



## **The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan: An overview of the current situation**

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### **Table of Contents**

<a href="#">Summary</a>	2
<a href="#">Introduction</a>	4
<a href="#">Part I: Main actors working on a peaceful solution of the conflict</a>	5
1. <a href="#">OSCE Minsk Group</a>	5
2. <a href="#">European Union</a>	6
3. <a href="#">Council of Europe</a>	7
4. <a href="#">United Nations</a>	8
5. <a href="#">European Partnership for peaceful settlement of the Conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK)</a>	8
6. <a href="#">European Movement International and National Councils</a>	10
7. <a href="#">Other Civil Society Organizations</a>	10
<a href="#">Part II: Context of conflict and conflict resolution efforts</a>	13
1. <a href="#">Mutual distrust</a>	13
2. <a href="#">Azerbaijani and Armenian policies</a>	14
3. <a href="#">Russia, U.S. and EU</a>	16
4. <a href="#">The Minsk process</a>	18
5. <a href="#">CSOs and NGOs</a>	19
<a href="#">Part III: Current developments in conflict and conflict resolution</a>	22
1. <a href="#">Deterioration situation until June 2013</a>	22
2. <a href="#">Revival Minsk Group process from June 2013 onwards</a>	23
3. <a href="#">Possible future EU involvement</a>	25
<a href="#">Part IV: Sources</a>	26

## Summary

From 1988 onwards, disagreement about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, a small isolated region in the Lesser Caucasus Mountains, resulted in violence and eventually war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In 1992, the OSCE Minsk Group started the peace negotiations and became the main political body concerned with peace negotiations, led by the Co-Chairmen and Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair. In 1994, a ceasefire agreement was reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan which ended the Nagorno-Karabakh war. The present situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is still based on this 1994 ceasefire agreement. Besides the OSCE, the European Union is sideways involved with the conflict through Special Representative on the South Caucasus and CSO funding. Civil Society actors involved in peace building are the European Partnership for Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh; the European Movement; and several CSOs from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is determined first by mutual distrust, which is mentioned as the crucial obstacle to conflict resolution. Negative propaganda, a hostile discourse and often personal involvement make the conflict closely intertwined with the promoted national identity in both countries. Therefore it is very difficult to deviate from the official government position. What else plays a role is the isolation of the societies due to lack of contacts; the confidentiality of the Minsk Group negotiations which does not prepare societies for compromise; and increasingly state controlled media.

Secondly, the context is defined by Armenian policies aimed at preserving the current situation and building legitimacy, and Azerbaijani policies aimed at restoring its territorial integrity and building up its military force. Maintaining of the status quo can benefit elites in both countries because it gives the opportunity to consolidate authoritarian power and diminish civil liberties; distract from national problems and pleases the support base of government. These last two points, as well as Azerbaijan's one-sided arms race, are however also mentioned as possible reasons for war. Generally, both countries see the Minsk Group negotiations as the best form of negotiations, which might be because of their near-complete control over its speed and content. The entanglement of politics and economics in both countries also brings economic interests into the conflict.

Thirdly, international involvement defines part of the context. Especially Russia's role is important. Russia has a big economic interest in the region because of Azerbaijani arms purchases and its big share in key economic sectors in Armenia as well as privileged market access. Furthermore, non-resolution gives Russia a bigger influence in the region. The interests of the U.S. and EU in the conflict are less big and more balanced. The lack of long term commitment by the international community is mentioned as a reason for non-resolution.

Fourthly, the Minsk process is confidential, only on official level and does not include representation of inhabitants of and displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh or civil society (organizations). This is argued to hinder any sustainable agreement and decrease legitimacy, as well as the fact that Armenia and Azerbaijan have full control over the negotiations.

Last, the work of CSOs and NGOs is hampered not only by the mutual distrust but also by the Azerbaijani and Armenian governments, who are suspicious of promoting dialogue.

Especially in Azerbaijan government-opposition to meetings, GONGO involvement and fear resulting in self-censorship hampers CSO activities related to the conflict. In Nagorno-Karabakh, CSOs have a better relation with the self-declared NK Republic, because they value their participation in discussions due to their own exclusion in the peace negotiations. However, civil society is weak in all societies, relies to a great extent on support from international organizations and only includes a small group of people.

From 2010 until June 2013, the situation of the peace negotiations was described as a deadlock, with an increasing number of ceasefire violations and fewer meetings between the governments and Minsk Group. Some voices expressed their concern about the growing possibilities of war. However, from June 2013 onwards there is a noticeable increase in the activities of the Minsk Group. Several meetings took place, new statements were released and OSCE Chair Leonid Kozhara visited Baku and Yerevan declaring an intensification of Minsk Group activity. Furthermore, the US appointed a new Co-chairman, which is quite active in providing information on Twitter and presented a letter from Obama to both governments pointing to a more active US involvement.

The negotiations of Azerbaijan and Armenia with the EU about the Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements started in 2010 and are said to lead to more EU leverage. However, negotiations with Azerbaijan show a lack of progress, and the announcement of Armenia in September that they will join a Russian-led Customs Union might greatly diminish EU leverage, because according to European Commissioner Füle political integration cannot proceed without economic integration.

Recent statements by the Italian Prime Minister Letta might indicate a future Italian and EU involvement in the conflict resolution. Italy will hold the EU presidency in 2014 and has announced that during its presidency, it will work hard to resolve the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh at an international level. The economic relations between Azerbaijan and Italy, mainly gas-related, might indeed put the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict higher on Italy's international agenda.

## Introduction: 'No war, no peace' since 1994

Until 1991 Nagorno-Karabakh, a small isolated region situated in the Lesser Caucasus Mountains, was an autonomous 'oblast' within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, so decided by Stalin in 1921. In 1988, Nagorno-Karabakh, the majority of the inhabitants being Armenian, requested to be unified with the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. The request was denied by the Soviet authorities, but fueled violence between Azerbaijanis and Armenians both in the region and outside. Until 1991, the Soviet Union restored and preserved order. However, when the Soviet Union fell apart and Azerbaijan and Armenia declared themselves independent, violence sparked again. When Nagorno-Karabakh declared itself formally independent after a referendum at the end of 1992, vicious fights took place and Armenian forces occupied both Nagorno-Karabakh as well as the surrounding region.

Many died in the fights and ethnic violence, and many were forced to flee. Over half a million Azerbaijani people are categorized as Internally Displaced People, coming originally from Nagorno-Karabakh or the surrounding regions. The ethnic tensions and competing claims on Nagorno-Karabakh, all based on a particular version of history, as well as the propagandized connection to the projected national identity complicated, and remain to complicate, conflict resolution efforts.

The present situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is based on a ceasefire agreement signed in 1994. With the ceasefire agreement a so-called Line of Contact was established, which functions as the border between Armenian- and Azerbaijan- controlled territory. Armenia holds military control over Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding Azerbaijani territory establishing a corridor to Armenia. In Nagorno-Karabakh a de-facto republic had been established, which however is not recognized by a single state, including Armenia. As journalist Thomas de Waal puts it, 'for everyday purposes [Nagorno-Karabakh] has become a province of Armenia'.<sup>1</sup>

The peace negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia are led by the OSCE Minsk Group, the main mediation undertaken by the Co-Chairmen from the United States, Russia and France. From 1994 until the present day, however, the situation has not fundamentally changed. The current situation is described as a 'no war, no peace' situation. The peace negotiations have had more and less prosperous periods. Until June 2013, the peace process was perceived as being in a deadlock.<sup>2</sup> However, since July 2013, new and interesting developments indicate a revival of the peace process.

In Part I, the actors working on a peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be identified. In Part II, an analysis of the context to the conflict and conflict resolution will be undertaken. In Part III, the most recent developments are discussed. In Part VI the used sources are listed.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>2</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'From resolution to transformation'

## Part I: Main actors working on a peaceful solution of the conflict

### 1. OSCE Minsk Group

The OSCE Minsk Group was created in 1992, by the then CSCE, to prepare a conference in Minsk to enable negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia for a peaceful solution to the ongoing conflict. The conference never took place, but the OSCE Minsk Group became the main political body concerned with finding a solution for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The **main objectives** of the Minsk Group are threefold. First, they aim at providing an appropriate framework for conflict resolution; second, they aimed at a ceasefire agreement and organizing the Minsk Conference; third, they aim at promoting the peace process by deploying peacekeeping forces.

