal ones reached in Dushanbe without intermediaries worked. At the same time, Armenia attaches more importance to the agreements on strengthening control over the ceasefire and confidence-building measures than Azerbaijan, and emphasizes that the implementation of the Vienna and St. Petersburg agreements can change the situation around the conflict for the better.

If we talk about the coincidence of positions on the thematic section related to the April war 2016, the study participants from both countries recognize that the war had a negative impact on the negotiations and informal dialogue, radicalized sentiments and intensified various manifestations of information confrontation. In other aspects of the topic, opinions differ rather than coincide.

The April war did not receive much attention from the Armenian and Azerbaijani media during the monitoring period, which can be considered natural. No matter how painful this topic is (first of all in Armenia, as the results in other components of the study showed), it is not timely for the media. And the statement that the event complicated the settlement process, is approximately equally reflected in the media publications of both countries.

#### **4. CONFLICT AND DEMOCRACY**

The responses related to the role of democracy in the settlement process were significantly affected by the different attitudes of the study participants both in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Some considered the introduction of democratic principles in the context of public attitudes that exist in the two countries under the current realities. Others assumed that the democratization would affect the approaches of citizens and society to various problems, including the settlement of the conflict. To some extent, this, as well as, of course, the social status of respondents, explains the differences in assessments.

While the majority of representatives of Azerbaijani civil society attach great importance to democratic reforms as a factor contributing to the settlement, the officials consider them as a desirable but not mandatory condition. At the same time, the latter emphasize that the presence of the conflict itself is a deterrent to democratic change. The positions of experts and journalists who participated in the research were divided approximately equally. Moreover, these two categories of respondents had the opinion that democracy can



complicate the settlement. While representatives of the opposition considered the factor of democracy as either desirable or mandatory for conflict resolution.

As arguments in favor of democracy, Azerbaijani respondents noted that it allows to proceed from the interests of people, not the ambitions of politicians. The trust in power inherent in democratic societies offers opportunities for decisive action towards a settlement. Democracy also means active involvement and substantial contribution of civil society in the search for mutually acceptable solutions. In addition, as noted by some respondents, the agreements between the two democracies would be given greater respect and recognition by the international community.

The arguments against it included the statements of the Azerbaijani participants of the study on that their approaches to the settlement do not change due to the democratic nature of the parties, but the increase of military force and international pressure contribute to the solution of the problem. In this sense, as one of the respondents said, it was easier to persuade the odious Serzh Sargsyan to make concessions than Nikol Pashinyan, who enjoys public support. There are many examples in history of successful negotiations between states that are far from democracy.

The positions of the Armenian respondents were similarly divided. Politicians (both officials and opposition) did not attach much importance to democracy in the context of conflict resolution. Representatives of the civil society and the media, on the contrary, considered it as an important factor.

The obligation of democracy in the framework of the study in Armenia was justified by its immunity against manipulation and false models of settlement. Only solutions acceptable to the societies of all parties will be stable. Democracy provides legitimacy and continuity of decisions, insures against denunciation of previous agreements after regime change. If the democratic process penetrates deeply into society, people will respect the rights of others and sooner or later will come to an agreement. Democrats do not fight with each other and come to mutual compromises easier. At the same time, the support by the Armenian respondents of the thesis of democracy as a condition for the settlement was accompanied by a reservation that most of them do not believe in the democratization of Azerbaijan and realize the need to deal with an authoritarian opponent.

Among the Armenian participants of the study there were many who believe that democracy is important only for internal processes. The state model in the country does not matter, because the position of the leader, regardless of how he reached the power, and society, as a rule, do not differ. Moreover, there are more opportunities for nationalism and uncompromising behavior in democratic states. In the undemocratic USSR, the decision on belonging of Nagorno Karabagh worked for almost 70 years. "So now," says one of the Armenian respondents, "if President Aliyev orders his citizens to love Armenians, in 5 years we will see radically different sentiments in the society." The Armenian respondents also expressed the opinion that the cause-and-effect link was in fact the opposite: the development of democracy would face many obstacles without a settlement.

The "Velvet Revolution" in Armenia, according to the majority of the Armenian participants of the study, did not change anything in terms of settlement, as the society's approaches to the NK issue remained the same. The minority is convinced that Armenia made its move in April-May 2018, and if similar processes take place in Azerbaijan, the common value system of the authorities and societies of the two countries can help to solve the problem.

Quite common among Armenian respondents was the opinion that authoritarianism in Azerbaijan will make it easier to resolve the conflict than in a democracy. This view is based on the idea that the position of the democrats of the neighboring country on the NK issue does not differ from the approaches of the current government and that democratic changes in Azerbaijan can even lead to even greater radicalization of sentiments. One respondent suggested that the new government in Armenia could make concessions due to internal circumstances or external pressure.

In Azerbaijan they are careful enough and even skeptical about the processes in Armenia. Among the participants of this study, this is most characteristic of the officials and representatives of the expert community. They believe that the new Armenian leadership is focused on complex internal contradictions and is inclined to continue diplomatic maneuvers in the Karabagh issue, which do not lead to specific solutions. Moreover, Pashinyan's desire to change the format of the talks, including representatives of Nagorno Karabagh, only delays the settlement. There was another point of view that legitimate Pashinyan will be less dependent on Moscow, which is interested in maintaining the conflict. Some Azerbaijani respondents believe that it will be easier to compromise with self-confident authorities, although they admit that there is no change in the public sentiments regarding the Karabagh conflict. As for the internal political processes in Azerbaijan, the participants of the research from this country assess them as stable and sluggish. Therefore, the attitude to the NK problem does not change, especially since there is a consensus in society on this issue.

Summarizing the respondents' positions on this thematic section, there are grounds to speak about the similarity of the picture in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Although the differences of opinion were significant, the boundary between the different positions was not on the national, but on the worldview dividing line. Consequently, people on both sides who share views on this topic have a common ground for dialogue.

Political changes as a factor hypothetically influencing the settlement of the conflict became one of the most intensively covered topics in both Armenian and Azerbaijani media during the research period. In Azerbaijan, it was the first in frequency of circulation, and in Armenia - the second. And in the media of both countries, the conditional statement that these changes (the "velvet" revolution of April-May 2018) will have a positive impact on the settlement was supported in fewer publications than in those where it was rejected. The studied Armenian media recorded a significant difference in the frequency of references to this topic at the second stage of monitoring (September 16 - December 15, 2018). This is due to the increased interest in it during the campaign for the elections to the RA National Assembly held on December 9. Accusations of the opposition, first of all, the former ruling Republican party, against the new Armenian authorities in their "readiness to make unacceptable concessions to Azerbaijan on the Karabagh issue", have become one of the main features of the election campaign. These accusations created a balance of agreement and disagreement with the relevant allegations. About 60% of all references to the topic were made by representatives of the opposition and in the vast majority of cases they contained criticism of the politically new authorities in the Karabagh issue. This trend is confirmed also by the fact that the greatest superiority of disagreement with the positive role of political changes in Armenia over the agreement is recorded on News.am and "Golos Armenii" newspaper, critically covering the activities of the new authorities.

In the Azerbaijani media, which became the object of monitoring, disagreement with the positive role of the "velvet" revolution in the Karabagh issue had a different emphasis:

here, as in other components of the study, skepticism was expressed about changes in the positions of the Armenian authorities. The least pessimistic in this sense was Turan news Agency, and the most intensive coverage of the topic was on “Yeni Musavat”.

The conditional statement that “internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem” has found much less coverage in both countries than the political changes in Armenia. Also, in terms of aggregate outcomes in both countries with this statement there was articulated consent, and in the Armenian media it was maintained in all references to the subject.

## **5. THE MOST “DIFFICULT” TOPIC**

The range of views on settlement models was quite wide. At the same time, the preferences of the Azerbaijani participants of the study appeared quite clearly. Most of them were in favor of granting the NK region greater autonomy within Azerbaijan and “guarantees of full civil, socio-economic and cultural rights of the Armenian population living there in accordance with the legislation of Azerbaijan and the norms of international law”. The Aland Islands were most frequently mentioned as a specific precedent that could be used. The experience of autonomy of the Swedish population in the Finnish-owned territory is so attractive to Azerbaijani respondents that one of them, answering the question about the composition of the Minsk Group co-chairs, proposed to include Sweden and Finland. At the same time, until the final decision, it is proposed to implement the formula of “territory in exchange for peace” as an element of a step by step settlement, i.e. to transfer to Azerbaijan all or part of the areas around the former Nagorno Karabagh region controlled by the Armenian forces. A settlement in accordance with the Madrid Principles was also mentioned as acceptable. One respondent favored the model proposed to the parties at the Key West meeting in 2001.

The majority of Armenian respondents believes that it is impossible to talk about the realism of a particular model in the current situation. Unlike the representatives of the neighboring country, they do not focus on what the final decision should be, but on the ways in which a settlement should be reached. Many stressed the need to engage civil society as an important channel for moving towards reconciliation. Mutual trust, the return of refugees, the opening of communications, the economic development of the region will help to find the most optimal model.

This study as a whole and the answers to the question of the settlement models, in particular, confirm the tendency of toughening positions of almost all segments of the society. It can be argued that this trend is particularly pronounced after the April war 2016. If the position of “Karabagh cannot be part of Azerbaijan”, which is the basis of the vast majority of settlement models supported by the Armenian participants of this study, is not something new, then the dominance of the paradigm “we will not yield an inch of land” reflects the change of mood in recent years. Previously, such an approach was typical for the maximalist-minded socio-political circles, now it is also expressed by representatives of civil society, the expert community, the media, known for their liberal views. This transformation appears to be due to the relative identification in the minds of most respondents of the concepts of “uncompromising” and “security”. In other words, any concession is considered a threat. This conclusion is consistent with the results of the analysis of the responses regarding the methods of settlement (see above), where the Armenian respondents, being in principle supporters of mutual compromises, are skeptical about the feasibility of this method in the circumstances.

Speaking about the conditions that can contribute to the choice of an effective settlement model, the participants of the study in Armenia noted a strong army and international guarantees, preferring the first as the most reliable factor. This position is, in fact, also consistent with the above conclusions. More often the specific model of “territory in exchange for status” received less support in all categories of Armenian respondents than the full preservation of the status quo and the postponement of the final decision until the time when the mechanisms of coexistence - respect for the security and interests of all parties -will be developed. At the same time, single statements in favor of the “Madrid Principles”, “common state” and “Aland model” were recorded. The unwillingness of most of the Armenian participants in the study to name a specific model of settlement acceptable to them also covered the question “What period of the negotiation process was the most promising in terms of the possibility of reaching an agreement?” The most common response was “the real ground for consent has not yet been created”.

At the same time, the Azerbaijani participants pointed to several periods when, in their opinion, there were chances to solve the problem. In addition to the well-known stages when the mediators proposed specific settlement models, 1993 was mentioned, when the “projects of the century” could be implemented through the territory of Armenia in exchange for recognition of Azerbaijan's sovereignty over the NK. This period was also noted because “it preceded the armed rebellion in Azerbaijan”, “both Armenians and Azerbaijanis still lived in Nagorno Karabagh”, “Russia's influence was not so strong, ” and “Armenia showed more pragmatism”. In a sense, the position that the most favorable time was in times of Levon Ter-Petrosyan’s presidency is associated with these views. As a promising one the Azerbaijani respondents called also the episode in 2008 when, after heavy March fighting a Declaration was signed in Moscow, in 2009-2010, when the Madrid Principles were proclaimed, as well as the situation after the April war (2016) when the international community could decisively intervene.

