

**Analysis of peacebuilding competences and engagement of Azerbaijani civil society.
25 years of peace initiatives around Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.**

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Table of contents

1. Executive summary2
2. Overview of main stages in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict5
3. List of organizations, involved to the peace initiatives and their impact to the conflict settlement9
 - 3.1 HCA Azerbaijan and beginning of the peace process9
 - 3.2 Local Organizations19
 - 3.3 Assessment of peace initiatives carried out in the past 20 years37
4. International initiatives and peace processes39
 - 4.1 Independent Civil Minsk Processes39
 - 4.2 Tekali Process42
 - 4.3 Dartmouth process44

4.4 EPNK (The European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh)	45
5. Independent experts and researches	46
6. Discussions in focus group	51
6.1 The overall situation in the country	51
6.2 Stages of development of the relations between Azerbaijan and EU	53
6.3 Civil society opinion on Azerbaijani-European relations	54
6.4 Azerbaijani Youth for Peaceful settlement of Karabakh Conflict and Karabakh Council discussion	55
6.5 Russian- Turkish relations discussions in Focus group	57
7. Conclusion	57
7.1 Recommendations of HCA for international and local NGOs on peace building	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7.2 Recommendations for the EU (on the basis of “Eastern Partnership for Peace Program”)	59
Afterword	60
8. Bibliography	61

1. Executive summary

The following study was written according to the requirements for the assignment.

The global objective of the assignment was to assess the potential of the civil society in the country to engage in the further advancement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process, in order to establish the most efficient approach for future EU support.

The specific objectives of the assignments were:

- To identify the civil society organizations working on peacebuilding activities in Azerbaijan, their competences, capacities and needs;
- To provide an overview of the main peacebuilding initiatives involving civil society, carried out in the past 20 years in connection with Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process, and identify the main lessons learnt from previous engagement;
- Based on this analysis, to identify further organizations and areas of possible engagement to advance the conflict settlement process;

- To formulate the number of recommendations which could potentially guide EU's further engagement in the conflict settlement process, in the framework of the Eastern Partnership policy.

An overview of the structure of the paper

The study contains of 8 main chapters where the author complies the requirements for the assignment. Firstly an approximate structure of the study was drafted. It was based on the different levels of experience in peace processes held in Azerbaijan. Author tried to capture all possible forms and levels of the process including international and local organizations, individuals and researches, Track I and Track II expert opinions.

The introduction section of the study was built from the history of the conflict taken from different international, local Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian and other sources and statistic data. Some personal evidences and unknown facts that are not public but took place and are based on personal experience of the author were also added.

The section "List of organizations, involved to the peace initiatives and their impact to the conflict settlement" was structured in order to capture all forms of participation in peacebuilding activities held in Azerbaijan. That is why we included both local and international organizations, since they played an extremely active role in development of peace process in the country.

The first principal is the selection of the organizations, which are involved in the peace process, organize peace projects and take part in peaceful initiatives. As an organization standing in the roots of peace process, HCA monitors any peace initiatives and try to cooperate with those organizations that match with values of ANC HCA. In order to get information from these organizations author held series of personal meetings with heads or other representatives of listed organizations. The information about the organizations was gotten from the organizations themselves and the author was asked to publish them in the presented way without any changes. Some of the representatives asked to keep their names anonymous due to the restrictions taking place in the country. Personal meetings gave us the opportunity to ask about recent capacity of those organizations and their will to continue the peacebuilding process.

Information on international organizations was mainly taken from media, official web-sites of the organizations in public access and long term partnership relations. Continuous cooperation with international organizations, was also giving opportunity to be in touch with new partners and new initiatives. So there was not a noticeable lack of information about international organizations and their partners.

The gathered information helped the author to understand and assess the effectiveness of existing peace process and the impact of recent political restrictions on motivation and capacities of the interviewed organizations.

The other important method of the information gathering was the discussion in focus group. People invited to the focus group discussions are mainly civil activists that play an important role in conflict settlement and peacebuilding. They are representatives of different structures and organizations involved to the peace process. In order to build a balanced discussion there are always invited representatives from Track I and Track II.

The topics described in the section were chosen because of their actuality to the recent political and social situation in the region and help in realization of the goals of this study.

One of the goals of this study was to elaborate possible variants of conflict settlement. According to these goals there are mentioned series of different proposals in the study. They are related prevention of conflict escalation and its regulation. Also there are several proposals and recommendations for peace organizations for a better work in order to achieve peace despite the enormous resources of conflict parties. The main idea of the proposals is preparation of the societies for peace. All recommendations and proposals are based on HCA methodology on comprehensive approaches for peace process and conflict settlement

The changes that on the law on Non-Governmental Organizations in 17 December 2013 were applied in February 2014 and immediately affected on the activities of local NGOs and branches of international organizations that were functioning in the country. Bank accounts of many NGOs were arrested and frozen. Tens of human rights defenders NGO members were prohibited to exit the country, the grants that were functioning were immediately prohibited and the opportunity to get new grants was also limited. Thus the NGO sector that was occupied with the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, democracy, corruption prevention, enlightenment of citizens, charity and social problems was paralysed and left the struggle for their existence.

2. Overview of main stages in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

The Republic of Azerbaijan is the largest country in the Caucasus region, located at the crossroads between Western Asia and Eastern Europe. It borders the Caspian Sea in the East, Russia in the North, Georgia in the Northwest, Armenia in the West and Iran in the South. It has a total area of 86 km² and a population of over 9,416 million people.¹ Azerbaijan regained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and is currently a member of the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CoE), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Partnership for Peace program. According to the 2009 population census, the ethnic composition of the population is: 91.60 percent Azerbaijanis, 2.02 percent Lezgians, 1.35 percent Armenians (almost all Armenians live in the break-away region of Nagorno-Karabakh), 1.34 percent Russians, 1.26 percent Talysh, 0.56 percent Avars, 0.43 percent Turks, 0.29 percent Tatars, 0.28 percent Tats, 0.24 percent Ukrainians, 0.14 percent Tsakhurs, 0.11 percent Georgians, 0.10 percent Jews, 0.07 percent Kurds, and 0.21 percent other.²

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict took place between 1988 and 1994, between Azerbaijan and Armenia over a territory in the west of Azerbaijan, populated by both Azerbaijanis and ethnic Armenians. Nagorno-Karabakh is the mountain part of the whole Karabakh region, the territory of which is under the occupation. And only in the mountain part of Karabakh the population of native Armenians was prevailed over the Azeri population. The circumstances of the dissolution of the Soviet Union facilitated an Armenian separatist movement in Soviet Azerbaijan. As Azerbaijan declared its independence from the Soviet Union, it removed the autonomous enclave government established in the region by the Soviet powers. In 1991, the Armenian majority voted to secede from Azerbaijan, and proclaimed the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, which, has not been recognized by the international community. Declaration document on secession from Azerbaijan was the only result of this stage of the conflict.

According to the pro-democracy activists (Zardusht Alizade, Eldar Namazov, Arzu Abdullayeva), the conflict was initiated and implemented by the Soviet KGB. Of course, there is a big responsibility of both nations, in being involved in the conflict. Both nations were not ready to solve the territorial and ethnic disputes in a cultural way and all civil society of Azerbaijan has been concentrated in one organization - the Popular Front of Azerbaijan, which was a political movement. Societies of both peoples were not tempted to live performances and provocations organized by the KGB, which has the purpose of the cultivation of a full-scale conflict.

Proof of this is the information obtained by a special commission on refugees and ethnic groups received from Arif Melikov, a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. In his request on massacres in Armenia and Azerbaijan, it became known that at during the mass extermination of Armenians in Baku there operated a criminal group of about a hundred people who had gathered in Baku since the beginning of January, 1990 and which was aimed to commit crimes and massacres with 13th to 17th January of the same year. At that time in Azerbaijan 2000 Soviet KGB employees were sent to the capital (in addition to the local KGB), 14,000 employees of the Interior Ministry of the USSR. The number of military servicemen in all military units at the time was 11,500 people. Until January 17, the troops mentioned above did not participate in helping ethnic Armenians. Local authorities and ordinary people (neighbors, friends) tried on their own to protect their citizens, relatives and friends. Authorities freed groups of Armenians by ferry to

¹ The World Bank, *Population Statistics 2013*, accessed September 2, 2014, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>.

² The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, *Demographic indicators of Azerbaijan - Statistical Yearbook*, Baku 2014, accessed 2 September, 2014, <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/indexen.php>.

Krasnovodsk. By January 17 riots in the city finished. Most of the Armenians were deported from the country. However, on the night from 19th to 20th of January the Soviet military entered the city by using their weapons not against thugs and criminals, but against civilians. According to the USSR KGB officers, in the Armenian village Gugark, repeated the same as in Sumgait.

The investigation is carried out commission on refugees and ethnic groups found that the script massacres in Armenia and Azerbaijan was the same. The evidence may be information about the mass killings of Azerbaijanis in Gugark. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has claimed itself as a successor and began dividing the weaponry of the union between 15 republics. As soon as Azerbaijan and Armenia received their weapons according to quote they immediately started the war.

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When the first refugees from Armenia appeared in Azerbaijan in the end of 1987, the author of the current study launched by the Commission on refugees and ethnic groups in the framework of the People's Front movement. The Commission members interviewed the refugees and prepared the list of 216 Azerbaijanis and Kurds who died and were killed during the deportation from Armenia. During carried out investigation (Arif Yunusov and Arzu Abdullayeva) found that the scenario

of massacres in Armenia and Azerbaijan were the same. As evidence it can be presented the information about the mass killings of 21 Azerbaijanis in Armenian Gugark village and 26 Armenians in Azerbaijani Sumgait. Based on the official answers to Arif Melikov from USSR KGB, Arif Yunusov and Arzu Abdullayeva from General Prosecutor and Supreme Court of USSR, the Armenian village Gugark, repeated the same scenario as in Sumgait, the same 1988 year. The analysis of the pogroms in Armenia and Azerbaijan was made in two articles, written by Arif Yunus later. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has claimed itself as a successor and began dividing the weaponry of the union between 15 republics. As soon as Azerbaijan and Armenia received their weapons according to quote they immediately started the war.

In the winter of 1992, a full-scale war between Azerbaijan and Armenia broke out. By 1993, Armenian forces had occupied nearly 20 percent of the Azerbaijani territory surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh and expelled hundreds of thousands of ethnic Azeris. International mediation including aid from the OSCE failed to successfully reach an agreement between the warring parties. In the spring of 1993, Armenian forces captured regions outside the enclave itself, threatening the involvement of other countries in the region. By the end of the war in 1994, the Armenians were in full control of most of the enclave and still hold command of approximately 9% of Azerbaijan's territory outside the enclave. The statistics on number of refugees and IDPs in Azerbaijan and Armenia is very different. From 230,000 to 370,000 Armenians from Azerbaijan and 207,000 Azeris from Armenia plus over 500,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) around Karabakh have been displaced as a result of the conflict.³ More than one-third of IDP in Azerbaijan are children. Azerbaijan has the largest internally displaced population in the region, and as of 2006, had the highest per capita IDP population in the world. The conflict resulted in the loss of 25,000 lives on both sides during the Karabakh conflict⁴.

A Russian-brokered ceasefire was signed in May 1994 and peace talks were initiated. Since 1994, there have been a number of unsuccessful attempts to broker peace by the Minsk Group, a subset of the OSCE chaired by Russia, the United States, and France. Actually, more effective negotiations in the frames of Minsk Group were facilitated by Sweden and Finland

Upon the request of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and concerned about continued illegal activities perpetrated by the Republic of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, (including the illegal settlement practices, economic exploitation, and devastation of these territories), the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs conducted a Field Assessment Mission (FAM) of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan surrounding its Nagorno-Karabakh region, between October 7 and October 12, 2010. The FAM revealed the continued practice of illegal settlement of ethnic Armenians in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, as well as infrastructure changes and economic activities conducted in these territories in violation of Fourth Geneva Convention and additional Protocols relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which Armenia signed in 1993. After the FAM's visit to the occupied territories, its report stated that the status quo in this region was unacceptable and parties need to "accelerate negotiations toward a political settlement in order, inter alia, to address the problem of the settlers and to avoid changes in the demographic structure of the region."⁵ The FAM also discouraged any further settlement of Armenians on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

³ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan,

⁴ Bode, Brigitta, *Conflict Affected Communities in Azerbaijan*, CARE International in the Caucasus, 2012.

⁵ Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OSCE Council, *Statement at the 810th Plenary Meeting of the Council*, 20 May 2010, accessed September 3, 2014, <http://www.osce.org/pc/68169?download=true>.

Today, Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding areas remain under Armenian control. As such, the region, effectively independent since the end of the war, is considered *de jure* a part of Azerbaijan.⁶ It must be noted that, despite the passing of four UN Security Council resolutions⁷, a Resolution from Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe (PACE) and a Resolution in the EU Parliament, and the recent focus on the region), Armenia continues the occupation of Azerbaijani territories.

Several resolutions have been adopted on the Nagorno-Karabakh situation. In 1992 and 1993, the UN Security Council debated the situation and passed four resolutions (822, 853, 874 and 884), condemning the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by the Armenian forces and calling for the “immediate complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces” from the recently occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the cessation of hostilities and establishment of a durable ceasefire and the return of IDPs to their homes. In 2008, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 62/243 on the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.⁸ The European Union has repeatedly called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, in accordance with relevant UN resolutions, and does not recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh.⁹ In 2005, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted resolution 1416, which referred to Armenia as an occupier and supported the UN Security Council’s resolutions.¹⁰ The Organization of the Islamic Conference has also adopted a number of resolutions condemning the military aggression against Azerbaijan, calling on Armenia to withdraw its armed forces from the occupied lands and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan.¹¹ At the OSCE Summits in Budapest in 1994, in Lisbon in 1996, in Istanbul in 1999 and in Astana in 2010, decisions were made on a peaceful political settlement of the conflict.

Despite the fact that in 1994 both sides signed a ceasefire, sporadic outbursts of gunfire are still taking place along the frontline of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. There have also been reports of mine accidents. The villages near the border, mainly inhabited by women and children, are the most vulnerable.¹²

⁶ OSCE, *Statement of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group*, March 17, 2008, accessed September 3, 2014, <http://www.osce.org/mg/49564>.

⁷ UN Department of Public Information, *General Assembly Adopts Resolution reaffirming territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, demanding withdrawal of all Armenian forces*, (New York: United Nations, 14 March 2008), accessed September 3, 2014, .

⁸ UN Department of Public Information, *General Assembly Adopts Resolution reaffirming territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, demanding withdrawal of all Armenian forces*, (New York: United Nations, March 14, 2008), accessed September 3, 2014, .

⁹ The European Parliament, *Resolution on the need for an EU strategy for the South Caucasus*, (Strasbourg: European Union, May 20, 2010), accessed September 3, 2014, .