During the 2007 OSCE Ministerial Council in Madrid, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, since 1997 consisting of ambassadors of Russia, France and the United States, formally presented a set of Basic Principles for the Peaceful Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. The **Madrid Principles** are based on the Helsinki Final Act principles of Non-Use of Force, Territorial Integrity, and the Equal Rights and Self-Determination of Peoples. Only 6 out of 14 have been agreed upon and are made public:

- Return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control;
- An interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh providing guarantees for security and self-governance;
- A corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh;
- Future determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will;
- The right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their former places of residence; and
- International security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation.

The **organizational structure** of the OSCE Minsk Group is as follows:

*OSCE Chairperson-in-Office (CiO):* Ukraine's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Leonid Kozhara

*Personal Representative of the CiO on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference:*  
Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk

*High Level Planning Group:* makes recommendations to the OSCE CiO, consists of eight officers seconded by OSCE participating States, and one contracted staff member, based in Vienna.

*Head of the OSCE High-Level Planning Group:* Col. Pavlo Shamaiev (for 2013)

*Co-Chair Russian Federation:* Ambassador Igor Popov

*Co-Chair France:* Ambassador Jacques Faure

*Co-Chair United States:* Ambassador James Warlick (since September 2013)

*Other participating states in OSCE Minsk Group:* Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, they have no formal mandate.

With regards to **OSCE field presence**, the Personal Representative Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk is based in Tbilisi, Georgia. In a 2010 article it is mentioned that Ambassador Kasprzyk monitors

the ceasefire and established Line of Contact with five assistants.<sup>3</sup> They visit both sides of the front-line, gather information and file reports. It is however unclear to what extent there is presence of any the other actors involved in OSCE Minsk group in Azerbaijan, Armenia and/or Nagorno-Karabakh. Both the OSCE Yerevan Office as well as the OSCE Baku Office explicitly mention online that they do not deal with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The OSCE Minsk Group **activities** consist of frequent declarations issued by the Co-Chair states and the Co-Chairmen, usually during G8- or other summits.<sup>4</sup> Visits take place very rarely. In 2010, a field assessment mission of the Minsk Group took place.<sup>5</sup> Meetings between the OSCE CiO, his Personal Representative, the Co-Chairmen and/or the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan take place on an irregular basis. **A recent increase in the activity of the Minsk Group** can be seen in several statements from involved parties, a sudden high frequency of informal meetings and preparations for a meeting at the highest level this year, as well as the visit of OSCE Chair-in-Person Leonid Kozhara to both Azerbaijan and Armenia.

## 2. European Union

The European Union's relationship with Armenia and Azerbaijan is determined mainly by **the European Neighbourhood Policy** and **Eastern Partnership**. The objective of ENP is strengthening prosperity, stability and security in the neighbour countries of the EU, thus making the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict also of interest for the European Union. The EaP focuses on enhancing the relationship with Eastern European and Southern Caucasus countries through Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreements.

In recent reports on implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU outlines its involvement in the conflict. The European Union prioritizes and fully supports the work of the **Minsk Group**, though it does not see any progress in its activity lately.<sup>6</sup> France is a Co-Chair to the Minsk Group, but does not represent or involve the European Union in this position. The EU also refers to the **European Partnership for peaceful settlement of the Conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh** (see below) as the EU-funded civil society programme. They provide funding for the EPNK through the Instrument for Stability. Further **funding** possibilities for CSOs in the region are offered via the mechanisms ENPI, EIDHR and NSALA.

The EU also appointed a **European Union Special Representative on the South Caucasus**, Philippe Lefort. Mr. Lefort was appointed as EUSR in 2011, and his mandate has been extended

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<sup>3</sup> <http://carnegieendowment.org/2010/08/01/remaking-nagorno-karabakh-peace-process/3ldh>

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of declarations see: <http://karabakhfacts.com/category/issues/minsk-process/> or <http://www.osce.org/mg>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.osce.org/mg/76209>

<sup>6</sup> ENP Joint Report 2013 [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013\\_enp\\_pack/2013\\_comm\\_conjoint\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_comm_conjoint_en.pdf); ENP Report Azerbaijan 2013

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013\\_enp\\_pack/2013\\_progress\\_report\\_azerbaijan\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_progress_report_azerbaijan_en.pdf)

ENP Report Armenia 2013

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013\\_enp\\_pack/2013\\_progress\\_report\\_armenia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_progress_report_armenia_en.pdf)



by another 12 months to 30 June 2014.<sup>7</sup> However, the mandate is due to be reviewed before 31 December 2013 and financing measures have been agreed upon for 6 months only. The EUSR is assisted by a small team, of which one officer is based in Tbilisi, Georgia.<sup>8</sup> His mandate is based on the policy objectives of the EU for the South Caucasus. This includes ‘in accordance with the existing mechanisms ... to prevent conflicts in the region [and] to contribute to a peaceful settlement of conflicts in the region’.<sup>9</sup>

According to the ENP reports, Mr. Lefort has visited the region on three occasions to support the work of the OSCE Minsk Group. One of these visits was in September – October 2011, where he met with the presidents of both Armenia and Azerbaijan.<sup>10</sup> According to information from his office, the EU conducts regular political dialogue with both partner countries and consistently conveys frank and direct messages to the sides, including at high level meetings and through the EUSR Mr. Lefort, to exercise restraint on actions and statements, which could lead to escalation.

Furthermore, the European Union has delegations in both Baku and Yerevan since 2008, delegations of the Armenian and Azerbaijani parliaments take part in EURONEST together with the European Parliament, and within the Eastern Partnership a Civil Society Forum is set up. However, these do not play a role in conflict resolution in Nagorno-Karabakh.

### 3. Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is not directly involved in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In 1994, a resolution and recommendation were adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) calling for support for the OSCE Minsk group.<sup>11</sup> In 2005, PACE called amongst others for ‘the parties concerned to comply with [UN resolutions on the conflict], in particular by refraining from any armed hostilities and by withdrawing military forces from any occupied territories’.<sup>12</sup> A 2009 declaration by several PACE members called for urgency in taking the regional developments into consideration.<sup>13</sup> In 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2010 the Committee of Ministers or PACE members asked the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh government to refrain from holding elections.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> EUSR mandates see [http://eeas.europa.eu/policies/eu-special-representatives/philippe-lefort/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/policies/eu-special-representatives/philippe-lefort/index_en.htm) and <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32013D0353:EN:HTML>

<sup>8</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/policies/eu-special-representatives/philippe-lefort/20121127\\_team\\_lefort\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/policies/eu-special-representatives/philippe-lefort/20121127_team_lefort_en.pdf) and [http://eumm.eu/en/eu\\_in\\_georgia/eu\\_special\\_representative\\_for\\_the\\_south-caucasus](http://eumm.eu/en/eu_in_georgia/eu_special_representative_for_the_south-caucasus)

<sup>9</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/policies/eu-special-representatives/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/policies/eu-special-representatives/index_en.htm)

<sup>10</sup> <http://eastbook.eu/en/2011/09/topic-en/politics-en/azerbaijan-03-09-2011-philippe-leforts-first-visits-to-the-south-caucasus/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta94/eres1047.htm> and <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta94/EREC1251.htm>

<sup>12</sup> <http://assembly.coe.int/documents/adoptedtext/ta05/eres1416.htm> and <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta05/EREC1690.htm>

<sup>13</sup> <http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewHTML.asp?FileID=12227&Language=EN>

<sup>14</sup> <http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewPDF.asp?FileID=12419&Language=EN>



#### 4. United Nations

The United Nations is not involved in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In the past, it has adopted several resolutions regarding the conflict. The UN Security Council adopted four resolutions in 1993 (822, 853, 874, 884) and the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 62/243 on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, based on a UN fact finding mission in 2005.<sup>15</sup> The resolution called for respecting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and demanded the withdrawal of Armenian forces from all occupied territories. The Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group voted against because the Minsk process was not taken into account. The measures demanded in the resolution have not been executed, and further involvement of the UN seems absent.

#### 5. European Partnership for peaceful settlement of the Conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK)

The European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK) is a **European civil society initiative** which main goal is to support the transformation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through a range of peacebuilding efforts. To this end, they seek to work with local partners in the South Caucasus on a wide range of programmes and projects. The three areas of work are media initiatives to provide balanced and challenging media coverage, reducing barriers to conflict resolution; strengthening the capacity of Conflict Affected Groups to engage in conflict resolution processes; and facilitate an inclusive and effective public policy environment in support of a negotiated settlement. For a look into some EPNK activities read the EPNK 2011 Brochure.<sup>16</sup>

The **five partners** that initiated and execute the EPNK partnership are Conciliation Resources, Crisis Management Initiative, International Alert, Kvinna till Kvinna and the London Information Network on Conflicts and State Building (LINKS). The EPNK started in June 2010 and builds upon earlier initiatives, such as UK financed Consortium Initiative that existed from 2003-2009 and consisted of the London-based organizations International Alert, Conciliation Resources and LINKS. EPNK receives funding through the **European Union Instrument for Stability**.