As expected, the greatest differences between the positions of Armenian and Azerbaijani respondents were recorded in the issue of settlement models. Perhaps the only opportunity for dialogue on this topic is a joint expert discussion of all the episodes, the separate elements of the relevant models, when the parties were more or less close to an agreement. As this study shows, even the competent circles in Azerbaijan and Armenia interpret very differently the domestic and foreign policy conditions under which certain settlement options were on the agenda of the negotiations. And returning to them gives a chance to form a general idea of the previous stages as a basis for further search of solutions.

The media of Armenia and Azerbaijan paid equal attention to the models of settlement of the negotiations - in both cases, this topic was on the 9<sup>th</sup> place among the 24 conditional statements chosen for the study. However, the attitude towards it, as well as the results of other components of the study, differed significantly. The Armenian media evaluated the previously tried models of settlement more critically than the Azerbaijani ones, in which the balance of consent and disagreement with the statement that the solution to the problem should be sought among the models already proposed to the parties turned out to be almost zero (23 and 22, respectively). Mainly, the disagreement related to the so-called Madrid Principles was most often expressed by representatives of the political opposition. The positive attitude to the corresponding statement dominated in the studied Azerbaijani media - consent in 36 references, disagreement only in three. This balance was ensured, first of all, by the newspaper “Yeni Musavat” - 32 references with consent and none with disagreement. The other three Azerbaijani media showed little interest in the topic. The references of the media of both countries to the settlement models were recorded mainly

in the context of the meetings of the heads of Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as foreign ministers.

## **6. THE ROLE OF RUSSIA AND EURASIAN INITIATIVES**

Almost all participants of the study from both Azerbaijan and Armenia note the huge influence of Russia on the conflict. The overwhelming majority also notes that Moscow is using the Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation in its own interests. At the same time, some Armenian respondents emphasize the regularity of this influence - all external forces form their attitude to the conflict based on their own benefits. They appreciate Russia's balanced policy and its deterrent role.

In turn, many Azerbaijani participants of the study believe that without the help of Russia, Armenia would not have achieved its results in a military confrontation with their country. In their opinion, "until Moscow wants, there will be no settlement." However, this circumstance is also considered in a positive way from the Azerbaijani point of view: "Russia has a huge influence on Armenia and is able to use it to solve this conflict." Some Azerbaijani respondents believe that through the conflict "Moscow holds in its hands the levers of influence not only over Armenia but also Azerbaijan."

The Armenian participants of the study mostly agree that Russia largely manages the conflict. But at the same time, they note that it is in Moscow's interests to pursue a balanced policy. Some respondents, on the one hand, expressed the opinion that "Russia is the guarantor of Armenia's security, and no one else can assume this role", but on the other hand, they assessed its role as negative, because it sells weapons to both, and Russia played a negative role in the April war 2016. At the same time, judging by the course of discussions in the focus groups, the participants did not see a contradiction in these two statements. The ambiguous assessment of Russian policy in the Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation is also evidenced by the opinion that Moscow plays a positive role in the Minsk Group, whereas acting alone just exacerbates the problem.

Quite common among Armenian respondents was the condemnation that Russia's role would be more positive if Yerevan behaved with dignity in Armenian-Russian relations and took into account not only Moscow's interests. In this sense, a dialogue in one of the Armenian focus groups, where the opposite statement was made, that "Russia is the screenwriter, director and producer of the conflict, and we are just hired actors" is interesting. This was followed by a reaction "Yes, Russia is a director, but talented actors can play in their own way." In this dialogue, "actors" meant both Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Recognizing the fact that Moscow, as one of the co-chairs, is engaged not in the settlement, but in the management of the conflict, some Armenian participants in the study allow Russia's intervention in the solution of the problem, if the conflicting parties themselves agree on it.

One of the Armenian respondents expressed an opinion that the aim of Moscow's policy towards the Karabagh conflict is to "drag" Azerbaijan into the Eurasian Economic Union and the CSTO. In general, the position of the study participants is that the integration projects initiated by Russia have no impact on the conflict, while the conflict itself is used to expand these projects. However, the majority of Armenian respondents are against the accession of Baku to the Eurasian structures and do not consider this development realistic.

The vast majority of Azerbaijani participants of the study agrees with them, moreover, even those who do not exclude membership to CSTO, consider this as a threat. Only one respondent believes that the return of Azerbaijan to this organization would contribute to the solution of the Karabagh problem. However, the motives of the attitude to the Eurasian projects among the representatives of the neighboring countries can be, of course, different. One of the officials who participated in the study in Azerbaijan, justified his position by the fact that his country cannot be in the same military organization with Armenia, "occupying our territories." Views were also expressed that the expansion of the Eurasian Union is a form of Russia's preservation of the dominant position in the region, and if it manages to unite Armenia and Azerbaijan in the EEU, it would mean triumph of its policy.

The similarity of the positions of the majority of respondents regarding the role of Russia and the importance of its Eurasian initiatives opens up certain prospects for the Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue. The fact that the parties have different interests in their attitude to these issues and have their own motivation will not necessarily impede mutual understanding. Moreover, it testifies to the strength of positions and stability of the agenda of such communication. At the same time, it is important, however, that the mistakes inherent in the dialogue of past years not be repeated, when identifying the external culprit of the conflict, the parties absolve themselves of responsibility for it and the discussion came to a standstill. In the answers to the questions of several thematic sections of this study, the desire for a settlement without intermediaries is also combined with a certain doom, due to the dominant influence of external players on the conflict. At the same time, as some opinions expressed in in-depth interviews and focus groups show, the need to overcome this doom is recognized.

Russia's special role in the conflict became one of the main media topics during the period when the study was conducted. In the Azerbaijani media, which became the object of monitoring, it became the fourth in frequency of circulation, and in the Armenian media - the seventh one. And in Azerbaijan, it was touched upon more than three times more often. The overwhelming majority of publications referring to this topic agreed with the statement that the keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow, although there were also cases of disagreement with such an assessment. In Azerbaijan, representatives of the expert community and NGOs spoke on this issue more than others, in Armenia - journalists themselves. Yeni Musavat turned to the topic more often than others - more than the other 7 studied Azerbaijani and Armenian media combined. Turan news Agency was the only one of all 8 media outlets that became the object of monitoring, where disagreement with the relevant statements slightly prevailed over consent (10 against 9).

Even more often there were references corresponding to the statement "the Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players" (the second place in the thematic rating in Azerbaijan and the sixth in the Armenian media). Here again, consent prevailed over disagreement, and gained an advantage, albeit small, also in the publications of "Turan". Since the most attention of the external players in the context of the Karabagh conflict was paid to Russia, there is reason to assume that in a certain part of the references to this conditional statement, this country is again implied.

The assumption that "the entry of Azerbaijan into the Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for the settlement of the conflict" from time to time discussed in expert circles, has caused very limited interest in the media. This seems to evidence a certain artificiality of the inclusion of this issue in the context of the Karabagh

settlement. According to the aggregate indicator of all the media studied in both Azerbaijan and Armenia, disagreement with the above assumption (conditional statement) prevails. The only media out of the 8 monitored in the two countries where the opposite was true (only consent with the corresponding statement) was haqqin.az.

## **7. THE THIRD IS NOT SUPERFLUOUS**

The vast majority of the Azerbaijani and Armenian participants of the study do not believe that the problem of Nagorno Karabagh is among the priorities of the United States. The minority is inclined to believe that the settlement of the conflict is important for Washington, but it is forced to act cautiously, realizing that Russia retains powerful leverage in the region. It is interesting that depending on how the respondents relate to this issue, they also assess the significance of the visit of the US President's security adviser John Bolton to the South Caucasus in October 2018. Some people perceive this visit as a sign of increased interest in the region, and therefore to the solution of the NK problem. The majority also believes that the lack of the US activity has a negative impact on the settlement process.

Some representatives of the Azerbaijani official circles and opposition expressed their complaints to Washington. In particular, they referred to the fact that “by allowing visits and receiving representatives of NK, US officials thereby encourage separatism”. This, as noted, is contrary to the role of the United States as co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, hinders negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan to resolve the conflict. They also expressed concern about the activities of the Armenian lobby in the United States, which led to the conclusion that a certain passivity of this country in the Karabagh issue has a positive side. There is a single opinion in Azerbaijan that Washington's activity is constrained not only by the factor of Russia, but also of Turkey.

It is widely believed among both Azerbaijani and Armenian respondents that the United States is interested not so much in the settlement of the conflict, than in preventing escalation and maintaining stability in the region. Therefore, when there is no immediate threat of escalation, they are not particularly concerned about the unresolved conflict. At the same time, it is important for the US to be in the Minsk Group, on the one hand, to serve as a counterweight to Russia, and on the other, under conditions of limited bilateral contacts, to have a platform for interaction with Moscow, at least on this matter. There is a consensus among Armenian respondents that the Karabagh conflict may become a priority topic for the United States if it becomes important in the context of relations with Iran, the situation on the energy market or other issues of extreme importance. In one of the focus groups held in Armenia, an opinion was also expressed that it is in the interests of the United States that Yerevan should establish relations with Baku and Ankara, open the borders and, as a consequence, reduce the influence of Russia on the parties. It was taken for granted by the participants of the discussion, but its exact meaning for the resolution of the conflict in the current situation was not clarified.

From other opinions expressed by the Armenian respondents, it should be noted that the United States may have a greater influence on the Karabagh conflict than on others in the South Caucasus region, since there are no open contradictions between Washington and Moscow. Added to that the United States has a resource to encourage the parties to the conflict in the search for mutually acceptable solutions. And also that much in relation to the Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation depends on the kind of administration in the White House. And the current one is more passive than the previous ones, although there is a

possibility of its activation. The peak of the US involvement in the NK problem was the organization of a meeting of the presidents of Armenia and Armenia in Key West.

Even closer were the respondents' assessments of both Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding the influence of the European Union in the settlement. The differences between the participants in the study in both countries were not fundamental. Some believe that the EU does not use its capabilities and is inconsistent. Others believe that the EU has no leverages of influence and therefore has fully delegated authority to the Minsk Group. The inability of Brussels to compete in this issue, first of all with Moscow, and also with Washington was mentioned as a reason. The respondents noted that, although the EU is interested in the pacification and peaceful development of the South Caucasus, it can do little to change the situation. They stressed that, apart from good wishes, Brussels turned out to be incapable of anything else. In addition, the Eastern Partnership initiative, whose participants are Armenia and Azerbaijan, is no longer as important for the European Union as before. To some extent, the EU's passivity is justified by its awareness of the region's unpreparedness to take serious steps towards a peaceful settlement.