¹⁰ Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, *Resolution 1416 on the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh region dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference*, (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2005), accessed September 3, 2014, .

¹¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, *OIC*, accessed September 3, 2014, <http://www.mfa.gov.az/index.php?language=en&options=content&id=841>.

¹² “Azerbaijani Defense Ministry: Armenian armed units violated the ceasefire 30 times,” *APA*, June 21, 2014, accessed September 3, 2014, en.apa.az/xeber_azerbaijani_defense_ministry_armenian_a_213043.html.

3. List of organizations, involved to the peace initiatives and their impact to the conflict settlement

3.1 HCA Azerbaijan and beginning of the peace process

I. HCA Background

The first organization that began its peace activity in Azerbaijan was Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (HCA). It happened in 1992.

The HCA originated from the dialogues between West European peace movements and East European human rights groups across the Cold War divide in the 1980's. Over 1000 people from all over Europe attended the founding meeting of the Assembly, held in Prague in 1990, which was opened by Vaclav Havel. Since that time, the HCA has grown substantially with active branches in around twenty countries.

The Helsinki Citizens' Assembly is an international organization with national committees in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and the Middle East. The HCA works in countries which have signed the Final Protocol of the Conferences on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The protocol forms a basis for promoting peace in Europe and human rights throughout the world. The HCA is a consulting member of the Council of Europe and cooperates closely with many international organizations including the United Nations, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, International Helsinki Federation, Amnesty International, among others.

Between 2000 and 2013 the Assembly was led by two acting national chairs—Arzu Abdullayeva (Azerbaijan) and Bernard Dreano (France). Currently Assembly is led by board of trusted think tanks from different European countries, members of OSCE and COE and from Middle East. All local HCA groups are self-organized and self-financing.

General Assembly of HCA, where activists of HCA and many other members of other groups are invited is held every 2 - 5 years.

General assemblies of HCA have a big impact on the places where they are held. The Assembly held in 1993 in Ankara was the first public event in Turkey where Kurdish issue was openly discussed. The assembly stimulated number of projects which were later carried out by HCA Turkey. The HCA Assembly in 1995 made a tough and in some cases dangerous journey by bus in order to reach Tuzla (Bosnia and Herzegovina), which was attended by civil society representatives from Serbia and Croatia as well as from other parts of Europe. The Assembly at that time declared post-Dayton strategy of HCA and played an important role in attracting local municipalities and groups of citizens all over Europe in the reconciliation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Activities of HCA

HCA was especially active in the conflict areas, focusing its attention in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as well as in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Chechnya.

During Kosovo crisis HCA also played active role in lobbying in government and international organizations, gradually appealed for on land troops in the region which should be more international and less NATO controlled. HCA also strived for international protection of Kosovo. During the war in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, HCA organized missions in Belgrade

HCA has worked on Kurdish problem in Turkey, set a Greek – Macedonia and Podgorica dialogues, met with local civil groups and opposition activists in order to find out possible solutions and discuss joint actions. Now HCA plans to start a project in Cyprus, organizing summer camps and symposiums for young representatives from both sides of the island.

Other issues that HCA considers as important – is a dialogue between Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist and other cultures; establishing grass root level democracy; civil participation in European Institutes (especially in European Council and OSCE); new conceptions of European and Civil security and minority rights.

HCA IN THE CAUCASUS

The decision to form a Transcaucasian branch of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly was taken at the HCA Assembly in Bratislava in March 1992. Later that year, HCA committees were established in Armenia, Azerbaijan including Nagorno-Karabakh region, Georgia and an international peace caravan was organized in August 1992 during the war. The caravan went from Tbilisi, Georgia, where a one-day visit to South Ossetia was organized, and to Baku (Azerbaijan) from where some participants have visited Nagorno-Karabakh (region), and to Yerevan (Armenia), and back to Tbilisi. The visit of Arzu Abdullaeva (Chair of the Azerbaijan HCA) to Yerevan and her Armenian colleague to Azerbaijan in September and October of 1992 represented a major breakthrough at that time. A cease-fire was negotiated at the Kazakh-Ejjevan border in order for the caravan to pass from Azerbaijan to Armenia and later a peace corridor was organized in that region where meetings of youth, women and even security forces took place.

This co-operation between the HCA groups enabled people from both sides to work together to find missing persons and to secure the release of over 500 prisoners of war and hostages, who were mostly released in the Kazakh-Ejjevan peace corridor. Arzu Abdullaeva and Anahit Bayandour (Chair of the Armenia HCA) won the Olof Palme Peace prize which enabled them to finance local HCA activities for a couple of years. The Helsinki Citizens' Assembly of Georgia is also engaged in peace-building work in the Abkhasian and South Ossetian conflicts.

In Azerbaijan, the success of HCA activities was recognized by the west European and US embassies, which honored Arzu Abdullaeva with Civic Society Award in 1998. Efforts to release prisoners of war and hostages have continued; these HCA activists were successful in securing the release of two prisoners of war including a heavily wounded prisoner who had been sentenced to death. The groups also work on refugee and IDP issues, in Azerbaijan and Georgia especially, helping individual cases, organizing discussions and involving refugees and IDPs in the HCA activities.

A major emphasis has been in the work with young people and children. In 1995 the HCA in particular has taken the initiative to organize Summer Schools and Winter Schools for NGO members and students. The alumni of these schools later on had been involved in the process of establishing a Transcaucasian youth network. The network will include young people and NGOs from all over the region. It will be under the umbrella of the HCA and will not be linked to any particular local committee.

One of the first projects was the publication of the HCA Youth magazine "The Collage" in Russian and English and took place in 2000. A children's magazine in Azeri and Georgian languages was produced for IDP children with the aim of helping them to understand their situation and develop tolerance and civic attitudes.

All three national committees have opened their regional branches during 1993-1998 and they are all still active. The ANC HCA groups function in the regions like Gusar, where ethnic minority lives, in Ganja and Kazakh. HCA groups function in Telavi – Georgian Republic and in Vanadzor – Armenian Republic.

South-Caucasian HCA also deals with the mine cleaning and it became the part of the international mine cleaning campaign. It has already brought positive results on pressing on the government to sign Ottawa Convention.

AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE of HCA (ANC HCA)

ANC HCA was founded on 15 August, 1992. This is a branch of the international Helsinki Citizens' Assembly in Azerbaijan.

Goals and objectives:

- participation in peace-building process and spreading of peace-building ideas
- promoting solution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan and Abkhazian conflict in Georgia;
- The human right protection;
- Active participation in the processes of reconciliation between conflicting sides in above-mentioned conflicts;
- Preventing of the conflicts on the ethnic ground;
- Education in the human rights sphere on the base of international and internal laws;
- Promoting in the solution of refugees' problems, forced migrants and other migrants;
- Assistance in the searching for missing persons, liberation of hostages and war prisoners in Azerbaijan and Georgia;
- Assistance in the progress of South Caucasus integration;
- Promoting development of third sector (non-governmental organizations) in Azerbaijan, etc.

Membership:

In 1992, the period of its creation Membership in ANC HCA is collective and/or individual, and was due to realities of originated democratic society: need of studying an experience of pluralistic society with priorities of a person. In this connection ANC HCA was created on the principles of peculiar Coordination Council, united different political organizations, cultural centers of national minorities, nongovernmental organizations, Unions and Associations.

Nowadays six cultural centers of ethnic minorities - Lezgins, Talyshs, Kurds, Udins, Russians, and Germans are collective members of ANC HCA.

Commissions of ANC HCA

From the beginning of its activity there were organized different commissions by HCA. For now first 5 commissions listed below are functional and continue their activities. But all others had stopped their activity because of several objective reasons like the end of Chechnya war, and the no necessity of active research of missing people.

- *Analytical Commission*

The analytical commission works on preventing measures against the conflicts, conflict transformation and resolution. The members of the Center have actively influenced to the discussion and preparation of the last version of the famous Platform of the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. By their recommendation, a very important part - the guarantee for the security of the civilians (from both sides) during the humanitarian action for the repatriation of the IDP's was included to the document.

- *Commission on the problems of prisoners of war, hostages and missing persons.*

Destiny of these persons was the most urging force for creation HCA not only in Azerbaijan, but also in Armenia and Georgia. Having pushed aside intentions of trading with the hostages from both sides, Armenian and Azerbaijani commissions provided with the opportunity for the direct exchanges of lists, and even with the scanty information about the destiny of the concrete person. Under the pressure of the National Helsinki Committees in 1993 there were created State Commissions on problems of destiny of prisoners of war and hostages in Armenia and Azerbaijan. HCA Commission on missing person's problem was established in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. Almost all the prisoners of war and hostages were given to the consideration of Commissions and also under the observation of International Committee of Red Cross. Cooperation between the groups of HCA allowed ANC HCA to contribute in the release of more than 500 prisoners – biggest number of war and hostages during the period from 1992 to 1995. This commission of ANC HCA set up card-index for 4874 persons “lost” in the war since 1992. Among them there are persons traces of which were found, one part of them was released.

- *Commission on the problems of refugees and IDPs works in humanitarian sphere,*

The commission provides them with the material and medical aid (clothes, products, toys, medicines distribution) and also involves them in the activity of HCA and peace building, works with them in the sphere of strengthening the local communities. Regular consultations with the representative of UNHCR in Azerbaijan and contribution in registration of refugees in republic were held in 1999. Just the work with Chechen refugees and Karabakh IDPs led the Commission to the preparation of the new strategy about setting up the settlements for refugees from Central Asia and Middle East to the boundary states members of OSCE (All Central Asia and South Caucasus states and Turkey) that was introduced: to CIS conference in Geneva in 1999 and was adopted, to Common Caucasus conference of NGO on problems of refugees and IDP.

- *Youth Commission*

After the active participation on "The Hague appeal for Peace" forum as the members of South Caucasian Peace Caravan initiated the establishment of movement “Caucasian Youth appeal for Peace”; collaborates actively in traditional youth school SIDU

- preparation of articles for international magazine “Collage”;
- working over creation of regional South Caucasian issue of "Collage" for young women;
- realized the project of creation the library “ Women rights”;
- edition of the digest “Femina”;
- peace-making meetings and actions;
- creation of South Caucasian youth network;
- work with the youth in the local regions.

- *Women Commission*

Goals:

- Women rights' protection;
- Education on women rights to increase the level of political knowledge and general civic education of women active in public life;
- Involvement of women in peace the process.

The NGO "Woman's Institute" which is an independent and active NGO was established in 1997 on the basis of the Women Commission. Further information about "Woman's Institute" is described in paragraph 2.2

- *Human Rights Protection Commission.*

Goals:

- improvement of penitentiary system;
- behavior of officials toward the imprisoned persons;
- rights of prisoners of conscious, political prisoners;
- illegal arrests;
- unjust court hearings;
- education on human rights;
- creation of HR School;
- assistance to the procedure of taking cases to the European Court (EC);
- Creation of Coordination Council of Lawyers and HR Protectors on issue for applying to the EC etc.

- *Commission on ethnic minorities and indigenous people*

There are 6 cultural centers of national minorities in Azerbaijan: Lezgins, Talyshs, Curds, Udins, Russians and Germans are collective members of ANC HCA. In regions of compact living of ethnic minorities - Lezgins, Talyshs, Curds, Udins the departments and groups of ANC were created. The ANC HCA prepared and introduced to society the conception of Analytical Commission of HCA "Peace between people of Azerbaijan". The commission played essential role for preventing the conflict in one of the village in the North region of Azerbaijan with compact living of lezgins in 1993. "Azerbaijan House" of representatives of different national and religious groups was established in 2001 on the basis of this commission.

- *Committee on protection of the rights of refugees from Chechnya.*

The commission was founded in 1999 and deals with problems of the refugees from Chechnya.

- *Children's center (public school) for the refugees from Chechnya.*

The commission carries out educational and rehabilitation programs for children - refugees. The commission was founded in 2000.

- *Commission on the protection of children rights:*

Work on the problems of socially and morally vulnerable children: children- hostages and prisoners of war, children- victims and witnesses of war, children – refuges and internally displaced persons, children with disabilities and ill children, children orphans, children of the families living on edge of the impoverishment, asocial children: children of the street. The Helsinki Children Assembly was established in 1999 on the basis of this commission. "Imdad" (Call For Help) - organization of Azerbaijani missing persons relatives - was established in 1992. Now it functions as a semi-nominal organizations and is not as active as before due to years passed and the topic that is not challengeable any more.

ANC HCA initiated the creation “*Soldiers’ Mothers’*” *Committee and Civil Control over Army and other power structures* in the republic. Commission organized the meeting of Armenian and Azerbaijan mothers, dedicated to the common efforts in searching relatives lost in Karabakh war. Legal Advise Centers were organized by assistance of HCA local branches in Barda, refugees camp №2 in Barda, Ganja, Gazakh, Gousar and Ganjabasar (Western region): Goranboy, Shamkir, Khanlar, Samukh, Dashekesen

Brief history of activity from 1992-2003 (Was generated by Marten Van Harten, liaison officer of HCA)

- August **1992** - Azerbaijan HCA was established on the conference in Baku with participation of International HCA network members
- September - visit of chair of Azerbaijan HCA Arzu Abdullayeva to Yerevan during war time
- October - visit chair of Armenia HCA Anahit Bayandur to Baku
- **1993**. Anahit Bayandur and Arzu Abdullayeva awarded by Olaf Palme Peace Prize.

Citizens’ diplomacy by Arzu Abdullayeva (Baku), Anahit Bayandur (Yerevan) and Karen Oganyanjan (Nagorno-Karabakh) has resulted in the release of Babek as “youngest prisoner” of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. After an appeal by Arzu, transmitted by Anahit and Karen Babek Ilyasov succeeds to get out of the detention center in Nagorno-Karabakh. Both Arzu and Karen take risks for transmitting the boy across the military front line.

Also OSCE diplomats (Minsk Group) and ICRC field officers have reason to welcome Babek. The one-sided release marks a sign of trust and compassion in a deadly spiral of war crime and revenge, including indiscriminate hostage taking of children, women, elderly, mentally and physically disabled, etc.

1994. Two meetings of Armenian and Azerbaijani youth and women were held on the Azerbaijan-Armenia boundary in Kazakh-Ejevan in June and August. Arzu Abdullayeva, Natalia Martirosyan, co-chair of HCA Armenia, and Karen Ohanjanian were responsible for dialog among the young from both sides. One Armenian officer and four Azerbaijani civilians: mother and three children, - were released during the meeting. This place was called by peace activists of HCA as Peace corridor. Arzu Abdullayeva made appeal to the new President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev to release Armenian hostages and prisoners of war as the act of good will. 42 Armenians were released. By assistance of Karen Ohanjanian and Anahit Bayandur 26 children and 38 women were released from the capture in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In October of the same year there took a place of Azeri and Armenian people of Nagorno-Karabakh in Stepanakert/Khankendi. One hostage, with a mental disorder, was released from captivity during this meeting. Local authorities did not agree on the release of the hostage Heydar Heydarov, the brother of who was invited to that meeting by Arzu Abdullayeva and Tamilla Zeynalova as a journalist. Later Heydar Heydarov died in jail of Stepanakert/Khankendi, with the official version of local authorities “died trying to escape” (HCA had information that he was a victim of medical experiments).