The EPNK project had its first phase from June 2010 to November 2011. The second phase started in March 2012, this time as a three year project that builds on first phase-projects and includes new activities. Phase 2 also includes a grant-giving element, which enables the EPNK partners to work more with local partners in the region.

##### 5.1 International Alert

International Alert is a peace building organization, based in London and also active in the Caucasus. Within the EPNK, International Alert is the lead agency. It has published studies on the conflict and peace building efforts in 2009 and 2013. The activities of International Alert within

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<sup>15</sup> <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/13508.htm> and  
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/ga10693.doc.htm>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/publications/EPNK%20Progress%20and%20Prospects.pdf>



the context of the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh focus mainly on sharing information and experience with peace building.<sup>17</sup>

### *5.2 Conciliation Resources*

Conciliation Resources is an organization working with people in conflict to prevent violence and build peace. They are also based in London, and work together with many local partners in the South Caucasus. Within the context of the EPNK, Conciliation Resources has set up a web forum that allowed Armenians and Azerbaijanis to reconnect and discuss key issues; the Karabakh Contact Group consisting of academics, analysts and thinkers from Armenia and Azerbaijan; and an extensive film project entitled 'Dialogue Through Film' which enables youth from Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan and Armenia to work together.<sup>18</sup>

### *5.3 Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)*

Crisis Management Initiative situated in Helsinki, Finland, works to resolve conflict and achieve sustainable peace. Their only mentioned project within the EPNK is the training and mentoring of 21 young leaders from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. It is unclear what other projects CMI runs in the context of the EPNK.<sup>19</sup>

### *5.4 Kvinna till Kvinna*

Kvinna till Kvinna, based in Johanneshov, Sweden, works on peaceful resolutions of conflicts with a special focus on the role of women. Their only mentioned project within the EPNK is a project aimed at empowering young Armenian and Azerbaijani women affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in a one-year project ending with a study trip to Israel and Palestine.<sup>20</sup>

### *5.5 London Information Network on Conflicts and State Building (LINKS)*

The London Information Network of Conflicts and State Building focuses on dialogue, analysis and research. Within the framework of the EPNK, LINKS has in the context of the project 'Karabakh: the big debate': mapped the positions of 46 political parties in Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; conducted interviews with twenty key personalities from Nagorno-Karabakh; and developed in cooperation with the Armenian ArmlInfo News Agency and the Azerbaijani 1news.az an online news portal, commonspace.eu. The news portal indeed offers the most recent and complete information on the conflict.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For more information see website: <http://www.international-alert.org/category/projects/regional-projects/caucasus-and-central-asia/epnk> and contact details: <http://www.international-alert.org/our-work/european-partnership-peaceful-settlement-conflict-over-nagorno-karabakh>

<sup>18</sup> For more information see the website: <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/south-caucasus>; the elaborate handbook: [http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/DialogueThroughFilm\\_web\\_EN.pdf](http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/DialogueThroughFilm_web_EN.pdf); the factsheet: <http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/Caucasus-English-2013.pdf>; or local partners: <http://www.c-r.org/about/partners>.

<sup>19</sup> For more information see team: <http://www.cmi.fi/activities/black-sea-region/epnk>

<sup>20</sup> For more information see working regions: <http://kvinnatillkvinna.se/en/where-we-work/>

<sup>21</sup> For more information see website: <http://links-dar.org/>

## 6. European Movement International, EM Armenia and EM Azerbaijan – the Tbilisi Process

In August 2012 and February 2013 two meetings took place between delegates of the EMI, EM Azerbaijan, EM Armenia and EM Georgia in Tbilisi, Georgia. In these meetings, hosted by EM Georgia, the relationship between their respective countries, especially regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, was analyzed. The meetings resulted in the **Tbilisi Declaration**, finalized after the second meeting. In the first and final Tbilisi Declarations, EM Azerbaijan and EM Armenia have expressed their commitment ‘to work together towards a shared vision of their common future’.<sup>22</sup>

In the context of the Tbilisi process, a training took place in September 2013 in Batumi, Georgia organized by EM Azerbaijan with EM Armenia, EM Turkey and the New Economic School Georgia. Four trainees each from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Turkey met for an intensive two day workshop in confidence and peace building, resulting in growing understanding and trust. The next step is a meeting planned in Yerevan in October this year. The final Tbilisi declaration contained an invitation for other EMI members and civil society organizations to join their efforts, though at this point no other actors are involved yet. The planned activities presented in the Tbilisi declaration are still being developed.

## 7. Other Civil Society Organizations

### 7.1 Stepanakert Press Club, Nagorno-Karabakh

The Stepanakert Press Club is based in Nagorno-Karabakh and is described as a centre for media freedom. For several years, it published the independent newspaper Demo and now publishes a monthly analytical journal, called Analyticon. It has cooperated within several EPNK projects, and is often mentioned as one of the few active CSOs in Nagorno-Karabakh.

### 7.2 Public Council for Foreign and Security Policy, Nagorno-Karabakh

The Public Council for Foreign and Security Policy is a nongovernmental partnership based in Nagorno-Karabakh. It consists of public figures from the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. It functions as a think tank and develops recommendations to the government and international organizations. It cooperated in EPNK studies.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>[http://www.europeanmovement.eu/index.php?id=6811&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=10811&cHash=569fc5f22abbd63f96220414bb037b3b](http://www.europeanmovement.eu/index.php?id=6811&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=10811&cHash=569fc5f22abbd63f96220414bb037b3b); Declarations:

[http://europeanmovement.eu/index.php?id=6811&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=8976&cHash=de1a7c631305d6a1e0101c5fbad8df89](http://europeanmovement.eu/index.php?id=6811&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=8976&cHash=de1a7c631305d6a1e0101c5fbad8df89) and [http://europeanmovement.eu/fileadmin/files\\_emi/Tbilisi\\_Process/tbilisi\\_II\\_-\\_final\\_declaration.pdf](http://europeanmovement.eu/fileadmin/files_emi/Tbilisi_Process/tbilisi_II_-_final_declaration.pdf), See also website AM Armenia: <http://azeuromove.az/account2012.html>

<sup>23</sup> Facebook see: <https://nl-nl.facebook.com/pages/FSPC-Public-Council-for-Foreign-and-Security-Policy/140937769287183?sk=info>

### *7.3 The Society for Humanitarian Research, Azerbaijan*

The Society for Humanitarian Research is a Human Rights organization based in Azerbaijan. They are actively involved in the peace building process, also working as a partner of the EPNK organizations. The Society participates in dialogue meetings with Armenian counterparts and round table events about the conflict.<sup>24</sup>

### *7.4 Internews Azerbaijan and Internews Armenia*

Internews is an international organization, based in California, which fosters independent media in emerging democracies. Internews in Azerbaijan and Armenia are separate NGOs, working to promote freedom of expression and free media, and work together in several (EPNK) projects.<sup>25</sup>

### *7.5 International and Comparative Law Center, Armenia*

ICLaw aims to strengthen the rule of law in international relations and foreign policy in Armenia. To this end, ICLaw conducts research and performs legal analysis. They set up a web database, KarabakhFacts.com, about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, containing documents, articles, statements and other pure factual data. The database is meant to enable objective research on the conflict.<sup>26</sup>

### *7.6 Peace Dialogue, Armenia*

The Armenian Peace Dialogue branch supports the participation of civil society in peace building and promotes dialogue. In relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, they organized a film workshop for Nagorno-Karabakh youth and are now fundraising for a theater project aimed at young women from Nagorno-Karabakh. They work with EPNK partners.<sup>27</sup>

### *7.7 Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Armenia and Azerbaijan*

The Helsinki Citizens' Assembly works for peace, democracy and human rights and is based on the Helsinki Final Act (1975). The Armenian and Azerbaijani hCa's are involved in legal advice and respond to human rights violations. They set up the Karabakh Public Council, which meets regularly and in 2007-2008 held several meetings with representatives of the Minsk Group.<sup>28</sup>

### *7.8 Yerevan Press Club, Armenia*

The Yerevan Press Club, establish in 1995, has as its mission to support the development of independent and professional media, help to strengthen democratic institutions and establish civil society in Armenia. They are often mentioned as partner in (EPNK) Nagorno-Karabakh projects, and mention several of those projects on their website under 'activities'.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Website see: <http://humanrights-az.org/index.php?lang=en>