One of the Armenian participants of the study suggested that the strengthening of bilateral relations between the EU and RA and AR could have a positive impact on the conflict. As a reason the EU's passivity, the deepening of internal contradictions and the inability of the EU to develop a common approach were cited, since its member states and their interests in the region are very different. An opinion of another Armenian respondent is noteworthy that, as the Ukrainian events have shown, the West as a whole still has no idea what can be expected from Russia, and this hinders the effectiveness of its policy in the post-Soviet space. At the same time, it was noted that the EU could contribute to post-conflict development if a settlement was reached. As a positive role of Brussels the Armenian participants of the study mentioned its steps "to get NK out of the isolation", and as negative one - its interest in Azerbaijani oil and gas, forcing to turn a blind eye to the "aggressive behavior of Baku". For the same reason, the EU does not use its opportunities to develop democratic institutions in Azerbaijan.

The opinions of the study participants in Azerbaijan and Armenia on the role of Georgia (including official structures, NGOs, media) differed only to a small extent. Thus, Azerbaijani respondents noted that Georgia does not have leverages over the conflict, moreover, it has many problems of its own. Its role is limited mainly by the fact that it serves as the main platform for Armenian-Azerbaijani meetings with the participation of representatives of civil society, journalists and experts. At the same time, one of the respondents expressed an opinion that Georgia is trying to get dividends from the unresolved conflict, to increase its importance for the neighbors. At the same time, the opposite view was expressed - that Tbilisi is interested in a peaceful settlement. The Azerbaijani participants of the study also noted that Georgia seeks to distance itself from Armenia and Azerbaijan as far as possible, rejecting the perception of the South Caucasus as a single region by international organizations, as well as emphasizing its greater proximity to the West, to Europe.

The Armenian respondents shared the conclusions of the Azerbaijani respondents that Georgia does not play a special role because of its focus on its own problems, except that it serves as a meeting place. And in Armenia it is widely believed that Tbilisi benefits from the existence of the Karabagh conflict. At the same time, some participants of the study believe that in the conditions of the primacy of the factor of competitiveness over the paradigm of cooperation in the modern world, it is unnatural to expect disinterest from anyone. A point of view was expressed about the coincidence of the interests of Georgia



and Azerbaijan, since they are connected by economic and infrastructure projects, as well as the common position on the settlement of conflicts solely in accordance with the principle of territorial integrity. At the same time, it was noted that large Azerbaijani and Turkish investments in Georgia will sooner or later lead to serious contradictions. One respondent hopes for the early integration of a neighboring country with NATO, which will create conditions for a balance of forces and security in the region. A number of Armenian participants assessed positively Georgia's neutrality with regard to the Karabagh conflict and the role of Tbilisi as a cultural center, which has an indirect impact on many processes.

The similar attitude of Azerbaijan and Armenia to external players shows that they have opportunities to promote dialogue between the parties to the Karabagh conflict. And the more attention the international community pays to the settlement process, including contacts within the framework of Track-2 Diplomacy, the closer the participants of this process will be to the development of common approaches.

## **8. “VICIOUS” TRIANGLE**

In contrast to the assessments of other external players, the majority of Azerbaijani and Armenian participants in the study approach the Turkish factor from a radically opposite position. This was manifested in the previous thematic sections, in particular, in the issue of the hypothetical inclusion of Ankara as the co-chair of the Minsk Group. Regarding the importance of the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations for the settlement of the Karabagh conflict, the most common opinion among Azerbaijani respondents was that the normalization of relations between Ankara and Yerevan would reduce the pressure on the Armenian side and make the solution of the NK problem even less likely. Most of the Azerbaijani participants of the study stressed at the same time that, along with the lack of a positive effect for the settlement of the conflict, the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations without preconditions would harm the relations between Ankara and Baku. In their opinion, the sequence of the approach to the two problems should be reversed: the key to reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey is the solution of the Karabagh problem. And “the sooner Yerevan shows interest in this issue and returns the occupied territories, the faster it will establish relations with its Western neighbor.” Moreover, not only politicians, but also Azerbaijani journalists, invited to focus groups and social network activists expressed rather categorical opinions. A minority of Azerbaijani respondents believe that the normalization of relations between Ankara and Yerevan would boost Armenians' trust in Turkey and increase Turkey's influence in the region, which in turn would create favorable conditions for the Karabagh settlement. It is important to note that even supporters of this position consider the solution of the NK problem as of paramount importance for the whole region.

With regard to the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations, the greatest degree of unanimity among all categories of participants of the study in Azerbaijan was recorded. In particular, the opinions of the opposition representatives practically coincided with the position of the officials. This primarily concerned the conditionality of the settlement of relations between Ankara and Yerevan to the latter's concessions in the Karabagh issue. Those who allowed for the opposite sequence of steps represented, among others the Azerbaijani expert community. They complemented the above-mentioned arguments in favor of greater flexibility with the assumption that the rapprochement of the Armenian and Turkish economies due to the normalization of relations between them would reduce Yerevan's dependence on Moscow and contribute to the settlement of the Karabagh conflict. The interdependence of the problems with the Western and Eastern neighbors is

also recognized by the participants of the study in Armenia. Most of them confirmed that improving relations with one would lead to a positive shift in the other direction too. A large part of the Armenian respondents considers most effective the need to normalize the Armenian-Turkish relations as a first step: "if the Karabagh issue is not used as a precondition, the probability of agreement between Ankara and Yerevan would increase." At the same time, even supporters of this point of view, basically, noted that at present it is unrealistic to count on such a development. In line with the above, we can consider the following position: "theoretically, the Armenian-Turkish normalization could contribute to the Karabagh settlement, as long as it would make adjustments to the stereotypes of the Armenians, Turks and Azerbaijanis about each other. But first, this topic is not a priority for Ankara, and secondly, nationalist sentiments are extremely strong in Turkey and the society is not inclined to improve relations with Armenia." As to the period of Armenian-Turkish "football diplomacy", the Armenian respondents came to the conclusion that the whole process, in particular, the implementation of the protocols signed in Zurich, was blocked by Ankara because of the Karabagh context.

During the discussions in focus groups and in-depth interviews with Armenian interlocutors, a number of specific judgments were also expressed, which, however, did not distort the overall picture. Thus, it was noted that "if it is a real normalization process, which does not give as much grounds as it was in 2008-2009 for mutual suspicions that the negotiating partner will deceive, then it would contribute to the Karabagh settlement. But it cannot happen soon", "even if relations with Turkey improve - it will be a temporary phenomenon, in case of any aggravation on the Karabagh front, they will deteriorate again". The pessimism of the Armenian respondents on the issue was also expressed in the thought that "it is impossible to neutralize Baku's influence on Ankara, which means that there will be no normalization". There were also opinions that stood aside. In particular, one of the respondents noted that the Karabagh issue is just an excuse for Turkey, and if it wants to improve relations with Armenia, it will neglect the presence of the Karabagh conflict. An even more categorical position is that the situation that will develop after normalization and will contribute to the settlement may not meet the interests of the Armenians, so "why is it needed then?"

Thus, the majority of the study participants in both countries agree on the interconnection between the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations and the Karabagh settlement. And regardless of how the relevance of this linkage or the priority of one issue over another is assessed, the topic may become relevant. According to the study, this will largely depend on the mood of Ankara: if currently Ankara's interest is extremely low in a meaningful dialogue, then in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the situation was different and can change again. The respondents also stressed that at present it is difficult to expect Turkey (as well as Armenia) to return to the topic of normalization. But the political situation in this country is changeable and in the long run everything is possible. Therefore, the normalization factor between Ankara and Yerevan is visibly or invisibly present in the Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue and, planning further contacts, one should be ready for its actualization.

Reference to the topic of involvement of other external players than Russia was substantially less active. Azerbaijani media covered the potential role of neighbors in the region, primarily Turkey, and Armenian media - the USA, the EU and the West as a whole. Despite the relative lack of attention to this topic, the attitude to the participation of third countries in the settlement by the media is positive. In the Armenian media, disagreement with the relevant conditional statements was expressed more often than in the Azerbaijani

ones as a result of assessments of Turkey's involvement in the settlement process in any capacity.

## **9. OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES**

The participants of the study approached from different positions the practice of the “black lists” against foreign journalists, representatives of the civil society, politicians and experts visiting Nagorno Karabagh without the consent of the Azerbaijani authorities. The opponents of this practice based themselves on the fact that if the conflict is to be resolved through a broad dialogue, involving the international community, such heavy restrictions are unacceptable, whereas the supporters consider the application of laws that ensure the sovereignty of the country as a priority, which is not subject to doubt or interpretation.

The Azerbaijani respondents generally held the second position. In particular, the officials unanimously claim that the actions of the AR authorities in this matter are fully justified and consistent with international practice. One representative of the opposition stressed that the use of “the blacklists” was particularly justified in the case of states struggling to restore their territorial integrity. At the same time, an opinion was expressed that in order to create an impeccable legal basis, criminal liability for visiting the NK, which is not agreed with the Azerbaijani authorities, and drawing up lists of foreign citizens who violated this rule, should be supported by the adoption of the law on the occupied territories, as it was done, for example, in Georgia. At the same time, a significant part of representatives of civil society, the media and expert circles supported the practice of “blacklists” with reservations, the most common of which related to exceptions for journalists who should be able to freely visit conflict zones. An opinion was less often expressed that the restrictions, by and large, do not give anything, since those subjected to the sanctions can appeal to the authorities of Azerbaijan and be excluded from these list.

Armenian respondents were against the practice of “the blacklists”, some of them quite sharply. At the same time, many rejected it, stressing that it is impossible to consider NK as a de jure part of Azerbaijan. It was noted that these lists harm the international reputation of Baku and work in favor of Armenia. Each precedent with getting into the lists of new people becomes an occasion for foreign media to address the problem of Karabagh (as in the case of blogger Alexander Lapshin), which is hardly in the interest of Azerbaijan. On the other hand, an opinion was expressed that this policy of Baku still limits the visits to Nagorno Karabagh, with which not everyone agreed, believing that if someone needs to be in an unrecognized republic for a specific purpose, the threat of Azerbaijani sanctions will be ignored. In the context of the settlement, the negative assessment of the “blacklists” was based on the fact that the more people will visit the NK with the relevant mission, the more likely will be the solution to the problem. Therefore, they should not be hindered. At the same time, other assessments were also made: that the Azerbaijani authorities can be understood - “from the point of view of realpolitik, such behavior can be expected for the side that lost in the war, and is an attempt to put pressure on the international community.”

The topic reflected in the conditional statement “Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right of free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone”, formulated for media monitoring, received more attention in Azerbaijani than in Armenian media. Moreover, disagreement with this statement prevailed in Azerbaijan, and consent prevailed in Armenia.

As an even more important factor than the “blacklists” contributing to the comprehensive settlement process or hindering it, the study participants considered the provision of conditions for dialogue at the level of civil society, the expert community and journalists, as well as various aspects of the relationship between the authorities and participants in dialogue initiatives.

Azerbaijani respondents spoke mainly about the obstacles in the work of the non-governmental sector, especially when it involves contacts with Armenian partners. Their significant part believes that the approaches of the authorities should be changed and the issue of project financing should be resolved. If this happens, NGOs and the media will be able to contribute to the settlement. At the same time, as a number of participants of the study in Azerbaijan noted, it is important for this to move the official negotiations from the dead point. Some representatives of the state structures of the Republic of Azerbaijan even spoke in favor of the direct link of the Track 2 diplomacy to the agenda of the official negotiation process. They noted that the dialogue should involve professionals with the direct support of international organizations. Representatives of the opposition believe that the situation can change for the better only due to the change of power and the development of democracy in the country.