1995. The Nagorno-Karabagh Conference in Bonn, organized by member of Bundestag, expert on South Caucasus region Dietrich Sperling, issues an Appeal 'Liberation of War Victims', for release of all hostages and POW's in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. With support of the full Bundestag, its chair Rita Zissmuth sends the Appeal to the Parliaments in Baku and Yerevan.

This is the result of an informal meeting between the above mentioned citizens' diplomats and OSCE diplomats (Co-Chairs and advisors of Minsk Conference), politicians, conflict researchers, etc.

Swedish deputies together with Co-chair of Social-Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, HCA member Zardusht Alizadeh and Arzu Abdullayeva visited Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh to discuss with politicians the current political situation and conflict solutions perspectives. A land model as conflict settlement model was first time proposed for discussion in Nagorni Karabakh.

92 Azerbaijani nationality prisoners of war were visited by delegation and their names have been listed and discussed with the leaders of Karabakh for the release.

1996. The international political action reinforces the combined efforts of OSCE, ICRC, Russian politician Evgeniy Primakov, Germany politician Dietrich Sperling, Swedish politicians Tone Tinsgaard, Gunar Lasinanti, Jan Fridrikson, HCA activists and "Soldiers' Mothers", resulting with the mass releases.

1997. After an exchange of letters through HCA Committees, Azerbaijani and Armenian "Soldiers' Mothers" announce their willingness to cross the border and military confrontation line of Nagorno-Karabakh, for mutual visits to graveyards, ceremonies of commemoration, and joint "Trust groups" for tracing missing persons and reburials of the death. OSCE observers warn that in view of ongoing shooting incidents and mining of the roads, such visits would put the lives of the "Soldiers' Mothers" at serious risk. Although the "Mothers" were ready to take any risk, the action was postponed.

1998. The meeting of Armenian and Azerbaijani intellectuals' representatives in Tbilisi by assistance of USA embassy public affairs officer Craig Dicker and USA NGO Global Community was held.

Arzu Abdullayeva was accorded recognition by USA and EU Award For Efforts in construction of democracy, signed by Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Jacques Santer.

1999. One Azerbaijani mother, and many "Soldiers' Mothers", expects the soon release of Agil Akhmedov, a disabled and wounded war prisoner, kept in Nagorno-Karabakh. This is the result of an appeal made by Arzu Abdullayeva, through Karen Oganjanian. On 5th February, during an international HCA Mission, the Stepanakert authorities promised to set him free on urgent humanitarian grounds in 10th March Agil Akhmedov was released.

Until now, numerous 'Soldiers' Mothers' appeal to the HCA Committees to help them to connect across the borders. In informal 'Trust Groups', they fight for the truth and for the memory of their dear ones. The HCA Committees support 'Soldiers' Mothers' in the conflict zones of Nagorno-Karabagh and Abkhasia, and build up contacts in Chechnya and elsewhere.

2000. The 5th General Assembly of HCA was held in Baku. The goals of the Assembly promote stability and peace in the region: to strengthen co-operation between civic groups attending the meeting, to support current civic networks and to develop new ones, and to enable people to share information and opinions about their situations.

The work of the Assembly was divided into five themes:

- Dialog of cultures and civilizations
- Civic security
- Local community development
- Regional integration and youth action across borders
- Human Rights

The Assembly was attended by 700 civic activists from the Caucasus, Middle East, Europe, North America and the rest of the world. Representatives of governmental institutions, international organizations, foundations and media also participated.

South Caucasus Center of Peace culture was founded on 5 General Assembly of HCA.

On highlight of the V General Assembly of HCA decisions in Baku the regional steering meeting of HCA and South Caucasus Center of Peace culture was conducted in December of 2000 in Tbilisi. The theme was “South Caucasus: from dialog to the strategic alliance”. The perspectives of the future cooperation between all parties of South Caucasus were discussed.

At the beginning of March HCA organized a meeting for the relatives of missing people from Nagorno-Karabakh war in Tbilisi.

The HCA Peace Prize was awarded to the organization of the journalists –veterans of the Nagorno-Karabakh war as the grant for the meeting in Georgia with the journalists from Nagorno-Karabakh according of the decision of V General Assembly to establish the Association of the journalists-peacemakers.

2001. The conducting of 3 days meeting of the relatives of missing persons from Armenia, Azerbaijan including Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone in Tbilisi. As the result the participants achieved the information exchange and prepared the lists of missing persons from both sides and have written the appeals to the leaders of the conflict parties.

The conducting of the forum of refugees and IDP's in Tbilisi was nice possibility for peoples, most affected during the war to share their mutual problems and the plans for future possible coexistence.

2002. The international conference: “Dialogue of Civilizations and Cultures: Baku – The Bridge between the East and the West” was held in May, in Baku. The goal of the Conference was to consider the possible ways of preventing the clash of civilizations. Based on the Peace Model: to work out a strategy for peace activists and other goodwill peoples, to attract all the public strata of societies (necessarily attracting women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities and so on) to the elimination process of phobia between the cultures. Here the ad hoc role does belong to the journalists initiating for the peace journalism trends.

At the conference participated: Dr. Mary Caldor, Professor of School of Economics (UK), Dr. Dmitri Furman, Director of the Sakharov Fund (Russia), Dr. Mohajerani, Director of the Centre of the Dialogue of Civilization, Dr. Murad Belge, well-known public figure, writer (Turkey), Mr. Mient Yan Faber, Director of the Inter-Church Peace Council, (the Netherlands), Dr. Walid Salem, Professor of the Palestine University, Mr. Bernard Dreano, Co-Chair of HCA International (France).

Regional HCA book «The war by eyes of women» was published. The book "The variants of the resolution of Karabakh conflict - ideas and reality" was published. Authors of this book are: from Azerbaijan professor Ali Abbasov and from Armenian - Harutyun Khachatryan .

2003. “The world after the war in Iraq” international conference was held in Baku. One of the goals of the conference was to see the future of the Middle East, especially in Iraq. Cultural interrelations as globally as well as in societies (countries, people): interethnic, inter religion, international dialogue, was discussed as well in the frame of this conference. Materials of the conference are under preparation to be published; also material for the film was collected. The final text of the Declaration are prepared, which will be distributed to the all participants and

international organizations. Famous international activists, diplomats and scholars took part in the work of the conference.

The Coordinating Advisory Council (CAC) of NGOs, Political and International organizations "For Free and Fair elections" was initiated by ANC HCA in Baku and implemented with 32 nongovernmental, 9 political and 6 international organizations. The CAC aimed to study mechanisms of conducting just and transparent elections and fair calculation of voting results as well as document violations of legislation, rights of the electorate and candidates during election process.

The projects in cooperation with Armenian HCA 2003 - 2015:

- Since 1993 the Armenian and Azerbaijani HCA Committees have actively participated in the public peace process initiated by the Foundation for Global Community, USA. The aim of this project is to bring together people from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh for open discussions, dialogue and possible cooperation.
- In 1999 the Committee was selected as a local partner for the international project 'Women Waging Peace' (1999-2003), which aims to support women's peace initiatives worldwide.
- In October 2000 in Baku (Azerbaijan) and September 2003 in Tsaghkadzor (Armenia) SIDU (Summer School for Intercultural Dialogue and Understanding) was held. This school was organized by the HCA Armenia and Azerbaijan Youth Branches, in cooperation with HCA France. Participants came from different countries, including Armenians to Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis and Turkish to Armenia.
- Since 2002 Helsinki Citizen's Assembly Armenian and Azerbaijan Committees have worked in the frame of CRINGO network with Danish Refugees Council (DRC) through a project which focuses on refugee women in rural areas of Armenia.
- In 2003 with support of UNIFEM and the Eurasia Foundation HCA Youth Branch published the "Collage" regional youth magazine (for Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia).
- In 2004-2005 HCA Azerbaijan and Armenia are implementing Regional Project "Where are you, my friends?" which is supported by Danish Refugees Council (DRC) and aimed to the rebuilding connections between former neighbors and friends in both countries.
- "Trust Building" Armenian-Azerbaijani Project supported by IKV (2004-2007) with support of liaison officer Siegfried Weber
- In 2005-2006 there starts Project "Establishing Mutual Trust – Development and Implementation of Universal Gender and Peace Education Manual" with support of UNIFEM, targeted on youth and aimed to improve the level of tolerance and develop the culture of peace approach among young people in South Caucasus countries.
- The project "Trust building", in cooperation with Interchurch Peace Council (IKV, Netherlands). In the framework of this Project in September 2005 and December 2006, there were organized meetings of Armenian and Azeri in Tsakadzor, Armenia and Tbilisi, Georgia. 20 young people from Baku, Gandja, Stepanakert, as well as from 6 cities of Armenia had opportunities to discuss youth problems, to share experience, as well to establish link across borders. (2005-2006)
- "To be or not to be" project, aimed to satisfy social needs of refugees was implemented with support of Danish Refugees Council (DRC). (2007)
- Youth in Politics the pilot project targeted to the young members of political parties was implemented in cooperation with HCA-Azerbaijan and Helsinki Initiative-92 and Helsinki with support of IKV-Pax Christi (Netherlands) and aimed to improve the role of

- young politics in peaceful solution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict Project supported by IKV-Pax Christi. (2007-2010)
- “Gender and Peace Education for Youth in Southern Caucasus” regional project in cooperation with Hilfswerk Austria founded by Austrian Development Agency (2008-2009)
 - Karabakh Monitor Project on Peace building and advocacy at EU institutions supported by BSTF (2010-2011) by assistance of International Secretary of HCA Barbara Migut
 - Regional project “Strengthening Women’s Capacity for Peace-building in the South Caucasus Region” in partnership with CARE International/CARE Caucasus and colleagues: Azerbaijan Women Problems Research Union, Armenia HCA, Georgia IDP Women Association “Consent” and break away entities: Abkhazia, and Nagorno-Karabakh, founded by European Commission. (2010 –2013)
 - Meeting of Independent Civil Minsk Process (ICMP) group in Tbilisi by support of EU Special Envoy to South Caucasus (June 2014)
 - Visit to Helsinki and Aland Islands on invitation and support of MFA of Finland (November 2014)
 - “Confidence in Recovery” Armenian-Azerbaijani Project implemented in partnership with CARE in Caucasus with support of European Commission (2014 – 2015)

HCA activities related to refugees and IDPs in the South Caucasus

Tamila Zeynalova (HCA Azervaijan)

Nataliya Martirosyan (HCA Armenia)

Julia Kharashvili (HCA Georgia)

“White Crane” Magazine for Children

The peace interactive children’s magazine was originally proposed by UN Volunteer Mr. Greg Hansen as 3 month pilot project, and was supported by UNICEF. The proposal was based on Norwegian Refugees Council survey (1994) which identified 16% of IDP children cannot attend school due to different reasons (poverty, lack of text books, lack of clothes, no school in place where IDPs were settled, health and psychological problems related with conflict and displacement). The Magazine was produced by team of local peace activists under UNV umbrella, and was based on children’s letters. Being originally small pilot publication, the Magazine became one of the most long-term projects of psycho-rehabilitation and peace building through children; it was regularly – monthly published during 12 years and become networking tool for conflict affected children from South Caucasus. Originally, the Magazine was distributed in IDP community throughout Georgia, including separated regions, and in schools of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Distribution was made mainly through international organizations, working in the region. Later, distribution started through NGO peace networks also in Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Magazine was providing tolerance education, support for children’s initiatives, e.g. explored the idea for children’s peace camps and South Caucasian peace network.

Peace Camps (2001 – 2007)

The children’s Magazine became mobilize of children divided by conflict. Many of them, writing letters to each other through “White Crane” expressed interest to meet. It gave to NGOs working across the border, idea to start peace camps and to bring children divided by conflict, to training and recreation together. The idea was discussed between Georgian and Abkhaz NGOs and Tskhinvali youth house joined to this initiative. The first camp was organized in Bulgaria, with the support of Open Education Center from Sofia, and 25 children from 2 separated regions and Tbilisi met in the multicultural camp, led by this center. Later, there were already more

NGOs and more groups involve – from Crimea tatar’s community, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In Georgia, the camps were organized by IDP Women Association “Consent” in cooperation with UN Volunteers programs (until 2004), from Abkhazia participated Center of Humanitarian programs and later – Youth Palace from Sukhumi and Ochamchire, from Azerbaijan – Yuva and Helsinki Citizens Assembly, from Armenia – YMCA, from Crimea – Union of Teachers. The main donors during different years were UNHCR, Swiss Red Cross, UNOMIG, Open Society Georgia Foundation.

Since 2001, the network of partners (“Consent” from Georgia, Azerbaijani HCA and Armenian “Meghvick”) started the project of Youth dialogue for peace, with involvement of “Consent” from Georgia, Azerbaijani organization and Armenian “Meghvick” (Giumri). The dialogue in different formats was conducted in Ukraine, Russia and Switzerland. The support came from UN Volunteers program “Confidence building measures in conflicts in Georgia”, IDEE/USIA, Canadian Feed the Children, UNHCR and Evangelisher Entwicklungsdienst (EED). 7 peace dialogues were conducted during the period 2001 – 2007,

3.2 Local Organizations

After the assignment of the ceasefire regime there were numerous organisations working on peacebuilding on Nagorno Karabakh conflict. They carried out the following types of activities i.e., dialogues, peace education with different social groups (youth, journalists, women, IDPs, teachers etc.), seminars, conferences, trainings, joint projects (on magazines films, peace camps etc). They estimate that organisations had the impact to make some changes in their societies. Most of organizations do not have an aim to resolve the conflict, but to eliminate the hate in the societies and prepare them to live in a future peace and ease the process of coexisting. We would like to point that none of these organizations hold activities contradicting to the official position of the Azerbaijani government on the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Most of the organizations that now work independently in conflict resolution sphere were beginning their peacebuilding practice within HCA or they were founded by HCA.

The statute of HCA allows associate membership of NGOs. All associated members – NGOs are members of coordinating board of HCA and participate in its different commissions.

Baku Journalism School

The project "Baku School of Journalism"(BJS), launched jointly by the HCA and “Dutch Free Press Unlimited” (DFPU) in October of 2005 was the most efficient one. Now Baku Journalism School is an independently acting organization, but not officially registered. The organization constantly applies for an official NGO status from Ministry of Justice but did not succeed for years. Dutch Free Press Unlimited was the most supportive and efficient partner of BJS. In 2015 the financial support was stopped and only office expenses are covered by DFP. During 10 years additional support came from different embassies like UK and USA, and from Ebert and Marshall Foundations.