<sup>25</sup> Website see: <http://www.internews.az/> and <http://www.internews.am/>

<sup>26</sup> Database: <http://karabakhfacts.com> and website: <http://iclaw.am/>

<sup>27</sup> Website see: <http://www.peacedialogue.am/index.php>

<sup>28</sup> Website see: <http://hca-anc.org/en/> and <http://hcav.am/en/>

<sup>29</sup> Website see: <http://www.ypc.am/>



**European  
Movement  
International**

#### *7.9 Helsinki Initiative-92 (HI-92), Nagorno-Karabakh*

Helsinki Initiative is mentioned as the first, and from 1992-1998 the only, NGO from Nagorno-Karabakh. The coordinator, Karen Ohadjanyan, is often interviewed and participates in research. The Nagorno-Karabakh Committee of HI-92 works on many projects, such as an internet forum, seminars, discussion club, educational trainings and cultural exchange.<sup>30</sup>

#### *7.10 Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Armenia and Azerbaijan*

EPF aims to empower people and create opportunities for civic and economic participation. They are involved in cross-border cooperation, and distribute grants to social entrepreneurs. Several of their projects deal with the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh. It is unclear if they work with other partners.<sup>31</sup>

#### *7.11 IKV/PAX Christi*

The Dutch organization IKV/Pax Christi is involved in peace initiatives in the context of Nagorno-Karabakh since 1992. They focus on dialogue and aim to create a youth peace movement. IKV/Pax Christi works as partner of the Helsinki Initiative-92, Armenian Peace Dialogue and Helsinki Citizens' Assembly.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Information on activities see: <http://www.changemakers.com/competition/entrepreneurship-peace/entries/nagorno-karabakh-committee-helsinki-initiative-92>

<sup>31</sup> Website see: <http://www.epfound.org/home.html>

<sup>32</sup> Website see: <http://www.ikvpaxchristi.nl/en/about-us/regions>

## Part II: Context of conflict and conflict resolution efforts

### 1. Context of conflict and conflict resolution efforts: mutual distrust

The mutual distrust between Azerbaijani and Armenian people is often mentioned as an obstacle, or even the crucial obstacle, to a solution of the conflict.<sup>33</sup> In the media and overall discourse, the conflict is discussed in nationalist rhetoric and with use of enemy images.<sup>34</sup> Generations are raised with negative propaganda and hostile narratives.<sup>35</sup> Either side proves its position with historical facts and regards the historical narrative of the other side as a lie.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, it is rooted deeply in painful historical memories which are kept alive by the public discourse.<sup>37</sup> This makes the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh closely intertwined with the promoted national identity of both Azerbaijan and Armenia.<sup>38</sup> The mutual distrust and negative propaganda which connects the conflict to the projected national identity make it almost impossible to reach a conflict solution.

The polarization of society speaks very clearly from the 2010 LINKS interview sessions with 46 political parties in both Azerbaijan and Armenia. The interviewees had strongly entrenched views, often using slogans and clichés, and were all convinced that historical evidence spoke in favor of their position. Furthermore, almost all interviewed politicians had been involved in the conflict themselves, either they fought in the war or were displaced by it. This personal involvement in the conflict, most probably shared by a large part of each society, makes people opposed to compromise and hampers the peace building on society level.<sup>39</sup>

The positions of the political parties reflect the respective government positions. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, the official positions of the governments on the conflict are constantly disseminated through statements and the largely state controlled media. In both countries, though especially in Azerbaijan (as will be discussed in the next section) it is very difficult to deviate from the official government position. The way the conflict is depicted by the governments has a big influence in the opinion of the populations, the distrust and polarization.

What also plays a large role is the isolation of the societies. There are not many opportunities for contact between Azerbaijani and Armenians. Only a limited number of CSOs promotes and organizes dialogue.<sup>40</sup> There is a total lack of contact between those living in Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, the only opportunity to meet being provided by international organizations (NGOs) working on the conflict.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, the confidentiality of the Minsk Group negotiations and exclusion of society in the process can be seen as a hindrance to any peace negotiations. Secrecy can lead to

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<sup>33</sup> International Crisis Group 2009 policy briefing, Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'Seeking peace', Micronon 2010 policy working paper

<sup>34</sup> International Alert 2013 study

<sup>35</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'From resolution to transformation'

<sup>36</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'From resolution to transformation'

<sup>37</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'Seeking peace'

<sup>38</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'Seeking peace'

<sup>39</sup> LINKS 2010 interviews political parties

<sup>40</sup> Micronon 2010 policy working paper

<sup>41</sup> International Alert 2013 study

misinformation, insecurity and mutual distrust, thus enhancing the already existing distrust.<sup>42</sup> Because the confidentiality, the public is often unaware of negotiations going on, and they are not 'prepared for compromise', as is often pointed out in research. In fact, in 2012 the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen urged Azerbaijan and Armenia to 'prepare their populations for peace'.<sup>43</sup> The necessity of preparing people for negotiations before they take place is also a point made in the 2013 Caucasus Edition analysis, stating that negotiations in this conflict proved the need for communication towards the respective societies before.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, in the past, it has happened that political leaders were willing to compromise and reach a solution, but were rebuffed by nationalistic voters.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, involvement of civil society gives the negotiations more legitimacy and increases the chance of (lasting) peace.<sup>46</sup>

The fact that media is largely, or as is argued increasingly, state controlled is also an impediment to dialogue and a change in discourse.<sup>47</sup> International Alert notices a decrease in contacts and joint initiatives with the media over the years.<sup>48</sup> In Azerbaijan, this is related to the government change in 2003, after which media initiatives became more difficult to employ.<sup>49</sup> In the context of the EPNK projects, many media organizations are mentioned as project partners, but this may refer to earlier projects, or to certain persistent media organizations.

## 2. Context of conflict and conflict resolution efforts: Azerbaijani and Armenian policies

Armenia and Azerbaijan pursue diverging policies towards the status quo. Armenia, on the one hand, aims at preserving the status quo.<sup>50</sup> It works on normalizing the current situation and building a de-facto state in Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>51</sup> From the interviews with political parties, it emerged that the views and welfare of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh is very important, whereas there is no consideration for the displaced Azerbaijani people from the region.<sup>52</sup>

Azerbaijan, on the other hand, is impatient with the status quo.<sup>53</sup> It aims to isolate Nagorno-Karabakh, pursues international lobby to have its territorial integrity recognized, and is building up its military force.<sup>54</sup> From the political party interviews, however, speaks the conviction that although Azerbaijani parties are unanimous in restoring Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, there is a widespread recognition that Nagorno-Karabakh should receive extensive autonomy. There is little disagreement about the need for a military solution at a certain point, though some parties see a need for international peacekeeping.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'Seeking Peace'

<sup>43</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'From resolution to transformation'

<sup>44</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'From resolution to transformation'

<sup>45</sup> Françoise Companjen 2012 chapter

<sup>46</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'Seeking Peace'

<sup>47</sup> Micronon 2010 policy working paper

<sup>48</sup> International Alert 2013 study

<sup>49</sup> International Alert 2013 study

<sup>50</sup> International Crisis Group 2009 study

<sup>51</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>52</sup> LINKS 2010 interviews political parties

<sup>53</sup> International Crisis Group 2009 policy briefing

<sup>54</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>55</sup> LINKS 2010 interviews political parties

Maintaining the status quo as an elite-strategy at both sides of the conflict is mentioned in almost all of the analyses used. The ‘no peace, no war’ situation benefits both Azerbaijani and Armenian ruling elites. First, by both the governments it can be used as a distraction for national affairs, like socio-political and economic problems.<sup>56</sup> Second, the conflict is also used to consolidate the authoritarian power of the respective Armenian and Azerbaijani governments, using the conflict to justify democratic shortcomings and the diminishing of civil liberties.<sup>57</sup> This has also been recognized by the EM National Councils in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In the first Tbilisi Declaration, they state their conviction that ‘the peaceful resolution of the conflicts would contribute in tackling the current democratic shortcomings and improve the situation of human rights in the entire region’.<sup>58</sup>

The status-quo also enables both presidents to be perceived as a tough negotiator, which compromising on a solution would negate.<sup>59</sup> There are also other advantages by retaining the status-quo, argues the Caucasus Edition in a 2013 analysis: Azerbaijan uses its oil revenues to build up its military, whereas Armenia is trying to win international legitimacy for the status quo.<sup>60</sup> These benefits could lead to the peace negotiations becoming irrelevant at top levels.<sup>61</sup>