Special attention was paid to the participation of NGOs and journalists from Nagorno Karabagh in the dialogue initiatives. A clearly negative attitude towards this “until a political solution of the problem and the liberation of the occupied territories” was expressed by the majority of representatives of the expert community. The other categories of respondents in Azerbaijan mostly see sense in the engagement of Karabaghi civil society and media, although their statements on this subject were accompanied by reservations. In particular, these reservations concerned the obligatory inclusion of representatives of the Azerbaijani community of the NK in the process, the lower status of the Karabagh participants in comparison with the representatives from Azerbaijan and Armenia, the appropriateness of bilateral contacts between the Karabagh Azerbaijanis and Armenians. According to the general opinion, there should be “no state symbols of Nagorno Karabagh.”

The statement “Journalists, representatives of civil society, NK experts should be involved in the regional cooperation projects”, unlike the topic of Nagorno Karabagh's involvement in the settlement negotiations, was not reflected in the media for the entire period of monitoring. This can indicate a lack of consistency in public discussions on approaches to interaction formats.

A number of participants in the study in Azerbaijan explain the restrictions on participation in projects with Armenian partners by the lack of progress in the negotiation process due to the unconstructiveness of Yerevan. Although a few successful examples of cooperation can soften the position of the authorities and restore public trust in joint initiatives. The majority of Azerbaijani respondents, as a rule, allowed for, and some considered obligatory the interaction of representatives of civil society and mass media with secret services of the countries in the questions connected with NK and relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In particular, it is necessary to inform the special services about possible threats to security, to follow their recommendations. At the same time, many stressed that interaction should not lead to the execution of functions of secret services by civil society and the media. From all categories of Azerbaijani participants of the study journalists reacted most negatively to the contacts with the special services. The opinions of Azerbaijani respondents on the Baku and Tbilisi Platforms for Peace, initiated during recent years, can be divided into 5 groups, which are approximately equal in size. 1. “Any peace initiative is good. ” 2 “The Baku and Tbilisi Platforms for Peace are needed, but they

quickly lose their effectiveness, and if they do not have the support of governments, they are forgotten.” 3. “They have no capacity and no clear program.” 4. “They are organized by the authorities, do not enjoy the trust of society and have no prospects.” 5. “Ill-informed about them.”

The Armenian participants of the study usually emphasized the differences in the conditions of NGO and media activities in Azerbaijan, explaining the reduction of contacts at the present time by the obstacles created by the authorities of the neighboring country. “Azerbaijan blocks all initiatives, while Armenia is open for dialogue.” Many people tend to attribute this difference in approaches to “Baku's destructive attitude” to the Karabagh problem in general, as well as to the fact that the NGOs and the media in Armenia are much more free. Meanwhile, dialogue is effective only when it involves equal partners with roughly equal opportunities for action. It was suggested that at the expert level, without much publicity it is realistic to carry out certain projects. Some Armenian respondents note that the international community could put more pressure on Azerbaijan on the issue of greater freedoms for civil society and the media.

As a general problem, the Armenian participants of the study mentioned the extremely limited number of organizations involved in the dialogue, the narrow scope of areas for interaction, as well as the negative attitude of societies towards each other. The additional difficulties created by the Azerbaijani side for the participation of representatives of Nagorno- Karabagh in the events affect the range and depth of topics that can be discussed. They also touched on such issue as a desire rather to receive grants than do the real thing. Thus, one of the respondents expressed the view that “if NGOs are managed by the authorities in Azerbaijan, in Armenia they are managed by donors.” The effectiveness of initiatives is also affected by the fact that communication takes place only in third countries and is interrupted at the end of the next meeting.

The Armenian participants of the study more categorically than the Azerbaijani ones rejected the permissibility of collaboration between representatives of civil society and the media with special services - “otherwise it is not NGOs or the media, but something else.” At the same time, it is quite common among them that the partners involved in the dialogue initiatives from the neighboring country cooperate in one form or another with the state services, including the special services. Those who do not do so, were imprisoned, emigrated, or are forced to limit their activities to a large extent. At the same time, as a single opinion, it was mentioned that the Armenian participants of such contacts are “under the surveillance of the special services as well”.

The focus groups and in-depth interviews conducted in Armenia recorded certain level of unanimity on the activities of the Baku and Tbilisi Platforms for Peace. It was noted that they were created by the Azerbaijani authorities for manipulative purposes and are engaged exclusively in propaganda against Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.

It is noteworthy that in the Azerbaijani media the conditional statement that “the Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process” has not been reflected for the entire period of the monitoring. Taking into account the fact that rather recently the platforms have been intensively covered by some media, we can talk about the inefficiency of the relevant initiatives. The studied Azerbaijani media also completely ignored the conditional statement “Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should function under the control of the state”. Conclusions about the reasons for this can be drawn from the above comments of the participants in the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Two cases of

references to the mentioned civil platforms and one case of reference to the topic of state control were recorded in the Armenian media, which became the objects of monitoring. In all three cases, there was disagreement with the allegations.

## **10. THE CAPACITY OF CIVIL DIPLOMACY**

Most focus group participants and in-depth interviews, both in Azerbaijan and Armenia, noted that civil diplomacy has played a role in the past, which is now significantly reduced. Azerbaijani respondents often pointed to the period from 1993 to 2000 as the most favorable, and an opinion was expressed that the content and effectiveness of the Track 2 diplomacy was at that time ahead of the official negotiation format. As reasons for the situation change the participants of the discussions in the three focus groups held in Baku called, first of all, the attitude to civil diplomacy on the part of the authorities, and secondly, the attitude of the society, which has lost confidence in its effectiveness and perceives contacts as an imitation of useful activity. These two reasons switched places in only one focus group, where the majority of participants were social media activists. There was also a lack of funding for informal initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict.

In in-depth interviews with Azerbaijani officials, a view was expressed that civil diplomacy was effective when it kept pace with the efforts of the authorities (1994-2002). In the future, the benefits of it became less and less, although the government continued to support the initiatives without really interfering in their content (visits of journalists, meetings of human rights defenders, etc.). Apparently, the lack of results led to the complete refusal of their support. Representatives of the Azerbaijani opposition believe that previously the role of civil diplomacy was in demand so far as the peaceful settlement of the conflict remained a priority. One of the respondents of this category spoke categorically: there is no civil society in Azerbaijan, so there can be no civil diplomacy. The representatives of the civil society involved in the study had nearly the same assessments as the opposition regarding the “history” of Armenian-Azerbaijani diplomacy and its current role. The representatives of the media also attached importance to the availability of financial opportunities - “if there are grants - there will be civil diplomacy.”

The Armenian participants of the study mainly believe that civil diplomacy can play a huge role - as one of the respondents noted, “comparable to the mission of the Minsk Group.” Communication helped to get an idea of each other's positions, generated optimism about the settlement. But in today's realities all this potential is not used. Probably, the restriction of contacts resulted in the development of skepticism in the Armenian environment regarding the Track 2 diplomacy. Some respondents indicated that civil diplomacy was used by the authorities - each party for its own purposes - and did not play a separate role. It has been argued that civil diplomacy is basically rather an interpersonal communication and has not become institutional in nature - “it has more form than content.”

In general, consent among the Armenian participants of the study was formed around the phrase of one of the respondents that the “it would have been possible to define the effectiveness of civil diplomacy in the past years if we could imagine how relations would have developed without it.” Another respondent suggested his own criterion for evaluating the effectiveness: “since Azerbaijan rejected the civil diplomacy, it means that it was useful. As a special one, the opinion of an Armenian respondent is recorded that” diplomacy is the art of deception, and society cannot rely on lies. That is why the phrase itself is nonsense. And the Armenian-Azerbaijani cooperation on an informal level, has nothing to do with the diplomacy”. However, the majority of the Armenian participants of the study said that the more contacts with colleagues from Azerbaijan happen, the better.

Even if they do not directly affect the settlement, the trust that is built up as a result of human communication is valuable in itself. At the same time, one of the respondents noted that he “had to freeze contacts in order not to endanger Azerbaijani partners.”

In a focus group of representatives of Armenian civil society the following example of the action of people's diplomacy was cited: when some mass event (wedding, funeral, etc.) was planned in the border villages of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the villagers living in Russia -Armenians and Azerbaijanis - were ensuring that no shooting on the other side of the border was allowed these days. Another Armenian participant of the study referred to the fact that Armenians and Azerbaijanis living in Moscow interact on different issues. In this sense, their participation in civil diplomacy took place regardless of the attitudes of the Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities to it. “This channel for dialogue, like any other, should be used.”

Azerbaijani respondents were more active about the role of diasporas in civil diplomacy. Their opinions were divided approximately equally. Some held the view that the Azerbaijani diaspora is weak and fragmented. Others believe that both the Armenian and Azerbaijani diasporas can contribute to the civil initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict. Some respondents made a reservation that their involvement in the process can occur only after reaching political agreements between the parties at the official level. Although there were opinions that humanitarian actions, cooperation in the information sphere, the impact on the public mood, etc. may be relevant even before that. In particular, it was noted that the business and journalistic circles of the Armenian and Azerbaijani diasporas are able to revive the dialogue. There were also objections to such an approach, the essence of which was that the positions of Diaspora organizations are more radical and cannot contribute to a constructive dialogue.

Among the areas of cooperation within the framework of civil diplomacy, both Armenian and Azerbaijani participants of the study gave preference to initiatives in the humanitarian sphere. This direction was actively working during the war of 1992-1994 (cooperation to assist victims who find themselves in a difficult situation as a result of the conflict), and does not lose relevance today. At the same time, an opinion was expressed that the exchange of prisoners of war currently being carried out is a one-time action, while research, exchange of professional experience should be areas that ensure the stability of the dialogue. This view was held mainly by Armenian respondents.

The second area after humanitarian cooperation, which received the greatest support from respondents, is information. Namely, exchange of journalists, countering hybrid wars, the formation of the image of the enemy, etc. were meant. The discussions of settlement models with the participation of experts, different kind of research allowing to determine the sentiments of the citizens, the influence on the settlement process of institutions, whose activities have an impact on the conflict (political parties, public organizations, mass media, etc.) were also welcomed. Peace initiatives that promote the communication of different groups of citizens - young people, women, people of border areas also received positive assessment by many respondents. Particular importance was given to the use of contacts preserved from the past and the worked-out methods of interaction.

Despite the contradictions identified in this thematic section, discussions in focus groups and in-depth interviews allow us to conclude that the creation of favorable conditions by the state bodies of the parties, as well as international organizations and donors, mutual action in the regime of civil diplomacy has the potential to intensify.

The media's interest in the topic reflected in the conditional statement “Civil diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process” turned out to be greater in Armenia than in Azerbaijan. And two of the four studied Azerbaijani media (haqqin.az and Turan) generally bypassed this topic, and in “Yeni Musavat” disagreement prevailed, and in the online newspaper “Zerkalo” - consent with the above statement. Of the four Armenian media monitored, consent prevailed in three and disagreement in one (“Golos Armenii” newspaper). It is noteworthy that in the Armenian media the topic of civil diplomacy was more often than others touched upon by the representatives of authorities.