Each year BJS receives three groups of students consisting of 15 students in each. The selection process goes with the help of wide announcements in media. Each course lasts for three months. After the graduation of the course, all students join the Baku Journalism School Network. There is organized a course on peace education and consultation for the groups of alumni that lasts for 16 days. Over the last two years the peace education and consultation courses are being hold time to time, from the reason the lack of financial support and are free of charge for alumni.

Over 415 journalists from newspapers, radio TV and online media have passed the three-month course of the school during ten years. During ten years conflict management and peacemaking

was a regular course. Each group was getting familiar these topics under the guidance of active peacekeepers of various areas (women, refugees, youth, ethnic minorities and so forth.). There were held specialized trainings in conflict resolution and the role of media in this process. There was always discussed the escalation of violence and hatred in the region accompanied with the analysis of the causes of that phenomenon and explaining the consequences.

The project in investigation of the same topics in two conflict countries held in cooperation by the Baku School of Journalism and Yerevan Caucasus Center of Peace Making Initiatives (CCPMI), in the two conflicting countries had a positive response in the blogosphere. Two authors were able to prepare a joint investigation text; the other eight authors (BJS alumni and CCPMI members) examined the same socio-political phenomenon and processes in Azerbaijan and Armenia from different positions, but with similar results. There were visually identified similarities of ideology and attitudes of the authorities of the two states to the society, peace, freedom and democracy.

Graduates of the BJS conducted a study of the population in a strip along the Karabakh front line from the Iranian border to the border with Armenia. Peace projects supported FPYU (Netherlands), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Marshall Foundations.

Given the enthusiasm for the main part of the Azerbaijani youth in ethnic nationalism ideas and a strong influence of state propaganda of ethnic hatred against Armenians as a phenomenon, the school held lectures on conflict resolution and peacemaking for each group of students. The lecturers involved well-known human rights activists and peace activists Arzu Abdullayeva, Professor Ali Abbasov and Professor Sajida Abdulvagabova. The latter also held classes for students on the theme "Gender and Peace". Since the school was involved in the execution of the international project on the theme "Media diversity", the training materials on the subject were used for training journalist-students. The school became the basis for the selection of members of the South Caucasus regional project for the "three-media journalism" (photo journalism, video journalism and printing) courses.

School keeps the constant contact with its graduates working in different media. Thanks to the School the potential criticism against chauvinistic propaganda of the government has been significantly increased and the team of teachers was able to mobilize a large number of colleagues for a PR company in support of a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Public Council of Experts for Karabakh Conflict Settlement

Coordination is carried out on rotation principle

Public Council of experts for Karabakh conflict settlement (hereinafter referred to as Karabakh Council, KC) was set up in 2005 in partnership with CMI. The Karabakh Council aims to discuss and scrutinize Karabakh conflict-related issues, work out recommendations and give their coverage in mass media, acquaint international experts and governmental structures, as well as representatives of civil society with these recommendations.

The KC is composed of around 30 experts – heads of various non-governmental organizations, scientists, political experts, representatives of the Azerbaijani community of Nagorno-Karabakh. Founder of the Karabakh Council is Chairman of the Azerbaijan National Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Arzu Abdullayeva. Public Relations Coordinator professor Irada Bagirova . Coordinator from CMI Mikheil Mirziashvili.

Governing body of the KC is as follows:

1. Arzu Abdullayeva - Azerbaijan National Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
2. Ali Abbasov - "AREAT" - Center for Research of Modern Social Processes
3. Leyla Aliyeva - Center for National and International Studies
4. Zardusht Alizadeh - Baku School of Journalism
5. Eldar Namazov – Political analyst, former assistant to the President H. Aliyev
6. Rasim Musabekov – Political analyst, MP
7. Kerim Kerimli - IDP's Unity (from Nagorno Karabakh)
8. Irada Baghirova – Historian, National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan
9. Ilgar Velizade – Political analyst, director of News Department of Sputnik I/A
10. Elkhan Shahinoglu - "Atlas" Political Research Center
11. Sajida Abdulvagabova - Women Problems Research Union
12. Gubad Ibadoglu – Economist, Center for Economic Studies
13. Ruhangiz Huseynova - Solidarity among Women
14. Rahman Badalov – Doctor of Philosophy
15. Togrul Juvarly – Political Scientist, "Turan" news agency
16. Fuad Hasanov – Democratic Monitor
17. Avaz Hasanov – Humanitarian Researches Center
18. Arzu Abdullayeva – ANC HCA
19. Erkin Gadirli – International Lawyer
20. Ilgar Mammadov – School for political Studies
21. Rasim Agayev – orientalist, former press-secretar of president Mutalibov
22. Ismail Abdullayev – coordinator of Youth for peaceful settlement of Karabakh conflict (EPNK Youth)
23. Ahmad Alili – EPNK youth member, cdnter for Economic Studies
24. Nidjat Melikov – journalist, former char Department in Zerkalo newspapers
25. Vagif Jahangirov – Azerbaijan Karabakh Committee of HCA, IDP from NK
26. Gahraman Gahramanov - Azerbaijan Karabakh Committee of HCA
27. Anar Usubov – IDPs community
27. Ulvi Ismail – researcher
28. Tabib Huseynov – Save the world
29. Mehriban Vezir -director of Political Cultural Centre of Azerbaijan Women

It should be noted that over 10 years of its existence KC members took part in a great number of international projects representing the KC at various international conferences, round tables and workshops.

One of the most significant was the Dartmouth process, 2001 to 2007. In the reviewed period, representatives of the public of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh had ten meetings, jointly with American and Russian members of the working group of Dartmouth conference for regional conflicts. The purpose of the dialogue is to study possible approaches to the beginning of peace process. These conferences were co-chaired by American representative Harold Sanders and Russian representative Vitaly Naumkin (advisor to the Russian President). Following the debates, participants worked on a draft framework agreement between the parties of the conflict. This agreement was transformed to a document which was taken as a base for elaboration of the Madrid Principals, submitted by co-chairs of the Minsk Group. Later on, this proposal was put forward to be discussed by the OSCE Minsk group and put on the agenda of peace talks. For more detailed information look at paragraph 3.3.

From 2010 to 2014, KC representatives took part in the project titled “The Role of Civil Society in Settling Conflicts in the Black Sea Region» under the aegis of «Crisis Management Initiative» and the Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly (HCA). Project’s kernel was to prepare and make analytical reports on conflict settlement by KC experts and discuss them at round tables. Note that 22 analytical policy papers were heard, discussed and published on HCA site over 4 years. The papers covered Nagorno-Karabakh and other conflicts in South Caucasus and post-Soviet expanse, as well as models of ethnic conflict resolution in European countries.

KC experts jointly with Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh representatives had three times visited the Aland Islands to familiarize themselves with the oldest experience of conflict settlement between Sweden and Finland.

Also, KC members took part in a project of partner organization IKV/Pax Christi (Netherlands) - ICMP (Independent Civil Minsk Process, presented by Guido Bierbrauwer) . Within the framework of the project, a Tbilisi declaration on principles Karabakh conflict settlement (can be attached) was adopted by KC members and representatives of Armenian NGOs in Tbilisi, 2010.

In January 2012, a meeting within the framework of ICMP project discussed with the Armenian party the prospects of the development of peacemaking projects at the level of civil society and a plan of subsequent actions. Meetings were held between Armenian-Azerbaijani delegation and trustees of the Euro-commission for Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as NATO representative for South Caucasus J.Appathurai.

Note that nearly every week the KC holds sittings attended by representatives of civil society and foreign specialists which discuss topical conflict-related issues in South Caucasus and Black Sea area; international situation, role of civil and expert community in peacemaking process, etc. Meetings are regularly held with Ambassadors of OSCE Minsk group countries – USA, France, rarer Russia, as well as co-chairmen of the Minsk group, representatives of EU, CE, International Crisis Center.

In addition to KC sittings and round tables at the HCA office, some experts have usual meetings meetings with local residents and refugees in regions of Azerbaijan and still take place often enough. Thus, KC expert, journalist K.Kerimli met with refugees of some villages around frontier Fizuli region, as well as Barda; got a line on their topical needs and problems, their vision of conflict resolution. KC members - Ruhangiz Huseynova (Chairman of Women’s Organization of Displaced Persons) and Shargiya Huseynova (Chairman of Refugees’ Society) held meetings with residents of Ismailly; with refugees in Agdam (settlement Guzanly) and Terter.

KC experts gained utterly positive experience in Tekali, a village located at the intersection of Azerbaijani, Armenian and Georgian borders where, on the initiative of human rights activist G. Vanyan, regular meetings of the representatives of all social strata of three South Caucasian Republics (youth, journalists, political experts, etc.) are held (See more information on Tekali process below).

At one of the latest meeting of KC held in the end of year 2015 experts of KC discussed the possibilities of future negotiations between conflict sides and came to a reasonable conclusion that says: “At present, the situation in Azerbaijan and the region as a whole is rather unpredictable; exchange of fire in the front-line is becoming regular up to the engagement of heavy artillery. In this respect, Russia’s involvement in the process is dishonorable: both belligerents are supplied with Russian arms. Hence, the goal of all regional and international forces is to avoid military upshot of the conflict when developments risk getting out of control. It was events in Ukraine, annexation of the Crimea by Russia that forced the world community to look at all conflicts on the territory of the former USSR in a new manner. The world experience of conflict resolutions is still positive in remedying conflict situations at local level, so the support of international organization is required to attain this goal”.

Some KC members, in particular, Doctor of Philosophy, Prof. R. Badalov called experts not to restrict themselves with geopolitical aspects of the issue but resuscitate the theory of minor matters where actions and deeds of individuals yield greater results than complex and unrealizable projects.

Public Association on Humanitarian Studies

Chairman Avaz Hasanov

The Public Association of Humanitarian Studies (PAHS) is an analytical center (think-tank) – non-governmental organization set up in 1997. The organization was officially registered on April 14, 2000. The PAHS is a member of above 10 local and international networks (associations) of civil society. Principal mission of the organization is to carry out democratic transformations in society by means of accelerating the civil activity, as well as protect rights and freedoms of citizens and ensure their sustained involvement in the development of civil society.

The main purpose of the organization is to study reasons of conflicts and participate in peace-making process, work out joint programs to resolve the Karabakh conflict. As one of the active participants of NGO network in charge of refugee problem in South Caucasus, the PAHS has been taking part in refuge programs and their role in conflict resolution since 1999.

In 2006, the PAHS issued a monograph «Karabakh is under discussion» funded by the British organization “Conciliation Resources” and mirroring the position of official and public circles of Azerbaijan on the Karabakh conflict. At the same time, a documentary film «Nagorno-Karabakh: Debates in Society» was produced. Based on interviews with NGO representatives and political experts, the film is illustrative of the results of peace talks, role of international observers, society’s participation in conflict resolution, probability of combat operations and, finally, results of situation aggravation.

«Master-classes» on human rights, conflicts and gender issues held in Baku, Ganja and Lankaran for journalists, representatives of human rights protection organizations provided their participants with experience of work of South Caucasian Republics, Georgian and local experts.

An emphasis has to be laid on a project «Youth Debates over Karabakh Conflict» carried out under financial support of the US Embassy in Azerbaijan. The debates gave hope on peace resolution to the Karabakh problem among young people. Lectures of well-known political experts were delivered on the subject, debates held on people's diplomacy and simulated youth' participation in peace-making process.

A memorial book devoted to the Karabakh conflict was prepared jointly with the British "Consiliation Resources" for presentation in Azerbaijan. These included films by Azerbaijani and Armenian directors through the assistance of «Internews».

In 2010-2011, the PAHS jointly with partners from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh with the assistance of the British Embassy within the framework of video-dialogue "Let's Peace Jam" via Skype held discussions with all three audiences. Participants discussed measures that were necessary to take among youth to expand youth' potentialities in using resources available for conflict resolution.

In 2012, the PAHS under the financial support of the British Embassy jointly with a partner organization from Armenia carried out a project «Anguish of Human Losses: Ceasefire» within the framework of which the participants collected stories of soldiers killed due to the ceasefire regime violation. The meeting was held with the participation of parents of soldiers killed on both sides and thus contributed to the strengthening of their role in the peace settlement of the conflict.

In 2013-2014, the PAHS jointly with the British organization "Saferworld" and a partner organization from Armenia implemented a project to assess incidents on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and expand opportunities of local communities on this track. A report on the project drew attention of local and international experts.

At present, implementation of peacemaking initiatives is essentially hampered by bans imposed on Azerbaijani NGOs in obtaining grants from international donors. All the projects have been suspended, so the PAHS succeeded to preserve its potential just at the level of individual participation in various actions.

Internews Azerbaijan.

Chairman: Ilham Safarov

The NGO known as "Internews Azerbaijan" Public Association was created in 2004 as an Azerbaijani local NGO / "Internews" and founded in 1997. The organization was aimed to develop traditional and especially digital media, TV journalism and radio journalism in Azerbaijan in compliance to international standards.

Internews played an important role in founding, equipping creative personnel and necessary technology for most of local TV stations. There can be named televisions as ANS, Space, ATV and, Lider . Also several TV stations in regions "Aygün TV" (Zaqatala), "Khayal TV" (Quba), "Kapaz TV" (Ganja), "Dunya TV" (Sumqayıt), "Simurq TV" (Tovuz), "Lenkeran TV", "Mingachevir TV" and many others.

Many experienced producers, trainers, videographers and journalists of USA, Russian, Ukraine, Georgia and EU shared their experience in producing, directing, journalism and filming with local staff from Azerbaijan in trainings organized by Internews Azerbaijan. Nowadays, most of

famous journalists, videographers and producers of Azerbaijani television, radio and on line site world are graduates of Internews trainings and seminars.

Internews played a decisional role in professional growth and technical equipment provision for all regional TVs. Thanks to its high quality trainings; staff of many local televisions was trained to produce qualitative and high-rated news reports, talk-shows, social programs and documentaries.

The project named “Media Law Institute” created in 2000, was famous not only in Azerbaijan but also in all Caucasus, because of the was a first professional web-site in the country, named “Mediaforum”, that was published also in Russian language and red in al South Caucasus countries. The project was continuing until 2014 and stopped its activity by the time governmental restrictions limited al foreign incomes.

Internews was also taking care of professional growth of local trainers. The staff and managers raised in Internews were provided with internships in USA and EU.

TV shows like “Crossroads” (co-working project of Internews staff in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia), “Güzgü”, “Nə isə”, “Bir bül iki”, “Pul” produced by Internews and broadcasted on local TVs were most rated shows in the end of 90th and beginning of 2000s.

The “Tele-Bridge Baku-Yerevan” project was realized by Internews and broadcasted on ANS - one of the most well-known channels. The “Tele-Bridge Baku-Yerevan” was a weekly show where experts from different spheres were discussing common conflicts. The project lasted continued from 2000-2001.