On the contrary, the International Crisis Group in 2011 listed why war as a policy might be beneficial for Azerbaijan and Armenia. In Azerbaijan, the public opinion is against compromise, and the regime might be tempted to war to distract from social problems and discontent, due to lower oil revenues. In this light, the crisis mentioned above as a possible boost to the peace negotiations, might also backfire and fuel war instead. In Armenia, the president’s support base is against compromise too, and the failure of reconciliation with Turkey heightened the tension.<sup>62</sup> In addition to this, the one-sided arms race by Azerbaijan is seen as a sign that Azerbaijan is getting ready for an escalation.<sup>63</sup>

Regarding international involvement, in Armenia the Minsk Group negotiations are generally seen as the best form of negotiation. From the interviews with political parties speaks a broad consensus that Turkey cannot play a role, but there is support for Iran’s involvement. Several parties want more involvement of the European Union; many feel the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic should take part in the negotiations too.<sup>64</sup> However, on 3 September 2013 the president of Armenia announced that Armenia will join a Russian-led Customs Union, which led to protests of citizens and parliamentarians. Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, stressed that political association and economic integration must go hand in hand. The Armenian announcement therefore presumably leads to a hold in the ongoing negotiations between Armenia and the EU over the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement and the Association Agreement.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Françoise Companjen 2010 article, Caucasus Edition 2013 ‘Seeking peace’

<sup>57</sup> MICRONON 2010 policy working paper

<sup>58</sup> [http://europeanmovement.eu/index.php?id=6811&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=8976&cHash=de1a7c631305d6a1e0101c5fbad8df89](http://europeanmovement.eu/index.php?id=6811&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=8976&cHash=de1a7c631305d6a1e0101c5fbad8df89)

<sup>59</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis ‘Seeking peace’

<sup>60</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis ‘Seeking peace’

<sup>61</sup> International Alert 2013 study

<sup>62</sup> International Crisis Group 2011 policy briefing

<sup>63</sup> EPC 2013 policy brief Armenia

<sup>64</sup> LINKS 2010 interviews political parties

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67482> and <http://www.commonspace.eu/eng/news/6/id2776>



In Azerbaijan, there is a 'tone of suspicion' by most political party - interviewees regarding the Minsk Group. Some feel the Minsk group is pro-Armenian, and Russia is the main reason that the conflict still lasts. Only Turkey's role is uncontested, and in general there is a positive view on the European Union.<sup>66</sup> So from both sides, in the interviews with political parties a positive view towards the EU is noted. Though this might give an opportunity for the involvement of the European Union or other European organizations, the Armenian announcement has probably thwarted this chance. Thomas de Waal argues in his op-ed that both Azerbaijan and Armenia probably prefer Minsk process above other forms of negotiation, since they have 'near complete' control over the content and speed of the negotiations.<sup>67</sup>

Important is also to realize that Armenia and Azerbaijan are not perfectly functioning democracies with free markets. On the contrary, in both states politics and economics are strongly intertwined, making economics part of politics and reverse. Though Nagorno-Karabakh is not an economic important region, due to its geographically isolated situation and lack of natural resources, economics are a big part of the conflict. This is mainly in relation to Russia, which will be discussed below. Besides this, Armenia, though not very rich, has invested in Nagorno-Karabakh and does not want to lose these investments.

### **3. Context of conflict and conflict resolution: Russia, U.S. and EU**

The involvement of the international community in the peace negotiations is in many analyses related to their direct interests, for example in energy and trade. It is contended by Francoise Companjen that a political solution can only be found if it is in the interest of external powers.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, the composition and interests of the mediators in the Minsk Group, who all have their own economic, strategic and/or energy interests, should be taken into account as well and has a direct influence on the peace building process.<sup>69</sup>

The role of Russia in the conflict and in the peace negotiations is very important. Russia has several interests in the conflict. First, Russia has big economic interests in the region, also directly related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Azerbaijan is one of the biggest buyers of Russian arms, the last agreement dating August 2013 concerning 4 billion US dollar. Furthermore, Russia and Azerbaijan cooperate on the gas and oil market, the most recent deal also signed August 2013.<sup>70</sup> However, the relations between Russia and Azerbaijan are generally more tensed, because Russia is even more involved with Armenia. Armenia is fully dependent on Russian gas and oil, and many key economic sectors are in Russian hands, like the transportation, telecommunications, banking and energy sector.<sup>71</sup> Because of Armenia's isolation due to the conflict - Turkey has closed its borders to Armenia - Russia has a privileged access to the Armenian market.

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<sup>66</sup> LINKS 2010 interviews political parties

<sup>67</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>68</sup> Francoise Companjen 2010 article

<sup>69</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 'Seeking peace'

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/russia-azerbaijan.q76> and

<http://www.presttv.ir/detail/2013/08/14/318641/russia-arms-sales-to-azerbaijan-at-4bn/>

<sup>71</sup> Ian J. McGinnity 2010 senior thesis

It is argued that Russia, besides its economic interests, also benefits from non-resolution because the current situation gives Russia a bigger influence in the region.<sup>72</sup> Not only economically but also politically Russia's influence is big. Indeed, in the interviews with political parties, some Azerbaijani parties expressed their opinion that Russia is the main reason that the conflict still lasts.<sup>73</sup> In an analysis of the Caucasus edition, it is argued that Russia is not only a mediator but also a party to the conflict, nevertheless excluding Russia as mediator will not solve the conflict but only provoke rivalry.<sup>74</sup>

The U.S. has a strategic and economic interest in the region, as well as a big domestic Armenian lobby, which was visible in a 2010 amendment regarding the Armenian genocide. However, Turkey is a NATO partner of the United States and the US has oil interests in Azerbaijan as well, making US interests more balanced.<sup>75</sup>

The EU interests might not be very straightforward. Françoise Companjen points to the different interests of the EU Member States. Germany has a trade-interest in Armenia and good relations with Georgia, whereas France has a big Armenian diaspora. In this regard French insistence on recognition of the Armenian genocide as a condition for Turkey's EU accession must be noticed. The UK, furthermore, takes into account BP's large financial interests in several gas pipelines running through Azerbaijan.<sup>76</sup> Though not addressed by her, these diverging interests could play a role in the EU's non-involvement in the conflict so far. Involvement in the Balkan, especially the violent break-up of Yugoslavia, is also mentioned as an important reason for absence of the EU in conflict resolution in the 1990's.<sup>77</sup>

The EU prioritizes the official mediation executed by the OSCE Minsk Group. It sporadically supports Civil Society Organizations working on the conflict, but is not directly involved in the peace process.<sup>78</sup> The projects or actions taken by the EU are only an addition to the official negotiation process.<sup>79</sup> It is argued that in general EU funding favors large, general (not conflict-focused) and non-political projects. A large part of the funding is based on calls for projects and therefore dependent on initiatives from organizations. It is argued that the EU seeks agreement of Azerbaijan and Armenia first before it implements or funds projects, even though this is not part of its official policy.<sup>80</sup>

In general, International Alert in their 2013 study points to the lack of long term commitment or strategy by the international community, which results in 'piecemeal and staggered' progress.<sup>81</sup> This conclusion is repeated in the two June 2013 Caucasus Edition Analyses, that argue that the external powers involved so far have focused on conflict management instead of conflict resolution, and lack a long-term vision.<sup>82</sup> In 2010, journalist Thomas de Waal attributed the low involvement of the international community to an unspoken

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<sup>72</sup> Françoise Companjen 2010 article

<sup>73</sup> LINKS 2010 interviews political parties

<sup>74</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 'Seeking peace'

<sup>75</sup> Françoise Companjen 2010 article, Françoise Companjen 2012 chapter

<sup>76</sup> Françoise Companjen 2012 chapter

<sup>77</sup> Simao 2012 study, EPC 2013 policy brief Azerbaijan

<sup>78</sup> Simao 2012 study

<sup>79</sup> MICRONON 2010 policy working paper

<sup>80</sup> MICRONON 2010 policy working paper

<sup>81</sup> International Alert 2013 study

<sup>82</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'Seeking Peace' and 'From resolution to transformation'

consensus that Nagorno-Karabakh is not a high-priority conflict, since there is no immediate danger of war, nor the likelihood that international pressure could enforce peace.<sup>83</sup>

#### 4. Context of conflict and conflict resolution: The Minsk process

The closed negotiations are a specific feature of the peace negotiations on Nagorno-Karabakh. There is no spokesperson on behalf of the Minsk Group, and much more than yearly statements from the Co-Chair states is not released to the press. An exception in this regard are the Madrid Principles, but of these (presumed) 14 principles, only 6 are public. The confidentiality is said to lead to a lack of public awareness that its leaders are negotiating over this conflict;<sup>84</sup> negative media coverage as far as the OSCE Minsk Group is concerned;<sup>85</sup> misinformation, insecurity and mutual distrust.<sup>86</sup>

Pointed out in every analysis, is that Nagorno-Karabakh is not involved in the peace negotiations of the Minsk Group. Neither the (non-recognized) elected Nagorno-Karabakh government is involved, nor the former Azerbaijani inhabitants of this region, often referred to as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Especially the Azerbaijan position on not including Nagorno-Karabakh is mentioned.