## **11. CONTRIBUTION, WHICH IS NOT ALWAYS IN DEMAND**

As noted in the previous parts, the contribution of international (foreign) donor organizations, NGOs and think-tanks to the solution of the Karabagh problem largely depends on the working conditions provided by the authorities of the parties to the conflict. And in this sense, especially in the last 10-15 years there have been many difficulties. Therefore, the role of international partners, according to the majority of the study participants, has significantly decreased. Azerbaijani officials, who participated in in-depth interviews, assessed it mostly negatively, explaining that foreign organizations proceeded, first of all, from the interests of other countries. Positive was only their contribution to the solution of humanitarian issues related to refugees, prisoners of war and hostages. According to the representatives of this category of participants, the effectiveness would be higher if foreign donors coordinated their activities with the relevant local structures - for example, with the State Support Fund for NGOs of Azerbaijan. There was also the traditional view, which had been voiced in the previous thematic sections that this resource could be more useful after the progress of the formal negotiations on the settlement of the conflict.

Among the Azerbaijani opposition representatives involved in the study, opinions were divided. One part believed that, as in the case of the Minsk Group, there is a lot of noise and travel in the activities of international donors and civil society organizations, but there is no result. Their opponents tend to be positive, although they note that little depends on these organizations - they can only contribute to the settlement process, but not solve problems instead of the parties to the conflict. For the same reason, foreign donors and NGOs cannot be active in Azerbaijan. Representatives of other categories of Azerbaijani respondents, recognizing the positive aspects of the activities of international organizations in the past and retained prospects for the future, pointed to the shortcomings: lack of coordination, ignorance of regional specifics, the selection of non-professional partners on the ground, sometimes having their own agenda, which should be treated with caution. In particular, as for the partners in Azerbaijan and Armenia, their different priorities were noted - some are genuinely interested in peace, some are set to freeze the conflict, and some are more aggressive.

Armenian respondents mainly spoke about the activities of international (foreign) donor organizations, NGOs and think-tanks in the same way as their Azerbaijani counterparts. This referred to differences in activity in the previous and current stages, weak coordination, and ineffective selection of partners on the ground, and ignorance of regional specifics, and the need to be careful about bringing the external agenda into the Karabagh context. On the other hand, it was noted that it was up to donors to provide opportunities, and it is grant recipients' responsibility how they take advantage of them. In particular, the tough competition for resources, which prevents NGOs from honestly and consistently fulfilling their mission, plays a negative role. According to one of the respondents, “donors prepared professional NGO figures who speak beautifully, but in that there are no feelings,



no content.” At the same time, the participants of the discussions in Armenian focus groups and in-depth interviews emphasized the different effectiveness of the activities of international donors and NGOs in Armenia and Azerbaijan. While in the first case they help to strengthen civil society and its participation in solving many problems, in the second, even those whose activities are not prohibited, are forced to exercise caution and have minimal impact on public opinion. One of the Armenian respondents, representing NGOs, described the contribution of international partners to the situation in Armenia as, in a good sense, “a mine of delayed action, which sooner or later will definitely work”. While in Azerbaijan, non-governmental organizations largely depend on the support of the state, and this does not contribute to their independence.

The described differences, according to the Armenian participants of the study, also affect the Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue on the Karabagh problem. If representatives of the civil society and media of the neighboring country can visit Armenia within the framework of programs supported by international organizations, Azerbaijan is much more closed. This may be one of the reasons for the extremely limited funding of bilateral projects from abroad. Moreover, the implementation of these projects is completely under the control of European organizations, “meanwhile, without intermediaries, Armenians and Azerbaijanis understand each other, as a rule, better.” Representatives of the Armenian expert community stressed that foreign donors should work more directly in Nagorno Karabagh, where it is necessary to develop the potential of the non-governmental sector. Since conflict resolution is a complex and multifaceted task, more attention should be paid to practical steps, such as, for example, mine action programs. Meanwhile, support from abroad for Armenian-Azerbaijani cooperation at the informal level is limited to the organization of “ceremonial meetings”.

In the context of numerous obstacles to direct Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue, some participants of the study from both countries stressed the importance of multilateral international platforms, which provide the parties to the conflict with additional opportunities for contacts. One of them in the last 10 years was the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. However, according to the majority of respondents from both Azerbaijan and Armenia, it contributed little to the interaction of representatives of civil society of the two countries. In part, its ineffectiveness in this issue is conditioned by the fact that the forum brought together too different NGOs, that the European Union itself was not interested in fully using this platform. The problem of the relationship of national platforms of the CSF with the authorities of their own countries was also noted. A view was also expressed that although the Forum had access to the EU resources, opportunities for direct communication and consultation with high-level international officials, access to a wide range of professionals, it is not enough to take advantage of these opportunities. CSF national platforms in Armenia and Azerbaijan retain a chance to do something in the future, but only if they manage to develop a joint action plan. Scattered efforts will be unsuccessful.

No matter how limited the capacity of international donors, non-governmental organizations and think-tanks to work in the sphere of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations is, and no matter how difficult the task of involving relevant partners from the region in the dialogue is, there remains a demand for their assistance in the settlement of the conflict. It is supplemented by the recovering demand for greater confidence in local players, their ability to independently solve project problems.

Only three media (two Azerbaijani and one Armenian) covered the topic indicated by the conditional statement “International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations

contribute to the establishment of a dialogue for the sake of settlement. ” In “Turan” and news.am publications consent was expressed, and on “Yeni Musavat” - only disagreement with the above statement (eight references to the topic were equally divided between the representatives of the authorities and the expert community). The fact that these data reflect the editorial position of this newspaper is confirmed by its references to another conditional statement “No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict.” In all 9 consent with this was expressed - in 5 cases the authors of the relevant statements were representatives of the authorities. In other Azerbaijani or Armenian media studied references to that statement have not been recorded.

## **12. DIFFERENT FACES OF MEDIA**

The study recorded significant contradictions among the participants' views on the fundamental mission of the media, expectations from them in specific circumstances and assessments of the actual role they play, in particular, in the context of the Karabagh settlement. Thus, Azerbaijani officials involved in in-depth interviews outlined the tasks of the media as the protection of statehood, education of the population's patriotic feelings and countering the information impact of the opposing side. They emphasize that journalists should not spread unconfirmed information and rumors that may weaken the country's defense, and should not disclose military secrets. Even informing the world community, one must think about protecting his/her country. Of course, at the same time, as noted by Azerbaijani officials, “the conflict should be covered truthfully,” the media “should not fan the flames out of nothing becoming an additional source of irritation for the population”.

The majority of representatives of other categories of Azerbaijani respondents defined the main mission of journalists as “prompt and qualitative reflection of reality”. However, representatives of the expert community and non-governmental organizations believe that the media is highly ideologized and contribute to stirring up emotions. Journalists themselves and active users of social networks who took part in the study, more positively assess the role of the media, although they recognize the influence of state structures on them. It is noteworthy that Azerbaijani journalists had diametrically opposed views on the mission of their profession: some of them repeated the approaches of officials, others were in solidarity with the views of the opposition. Referring to the activities of the media to cover the Karabagh conflict, including promoting dialogue between communities, it was stressed that in modern conditions there are no grounds to expect more from them in the current situation (for example, providing a platform for different views on the settlement, multilateral analysis of the situation and the consequences of the conflict) than reliable coverage of events.

There was a greater unity of views among the Armenian respondents. They almost unanimously recognized that the media, carrying out its primary mission - to disseminate facts and ideas - would play a positive role in the settlement process. But in practice, they are under strong political influence and serve as an instrument of propaganda in the Nagorno- Karabagh issue. At the same time, a point of view was expressed that it would be wrong to expect a different response from the Armenian media to the spread of hostility by Azerbaijan. “The spread of hatred translates into cruelty towards each other, which was manifested in the April 2016 war.” The problem is further compounded by the low professional level of journalists. Summarizing, we can quote one of the participants in the focus groups: “the media cannot be separated from politics and society, they are their

mirror. And those who do not participate in the Armenian-Azerbaijani information war are a clear minority. If the mood changes, so will the media.”

Several other statements of the Armenian participants of the study deserve attention. “Journalists and media should be diplomats and act on the principle of “do no harm”. “There must be a differentiation between information for internal use and information for the outside world.” “During the April 2016 war, the Armenian media acted very freely, and the Azerbaijani media were limited in opportunities. This gave Armenian sources an advantage in the information sphere.” “The media is an important institution that becomes destructive during conflicts.”

As in the other thematic sections of the study, Armenian respondents were inclined to compare the situation in their own country with that of their neighbors, which was less characteristic of discussions and interviews carried out in Azerbaijan. Some of them stressed that the media can play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict in Armenia, but not in Azerbaijan, where an atmosphere of hostility is created. The tension in the information space has increased due to the spread of propaganda war on social networks. At the same time, an opinion was expressed that the pro-government approach of the Azerbaijani media has a positive side - in a certain situation, Baku will be able to reconfigure them for a peaceful way.

The idea of a joint professional media code as a mechanism to reduce tension on the Armenian-Azerbaijani “information front” was close to many participants of the study. According to them, international organizations, one way or another related to the Karabagh conflict, should initiate a process on the development of such a code. Although it was widely believed that such initiatives are meaningless, because still no one will follow ethical standards. The formation of the institute of media self-regulation requires greater independence of this industry, which is not applicable to the parties to the conflict. Moreover, social networks have a significant impact on the information climate, and the code is not applicable to their users.

While agreeing with the skeptics, some respondents at the same time noted that, despite the difficulties with the application, it is worth formulating the norms of professional behavior of journalists. The very fact of the existence of such a code in the future will have an impact on the work of the media. Many participants of the study in Azerbaijan, as in the case of other initiatives aimed at reducing the tension in Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, argued that the joint journalistic code becomes important only after the political settlement of the Karabagh conflict.

The analysis of the results of the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews confirms the importance of bringing the media sphere in the region in maximum compliance with the norms of a democratic, civilized society. This will allow to count on the positive role of the media in the settlement of the conflict. Without appropriate changes, the vast majority of the information sphere will remain at the mercy of propaganda and hybrid wars. At the same time, even in today's reality, it is necessary to monitor Armenian and Azerbaijani media from time to time, track trends, and talk about journalists' compliance with basic professional standards. In particular, joining and following the Joint Code of Ethics can be proposed as a condition for participation in mutual working visits of journalists and other initiatives supported by international donor organizations.

The monitoring has recorded very few publications on the role of the media in the Karabagh conflict settlement process - 5 in the Azerbaijani media and one in the Armenian

media. Of these six references to the conditional statements “Cooperation of the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the exchange of information contributed (or could contribute) to the formation of a favorable climate in the settlement process” and “In the context of the conflict, the media should maintain objectivity and meet ethical standards, not be involved in information wars” consent and neutral attitude were equally divided.

### **13. SPACE FOR CONSENT**

One of the two topics on which the positions of the Azerbaijani and Armenian participants of the study were the closest is the attitude to the appropriateness of considering other conflicts in the territory of the former Soviet Union in a single format and context. The dominant view was that conflicts are very different, each developed in specific conditions and different geopolitical contexts. Commonalities are so small that they are not worth focusing on. Throughout the USSR there are no positive precedents that would be worth borrowing, especially since all these conflicts are only getting worse. There is only a negative experience of solving problems, although it can be studied to learn lessons and not to repeat mistakes. Some participants of the study both in Armenia and Azerbaijan paid attention to specific, noteworthy elements Transnistria situation. In particular, it was noted that they managed to remove the military component of the conflict, that Moldova does not hinder the free movement of both residents of the region and its foreign visitors. Transnistria is not excluded from international and intra-Moldovan economic relations, sports events, etc.