The “Crossroads” project (1998-2004) should be also mentioned as a strong and popular peace building project in Azerbaijan. The project was broadcasted on TV and showed life of people in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia in one show using Russian language. The show was aimed to maintain the connection between neighboring countries and show a real life that is happening on the other side of the conflict border. Generation of youth born after 90th was raised on this show that is unfortunately closed now.

Other achievement of Internews is the series of films promoting gender equality and culture. Tens of documentaries and fiction films made by Internews and broadcasted on local TVs were showing lives of real people suffering from gender discrimination.

The organization has also done a fundamental work on designing necessary educational base for growth of TV and Radio professionals. Books like “TV report”, “TV management”, “Creative tele-management” and other books were translated and published by Internews Azerbaijan.

Even if Inernews Azerbaijan cannot function as effectively as it was doing during 1997-2004 (due to the known restrictions created from the NGOs), it could manage to hold trainings on media law, media ethics, conflict journalism and other useful trainings and seminars.

During 1997-2004 Internews was functioning as a branch of Internews Network. Since 2004 it was registered as a local NGO and continued its activities as an independent, non-political and not political organization.

Every year Internews was organizing about 10 different trainings for young journalists. The trainings were focused on TV, Radio, and Internet journalism. There were invited local as Gulu Magerramli, Zeynal Mammedli, Aynur Kerimova, Yadigar Mamedli, who are famous and professional journalists in Azerbaijan. (2004-2013)

Documentary series on the life of IDPs and refugees' life in Azerbaijan was realized by Internews during 2010-2012. The documentaries were directed by well-known local directors as Ayaz Salayev, Mirsadog Agazade, Rauf Mamedov and etc. The project consisted of several steps: preparation and realization of the documentary, public demonstration and discussions among youth. The aim of the project was to change the attitude of the youth to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from the different perspective and show them feelings and conditions of people who suffered the displacement.

At the moment, the accounts of the organizations are temporarily frozen, but the juridical status of the organization as a Public Association was extended for two more years, until 2018.

Women Problems Research Union (Women Institute)

Director prof. Sajida Abdulvagabova

Women activists, as well as peace and women's organizations have been fostering partnerships across the lines of conflict. For the few organizations willing to work with "the other" their approach to conflict prevention is premised on the fact that the establishment of strong mutual trust, confidence and understanding at the grassroots level ensures an enabling environment which will advocate for, and uphold, any peace processes which emerge.

At the initiative of the active in society women the woman NGO "Woman's Institute" was established in 1997 and was registered by Ministry of Justice Azerbaijan Republic in 2000 as "Women Problems' Research Union". Vision: - a society where women take active part in local and parliamentary elections and in the peace building process; a society where women are leaders and politicians.

The vision WI is: -a society where women take active part in local and parliamentary elections and in the peace building process; a society where women are leaders and politicians.

The mission of WI are:

To protect the rights of women; to educate women about their rights to increase the level of political knowledge and general civic education of women to make them active in public life; to involve women in the peace process; to involve women in election process; to promote development of the third sector in Azerbaijan.

The organization has been active in promoting peace education and advocacy for peaceful conflict resolution.

Taking all this as basis the organization since 1997 to till is engaged with the following activities for women in Baku and different regions of Azerbaijan:

- Organizes courses, seminars, forums, round tables, conferences;
- Publishes booklets and magazines;

- Takes part in international conferences, seminars, and meetings.

Woman's Institute at the national and regional levels implemented projects on peacekeeping. At the national level were:

- "Peace Education for Women, and for Women Journalists"
- "Peace and Gender Education for Youth in Southern Caucasus"
- "Improve Journalists' Skills on Covering Encouragement of Women in Peacebuilding Process"
- "Strengthening the Knowledge of Women's Rights and the Skills for Peacebuilding Among Azerbaijani Women"
- "Strengthening Women's Capacity for Peace-building in the South Caucasus region"
- "Strengthening the women's opportunities for peace building in the region"
- "Advancing gender equality using CEDAW and resolution UNSCR s on Women, Peace and Security"
- Advocacy for property rights of conflict-affected women in Azerbaijan
- WPRU worked on regional level. Amongst other activities, the WPRU has cooperated with Georgian and Armenian partners were worked on the following projects:
- "Advocacy, lobbying and participation of woman in the peaceful resolution of conflicts" (UNIFEM)
- Development of "Gender and Peace Education Manual"
- Establishing Mutual Trust – Development and Implementation of Universal "Gender and Peace Education Manual" (using UN Security Council Resolution #1325).
- 'Strengthening women's capacity for peace building in the South Caucasus region'
- Confidence in Recovery

The overall objective of these projects: 'Strengthening women's capacity for peace building in the South Caucasus region' and Confidence in Recovery is outlined in UNSCR 1325, the stated goal of which is to "mainstream" women into all aspects of peacemaking, peace building, and peacekeeping operations. The projects also take its reference from UNSCR 1820, which acknowledges and seeks to respond to sexual violence as a weapon of war.

Within projects 'Strengthening women's capacity for peace building in the South Caucasus region' and Confidence in Recovery there are repeatedly organized meetings with IDP's women in Tbilisi and Brussels.

Organization is member of the GPPAC (Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict) is a global member led network of civil society organisations who actively work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding based on regional and global action agendas. The Global Partnership seeks a world in which people and governments elect peaceful means, rather than armed conflict, to achieve greater justice, sustainable development, and human security. It aims to build a multi-stakeholder partnership including civil society, governments, regional organisations and the UN.

Association for the Protection of Women's Rights in Azerbaijan after D. Aliyeva

Chairman Novella Jafarova

Beginning of peace-building activities.

1995 - 2004 participation in the project "Working Together in the Caucasus", bringing together women's organizations of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In collaboration with IDEE.

1999 - 2003 - Studying of the problems of the Azerbaijani community of Karabakh and identifying actions to resolve the problems. In partnership with International Alert.

2001 – “Caucasus - our common home” series of the round table sessions on the topic of peace-building in Marneuli, Bolnisi and Gardabani regions of Georgia with the participation of representatives of the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Georgian population. In collaboration with IDEE.

2002 - 2003 - The publication of the bulletin "Working Together in the Caucasus." In collaboration with IDEE.

2000-2003 - Translations of Jinnah Vickers's "Women and War» book into Azerbaijani language. In partnership with OSI SOROS Fund.

2006 - "The trust across borders. First steps" project. In collaboration with Danish Refugee Council.

2007 - Restoration of documents for refugees and IDPs. In partnership with Danish Refugee Council.

2009 - Organization of a dialogue between the Armenian and Azerbaijani women. In collaboration with Kvinna Till Kvinna organization, Sweden.

2010 - Training in conflict resolution and peace-building. Organization of the meeting between the representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia. In collaboration with “Kvinna Till Kvinna” organization, Sweden.

2011 - A study of the activity of the international community in Azerbaijan in peacekeeping. In collaboration with British Embassy.

2011. Initiation of the dialogue between the Azerbaijani and the Armenian community of Nagorno-Karabakh. In partnership with “Kvinna Till Kvinna” organization, Sweden.

2010- The "Women of South Caucasus for peace. Peace starts from your home" initiative. Partners: "Democracy Today" (Armenia) and "Association for the Protection of Women's Rights in Azerbaijan after D. Aliyeva" (Azerbaijan). The peace movement in the South Caucasus attracted to 32 organizations of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. During the initiative February 6th was announced as Day of Peace in the Caucasus.

2011 - Peace Prize for young Caucasian women. Partners: "Democracy Today" (Armenia) and "Association for the Protection of Women's Rights in Azerbaijan after D. Aliyeva" (Azerbaijan). The purpose of the project: the recognition of the exceptional role and leadership potential of young women in building peace, their important role in strengthening their communities, work on conflict prevention and recovery of human rights protection.

2010 - 2015 - EPNK - European Partnership for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Partners: Yuwa (Azerbaijan), "Association for the Protection of Women's Rights in Azerbaijan after D. Aliyeva" (Azerbaijan), WRC "Women's Resource Center" (Armenia), the DT "Democracy Today" (Armenia) and "Kvinna till Kvinna" as general partner. The project was aimed at strengthening the role of women in peace-building in the South Caucasus and the empowerment of young women of Armenia and Azerbaijan affected by the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh to accept peacemaking initiatives, and transform the image of the enemy and strengthen the capacity for dialogue.

Most of the projects were implemented in partnership with the Armenian and Georgian organizations and the experience of this cooperation gives reason to believe that the South Caucasus security issues should be solved only by combining the efforts of the people of all three countries, taking into account the needs and concerns of women, children and the elderly.

18 employees, most of whom have been trained in specialized training courses and seminars, including “Workshop on conflict prevention and problem solving skills” in 2002 and “Workshop for negotiation and conflict management skills” in 2003 at US Institute of Peace.

Work perspectives: activity of Association for the Protection of Women’s Rights in Azerbaijan after D. Aliyeva is focused on peacekeeping and constantly supports conflict transformation and this is reflected in the majority of projects aimed at enhancing the role of women in peace processes, the restoration of confidence between the warring peoples, the involvement of youth in peace processes, legal education of refugees and IDPs and their involvement in peace-building processes, the study of problems of separated families, the study of the peacebuilding role of international organizations in the region, etc. In the future, it is also intended to continue its work in this direction.

South Caucasian Center of Peace Culture and Dialogue of Civilizations.

Headed by Ali Abasov

This organization was founded by unification of two different centers: “AREAT Center of Modern Social Studies” headed by Ali Abbasov and Elena Kasumova and “South Caucasian Center for Dialogue of Cultures and Civilizations” in 2012.

The both centers are engaged in theoretical studies, practical activities and trainings, as well as involved in compiling teaching aids on analysis and conflict settling, culture of peace and gender policy.

The Center has carried out a number of gender studies, including:

- Businesslike cooperation of South Caucasian women ("Eurasia" Foundation, 1999)
- Gender studies "Women in social conflict" (The World Bank, 2000)
- Women in Azerbaijani society (Altair, 2000)
- Women against violence (ISAR - Gorizonte, 2001)
- Women in local self-government (ISAR - Gorizonte, 2002)
- Topical information resources of gender and development of third sector (ISAR, 2002)

The organizations were focused also on implementation and publication of studies on comparative economy of South Caucasian countries, analysis of conflict-caused missed development opportunities, studies on local self-government and role of women in peacemaking activity and conflict resolution.

The monograph «Karabakh conflict: Alternative Settlement: Ideas and Reality», «World Culture» has been written and edited three times. This book has been published several times in Russian and English in Poland, Sweden and Iran. In Moscow there was its presentation, which was attended by representatives of the diplomatic corps, the Azerbaijani and Armenian Diaspora in Russia (2005). The last edition was in 2006.

The Center participated in all UN gender, peacemaking, conflict resolution, training, etc, programs and participation in tens of projects and grants in line with DAAD - Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German: German Academic Exchange Service), Center for Conflict Resolution «Imagine» projects. During 2006-2013

From the time of crackdown, members of the organization are participating in different projects and conferences as independent experts. As an example we can name the recent work, that Ali Abasov does for the future cooperation with DAAD regarding digital education on South Caucasus.

Center for National and International Studies

Chairwoman Doctor Leyla Aliyeva

The Center for National and International Studies is specialized on research in a few areas such as conflict analysis and resolution, democracy building, foreign policy and security issues and other.

It held trainings for the local observers for the Azerbaijan's municipal and parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2005, the project 'Democratic Governance of the Security Sector (jointly with the University of Groningen and OSCE), developed a proposal on "Open Air Oil History Museum", conferences and round tables on security, conflicts, EU integration. The CNIS projects include: publication of the book: " The History of Baku Oil and Life of Communities", conferences on " Democratic Values in Azerbaijan's history", EU FP7 project (2009-2011) EU4Seas. (consortium leader - Confederacion Indigena Del Oriente Boliviano ((Spanish: Indigenous Confederation of the Bolivian East) (CIDOB, Barcelona)), and "EU FP7 project(2014-2016) " Democracy and Security" (consortium leader at FSMH - Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris), where contributes to a few Working Packages including one on conflicts.

After the crackdown, the accounts of the organization were arrested and the Center for National and International Studies doesn't function any more. But the registration as an NGO still remains active. Also Leyla Aliyeva mentioned that after the governmental restrictions the Center transformed from the country organization to a regional one, with the office in Tbilisi. It is functioning in co-chairmanship with Mikheil Mirziashvili, former regional coordinator of Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) at Black Sea Peace Network. The new organization is named "Regional Center for Strategic Researches" and established in 2014.

Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation

Country Director: Zamira Abbasova

Overview: The Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation (the Imagine Center) is an independent, non-political organization that is dedicated to positively transforming relations and laying foundations for lasting and sustainable peace in conflict-torn societies. Started in 2007 by Armenian and Azerbaijani students studying conflict transformation in USA, Imagine has developed into an organization that sustains networks of hundreds of individuals around the world committed to working across conflict divides towards creating linkages and improving understanding between and within their societies.

With headquarters in Washington DC and regional offices in the Armenia, Azerbaijan (non-registered due to lack of legislative grounds for NGOs in Azerbaijan) and Georgia, Imagine has a large network of partner organizations from Yerevan, Baku, Istanbul, Tbilisi, and Berlin. Main directions of Imagine are youth reconciliation, media and journalism and academic preparedness for peace activism. The Center has carried out a large array of activities – from research, conferences, and conflict resolution methodology development to dialogues, trainings, workshops, and peace action campaigns concentrating on Armenian-Azerbaijani, Georgian-South Ossetian, Georgian-Abkhaz, Caucasus-wide and Turkish-Armenian and other contexts.

While staying independent Imagine has been committed to work with government representatives and academic institutions to act rapidly and inclusively as the centre believes that the key to success in region goes through political engagement which has gotten challenging route due to the lack of political will in Azerbaijan.

Capacity: Imagine Center has about 8 years of expertise on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with two offices in Tbilisi and Yerevan, 12 full time experts and imagine alumni directory which brings together more than 300 youth, analysts, historians, politicians, educators, and journalists both between and within conflict-torn societies and unique methodology and technique which has been tailored by regional experts of Imagine and successfully tested to be effective in this multicultural, multiethnic and multi-religious region.

Main strengths of Imagine are:

- Strong presence in the conflict zone
- Broad network of regional professionals
- Distinctive expertise in addressing difficult conflict topics

Future vision and projects: Stemming from the vision and mission are the goals of the Imagine Center. Together with our alumni and project participants we strive to:

- Transform negative attitudes and behaviors that shape the conflicts;
- Create and sustain networks of professionals across conflict lines by generating joint learning and analysis;
- To become a regional hub for governments, organizations and individuals seeking to understand and promote peaceful coexistence.