A similar point often made is the monopolization of the peace negotiations by official institutions.<sup>87</sup> Civil society is not included in the negotiations at all. There is no contact or dialogue established between the official and unofficial actors working on peace building. NGOs and CSOs lack influence on the peace building process. It is the ruling elite, not the societies, that hold power over the negotiations.<sup>88</sup> In the 2013 International Alert study, it is mentioned that from 2000 onwards, the monopolization of state involvement, and marginalization of civil society in the peace negotiations has increased.<sup>89</sup>

In two 2013 analyses of the Caucasus Edition, it is stated that the negotiations on the highest level and absence of mid-level and grassroots level actors hinders any sustainable agreement. Inclusion of civil society would give negotiations more legitimacy and increase the chance of (lasting) peace. Problem is also the –earlier mentioned- discourse on either side, the negative propaganda that results in societies opposed to compromise. The absence of communication strategies and preparing people for negotiations is key to the failure of the Minsk negotiations. The absence of civil society in the peace process, also reinforcing the mutually exclusive discourse, results in the peace negotiations being perceived as a ‘zero-sum-game’ on either side.<sup>90</sup>

Several other reasons are discussed for the absence of new agreements within the Minsk process in the last twenty years. According to Thomas de Waal, mediation by three ambassadors and on president-level only leads to difficult coordination and impedes swift

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<sup>83</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>84</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>85</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>86</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis ‘Seeking Peace’

<sup>87</sup> International Alert 2013 study

<sup>88</sup> International Alert 2013 study

<sup>89</sup> International Alert 2013 study

<sup>90</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis ‘From resolution to transformation’ and ‘Seeking peace’

diplomacy, and argues that one mediator would be more useful.<sup>91</sup> He also argues that the relation between the co-chairs and presidents has become too close. The power over the negotiations lies in hands of the presidents, and proposals are shot down without a fierce stand on the side of the Co-Chairmen.<sup>92</sup>

However, the main result of the Minsk Group, the 1994 ceasefire, has a unique aspect, which is that it is handled by the conflicting parties itself. The Personal Representative of the OSCE, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and five field officials monitor the ceasefire for the OSCE. However, there is no external (peace) force present and the OSCE monitoring focuses more on reports and communication and is too small to enforce the ceasefire itself. For many analysts, the fact that the ceasefire rests on the will of both parties is a sign that there is a potential to resolve the conflict.<sup>93</sup>

The success of the Minsk Group in conflict mediation is, according to the used analyses, divided: the lack of new agreements and current deadlock is seen as failure, though most concede this can not entirely be attributed to the Minsk Group; but the absence of a real deterioration of the conflict in the last 20 years as success.

## 5. Context of conflict and conflict resolution efforts: CSOs and NGOs

For CSOs and/or NGOs, working on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not an easy task. Their work takes place in an environment marked by distrust and a nationalist, hostile discourse which is even connected to the projected national identity. In both Azerbaijan and Armenia, there is not much room for CSOs organizing dialogue or trying to counter or just nuance the state position and accompanying propaganda, though the situation does differ per country.<sup>94</sup>

It is argued that Azerbaijan is more suspicious of promoting dialogue between societies because they are afraid it might legitimize the, to them unacceptable, status quo.<sup>95</sup> In the same line of reasoning, they don't approve of NGO cooperation as long as the conflict lasts.<sup>96</sup> In research done by MICRONON it is also concluded that the work of CSOs is more difficult in Azerbaijan, mentioning self-censorship and fear.<sup>97</sup> MICRONON categorizes Azerbaijan NGOs as either led by the state, opposition or former soviet-era elite.<sup>98</sup> The interview political parties had very mixed views on the role of civil society, but were in agreement that free movement of people in this regard is not an option.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, meetings between people from both sides are always suspicious and often prevented, more than in Armenia.<sup>100</sup>

In Armenia, on the other hand, people-to-people contact does not oppose the government's viewpoint that the conflict is resolved and the current situation is just.<sup>101</sup> According to MICRONON, Armenia has a more plural public space in which CSOs have more

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<sup>91</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>92</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>93</sup> Spectrum 2012 interview, Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>94</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'Seeking peace'

<sup>95</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>96</sup> MICRONON 2008 policy working paper

<sup>97</sup> MICRONON 2010 policy working paper

<sup>98</sup> MICRONON 2010 policy working paper

<sup>99</sup> LINKS 2010 interviews political parties

<sup>100</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'Seeking peace'

<sup>101</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

opportunities.<sup>102</sup> In earlier research, they stated that in Armenia there are many government-organized NGOs (GONGOs) and NGO often receive foreign funding.<sup>103</sup> In the interviews with political parties by LINKS, a general positive attitude towards civil society engagement could be recognized, some parties actually interested in dialogue with their Azerbaijani counterparts, and a conviction that it is mainly the responsibility of the Azerbaijani government that civil society involvement is hindered.<sup>104</sup> The difference in attitude towards CSOs and NGOs could be an explanation for the bigger number of Armenian CSOs/NGOs involved in projects dealing with Nagorno-Karabakh, which can be seen in Part I.

In relation to the above, Thomas de Waal expresses the presumption that the Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities are suspicious of western-funded civil society organizations promoting dialogue.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, the Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis argues that in authoritarian regimes, barriers for the engagement of civil society are not alien, because elites want to keep a monopoly, in this case over the negotiations.<sup>106</sup>

In Nagorno-Karabakh, CSOs are more often grassroots organizations, but have more difficulty reaching the international community and looking for funding.<sup>107</sup> However, it is mentioned in the International Alert study that because the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is not involved in negotiations itself, it does value the participation of the civil society in discussions, even though it does not understand the importance of all projects. It is concluded that the relationship between the government and civil society could be improved, for example by having more former civil society activists in government.<sup>108</sup>

The activities of CSOs and NGOs involved in peace building and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as discussed in Part I, focus chiefly on establishing dialogue and usually employ two sorts of activities: actual meetings and online forums. Meetings or people-to-people contacts take place in the form of a single workshop or longer-term project. A large part of these projects involve film-making or other media-related activities. The online activities focus on building online forums for dialogue, providing news and establishing information databases. Many projects therefore have media-partners, though as is stated above there is a decrease in media participation because of increased state control, mainly in Azerbaijan.

The use of social media by CSOs, activists or opposition to avoid government restrictions is promoted by some CSOs. For example, International Media Support organized a workshop on the use of social media for social change<sup>109</sup>, and in Armenia YouTube videos are used to generate public discussion on subjects ignored in regular media.<sup>110</sup> EM Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in the final Tbilisi Declaration agreed on the use of social media to enable direct involvement of individual members in discussions to generate mutual understanding.<sup>111</sup> However, a 2012 study of social media in Azerbaijan suggests that the government uses digital

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<sup>102</sup> MICRONON 2010 policy working paper

<sup>103</sup> MICRONON 2008 policy working paper

<sup>104</sup> LINKS 2010 interviews political parties

<sup>105</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>106</sup> Caucasus Edition 2013 analysis 'Seeking peace'

<sup>107</sup> MICRONON 2010 policy working paper

<sup>108</sup> International Alert 2013 study

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.i-m-s.dk/social-media-for-social-change-in-azerbaijan/>

<sup>110</sup> <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/social-media-and-expanding-public-discourse-armenia>

<sup>111</sup> [http://europeanmovement.eu/fileadmin/files\\_emi/Tbilisi\\_Process/tbilisi\\_II\\_-\\_final\\_declaration.pdf](http://europeanmovement.eu/fileadmin/files_emi/Tbilisi_Process/tbilisi_II_-_final_declaration.pdf)

media for manipulation, successfully dissuading frequent internet users of using social media for political purposes.<sup>112</sup>

In their 2013 study, International Alert concludes that civil society is weak in all societies affected by the conflict, and that GONGOs undermine the independence of the civil society sector, as well as the credibility of the peace building projects going on. They point to the risk of politicization of peace building, where civil society is used as tool.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, International Alert concludes that peace building, also as a result of the above, relies on support from international organizations, which remains crucial. They also point to a lack of coordination amongst local civil society actors and the lack of bottom-up, locally approved projects. The effectiveness of most projects is limited to providing dialogue, establishing communication and a more critical thinking and awareness in the small group of participants.<sup>114</sup>