In focus groups and in-depth interviews conducted in Azerbaijan, many interlocutors stressed that the commonality of post-Soviet conflicts is that Russia is behind them. However, this was not considered as a circumstance that makes it appropriate to approach them in a common way. There was only a single opinion, which did not exclude the formation of a common platform for solving post-Soviet inter-ethnic problems. Some Azerbaijani respondents insisted on the general principle of settlement of all conflicts - the inviolability of borders. Some experts differentiated conflicts in the European part of the former USSR, which have a geopolitical component, and in Central Asia, where the use of water resources and customs and border rules disputed by neighbors are at the heart of the contradictions. If the same problems were the essence of the Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation, the Karabagh conflict, in their opinion, would have been settled long ago.

One of the Armenian respondents noted that there are no similar conflicts not only in the post-Soviet space, but also in the world, which means that it is pointless to look for a useful experience anywhere. Another pointed to the largely artificial nature of the conflicts on the territory of the former USSR, which were laid by the system itself and sooner or later were supposed to explode. In a sense, this opinion is consistent with the point of view of another Armenian participant of the study on the general basis of the origin of conflicts - the artificiality of the internal borders of the USSR. However, he notes that fundamental differences began to appear in the process of development of these conflicts, including those relating to the search of solutions. The Baltic countries, and in particular their relations with Russia and the situation of their Russian-speaking population, were mentioned as an example worthy of attention. Despite the sharp contradictions at the interstate level, the cohabitation of representatives of different nationalities is free from threats of violence, and other problems tend to be resolved. Another three opinions of Armenian respondents, reflecting to some extent a similar approach, were that the common principle for the settlement of all post-Soviet conflicts could be the expression of the will of the people living in the relevant territory. In this sense, the difference of Nagorno Karabagh is that it raises the issue of self-determination, while other conflicts in the

territory of the former USSR are based on contradictions and disputes between states. A positive precedent would have been set if “one of the conflicts had been resolved on the basis of the full range of norms of international law, including the right to self-determination, exercised by free will.”

Finally, an attitude close to complete unanimity of both Azerbaijani and Armenian participants of the study, was manifested with regard to the question “is a comprehensive analysis of the achievements and mistakes in the settlement process necessary to determine the priorities of the most important efforts at the level of the negotiating parties, mediators, civil society, experts and the media?” The respondents consider this analysis important for future efforts towards a settlement, moreover, many emphasized the necessity of its periodic conduct to rethink the situation at different stages. The importance of conclusions and recommendations arising from such initiatives, as well as a clear goal-setting, including the need to change the sentiments in the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities, was noted. An opinion was expressed that research should not remain at the level of analysis, but should also play an applied role. Any initiative should set a specific task, for example, countering the language of hostility. A special role of research projects is that other forms of interaction between Armenian and Azerbaijani partners have become very problematic, and joint expert and analytical work is possible. One respondent stressed: “We are becoming cynical and skeptical of all peacekeeping efforts. But such studies help to understand that not all people on the other side think the same, that Armenians and Azerbaijanis can be close in mind and spirit. Isn't this helpful?”

In Azerbaijan, only active users of social networks voiced doubts about the appropriateness of research projects, since their practical effect is extremely low. And one of the respondents in Armenia believes that the research will help to understand the situation, if the participants are people who have gone through the problem and feel pain.

Answers to questions about the need for a comprehensive analysis of various aspects of the conflict in comparison with the results of the thematic section, where the most popular areas of cooperation were discussed (see above), give cause for some optimism about the prospects for further interaction between Armenian and Azerbaijani representatives of civil society and experts. Although the appropriateness of the common efforts of the parties involved in various conflicts on the territory of the former USSR received a very skeptical assessment from the respondents, the research component (in particular, the lessons learned, allowing not to repeat others' mistakes) was not rejected. From this follows that this component may in some cases be included in the context of studies on the Karabagh conflict.

## **ANNEX 1:**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FOCUS-GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS**

1. Do you see in principle an alternative to the settlement of the Karabagh conflict through peaceful negotiations?
2. Can a military solution to a conflict (not a freeze, but a decision with legal consequences) be final or effective for a long period of time (minimum 50 years)?
3. What format of negotiations is the most optimal for you (Co-chairs of the Minsk Group , mediation of the UN, the EU, any other country, without intermediaries, another)?
4. Does the composition of the Minsk Group co-chairs require any changes or additions?
5. Which method of settlement seems to be the most acceptable and the most realistic: compromise agreements; coercion by the international community; normalization of relations with a deferred settlement decision; another?
6. What role in the negotiation process should be assigned to the representatives of the NK?
7. What was the impact of the war in April 2016 for a dialogue on various levels (official, expert, civil)?
8. What is your opinion about the implementation of preliminary agreements in Vienna and St. Petersburg of May-June 2016 on the extension of the monitoring of the line of contact, withdrawal of heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening of confidence-building measures, reduction of aggressive rhetoric?
9. Are the democratic changes in both countries a mandatory (desirable) condition for a settlement?
10. Did the “velvet revolution” in Armenia affect the prospects of the negotiation process? How?
11. Do the internal political processes in Azerbaijan influence the course of negotiations? How?
12. Which of the models of settlement discussed at the official or unofficial level seems to you the most acceptable (realistic): the NK de jure in Azerbaijan, de facto dependent, “common state”, “Aland model”, “exchange of territories” (Goble plan), “territories in exchange for status”, “territories in exchange for peace”, “Madrid Principles” (specify how they are understood), another (including combined)?
13. What period of the negotiation process was the most promising in terms of the possibility of reaching an agreement? Why?
14. How do you assess Russia's role in the conflict: in the context of modern history and now?
15. Is the Eurasian Economic Union and Eurasian integration as a whole a separate factor in Armenian-Azerbaijani relations?
16. What role can the hypothetical accession of the AR to the CSTO play?
17. In your opinion, is the settlement of the Karabagh conflict among the priorities of the US foreign policy?
18. Does the EU use all its capabilities to resolve the conflict?
19. Could the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations contribute to the settlement of the Karabagh conflict?

20. Does Georgia (including official structures, NGOs, media) have a special role in the settlement of the Karabagh conflict and the normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations?
21. To what extent is the experience of the settlement of other conflicts in the territory of the former USSR (including at the official and unofficial levels) applicable and can contribute to the process in Armenian-Azerbaijani relations? Is it appropriate to consider all these problems in unified formats and contexts?
22. How justified is the practice of “blacklists” against foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, politicians and experts visiting the conflict zone without the consent of the authorities of countries with de jure sovereignty over these territories?
23. Does (did) civil diplomacy have an impact on the settlement process?
24. What political (geopolitical) factors and in what periods influenced the intensity and effectiveness of the dialogue (interaction) of representatives of civil society?
25. Which forms of interaction of civil society were the most effective: humanitarian (prisoners of war, hostages, refugees, etc.) peacekeeping (rapprochement, communication, etc.); discussion of settlement models; exchange of experience (on the situation and reforms in different spheres of life, etc.); joint research; countering information wars, formation of the image of the enemy; another?
26. What is the “added value” of the interaction between the Armenian and Azerbaijani civil society? How is it used at the official level?
27. What role do the media play and should play in the coverage of the Karabagh conflict and Armenian-Azerbaijani relations?
28. Is an informal code of conduct for journalists (or a specific group of journalists) specializing in coverage of the Karabagh conflict and Armenian-Azerbaijani relations possible?
29. To what extent do the conditions of the activities of non-governmental organizations in Azerbaijan and Armenia allow for an effective dialogue at the level of civil society, expert community and journalists?
30. Is it acceptable for representatives of civil society and the media to interact with the secret services of their countries on issues related to the NK and the relations between Armenia and Armenia? How can this interaction be?
31. How do you see the involvement of the NK civil society in the regional projects along with the partners from RA and AR?
32. What needs to be changed to enable civil society and the media to make a major contribution to the resolution of the conflict?
33. Can the Azerbaijani and Armenian diasporas contribute to the civil initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict?
34. Are you aware of the Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace? How do you assess its activities, as well as the effectiveness of other initiatives over the past 2-3 years?
35. How do you assess the contribution of international (foreign) donor organizations in the settlement of the conflict?
36. How can international and foreign non-governmental organizations and think tanks contribute to the Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue and settlement of the conflict? How effectively do they carry out this mission?
37. To what extent can structures such as the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and its national platforms contribute to the Armenian-Azerbaijani civil dialogue?

38. Is a comprehensive analysis of achievements and mistakes now needed to prioritize further efforts at the level of civil society, experts and the media? Do the conflicting parties and international structures need such an analysis to put it into practice in the current specific circumstances?



## ANNEX 2:

# METHODOLOGY OF THE MONITORING OF THE COVERAGE OF ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI RELATIONS

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Monitoring objectives** - identification and recording through analysis of quantitative data on the level of attention of the studied Azerbaijani and Armenian media to various aspects of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations.
2. The monitoring is conducted in parallel in Azerbaijan and Armenia on a single methodology and in the same time periods;
3. **Period of conduct of monitoring: September 16 - October 15, 2018 and November 16 - December 15, 2018;**
4. Monitoring includes **4 Internet-editions/versions of the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia** respectively.

#### IN AZERBAIJAN:

Haqqin.az (<https://haqqin.az>)

Turan.az ([http://www.turan.az/index\\_az.html](http://www.turan.az/index_az.html))

Yeni Müsavat (<http://musavat.com>)

Zerkalo.az (<http://zerkalo.az/>)

#### IN ARMENIA:

Aravot.am (<https://www.aravot.am>)

Golos Armenii (<http://www.golosarmenii.am>)

Lragir.am (<https://www.lragir.am>)

News.am (<https://news.am>)

5. **The object of monitoring are:** all archived (for the previous day) pieces of the above-mentioned Internet publications/media versions, **except for** commercial/political/social advertising and announcements, “pure” photographs (outside publications and without headlines, texts).

6. **The subject to monitoring are:** the range of topics outlined in the mentioned conditional statements.

## THE MONITORING METHODOLOGY

### I. The main unit of study is **the online piece**.

#### ***The following is regarded as an online piece:***

text unit, distinct in its theme, composition and design, meaning:

- separate article, news report, interview, etc.;
- announcements to publications were considered as part of the story they referred to;
- headline/subheadline, lead (i.e. the text after the headline/subheadline, which precedes the publication and contains the main idea of the article) were considered as part of the story they referred to;
- editorial comment on a certain publication, distinguished by words “Editor’s note”, “Editorial comment”, etc., was considered as part of the piece it referred to;
- photograph (drawings, sketches, cartoons, collages, illustrations, graphics, etc.), which was not part of the publication yet contained a headline or a text, or conveyed a certain message, was viewed as a separate piece. If a photograph accompanied the publication, it was considered a part of the piece it referred to;
- if the text material was accompanied by video (audio), it was considered as a single multimedia publication;
- if the video (audio) was not part of the publication, but was a separate piece (with headline, text, etc.), then such a material was viewed as a separate multimedia publication.