Current projects of Imagine are:

- **Youth dialogue program:** Imagine organizes youth dialogue programs which brings together Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Abkhazian, Ossetian and Turkish active youth to reconcile in the first place as well as discuss conflict narratives including Armenia-Azerbaijan, Georgia-Russia and Armenia-Turkey.
- **Breaking the Impasse Series:** The Breaking the Impasse series is an analytic initiative that brings together analysts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, as well as Turkey, Georgia, EU, US and Russia to develop and advocate for joint vision for sustainable solution of conflicts, as well as to coordinate between officials and unofficial level efforts. In addition to the analysts the initiative also regularly engaged diplomats and civil society representatives
- **Academics and historians:** For the past three years the Center has been engaging historians and history educators to develop inclusive and transformative approaches to history education, learning from the post-WWII European experience.

- **Media and Journalism:** Together with its journalist alumni, Imagine Center has developed Ethics Code for Journalists working on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Currently, the ethics code is being used as a curriculum for educating young journalists. Imagine Center is also implementing Radio Without Borders project for bringing together Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijani youth ready to DJ their own content via online radio software. This project is an outstanding tool for youth to not only integrate into each other's values but also promote their values among wider audience.
- **Caucasus Edition:** As an independent online journal, Caucasus Edition is a forum developed for scholars from South Caucasus and Turkey to discuss course of Armenia-Azerbaijan, Georgia-Russia and Turkey-Armenia conflicts. Team is working currently to make all materials to be available in audio format as well.

YUVA Humanitarian Center (YUVA)

Co-chairs: Pervana Mammadova and Rena Tahirova

YUVA Humanitarian Center (YUVA) is a non-governmental and non-profit organization founded in December 1997 and registered in the Ministry of Justice in April 1999 (registration #1116). YUVA is established to develop self-confidence, new strategies and programs to advance young women and girls' equality, non-violence, development and, most importantly, empowerment of them in all sectors of society.

The mission of the YUVA is to empower and inspire young women and girls to create positive change in their lives and communities in Azerbaijan. We recognize the unequal position of women and men in society. YUVA strives to reflect on and analyze the consequences of women's inequality in personal, community, institutional and societal terms. We have a particular focus on working to raise awareness and effect change in areas in which women experience inequality.

YUVA's Vision is a safe society that is responsible and supportive of young women and girls, a society that fosters equality, dignity, respect, self-determination, social justice and peace.

Women in Peace Negotiations and Peace Processes are one of the priority areas within YUVA and here are some examples of the projects that have been implemented by YUVA in this regards.

Azerbaijan Feminist Group (2006-present)

More than twenty young women, most of who work professionally with women's rights, gender, conflict management and peace-building came together to work as volunteers for the Azerbaijan Feminist Group that been established under the umbrella of YUVA. The beneficiaries of the group's activities are predominately women interested in gaining more information and engaging in dialogue on feminist issues. The group provides a forum for discussion and a source of information to these women. The structure is informal and open and encourages all women to participate. Outside advice and moral support for the organization comes from different organizations and individuals, both regional and international.

Young Women and Girls Development and Leadership Program

Since 2005 YUVA has been implementing long-term program on Young Women and Girls Development and Leadership. Young Women and Girls Development Center (YWGDC) was established in Baku in 2006 as the place where young women and girls get together to meet, socialize and interact with each other. Since that period YWGDC functioning in Baku by providing a safe venue for young women and girls with diverse backgrounds not only to openly

discuss topics related to gender issues, inequality, human rights, conflict and peace, but also exploring possibilities of being actively involved in changing people's perceptions through planned activities. YUVA is providing support, information and contributing to building new skills and competences that helping for many young women and girls to get through challenges that they are facing in everyday life and to become positive change in their families/communities.

Young Women's Network of South Caucasus YWNSC (2007-2008)

YWNSC is a platform for young women of South Caucasus. The purpose is to empower and initiate cooperation among young women from South Caucasus. Young Women's Network South Caucasus was initiated by three women organizations from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia - Women's Resource Center (Armenia), Yuva Center (Azerbaijan) and Avangard (Georgia) in cooperation with the Swedish Foundation Kvinna till Kvinna. The idea was to create a place for young women from South Caucasus to meet on their own terms, share ideas and get inspired by each other to engage in social and peace-building activism. The first meeting was held in Istanbul, back in 2007 where the Network with the participation of young activist from the region has been established.

Young Women Activism for Peace and Security (EPNK) (2010-2014)

YUVA has been implementing long term project Young Women Activism for Peace and Security since 2010. The aim of the project is to empower Armenian and Azerbaijani young women, affected by the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, to take peacebuilding initiatives, break enemy images and to strengthen their potential for dialogue. The Project targets directly young women affected by conflict by providing them with competences such as on women participation in peace process. The series of the public meetings, focus group discussions, information session has been organized within the project activities, which included the following topics: information about UNSCR 1325, conflict prevention, leadership skills, women's rights, the role of women in peace negotiations and peace processes, women's participation in decision making. This project is implemented in the framework of a wider partnership with the Consortium of the European Peacebuilding organizations with the financial support of the European Commission and Kvinna till Kvinna, Swedish Women Foundation.

Building Bridges through Culture

CAUCULT – Caucasus Cultural Initiatives Network (2012-2015)

CAUCULT is an international, intercultural project promoting local culture-related initiatives that support ethnic, religious and cultural diversity across the South Caucasus.^[1] The unique cultural diversity was the strength of the Caucasus region throughout its history and resulted in an amazingly wide range of cultural expressions. Wars and conflicts of the past decades cast a shadow on the beauty and strength of this unique feature of the Caucasus. The aim of CAUCULT is to rediscover the cultural diversity in the Caucasus as a key to a creative, progressive and prosperous development of the region. Communities in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are activated and empowered through art events. Through a variety of targeted measures for capacity building, community art development, targeted media work and the promotion of inclusive cultural policies the action

- Supported the active participation of citizens, especially groups with least recognized ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds in cultural activities.
- Established strong, inclusive and sustainable networks of cultural actors from different areas actively promoting cultural diversity.
- Enhanced structured and skillful intercultural and interreligious dialogue between all relevant stakeholders aiming at greater respect for and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Furthermore, these activities encouraged a mutual and vivid dialogue between various stakeholders representing different cultural backgrounds.

Learning opportunities, study trips abroad

YUVA's team participated in many study trips with support of Kvinna till Kvinna such to learn about other conflict context such as Liberia, Northern Ireland, Aland Island, Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia, etc. The areas visited by YUVA's team are the places with past conflict sides where participants learned the experience of conflict resolution.

Cross Regional Network Meeting in Liberia

The idea behind the cross-regional network meetings was to meet women across regions and have different experiences from conflicts in their countries and learn from each other with the focus on women's participation in conflict resolution, peace negotiations and the peace process. There was a lot of learning and inspirations that was brought back to YUVA.

Belfast, Northern Ireland

The vision of the trip was to inspire YUVA team that took place in the study trip and strengthen them as women human rights defenders, peace activists in our daily work for women, peace and security. During our stay in Belfast our team met women, who participated in the Northern Ireland peace negotiations themselves, as well as local organizations that work cross communities/former conflict lines, and youth organizations working for women's political participation and a feminist network. This study trip was very fruitful and inspiring for our future work.

"Democracy Monitor" Public Union (DEMO)

Chairman: Fuad Hasanov

"Democracy Monitor" Public Union (DEMO) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization in activity of monitoring, advocacy, legal aid, humanitarian research and education for civil and political rights as well as promotion of democratic institutions and confidence-building in the communities and among the societies involved in conflicts in the South Caucasus. The Monitor was established as a national NGO in June 2002 and got state registration on 31.01.2007. It is member of CIVICUS-World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Coalition of Rebuilding of Trust formed by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and six CSOs in the South Caucasus and Karabakh Council established by the prominent Azerbaijani CSOs, public figures, former officials and researchers. The Monitor is also member of the National Platform of NGOs of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Program.

The Monitor has implemented several human rights education projects nationwide and in the regions. It has also been carrying out a human rights advocacy work at the national and the international level in cooperation with CIVICUS, Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch etc. The Monitor is currently carrying out the last phase of a program supported by the European Commission and the Norwegian MFA which includes a huge human rights education component on the topics of human rights monitoring, reporting and advocacy, transitional justice, intercultural understanding, reconciliation and etc. in the South Caucasus.

The program has got its start with the financial support by the European Commission and the Norwegian MFA in 2013 with the specific objectives that include capacity-building to support civil society efforts to promote protection of human rights, intercultural understanding and reconciliation in the region; Transfer of know-how to NGO sector on new methods in the field of transitional justice; Establishing cooperation channels between NGOs, media and other actors.

The main activities carried out within the action were organization of seminars and conferences for youth, civil society activists and journalists; production of various publications; development and drafting of a strategy-program; awareness raising and promotion of strategy at the national and international level; lobbying of authorities, religious communities and civil sector.

Women Coalition 1325

The Coalition 1325 was set up in Azerbaijan in 06 September 2002 with the assistance of the UNIFEM project «Women for Prevention of Conflicts and Peace-building in the Caucasus. Note that the Coalition 1325» was actively involved in promoting ideas of gender equality and peace-building. The Coalition includes MPs, representatives of governmental structures, NGOs, mass media – total 22 women. The Coalition 1325 does not deal with peace-building only but suggests instead a strategy of women status improvement in society through their greater involvement to decision-making processes in economy, policy and culture. Coalition's main purpose is to ensure equality between men and women as chief component of efforts aimed at resolving social, economic and political problems.

In accordance with UN Secretary General initiative on strengthening the role of civil society in preventing armed conflicts, the European conflict prevention center was successful in implementing the global initiative «Participation of Civil Society in Preventing Armed Conflicts». Within the framework of the process, representatives of civil society in the Caucasus gathered together to work out specific recommendations aimed at improving activities of NGOs in preventing conflicts and strengthening of peacemaking processes. An impetus to the process in the Caucasus was given in February 2004 at the regional conference in Likani (Georgia) when 5 working groups were set up. In March 2004, the UNIFEM-backed South Caucasian regional coalition joined this regional project. Four meetings were held within a year to discuss and work up specific recommendations directed to enhancing NGOs role in conflict prevention and expansion of peacemaking processes that emphasize a particular role of Caucasian women in the regional and global peacemaking process. Backed by the UNIFEM, International Center for Conflicts and Negotiations and the Georgian Committee of Helsinki Citizens Assembly, the regional Coalition 1325 succeeded to set up a sixth working group titled «Women, Civilian Society and Peacemaking». In the course of the Caucasian regional conference in 2004 «The Role of Civilian Society in Preventing Armed Conflicts», the working group held a session to discuss recommendations to be included in the regional document «Action Program for the Caucasus». As a result, proposals and recommendations of the regional Coalition aimed at consolidating a gender component of the peace process were mirrored in a final document of the international conference «Role of Civil Society in Preventing Conflicts» - Agenda of global actions submitted to national governments and the UN in 2004.

For now the capacity of the “Coalition 1325” is weak. The lack of finances strongly affected to the working process. Mainly the works of the coalition was financed by UNIFEM. The coalition exists, the discussions take place. Nowadays there is a big stagnation in the activities in the work of the Coalition 1325. UNIFEM continues the work only in Track 1 level; they further supported the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs in convening a working group comprised of representatives from government and civil society

Institute of Peace and Democracy

Chairman: Leyla Yunus

The author couldn't get any detailed information about activities of Institute of Peace and Democracy, because of the arrest of two main figures of the organization: Leyla Yunus and Arif Yunus in August 2014. Later on November 12 Arif Yunus was released at the request of his lawyers; his wife Leyla Yunus was freed on December 9, 2015. The arrest of the chairmen of the Institute of Peace and Democracy played a big role on the continuation of peacebuilding activities, because the named above activists were jailed on suspicion of spying for Armenia. The same charge was given to a famous journalist Rauf Mirgadirov, which took part in conferences in Armenia in the frames of the project of Institute of Peace and Democracy.

The author doesn't think that the reason of detention of all three activists was in their peacebuilding activities. And despite the name of the organization, we do not consider this organization as the one really involved in the peace process, but it was doing some conferences and activities with short term impact.

The latest dialogue of the Institute with peace activists from Armenia was not finalized and the Independent Civil Minsk Process (ICMP) group decided to organize a meeting exactly in the period of Rauf Mirgadirov's arrest and criminal cases against Arif and Leyla Yunus. The meeting was attempted in order not to stop the peacebuilding process, and took place in Tbilisi, May 2014 between Armenian and Azerbaijani experts of ICMP. The ICMP meeting was possible with the support of special representative of EU on South Caucasus Philip Lefor.

In fact during the period of ruling of the National Front Leyla Yunus was working in the Ministry of Defense and has acted against peace activities regarding Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Both of the activists were arrested for the reason of Leyla Yunus's strict speeches against authority.

The situation on capacity of the listed organization is almost the same. The organizations who have offices in Baku are: Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (sharing with Karabakh Council and Women Institute), Public Association on Humanitarian Studies, Internews Azerbaijan, Association for the Protection of Women's Rights in Azerbaijan after D. Aliyeva, Baku School of Journalism and YUVA.

Human Resources of the listed organizations consist of experts with theoretic and practice experience. Organizations do not need to look for new employees or project participants in the field, their networks have developed enough.

The reason for that is that from the end of 2013 Azerbaijan government has begun a campaign against civil society: beginning with some changes in NGO regulation they sopped the registration of grants and froze the bank accounts of NGOs. And finally arrests of civil activists led to the weakness of the civil society.

The pleasant exception among them is Public Association on Humanitarian Studies, because its chair Avaz Hasanov who was chosen as the main partner of one of EPNK partner organizations (Conciliation Resource) and also a partner of Safeworld organization, signed individual contract with him on operational service. From the other hand Avaz Hasanov works on joint projects with council of State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This was a very important decision to maintain the balanced policy

between government and civil society. Unfortunately the overall situation is not getting better despite his personal attempts.

At the same time, all listed organizations have a big potential in the peacemaking sphere. Firstly they have human resources and none of the listed organizations stopped their activity and have an intention to continue the work in future. All of them have regional and international partners. If the situation on the NGO restrictions will change they are ready to continue bilateral relations.

3.3 Assessment of peace initiatives carried out in the past 20 years

There are four main reasons of inefficiency of peace process.

1. The main reason was that the goals of civil societies and governments in both countries did not match. The governmental policy of both countries was aimed against the peace between people. Azerbaijani government spends millions of dollars on conflict freezing and hatred support: all governmental TV channels (there are not any private televisions in Azerbaijan) everyday there is being performed shows, documentaries distributing information based on militarist rhetoric, military-patriotic programs and antiarmenian propaganda. For the sake of fairness we would like to mention that Armenian side does the same type of propaganda. Institute of History of Azerbaijan prepares lots of monographs on the same topic; governmental newspapers also do a daily distribution of antiarmenian propaganda. It is also known that Azerbaijan has bought the military equipment for more than 3 billion dollars.