In the same 2013 study, International Alert points to the fact that in the peace building activities that are employed outside the official negotiations, many groups are left out. They point to the small number of people involved, the lack of incorporation of retired diplomats, diasporas, businesses or teachers, which have a great potential, and insufficient effort to engage the younger generation. All in all, there is a very low awareness of peace building initiatives in the societies. Because of the general discourse, it is difficult to be involved in peace building projects and share this with others. According to International Alert, this 'feeds into suspicion and cynicism towards peace building in the societies'.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Katy E. Pearce and Sarah Kendzior 2012 study

<sup>113</sup> International Alert 2013 study, International Crisis Group 2009 policy briefing

<sup>114</sup> International Alert 2013 study

<sup>115</sup> International Alert 2013 study

## Part III: Current developments in conflict and conflict resolution

### 1. Deterioration situation until June 2013

The Russian-Georgian war in 2008 is generally regarded as a trigger for renewed interest in the region and specifically the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by external actors. Together with a slight improvement in the Turkish-Armenian relationship at that time, the EU, US and Russia showed renewed interest in a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.<sup>116</sup> In 2009, there is even mentioning of a 'window of opportunity', with a new sense of urgency by all involved.<sup>117</sup> An increase in mediation meetings, together with the attention on the revised Madrid principles, results in a positive feeling about resolution of the conflict, which speaks from all analyses around this time.

However, the peace negotiations have come to a halt again in 2010. In a 2011 Policy Briefing of the International Crisis Group an increase in ceasefire-violations is noted, as well as an increase in rhetoric and defense spending.<sup>118</sup> Ceasefire violations doubled again in 2012.<sup>119</sup> It seems true that the situation at the Line of Contact functions as a barometer for the peace negotiations, as Thomas de Waal contends. Furthermore, from 2010 onwards fewer meetings have taken place between the governments and the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group. Positions hardened and there was no progress with the Madrid Principles.<sup>120</sup> Since the only contact took place on the highest levels, the lack of direct contact between the presidents in 2010 (except a meeting with Medvedev in Sochi) basically meant no contact between the governments at all.<sup>121</sup> At the end of 2012, Azerbaijan aggressive rhetoric increased, including sharp criticism on the Minsk Group.<sup>122</sup> In all analyses until June 2013 the situation is described as a deadlock, with tensions mounting.

In the context of these developments from 2010 onwards, some voices are concerned about the growing possibility of war, especially because of the building up of military force and attitude of Azerbaijan.<sup>123</sup> They feel the continuation of the status quo might compel Azerbaijan to act.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, the recent one-sided arms-race by Azerbaijan, and accompanying increases in defense spending in both countries, leads to concern.<sup>125</sup> At the beginning of 2013, LINKS Director Dennis Sammut expressed in an interview that if the negotiations would not restart in 2013, escalation of the conflict would be likely. In June 2013, EPC speaks of a deteriorating security situation.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Micronon 2010 policy working paper, International Crisis Group 2009 policy briefing, EPC 2013 policy brief Azerbaijan

<sup>117</sup> International Crisis Group 2009 policy briefing

<sup>118</sup> International Crisis Group 2011 policy briefing

<sup>119</sup> EPC 2013 policy brief Armenia

<sup>120</sup> Françoise Compañen 2012 chapter, International Crisis Group 2011 policy briefing

<sup>121</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>122</sup> Spectrum 2012 interview

<sup>123</sup> Thomas de Waal 2010 Op-ed

<sup>124</sup> International Crisis Group 2011 policy briefing

<sup>125</sup> EPC 2013 policy brief Armenia

<sup>126</sup> EPC 2013 policy brief Armenia



On the positive side, the recent economic crisis is mentioned as a possible boost to the peace negotiations, because it might make trade and energy interests of bigger importance than political interests of the actors involved.<sup>127</sup>

## 2. Revival Minsk Group process from June 2013 onwards

Recently, especially from June 2013 onwards, the Minsk Group seems to have intensified its activity. Starting with a statement on June 5<sup>th</sup> from the US Chairman that a meeting at the highest level should take place and would be prepared by the Minsk Group, the OSCE CiO met with the Co-Chairmen on June 14<sup>th</sup>, while the Co-Chair presidents released a new Joint Statement at June 18<sup>th</sup>.<sup>128</sup>

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, both the U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan as well as the French Ambassador to Armenia stated respectively their will to intensify the action of the Minsk Group and their conviction that the Minsk Group is constantly working to reach a solution for the conflict.<sup>129</sup> On July 13<sup>th</sup> a press release by the Co-Chairs stated that several informal meetings had taken place in June and July (also on the 12<sup>th</sup>) with the Co-Chairs, Chairs, Personal Representative of the CiO and the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, who expressed their commitment to reduce tensions and create conditions for a meeting at the highest levels later this year.<sup>130</sup> Further talks in the coming months will be planned.

Also in July, the OSCE Chair-in-Person Leonid Kozhara, Ukrainian minister of foreign affairs, visited both Azerbaijan (7-8 July) and Armenia (15 July), on which occasions he declared that Ukraine would like an intensification of the OSCE Minsk Group's activity.<sup>131</sup> After these visits, Azerbaijan expressed its dissatisfaction with the activities of the Minsk Group on July 8<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, urging for an intensification of activities.<sup>132</sup>

On August 5<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. appointed Ambassador James Warlick as U.S. Co-Chair from September onwards.<sup>133</sup> From 9 September 2013, the new U.S. Co-Chairman Warlick visited Baku, Yerevan and Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>134</sup> He tweets regularly about his new position and activities.<sup>135</sup> He arrived at 9 September with a letter from President Obama to the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. All in all, this points to the intention of the US to have a more active involvement in the resolution of the conflict. The letter, according to the official website of the Azerbaijani president, reads as follows<sup>136</sup>:

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<sup>127</sup> Françoise Companjen 2012 chapter

<sup>128</sup> <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/2158047.html>; <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/2161756.html>;  
<http://www.osce.org/mg/102856%20>

<sup>129</sup> <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/2170311.html>; <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/2170468.html>

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.osce.org/mg/103570>; <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/2170630.html>

<sup>131</sup> <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/2168736.html>; <http://www.osce.org/cio/103452>;

<http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/2170920.html>

<sup>132</sup> <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/2168718.html>; <http://www.news.az/articles/politics/81271>

<sup>133</sup> <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/08/212707.htm>

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.news.az/articles/politics/82404>

<sup>135</sup> <https://twitter.com/AmbJamesWarlick>; <http://www.commonspace.eu/eng/news/6/id2777>

<sup>136</sup> <http://asbarez.com/113667/obama-urges-azerbaijan-for-karabakh-conflict-resolution/comment-page-1/>



“Dear Mr. President,

On the occasion of his first official visit to Baku, I would like to convey to you my full support for Ambassador James Warlick as the new U.S. co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group. His recent appointment is a strong signal of the United States’ enduring and unequivocal commitment to helping the sides reach a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

It is my hope that Ambassador Warlick’s wealth of diplomatic experience and your government’s desire for progress will bring new energy to the co-chairmanship, and to the peace process. I support your efforts to take advantage of opportunities for direct dialogue with Armenia in the months ahead, and to avail yourself of the co-chairs’ time and expertise to move beyond the current impasse in negotiations. With the outlines of a compromise already well established, now is the time for a renewed effort to bring peace to the region.”