### II. Monitors ***determined and recorded:***

#### **1. Pieces dedicated to the Karabagh conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani relations or containing any mentionings of them**

The number of pieces dedicated to the Karabagh conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani relations or containing any mentionings of it was determined and recorded. The category included all such pieces regardless of whether they contained any conditional statement.

#### **2. Total amount of studied pieces containing conditional statements**

Monitors determined and recorded the number of pieces containing conditional statements.

The range of topics containing the most actual and discussed conditional statements on the Armenian-Azerbaijani relations was determined.

## LIST OF CONDITIONAL STATEMENTS

1.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future
2.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises
3.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players
4.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative
5.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict
6.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible
7.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict
8.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process
9.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict
10.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem
11.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear
12.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow
13.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution
14.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement
15.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement
16.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process
17.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states
18.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process
19.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests
20.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war
21.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process
22.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone
23.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects

In the course of the study the above-mentioned statements were viewed not literally but in essence. The content of a certain statement could be presented in different wording, the most important was to deliver the main message, the idea of the statement. At the same time, even if the piece contained only a part of idea of the formulated statement, it was a sufficient reason for its recording.

### **3. Number of references to the conditional statements in pieces**

Monitors determined and recorded the number of references to every concrete conditional statement in the piece. Hereafter (in the categories below) the principle of repeatability applied: each statement (connotation, author) was recorded as many times as it was repeated in the same piece.

### **4. Nature of references to the conditional statements by the authors/carriers of the statements**

Monitors determined and recorded the attitude of the author contained in the piece (carrier, quoted person) to the conditional statement: **consent** of the author with the statement (+), **disagreement** with it (-), **neutral** acknowledgement (0).

The principle of repeatability also applied here: the attitude of the author/carrier towards the statement was determined as many times as it was voiced.

All the doubts of the monitor regarding the uncertainty of the nature of reference were interpreted in favor of neutral reference.

### **5. Authors/carriers of the conditional statement**

Monitors determined and recorded the authors/carriers of the conditional statements, as well as the side they represented:

- **Azerbaijani side**
- **Armenian side**
- **Third side.**

If the author/carrier of the statement was a representative of the country studied (for Azerbaijan - Azerbaijani media, for Armenia - Armenian media), then his/her type of activity was also determined.

The Azerbaijani authors/ carriers of the statement (in the studied pieces of the Azerbaijani media) and the Armenian authors/ carriers of the statement (in the studied pieces of the Armenian media) were grouped into the following categories:

1. journalists/editorial office of the media;
2. representatives of the authorities (state, local self-government bodies);
3. opposition representatives;
4. civil society organizations representatives (including media NGOs/experts/public figures);
5. ordinary citizens/ Vox populi;
6. others.

In this, categories **2** and **3** were determined in the following way:

1. If the party affiliation of the author/carrier of the statement was underlined in the piece, then the latter was determining. For example, if Minister N was the author of the statement, but at the same time it was noted in the piece that he is a member of the opposition (not ruling) party Y, then the author was listed in the category "Opposition representatives".
2. If the party affiliation of Minister N was not mentioned, then he was listed in the category "Representatives of the authorities".
3. If Minister N was a representative of the ruling party, he/she was listed in the category "Representatives of the authorities" regardless of whether his/her ruling party affiliation was underlined in the piece or not.

The principle of repeatability also applied here: it was mentioned who the author/carrier of the statement was and from which country as many times as the statement was voiced.

All the above-mentioned categories were measured in **units**.

### **III. Note from monitors**

Monitors prepare a short note on each media with their comments, conclusions and impressions regarding the studied content, which was object of the monitoring.

**ANNEX 3:**  
**CHARTS OF THE MONITORING**

**MEDIA IN ARMENIA**  
**Aravot.am, Golos Armenii, Lragir.am, News.am**  
**16 September - 15 October, 16 November - 15 December 2018**

Pieces on/containing references to the Karabagh conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani relations		1876												
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements		697												
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement								Azerbaijani side	Third side
		+	-	0	Armenian side						Others			
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi					
1.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	571	560	7	4	31	334	14	12	0	2	13	165	
2.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	525	120	372	33	62	48	313	44	0	2	22	34	
3.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	352	345	0	7	30	184	20	30	0	1	17	70	
4.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	244	29	213	2	7	139	49	9	0	1	22	17	
5.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	206	191	10	5	4	108	9	6	0	2	5	72	
6.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	85	68	12	5	17	1	7	6	0	0	1	53	
7.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	64	53	6	5	14	0	4	4	0	0	0	42	
8.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	56	32	11	13	16	3	4	2	0	0	2	29	
9.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	47	23	22	2	12	6	15	6	0	0	5	3	
10.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	40	24	13	3	18	0	0	0	0	0	17	5	
11.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact	39	31	7	1	4	21	0	5	0	0	0	9	

	on the settlement process												
12.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	29	5	19	5	0	11	5	2	0	0	0	11
13.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	25	13	8	4	1	1	6	3	0	0	2	12
14.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	21	21	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	5	11
15.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	15	10	3	2	5	1	3	2	0	0	0	4
16.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	12	1	10	1	2	1	0	5	0	0	0	4
17.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
18.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
20.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>2337</b>	<b>1529</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>541</b>



**MEDIA IN AZERBAIJAN**  
**Haqqin.az, Turan.az, Yeni Müsavat, Zerkalo.az**  
**16 September - 15 October, 16 November - 15 December 2018**

Pieces on/containing mentionings on the Karabagh conflict, Azerbaijani-Armenian relations													847	
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements													445	
Conditional statements		Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement							Armenian side	Third side
			+	-	0	Azerbaijani side					Others			
						Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi				
1.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	340	82	216	42	96	96	9	105	0	0	14	20	
2.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	334	254	63	17	123	32	20	100	0	0	26	33	
3.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	280	103	160	17	51	89	5	63	0	0	8	64	
4.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	277	203	59	15	110	19	20	89	0	0	10	29	
5.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	244	169	65	10	39	71	2	37	0	0	29	66	
6.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	126	14	75	37	19	64	0	15	0	5	13	10	
7.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	94	66	28	0	22	18	0	16	0	0	35	3	
8.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	45	33	8	4	16	2	1	18	0	0	2	6	
9.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	39	36	3	0	10	9	0	5	0	0	1	14	
10.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	39	36	1	2	8	2	0	15	0	0	0	14	
11.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	36	10	22	4	11	1	0	13	1	0	3	7	
12.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the	32	26	3	3	11	5	0	2	0	0	10	4	

	heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process												
13.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	12	4	8	0	0	4	0	8	0	0	0	0
14.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	11	9	2	0	3	6	0	1	0	0	0	1
15.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	10	5	5	0	6	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
16.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	9	9	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	3
17.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	7	5	1	1	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
18.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
19.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
20.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>1941</b>	<b>1066</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>277</b>

**MEDIA IN ARMENIA**  
**Aravot.am, Golos Armenii, Lragir.am, News.am**  
**16 September - 15 October 2018**

Pieces on/containing references to the Karabagh conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani relations						896							
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements						337							
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement								
		+	-	0	Armenian side						Azerbaijani side	Third side	
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/Experts/Public figures	Vox populi	Others			
1.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	387	378	5	4	28	223	4	5	0	2	12	113
2.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	213	206	0	7	22	101	8	19	0	0	14	49
3.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	126	121	4	1	4	76	2	3	0	2	1	38
4.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	104	23	81	0	5	70	1	6	0	0	21	1
5.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	103	31	51	21	30	5	8	18	0	0	21	21
6.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	55	45	7	3	15	1	1	3	0	0	1	34
7.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	41	35	4	2	13	0	0	3	0	0	0	25
8.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	29	23	3	3	7	2	0	0	0	0	1	19
9.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	27	18	9	0	9	6	2	2	0	0	5	3
10.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	26	18	7	1	4	12	0	4	0	0	0	6
11.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	25	14	8	3	16	0	0	0	0	0	8	1

12.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	21	0	16	5	0	10	3	2	0	0	0	6
13.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	14	14	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	10
14.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	11	5	5	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	1	5
15.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	8	0	7	1	2	1	0	4	0	0	0	1
16.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	7	6	1	0	4	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
17.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
18.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
20.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>1203</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>332</b>

**MEDIA IN AZERBAIJAN**  
**Haqqin.az, Turan.az, Yeni Müsavat, Zerkalo.az**  
**16 September - 15 October 2018**

Pieces on/containing mentionings on the Karabagh conflict, Azerbaijani-Armenian relations						430							
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements						270							
Conditional statements		Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement							
			+	-	0	Azerbaijani side						Armenian side	Third side
						Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi	Others		
1.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	187	24	154	9	54	61	8	42	0	0	5	17
2.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	181	140	31	10	59	24	20	52	0	0	6	20
3.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	156	119	27	10	56	16	20	42	0	0	5	17
4.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	136	90	43	3	23	28	2	30	0	0	24	29
5.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	120	14	72	34	19	60	0	13	0	5	13	10
6.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	98	55	34	9	16	25	0	24	0	0	6	27
7.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	36	30	6	0	8	12	0	7	0	0	9	0
8.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	32	26	3	3	11	5	0	2	0	0	10	4
9.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	27	5	21	1	7	1	0	10	1	0	3	5
10.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	17	17	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	0	3
11.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	15	14	1	0	5	2	0	4	0	0	0	4

12.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	9	8	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	4
13.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	6	1	5	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
14.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	4	4	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
15.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	4	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
16.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
17.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
18.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
19.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>143</b>

**MEDIA IN ARMENIA**  
**Aravot.am, Golos Armenii, Lragir.am, News.am**  
**16 November - 15 December 2018**

Pieces on/containing references to the Karabagh conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani relations		980											
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements		360											
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement								
		+	-	0	Armenian side						Azerbaijani side	Third side	
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi	Others			
1.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	422	89	321	12	32	43	305	26	0	2	1	13
2.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	184	182	2	0	3	111	10	7	0	0	1	52
3.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	140	6	132	2	2	69	48	3	0	1	1	16
4.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	139	139	0	0	8	83	12	11	0	1	3	21
5.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	80	70	6	4	0	32	7	3	0	0	4	34
6.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	30	23	5	2	2	0	6	3	0	0	0	19
7.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	27	9	8	10	9	1	4	2	0	0	1	10
8.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	23	18	2	3	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	17
9.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	20	5	13	2	3	0	13	4	0	0	0	0
10.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	15	10	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	9	4

11.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	14	8	3	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	1	7
12.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	13	13	0	0	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	3
13.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	8	4	2	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	4
14.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	8	5	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	5
15.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	1
16.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
17.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>1134</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>209</b>