People diplomacy was not supported, and different activists were arrested and discredited by media. Since the end of 2013 when president of Russia Vladimir Putin visited Azerbaijan and suggested to buy their military-industrial complex, though those complexes were out of date. Azerbaijan had to agree but still did not buy that equipment. Dmitriy Ragozin-the Deputy Chairman of the Russian Government, who oversees the military-industrial complex and military-industrial cooperation, recently visited Azerbaijan in connection with disbursement for that military equipment and Azerbaijan became a hostage of the Russian politics as it was with Armenia from the beginning of the conflict.

When Armenia was taking a positive side in the agreement with EU, Russia did not allow it and Armenia entered to Eurasian Union. Russia is interested in freezing of the conflict; moreover it is not interested in the resolution of the conflict in order not to lose the influence points. Political decision becomes more important than image decision despite the difficulty of the situation.

The situation is also getting worse by deteriorating relations between Russia and EU, Turkey, NATO and CoE.

2. The other and not less important reason of inefficiency of conflict resolution is the composition of the Minsk Group co-chairs (France, Russia and USA). This is a well-known fact among stakeholders that the presidency with USA and Russia in the Minsk Group cannot give positive results: Russia perceives all post-Soviet countries as the territory of its national interests and will never give them up as spheres of influence and US is interested in Azerbaijan as a strategic partner because of the wealth of hydrocarbon resources, the border with Iran and general proximity to the Middle East and Central Asia. Azerbaijan is also a good partner for the US in the Afghan issue. However, the struggle between the United States and Russia is not conducive to the settlement of the conflict.

It was not a coincidence that Russia initiated the meeting between Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents and ministers of foreign affairs in Meyendorff¹³ in 2008 as if taking away the question of the competence from the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group. This was in contrast to successful initiatives of Matthew Bryza, co-chair of the Minsk Group from the United States (2006-2009). Matthew Bryza's success in peace initiatives has been linked to the fact that in addition to the representation of US and OSCE, he coordinated the work with EU and closely worked with experts in the field of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, civil society and representatives of the authorities. One of the positive examples was Matthew Bryza's support to the outcome document, prepared by the participants of the Dartmouth Conference. The development of the agreement on the peace process on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was held by attendance of experts from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia and the United States. This was the result of negotiations within the framework of the Dartmouth Conference, which lasted from 2001 to 2007, in the in consultation with the participants and the two Co-Chairs of the Dartmouth Conference Vyacheslav Naumkin (now the Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of Russian Academy of Sciences) and Harold Sanders, former Deputy of the US State Secretary Henry Kissinger. The document, named "Frame Agreement", was later used in the content of Madrid Principals.

It is significant that the Russian co-chair of the Minsk Group did not wish to meet with the participants of the Dartmouth Conference, even after such a positive fact that the participants jointly developed and signed a very important agreement for the settlement of the conflict.

3. Currently, the authorities of Armenia and Azerbaijan do not go to dialogue with civil society, in any issues, even on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. On the other hand, civil society activists involved in the peace process, are more limited in their ability to organize or participate in peace initiatives than before. Until 2001 Armenian peacekeepers could come to Azerbaijan, as well as Azerbaijani in Armenia. Since 2001, only those rare visitors who are invited directly by the representatives of the Azerbaijani government can come to Azerbaijan. Since 2013, with the start of a campaign of the authorities of Azerbaijan against NGOs, peace initiatives are also assessed as undesirable by the authorities. A visit to Armenia to participate in any activities is prohibited for Azerbaijani NGOs.

All this creates a big problem for the continuation of peacebuilding. Complicated situation and limited financial resources due to the inability of grant registration does not allow working officially. This is especially difficult in regions of Azerbaijan, where local authorities do not allow any activities.

4. Grant policy of international organizations.

The situation described below is referred to the majority of donor organizations. The lack of long-term projects and constant support, random selection of partner leads to the competitive nature of partnership between some Armenian and Azerbaijani organizations and their relations are not being converted into teamwork. This is also reflected in the relationship between target groups, involved in the project (youth, women, refugees, migrants, and others).

¹³ The presidents of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a declaration on the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The document includes a legally binding international guarantee of the Karabakh conflict settlement. Trilateral summit to resolve the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh was held in the castle's "Mein Dorf" in Moscow on the initiative of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. (http://www.newsru.com/russia/02nov2008/karabah_print.html#1)

The form of the grant application of the EU is too big and complicated. That is why extremely busy civil leaders and especially human rights defenders usually do not manage to fulfill the form and write a good project according to the form. Not experienced applicants with knowledge of foreign language usually win calls for applications. The construction of a good project takes about a month of a busy schedule. That is why we recommend the different form of EU relations with civil activists. EU delegations in Azerbaijan and Armenia should be allowed to have a choice of partners in such a field as peacebuilding and human rights. Random people in these important areas are unacceptable because they do not help, but harm the process.

4. International initiatives and peace processes

4.1 Independent Civil Minsk Processes

Co-chairs Eldar Namazov/Arzu Abdullayeva

The Independent Civil Minsk Process – a parallel civic-driven, open and proactive peace process that involves all those directly affected by the conflict - is initiated for the peaceful and just resolution of the Karabakh conflict¹⁴. It was initiated by the South Caucasus network of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and IKV Pax Christi. ICMP still exists, but the latest meeting in its frame was held in May 2014. The process is frozen because of the recent governmental restrictions.

Five main strands of the Independent Civil Minsk Process :

- Negotiations
- Study visits to other conflict regions
- Providing information and promoting discussion in society
- Providing input to the official negotiators, through lobby and advocacy
- Peacebuilding and confidence building activities

The Independent Civil Minsk Process coordinated by the Coordinating Council. The following persons are involved in the Coordination Council:

The Action Plan of the Independent Civil Minsk Process.

Negotiations

Key objective:

The objective of this parallel negotiations, that are as an alternative to the official negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia is to achieve common understanding, common positions and recommendations on the key issues as described in the roadmap of the Basic or elaborated (Madrid) Principles – the proposed format for the official peace process, as it is put forward by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group.

¹⁴ From: Approved Declaration on the Launch of the Independent Civil Minsk Process, May 22, 2009.

A list of issues for negotiations based on elements related to the official negotiation process supported by the OSCE Minsk Group. For example: the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, withdrawal of territories, mutual returning of refugees, human security, replacing of international peacekeeping forces and other issues related with the current challenges

Study visits to other conflict regions

Key objective:

The objective of study visits to other conflict regions is to learn from other experiences in dealing with (potential) conflicts, and to investigate which positive elements could be implemented in the case of the Karabakh conflict as well. This will result in a report on the different case studies and recommendations to be applied in the case of the conflict on Nagorno Karabakh.

Actions: Study visits were organised to Northern Island March 2015 and the Aland islands have been visited in April 2010, planning to visit Cyprus.

Providing information and promoting discussion in society through the Karabakh Monitor (KM)

Key objective:

The Karabakh Monitor was implemented in 2011-2012 period. There was planned its continuation, but as a result of governmental restrictions the Karabakh Monitor has to pause its activities.

The aim of the Karabakh Monitor was to support the Coordination Council and to facilitate constructive public discussion on the peace process by providing access to consolidated, regularly updated information and competent analysis of the peace talks, with the aim to identify possible common grounds with “the other” in the understanding of an overall framework for future peace and particular peacebuilding measures needed to be undertaken at this stage.

Actions: Local groups of experts and eminent persons will be set up in Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert, together called the Karabakh Conflict Monitor Think Tank, to support the ICMP to facilitate constructive public discussion on the peace process. This body, which will also include the representatives of the Coordination Council, will function as the live, analytical wing of the Karabakh Conflict Monitor and as a motor for the public debate. The Think Tank members in Yerevan and Baku will convene once in three months to discuss the results of the public discussions as well as issues related to peace process .

The local experts involved to ICMP have an analytical task and identify common grounds, through internet forum meetings, expert meetings, surveys with the focal and wider groups and analysis of reports and other relevant material. The primary analysis of gathered materials, serve as food for thought for KM Think Tank discussions. The secondary more deep analysis of the material will provide more profound understanding of current issues in the peace process. Also special attention will be paid to the understanding of peacebuilding measures across different levels of societies in order to have more effective impact on peace process supporting non-violent resolution of conflict. Another issue that will be explored is the future of economic cooperation in the conflict region.

Generating public discussions in focus groups. To understand public perceptions and expectations on the just resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, focus group discussions carried out among different interest groups. The other method applied to gather information on public perceptions about Nagorno-Karabakh peace process hall meetings depending on the scope

and particular topics to be discussed. The target groups will include groups, such as: youth (including students), women, businessmen, journalists, community leaders, refugees, border area communities, and NGO leaders.

Planning :

- Elaboration of the Karabakh model for conflict settlement based on Aland example in cooperation with Armenian colleagues from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

-carrying out public-awareness raising meetings. Once every quarter, a group composed of Think Tank experts – The KM Information Dissemination Team - carry out public-awareness raising meeting for different target groups the purpose of which is to get feedback from broader society on the issues being discussed.

AZERBAIJANI GROUP:

- Ali Abasov - Head of Department of Gender Research, Academy of Science, Director of analytical centre AREAT
- Arzu Abdullayeva - Chair of Azerbaijani National Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, co-chair Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
- Sajida Abdulvahabova -director of Women Problems' Research Union
- Leila Alieva -President of The Center for National and International Studies
- Zardusht Alizadeh -director of Netherlands School of Journalism
- Sabit Baghirov -former president of the State Oil Co., present president of Economical and Political Research Center
- Irada Baghirova -Head of the Caucasus History Department of the Institute of History, Academy of Science
- Erkin Gadirli -law expert, Baku State University, expert of Caspian Commission of EU
- Rashid Hajili -chair of The Media Rights Institute
- Avaz Hasanov -director of the Society for Humanitarian Research
- Ruhengiz Huseynova - founder and president of "Solidarity Among Women" organization,
- Kerim Kerimli -co-chair of Azerbaijani Karabakh Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
- Rasim Musabayov -independent political analyst
- Eldar Namazov -analyst and politician, Head of The Public Forum for Azerbaijan
- Ilgar Valizada -political analyst, deputy chief of the filial branch of RIA Novosti in Azerbaijan

ARMENIAN GROUP:

- Karen Aramyan - professor at Artsakh State University
- Hrant Bagratyan - former Prime Minister of Armenia, leader of the 'Freedom' party, economist
- Stepan Danielyan - Chairman of 'Collaboration for Democracy Centre'
- Hovsep Khurshudyan - Director of 'Arax Publishing House', Senior analyst at Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS), Member and spokesperson of Heritage Party,
- Natalia Martirosyan - Co-chair of Armenian Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
- Karen Ohanjanyan - Coordinator Nagorno Karabakh Committee of "Helsinki Initiative-92", former MP of NK parliament
- Rita Osipyan - member of Nagorno Karabakh Committee of "Helsinki Initiative-92"
- Arevik Petrosyan - Chairwoman of "VITA" NGO
- Anush Sedrakyan - Political analyst, lecturer at Yerevan State University.
- Sarasar Saryan - Chairman of the public organization of Refugees in Shushi
- David Shahnazaryan - Director of Analytical Center Concord, Founder-Member of the Board of "Armenian National Movement" Party

4.2 Tekali Process

Co-chairs: Ali Abasov/ Zardusht Alizade and Georgi Vanyan/Luisa Pogosyan

The idea of the project was in initiation of the projects on regional cooperation and conflict transformations in the village of Tekali, which is the closest location to the intersection of the borders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia by several South Caucasian NGOs.

The Tekali Process has launched its public activities on March 9, 2011 and is active till now. Since then the initiative has organized 18 public hearings and two festivals (The South Caucasian Movie Festival, (2012) and Tekali Art Festival (2014). The sponsor of public hearings is the National Endowment for Democracy (USA), implementer is the NGO- the Caucasian Center for Peace building Initiatives (Armenia). Festivals have been implemented with financial support of Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation of the German Marshall Fund (BST). The implementer of the project is the NGO Regional Center for Cooperation and Development (Azerbaijan).

In 2013, the Caucasian Center for Peace building Initiatives with the support of BST has implemented a project «Tekali Process – as a social model of conflict transformation». Tekali working group comprised of Azerbaijani, Armenian and Georgian experts have conducted series of discussions in Berlin together with the members of civil society, NGOs and students moderated by Berlin Center for Integrative Mediation (CSSP). With the invitation of German MP Viola von Cramon, the CSSP organized an introductory meeting in Bundestag for presenting the concept of Tekali Process as well as exchanging ideas with German experts, scientific community and government structures followed by three civil hearings conducted in partnership with German NGO "EuroKaukAsia".

After the Berlin events, the Center for Integrative Mediation officially became the partner of Tekali Process and continued the needed consultation and support in formalization and institutionalization of the initiative. Along with CSSP, The Documental Theatre (Moscow, Sakharov center) as well as Dana Rupholo (The Theater Research Institute of Europe) have conducted several Master-classes for the initiative. In 2012, the cultural expedition of the project "Cultural Caucasus" covering South Caucasus and Turkey, visited Tekali followed by which published materials on the history and culture of the village. In 2014, Tekali was expected to be one of the festival centers of "One Caucasus" (Poland and South Caucasus). A program for launching interdisciplinary, scientific-educational center in Tekali is being developed at the moment. The latest meeting within Tekali process was held in December 2015.

Main principles of Tekali activities are:

- Transparency: the theme and program of each meeting is communicated in advance, participants are not obliged to register, journalists without accreditation are allowed; trainings and workshops held in Tekali are open for public observant.
- Openness: the presence of "open mike", which means any participant can present his/her own project, and speak up outside of the main theme. Any organization can use resources of Tekali Process to promote and implement their projects in the region.
- Documenting: videos, photos and briefs are published.
- Pluralism: importance "of uttering" problems; submissiveness of the meeting format and speakers functions which requires continuous dialogue with different positions and opinions on the theme.

Group of regular participants of Tekali Process are also involved in advocacy on specific issues related to violations of human rights of those living in the borderline of three countries (Pelengov, Khojoyans' case etc.). Public campaigns are being conducted on protection as well as establishing control over specific cases. Currently, a program for the creation of the South Caucasus Institute of the Ombudsman and the rapid response team of human rights violations is being developed.

Official web-site of the initiative: «Alternative Start» - www.southcaucasus.com. In April of 2014, web site of the initiative has also been launched (www.tekali.org) which has been established on the youth platform of the Tekali Initiative.

What's unique about the project is that, Tekali process conducts all its activities in random houses of Tekali villagers, participants also eat and sleep at their houses, in the same houses have organize luncheons for about 80-100 attendants of public hearings. Tekali villagers (about 8-15 people) also attend events as participants and almost as many people becomes part of the logistics team helping to organize, plan and carry out accommodation, or arranges catering. This module, in our opinion creates an important experience of interethnic and cross-cultural communication (in Tekali there are people from the capitals of the three countries, from different cities of Georgia, from the border towns and villages of Armenia and Azerbaijan, from European countries, USA, Russia). This format allows the exchange of information in both ways- through formal, informal, and networking.