In many recent analyses (especially two recent policy briefs by EPC and an opinion written by Richard Giragosian of the Armenian independent think tank Regional Studies Center) a bigger role for the EU is proposed. It is mentioned that the EU has bigger leverage with the Vilnius Summit coming up in November 2013, the negotiations over Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with Armenia and the Association Agreement negotiations with Armenia and Azerbaijan, though with Azerbaijan these show a profound lack of progress<sup>137</sup>. Furthermore, as Armenia’s biggest trading partner the EU has great leverage.<sup>138</sup> The vacuum that Russia leaves, being more involved in conflict resolution between 2008 and 2012 but now retreating, is mentioned too, as well as the EU’s energy interests.<sup>139</sup>

However, the Armenian announcement on 3 September that they will join a Russian-led Customs Union might diminish the EU leverage. The president of Armenia announced during a visit in Moscow that Armenia is ready to join the Moscow-led Customs Union. This led to protests in Yerevan from Armenian citizens and parliamentarians, who are afraid that this is not in Armenia’s advantage and due to Russian pressure. According to President Sargsyan, this would not necessarily ‘preclude our dialogue with the European structures’. However, the spokesperson for Štefan Füle stated on 6 September that ‘the EU would not initial either an Association Agreement or an Agreement on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with Armenia, if Yerevan’s Customs Union plans proceeded.’ A political analyst from President Sargsyan’s circles stated that a major factor in favour of the Customs Union was the Russian guarantee to ensure the security of Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>140</sup>

This presumably leads to a hold in the ongoing negotiations between Armenia and the European Union over the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) and the Association Agreement, which were opened in July 2010.<sup>141</sup> In November 2013, an EU summit with its Eastern Partners is planned in Vilnius.<sup>142</sup> Here, the progress in negotiations about the agreements would be discussed, as well as the long-term perspective of the Eastern

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<sup>137</sup> <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2013/june/the-eu-and-azerbaijan-mismatched-objectives/77560.aspx>

<sup>138</sup> EPC 2013 policy brief Armenia

<sup>139</sup> EPC 2013 policy brief Azerbaijan

<sup>140</sup> <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67482>

<sup>141</sup> EPC 2013 policy brief Azerbaijan; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/nl/news-room/content/20120418IPR43187/html/EU-deals-with-Azerbaijan-and-Armenia-should-make-the-region-safer>

<sup>142</sup> <http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/pressreleases/lithuanian-foreign-minister-vilnius-summit-should-bring-concrete-results-and-set-forward-looking-guidelines>

Partnerships. During an Eastern Partnership meeting in Yerevan on September 13<sup>th</sup>, Štefan Füle stressed that political association and economic integration must go hand in hand; and that therefore the Association Agreement cannot be signed without the DCFTA.<sup>143</sup>

### 3. Possible future EU involvement

In a visit to Baku in August 2013, Italy's Prime Minister Enrico Letta expressed his support for the activities of the Minsk Group, and stated that during Italy's EU presidency in 2014, it will work hard to resolve the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh at an international level. According to Letta, long-term conflicts serve no-one's interest, and preserving the status-quo is no way out.<sup>144</sup>

These statements were made during a visit that mainly focused on bilateral economic cooperation. Letta expressed his thanks to the Azerbaijani government for choosing Puglia as the EU entrance for gas delivered through the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) last June. This pipeline also runs through Greece and Albania and is therefore, according to Letta, not only beneficial for Italy, but for Europe as well. During the visit, both presidents expressed their wish for more economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Italy in oil and gas as well as other economic projects. To this end, in early November a high profile Italian delegation will visit Baku.<sup>145</sup>

Azerbaijani-Italian relations are said to date back to the Middle Ages. In more recent times, 2004, a Joint Declaration on economic issues was signed, which established an Italian-Azerbaijani Council for Economic Industrial and Financial Cooperation. Energy is key to the economic relations. Italy is Azerbaijan's biggest trade partner and main oil customer. In an interview with the Italian Ambassador to Azerbaijan earlier this year, it is said that 'Azerbaijan plays a fundamental role in ensuring energy security of Italy'.<sup>146</sup>

In 2014, both Greece and Italy will hold the EU presidency. In a joint press conference during a visit of Prime Minister Letta to Greece, both prime ministers announced that they will prepare a common presidency agenda for 2014.<sup>147</sup> In September, Greek Prime Minister Samaras will visit Italy to decide on the common agenda, whose focus will be on competitiveness, investments and unemployment. Since Italy mentioned the conflict resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh as one of its issues during the EU presidency, and seen the cooperation of Azerbaijan with not only Italy but also Greece over the TAP and energy interests of Italy and Greece in Azerbaijan, the conflict could be a common agenda point for Italy and Greece for 2014.

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<sup>143</sup> <http://www.commonspace.eu/eng/news/6/id2776>

<sup>144</sup> <http://en.president.az/articles/8942>

<sup>145</sup> <http://www.azernews.az/azerbaijan/57980.html>; <http://en.trend.az/capital/energy/2178341.html>;  
<http://www.news.az/articles/politics/81677>; <http://www.caspianreview.com/news/well-help-more-on-nagorno-karabakh-italian-pm-tells-azerbaijan/>

<sup>146</sup> <http://www.azerbaijantoday.az/economics8.html>

<sup>147</sup> <https://mninews.marketnews.com/index.php/update-greece-italy-plan-common-2014-eu-presidency-agenda?q=content/update-greece-italy-plan-common-2014-eu-presidency-agenda>

## Part IV: Sources

### Main research institutions and actors providing information and research on Nagorno-Karabakh

#### *Commonspace.eu*

Commonspace is an online news portal with recent news and opinion articles about the Caucasus and Nagorno-Karabakh. It offers a space for dialogue on issues related to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. It is developed by LINKS, the Armenian ArmlInfo News Agency and the Azerbaijani 1news.az news portal.

#### *KarabakhFacts.com*

KarabakhFacts is a comprehensive database about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It contains documents, articles, statements and other factual data, which is meant to enable objective research on the conflict. It is developed by the International and Comparative Law Centre Armenia.

#### *Caucasus Edition – Journal of Conflict Transformation*

The Caucasus Edition is a forum for scholars and researchers to discuss the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh. The journal exists for two years and claims to be the “Go-to’ resource when it comes to this conflict and the surrounding issues.”

A selection of recent analyses:

- 2013 July analysis entitled ‘Seeking Peace: What Needs to be Done for the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict’
- 2013 July analysis entitled ‘From Resolution to Transformation: Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and the Need for More Civil Society Engagement’

#### *Spectrum Center for Strategic Analysis, Yerevan, Armenia*

The SPECTRUM Centre for Strategic Analysis, an independent NGO, gathers and analyzes information on the current political and social developments in Armenia and the South-Caucasus region. Their website presents the content of policy papers, interviews and publications, including a 2005 book ‘The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict – in the search of a way out’ (more information), but only interviews and older papers are available online.

#### *EPNK Partners*

Recent publications from EPNK partners in the EPNK context:

- 2009 International Alert study on Regional Cooperation in the South-Caucasus
- 2010 LINKS publication ‘Karabakh: the big debate’: research on the views of 46 Armenian and Azerbaijani political parties on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the conflict resolution process.
- 2011 LINKS interview session ‘Karabakh: the big debate’: interviews with 20 key personalities from Nagorno-Karabakh
- 2013 LINKS interview with Director Dennis Sammut
- 2013 International Alert study on 20 years of peace building in Nagorno-Karabakh

*European Policy Centre*

The European Policy Centre, based in Brussels, is a think-tank concerned with European integration. In June 2013 it published a double Policy Brief on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from Azerbaijani and Armenian perspective.

*The International Crisis Group*

The International Crisis Group aims to prevent and resolve conflict. To this end, it combines field-based analysis, practical policy prescriptions and advocacy. It published:

- 2009 Policy Briefing entitled 'Nagorno-Karabakh: Getting to a Breakthrough'
- 2011 Policy Briefing entitled 'Armenia and Azerbaijan: Preventing War'

*MICRONON*

MICRONON was a five-research programme funded by the European Commission running from 2007-2011. It studied conflict from a micro-level, multidisciplinary approach. Two Policy Working Papers were published discussing Nagorno-Karabakh.

- 2008 Policy Working Paper on Civil Society and Conflict Transformation
- 2010 Policy Working Paper on engaging Civil Society in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

*Academic/other publications*

- 2010 op-ed for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace entitled 'Remaking the Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process' by Thomas de Waal, a British journalist and writer of several books and articles on the Caucasus
- 2010 article entitled 'Nagorno-Karabakh. Embedded in Geo-politics' with an analysis of the conflict. By Françoise Companjen, PhD, who works as Assistant Professor at the VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
- 2010 senior theses 'Selling its Future Short: Armenia's Economic and Security Relations with Russia' by Ian J. McGinnity
- 2012 chapter entitled 'Complexities of the Peace Process in Nagorno-Karabakh' in the book 'Conflict and peace in Eurasia', 2013, London Routledge. (not completely available). By Françoise Companjen, PhD.
- 2012 study published in Journal of Communication 'Networked Authoritarianism and Social Media in Azerbaijan' by Katy E. Pearce of the University of Washington, Seattle and Sarah Kendzior of the Washington University, Saint Louis.
- 2012 study at the Centre for Social Studies on the problematic role of EU democracy promotion in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh  
By Licinia Simão, PhD, who works as a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies and Assistant Professor at the University of Coimbra, Portugal
- 2013 opinion on Commonsplace.eu by Richard Giragosian of the Armenian independent think tank Regional Studies Center