**MEDIA IN AZERBAIJAN**  
**Haqqin.az, Turan.az, Yeni Müsavat, Zerkalo.az**  
**16 November - 15 December 2018**

Pieces on/containing mentionings on the Karabagh conflict, Azerbaijani-Armenian relations		417												
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements		175												
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement								Armenian side	Third side
		+	-	0	Azerbaijani side						Others			
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi	Others				
1.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	182	48	126	8	35	64	5	39	0	0	2	37	
2.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	153	114	32	7	64	8	0	48	0	0	20	13	
3.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	153	58	62	33	42	35	1	63	0	0	9	3	
4.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	121	84	32	5	54	3	0	47	0	0	5	12	
5.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	108	79	22	7	16	43	0	7	0	0	5	37	
6.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	58	36	22	0	14	6	0	9	0	0	26	3	
7.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	30	28	2	0	9	7	0	4	0	0	0	10	
8.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	28	16	8	4	9	2	1	11	0	0	2	3	
9.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	24	22	0	2	3	0	0	11	0	0	0	10	
10.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	9	5	1	3	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	
11.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	8	6	2	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	
12.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	8	4	4	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	

13.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	6	5	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
14.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	6	0	3	3	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0
15.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	5	5	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
16.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	4	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
18.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>134</b>

## MEDIA IN ARMENIA

Aravot.am

16 September - 15 October, 16 November - 15 December 2018

Pieces on/containing references to the Karabagh conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani relations		489											
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements		207											
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement								
		+	-	0	Armenian side						Azerbaijani side	Third side	
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi	Others			
1.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	149	143	4	2	3	85	8	6	0	2	8	37
2.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	124	124	0	0	8	61	10	10	0	1	8	26
3.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	102	26	73	3	5	9	63	8	0	0	10	7
4.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	60	56	1	3	0	31	3	2	0	2	3	19
5.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	48	4	44	0	1	29	9	3	0	1	4	1
6.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	18	14	3	1	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	12
7.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	18	8	10	0	2	3	7	3	0	0	2	1
8.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	17	9	4	4	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	12
9.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	15	10	3	2	1	0	3	1	0	0	2	8
10.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	14	10	2	2	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	9
11.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	6	1	5	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	1

12.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	6	6	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	2
13.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
14.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
15.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
16.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
18.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>137</b>

**MEDIA IN ARMENIA**  
**Golos Armenii**  
**16 September - 15 October, 16 November - 15 December 2018**

Pieces on/containing references to the Karabagh conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani relations						348							
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements						136							
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement								
		+	-	0	Armenian side						Azerbaijani side	Third side	
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/Experts/Public figures	Vox populi	Others			
1.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	125	122	2	1	7	69	0	0	0	0	1	48
2.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	92	10	74	8	27	8	34	7	0	1	4	11
3.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	57	10	47	0	3	36	2	2	0	0	9	5
4.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	57	57	0	0	5	21	0	4	0	0	6	21
5.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	45	39	5	1	1	20	3	1	0	0	1	19
6.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	30	16	11	3	13	0	0	0	0	0	15	2
7.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	25	20	4	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	21
8.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	21	8	7	6	10	0	1	0	0	0	2	8
9.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	16	15	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
10.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	12	5	5	2	5	1	3	2	0	0	0	1
11.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	11	3	7	1	4	3	0	4	0	0	0	0

12.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	10	2	5	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	7
13.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
14.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
15.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
16.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
17.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>166</b>

## MEDIA IN ARMENIA

Lragir.am

16 September - 15 October, 16 November - 15 December 2018

Pieces on/containing references to the Karabagh conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani relations		455												
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements		157												
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement								Azerbaijani side	Third side
		+	-	0	Armenian side						Others			
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi					
1.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	158	156	1	1	16	97	2	4	0	0	3	36	
2.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	117	50	55	12	26	16	47	14	0	0	8	6	
3.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	85	81	0	4	17	45	3	12	0	0	3	5	
4.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	44	42	1	1	3	28	1	0	0	0	1	11	
5.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	43	7	36	0	3	32	2	0	0	0	6	0	
6.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	26	19	4	3	14	0	0	2	0	0	0	10	
7.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	21	16	2	3	12	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	
8.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	15	15	0	0	0	11	0	1	0	0	0	3	
9.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	11	7	4	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	
10.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	10	7	0	3	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	
11.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	8	8	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	1	2	

12.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	7	4	1	2	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
13.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	5	1	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
14.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	5	1	2	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1
15.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	4	1	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
16.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
17.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>93</b>



## MEDIA IN ARMENIA

News.am

16 September - 15 October, 16 November - 15 December 2018

Pieces on/containing references to the Karabagh conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani relations		584											
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements		197											
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement								
		+	-	0	Armenian side						Azerbaijani side	Third side	
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi	Others			
1.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	214	34	170	10	4	15	169	15	0	1	0	10
2.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	139	139	0	0	5	83	4	2	0	0	1	44
3.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	96	8	86	2	0	42	36	4	0	0	3	11
4.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	86	83	0	3	0	57	7	4	0	0	0	18
5.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	57	54	3	0	0	29	2	3	0	0	0	23
6.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	16	15	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	10
7.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	13	12	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	10
8.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	9	1	6	2	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	2
9.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	8	8	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
10.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	7	7	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
11.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	6	3	3	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0

12.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	6	6	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
13.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	4	0	3	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
14.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	4	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
15.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	3	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
16.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
17.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
19.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
20.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>145</b>

**MEDIA IN AZERBAIJAN**  
**Haqqin.az**  
**16 September - 15 October, 16 November - 15 December 2018**

Pieces on/containing mentionings on the Karabagh conflict, Azerbaijani-Armenian relations			211												
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements			88												
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement									Armenian side	Third side
		+	-	0	Azerbaijani side						Others				
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi						
1.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	70	68	1	1	2	24	0	0	0	0	0	13	31	
2.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	31	17	11	3	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	
3.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	30	6	6	18	0	10	0	0	0	2	0	8	10	
4.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	28	2	22	4	4	16	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	
5.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	25	13	0	12	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	13	5	
6.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	11	5	0	6	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	
7.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	10	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	
8.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	6	3	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	
9.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	4	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	
10.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	

11.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
12.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>76</b>

## MEDIA IN AZERBAIJAN

Turan.az

16 September - 15 October, 16 November - 15 December 2018

Pieces on/containing mentionings on the Karabagh conflict, Azerbaijani-Armenian relations		89													
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements		53													
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement									Armenian side	Third side
		+	-	0	Azerbaijani side						Others				
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi						
1.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	45	22	19	4	5	17	0	7	0	0	4	12		
2.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	33	22	11	0	2	9	0	13	0	0	4	5		
3.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	22	12	10	0	8	2	1	7	0	0	1	3		
4.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	21	9	10	2	2	8	1	10	0	0	0	0		
5.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	19	9	10	0	8	0	1	6	0	0	1	3		
6.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	7	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0		
7.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	6	4	2	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	2	0		
8.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	6	6	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1		
9.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	5	0	5	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1		
10.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0		

11.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
12.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
13.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
14.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
15.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
16.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total (units)</b>		<b>176</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

**MEDIA IN AZERBAIJAN**  
**Yeni Müsavat**  
**16 September - 15 October, 16 November - 15 December 2018**

Pieces on/containing mentionings on the Karabagh conflict, Azerbaijani-Armenian relations		471												
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements		254												
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors			Authors/carriers of the conditional statement								Armenian side	Third side
		+	-	0	Azerbaijani side						Others			
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi	Others				
1.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	254	64	157	33	60	70	8	94	0	0	9	13	
2.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	239	194	40	5	78	15	19	93	0	0	12	22	
3.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	200	155	36	9	64	9	19	83	0	0	5	20	
4.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	145	49	92	4	18	41	0	54	0	0	4	28	
5.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	114	66	39	9	24	33	2	18	0	0	7	30	
6.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	75	59	16	0	19	17	0	13	0	0	23	3	
7.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	72	2	52	18	10	45	0	15	0	0	2	0	
8.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	35	33	0	2	7	2	0	14	0	0	0	12	
9.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	33	23	6	4	7	2	1	18	0	0	0	5	
10.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	32	32	0	0	9	8	0	4	0	0	1	10	
11.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	18	4	13	1	3	0	0	10	1	0	3	1	
12.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the	15	13	2	0	7	2	0	2	0	0	4	0	

	heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process												
13.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	10	8	2	0	3	6	0	1	0	0	0	0
14.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	9	9	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	3
15.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	8	0	8	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0
16.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
17.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
18.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
20.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>1268</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>150</b>



**MEDIA IN AZERBAIJAN**  
**Zerkalo.az**  
**16 September - 15 October, 16 November - 15 December 2018**

Pieces on/containing mentionings on the Karabagh conflict, Azerbaijani-Armenian relations						76							
Total number of studied pieces containing conditional statements						50							
Conditional statements	Number of references (in units)	Nature of reference to the statements by their authors				Authors/carriers of the conditional statement							
		+	-	0	Azerbaijani side						Armenian side	Third side	
					Journalists/media	Representatives of the authorities	Opposition representatives	Civil society organizations/ Experts/ Public figures	Vox populi	Others			
1.	The mission and format of the Minsk Group has no alternative	59	15	38	6	28	15	5	2	0	0	0	9
2.	The Karabagh conflict can be settled only with the direct intervention of external players	48	35	13	0	36	9	0	0	0	0	0	3
3.	The keys to the solution of the Karabagh problem are in Moscow	47	34	13	0	37	7	0	0	0	0	0	3
4.	Political changes in Armenia will play a positive role in the settlement of the conflict	37	7	27	3	30	2	0	1	0	0	1	3
5.	The most preferable and probable is the peaceful settlement of the Karabagh conflict on the basis of mutual compromises	27	13	14	0	11	5	0	6	0	0	5	0
6.	Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right to free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone	17	6	10	1	9	2	0	0	0	3	3	0
7.	Azerbaijan's entry into Eurasian integration projects (CSTO, EEU) will create better conditions for conflict resolution	10	3	4	3	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
8.	Regional players (Georgia, Iran, Turkey) can play a bigger role in the settlement	7	7	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9.	The 2016 April war complicated the settlement of the conflict	6	5	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
10.	Civic diplomacy has (may have) a positive impact on the settlement process	6	4	2	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11.	The implementation of agreements on expanding monitoring on the contact line, withdrawal of the heavy weapons and snipers, strengthening confidence-building measures and reducing the degree of aggressive rhetoric are an important condition for an effective negotiation process	5	4	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0

12.	The parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan. Involvement of NK in the negotiation process is impossible	3	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13.	US, EU, Western countries should be more actively involved in the settlement	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
14.	The parties must agree to one of the settlement models discussed earlier in the negotiation process. New models in the foreseeable future may not appear	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15.	Karabagh conflict can be settled in the near future	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16.	No forms of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia are possible without a final settlement of the conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17.	Internal political stability in Azerbaijan is an important factor in the solution of the Karabagh problem	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	Civil society organizations involved in the dialogue on the settlement of the conflict should operate under the control of states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	The Baku/Tbilisi Platform for Peace plays a positive role in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Interaction of civil society organizations and media representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the conditions of unresolved conflict poses a threat to national interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	In conflict situations, the media must maintain objectivity, meet ethical norms, and not to get involved in the information war	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the matters of information exchange contributed (or could contribute) to the creation of a favorable climate in the settlement process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	International (foreign) donor and non-governmental organizations promote dialogue for the sake of settlement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Journalists, civil society representatives, NK experts should be involved in regional cooperation projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total (units)</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>