However, the development process requires a "office space" and the idea put forward by shareholders who represent the sphere of art. Obviously, overcrowded cultural events - film screenings, exhibitions, concerts, installations requires to stay a little further from living areas. Tekali villager Mushvig Namazov, constant and active participant in all of Tekali process activities, a member of the Association "Tekali" proposed his 4 acres of private land for the use

of Tekali Process. Participants in the process, decided to find opportunities for infrastructure development on this land, and proposed to start doing it during the summer season. That land has been effectively used a camp space for Tekali Youth Platform's a speech competition event "Tekali Mic". This project was supported by the initiative of 5 European NGOs within-European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK), which is funded by the European Union.

4.3 Dartmouth process

Azerbaijani coordinator: Zulfugar Farzaliyev

The Dartmouth Conference is the longest continuous bilateral dialogue between American and Soviet (now Russian) representatives.¹⁵ The first Dartmouth Conference took place at Dartmouth College in 1961. Subsequent conferences were held through 1990. They were revived in 2014 and continue today. Task forces begun under the auspices of the main conference continued to work after the main conference stopped. The Regional Conflicts Task Force extended the sustained dialogue model, based on the Dartmouth experience, to conflicts in Tajikistan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Dartmouth inspired a number of other dialogues in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere, many of them under the auspices of the Sustained Dialogue Institute and the Kettering Foundation.

During the 1970s, the conferences had come to include small meetings focused on particular issues. These had proven to be valuable. The idea of establishing task forces to discuss particular issues between conferences was raised at Dartmouth IX in 1975. But it was not until the early 1980s that task forces began to meet regularly. They came to do some of the most important work associated with the Dartmouth Conference.

The Regional Conflicts Task Force first met in 1982. It was led by Evgeny Primakov on the Soviet side and Harold Saunders on the American until Primakov left to take a senior position under Gorbachev. His place was taken by Gennadi Chufrin, a scholar from the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Task Force met regularly until 2001, and then worked directly on conflicts in Tajikistan and over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The dialogue on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh within the framework of the Dartmouth Conference covered a total of 12 meetings over a six-year period. It was led by co-chairs of the Dartmouth Conference Dr. Harold Saunders from the U.S. and Dr. Vitaly Naumkin from Russia. Representatives of civil society, the IDP community from Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as experts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno-Karabakh participated in these meetings. At the 11th meeting held on 18-20 June 2006, "The Framework Agreement on a Peace Process in the region Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh" was elaborated on by the participants. It was submitted by the co-chairs of the Dartmouth Conference to the OSCE Minsk Group's U.S., Russian, and French co-chairs.¹⁶

The purpose of the dialogue is to study possible approaches to the beginning of peace process. Following the debates, participants worked up a draft framework agreement between the parties concerned which as a compromise variant had first ever brought out an intermediate status for

¹⁵ Saunders, Harold H. (1999). *A public peace process : sustained dialogue to transform racial and ethnic conflicts* (1st ed.). New York: St. Martin's Press. p. xvi.

¹⁶ Gulshan Pashayeva: *ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF TRACK TWO INITIATIVES ON THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH PEACE PROCESS* (http://turkishpolicy.com/pdf/vol_11-no_3-pashayeva.pdf)

Nagorno Karabakh. Later on, this proposal was put forward to be discussed by the OSCE Minsk group and put on the agenda of peace talks.

As a result of the work done during the process in 2007 during the meeting between Arzu Abdullayeva and the leader of Nagorno Karabakh Arkadiy Gukasyan there were presented and discussed proposals of the Azerbaijani side of the Dartmouth conference. A Gukasyan was very interested in getting these proposals. But unfortunately the the Karabakh Conflict is a hook of Russia to influence to the region. That is why the main aim of peace organizations should be the preparation of the societies for the future peaceful coexistence that will show the willingness of populations for peace.

Later, the proposals described in the framework agreement were used by Matthew Bryza as a base for elaboration of Madrid principles. For more information please look paragraph 2.4.

Participants of the Dartmouth Conference from Azerbaijan (Zulfugar Farzaliyev, Ali Abasov, Zardusht Alizade, Arzu Abdullayeva, Irada Bagirova, Tofiq Zulfugarov, Afrand Dashdamirov, Rasim Musabekov, Eldar Namazov, Karim Karimli) later were united in Karabakh Council for joint actions. For more information on Karabakh Council see the paragraph 2.2

4.4 EPNK (The European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh)

EPNK is funded by the European Union and builds on previous work that our five member organizations carried out in this field and region, individually or in groups. EPNK five member organizations are: Conciliation Resources (based in the UK), Crisis Management Initiative (Finland), International Alert (lead agency, UK), the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation (Sweden) and LINKS (UK). They work closely with multiple local partners across the region.

EPNK activities started in 2010. Its activities focus on the following key themes: Dialogue, Research & analysis, Film & media, Inclusivity & participation and Training & capacity building.

EPNK aims to bridge these differences by encouraging dialogue between societies across the conflict divide. Those taking part in the dialogue include a broad range of Armenian and Azerbaijani policymakers, media and civil society – including those in and from Nagorno-Karabakh. The work is carried out through a wide variety of practical peacebuilding activities, for example:

Advocacy and dialogue with governments and other stakeholders;

- Public policy debates and moderated discussions;
- Peacebuilding courses and workshops;
- Documentary films and public film screenings;
- News journals, reports, policy papers and studies on conflict-related issues;
- A news website focusing on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and settlement process;
- Comparative conflict studies and visits;
- Cross-conflict training courses and networking for journalists;
- Photography/arts exhibitions and events.

EPNK partners in Azerbaijan:

- Rahman Badalov
- Gulshan Pashayeva
- Parvana Mammadova, Rena Tahirova (YUVA)

- Novella Jafarova, Pervin Mamedova (Association for the Protection of Women's Rights in Azerbaijan after D. Aliyeva)
- Arzu Abdullayeva (HCA)
- Ilham Safarov, Naila Babayeva (Internews Azerbaijan)
- Avaz Hasanov, Bakhtiyar Aslnov (Public Association on Humanitarian Studies)
- Rauf Radjabov ("Three viewaz")
- Hamida Giyasbayli (Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation)

The strategy of EPNK partners was built on permanent concord among all partners and local organizations in order to achieve a single and common goal. Maria van Ruiten, a collaborator of International Alert was aimed to coordinate EPNK partner NGOs in Azerbaijan and had a position of EPNK strategy and coordination advisor. It was a very good try, but unfortunately was not successful. Some international organizations, members of EPNK, were working according to Chatham House principals and were not sharing information with other members or partners.

We would like to mention that this fact is very important in evaluation of effectiveness of all organizations involved in peacebuilding. The coordination between all of them is essential in terms of achieving our common goal – peace in the region. The absence of coordination can be one of the main reasons of the lack of efficacy in conflict resolution sphere. For sake of fairness Maria van Ruiten gave a very nice try in doing this coordination, but unfortunately it didn't work well for the reasons named above.

5. Independent experts and researches

Some of experts working on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had also worked on researches and written books on the conflict. We mentioned them in this study to distinguish their scientific approach to the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

1. Gulshan Pashayeva

Dr. Gulshan Pashayeva is Deputy Director of the think tank The Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. She previously worked for the United Nations Office in Azerbaijan as National Programme Coordinator for the UN Women (UNIFEM) project "Women for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in the Caucasus" (2001–2006), and as Public Information Associate for the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI). From 1996 to 2001, Dr. Pashayeva directed the NGO Conflict Research Center and taught at various state and private universities in Azerbaijan. She was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship and conducted post-doctoral six-month research at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of Tufts University in 1998/99. Dr. Pashayeva specialises in conflict resolution and security studies, as well as gender and language policy. She is the author of more than 80 publications.

Among Pashayeva's publications regarding to conflict resolution and Nagorno-Karabakh conflict there are works as:

- "Security challenges and conflict resolution efforts in the South Caucasus"
- "NK Legal Status-CI Vol 3 no 1-2"
- "Understanding conflict. Building peace."
- "The Nagorno Karabakh Conflict In The Aftermath Of The Russia-Georgia War"
- "Assessing the impact of Track Two initiatives on the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process"

- “The Interplay of the approaches of Turkey, Russia and the United States to the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh”

2. Leyla Aliyeva

Dr. Leyla Aliyeva is a chairman and founder of Center for National and International Studies from 2003 in Baku, Azerbaijan. Dr. Aliyeva was also the former Deputy Director (1991-1994) and Director (1994-1996) of Baku-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. She has taught at Baku State University and was a visiting fellow to the Center of Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. Moreover Dr. Aliyeva has held fellowships Woodrow Wilson Center (Kennan Institute) (1995), UC Berkeley (2000), and SAIS (Johns Hopkins University) (2001). Since 1993 provided expertise and consulted the US Congress and the US Government, international organizations, business and non-governmental sectors on the issues related to the Caucasus region. Dr. Aliyeva was an advisor to the President of EBRD, as well as to the leading oil companies in Baku. Dr. Aliyeva was an advisor to the President of EBRD, as well as to the leading oil companies in Baku. She also was a National Coordinator of the Human Development Report for UNDP (1997) and served on the board of Open Society Institute in Baku (1998). She has written extensively on regional conflicts, particularly the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, conflict resolution.

Here are some publications of Leyla Aliyeva regarding Nagorno-Karabakh conflict:

- “The Breakup of Soviet Empire: the South Caucasus”, 2001
- “Wars in the Caucasus: The Calamitous Transition of the Marginal Region”, 1997
- “Azerbaijan at the Crossroads of Three Powers: Russia, Iran and Turkey”, 2006
- “Integrative Processes in the South Caucasus and their Security Implications”, 2006

3. Zardusht Alizadeh

Zardusht Alizadeh is an independent Azerbaijani political analyst and former politician. He is known for his interviews, political comments and articles as an independent political analyst and former politician. He is known for his interviews, political comments and articles. From 1971 to 1990, he worked for the Institute of Oriental Studies of the , where he later earned a master's degree in philology. In 1988, Zardusht Alizadeh became one of the founders of the , the first opposition party in then . In his memoirs, Alizadeh described his initial vision of the party as one led by "patriotic intellectuals able to [...] make adequate decisions guaranteeing democratization, transferring of the state's property under the people's control, freedom of speech, a multi-party system and fair elections"

Alizadeh views as a power that orchestrated the between Armenia and Azerbaijan and continues to be the sole power that exercises control over the negotiations. This, however, does not stop other great powers, including the , from trying to benefit from the conflict situation, according to Alizadeh.

He is pessimistic about the efforts of the , the official mediator, and believes that any developments, positive or negative, in the negotiation process are either a reflection of the geopolitical interests of the great powers or pre-election bravado of the parties at conflict. [

In 2012, Alizadeh condemned the pardoning of , a convicted murderer of an Armenian officer, extradited to Azerbaijan from after serving eight years of his lifelong sentence. According to Alizadeh, the act was not based on any political will, respect of law or interest in conflict

resolution, but instead had only "cheap fame" to it, and could only disrupt the peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

From 2005 to 2011, Zardusht Alizadeh was the head of the executive board of the Azerbaijani branch of the .[13] He is currently the director of a private establishment known as the Baku School of Journalism.

Zardusht Alizadeh is an author of hundreds articles, biggest part of that dedicated to Karabakh conflict problems. Articles were written in Russian, in order to be able to understand by the Armenian readers, as well as by the wider Russian-speaking audience :

- Кто не хочет мира в Карабахе
- Кто это сделал
- НК конфликт как инструмент геополитики
- Возможный путь к миру
- Аландская модель как оптимальный вариант для азербайджанцев и армян в урегулировании конфликта, 2011

He also is an author of well-known book The End of Second Republic and several policy papers:

- Аландская модель разрешения конфликта
- The role of information in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict

4. Elkhan Mehdiyev

Director of the Peace and Conflict Resolution Center since 1998, he has been Secretary General of the Azerbaijani Atlantic Association since 1997. Former Research Fellow at the University of Maryland and Fulbright Scholar at the American University in Washington, DC, he was NATO-EAPC Fellow at the Johns Hopkins University. During 2010-2011, he was a Fulbright Scholar at Duke University on civil-military relations. He lectured at the Khazar and Western Universities in Baku, where he also worked at the Institute for Space Research. He served in the office of the Azerbaijani President on issues of foreign affairs and international relations.

- "Armenia-Azerbaijan Prague Process: Road Map to Peace or Stalemate for Uncertainty?", 2005
- "Perspectives Of Security Development In The South Caucasus"

- “Azerbaijan and Armenia: Political development, policy priorities, options for peace”, 2004
- “Turkish-Armenian protocols: An Azerbaijani perspective”, 2010

4. Rasim Musabayov

Rasim Musabayov is a Member of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan, political scientist and specialist in conflict resolution. From 1989 headed the laboratory of sociological researches in Baku Higher Party School, in 1990-1991 was in charge of the ideological department of Baku city committee of the Communist Party. He worked as Foreign Policy State Advisor for Azerbaijan President between 1991-1993. Since 2000 worked as an independent political analyst, he worked at the Center for Economic and Political Studies. From November 2010 Rasim Musabayov was elected as the deputy of Milli Majlis of the Azerbaijan Republic. He is a member of the Committee on International Relations and Inter-parliamentary Relations and also is included in the group of inter-parliamentary relations with Russia, Israel, Macedonia, Georgia and Afghanistan. Member of the Parliamentary delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly of States Parties Being a well-known international expert, carried out scientific management of several large international projects, and was the author of more than 100 articles and books.

- “Karabakh conflict. “Status Quo” increases military risks and hinders the development of the region.”, 2012
- “Karabakh conflict: to understand each other”. In collaboration with Arif Aliev, Stepan Grigorian, Boris Navasardian. 2006

5. Ayten Gahramanova

Ayten Gahramanova held M.A. degrees in International Relations from the Institute of Public Administration and Political Science (Baku), Peace and Development studies from University Jaume I (Castellón, Spain), and Political Economy of the Countries in Transit from Central European University (Budapest, Hungary). Ayten has 10 year experience of working for various international development organizations in Azerbaijan such as GIZ, USAID, Oxfam, where she managed multi-million programs on technical assistance for Azerbaijan in the areas of economic reforms, public administration reforms, and assistance to civil society organizations. She has several publications published in the academic journals on the topics of democratization and conflict management in Caucasus region. She held a position of the Early Stage Researcher at DCU School of Law and Governance as a Marie Curie Fellow. Her focus of PhD research is civil society actors in the Caspian Region - the dynamics of democratization and political cooptation.

- Ayten Gahramanova - “Peace strategies in “frozen” ethno-territorial conflicts: integrating reconciliation into conflict management. In case of Nagorno-Karabakh

6. Arif Yunus

Arif Yunus is an Azerbaijani author, historian, and human rights activist. He is the head of the Department of Conflict and Migration of the Institute of Peace and Democracy. He began his studies at Baku State University and graduated from there in 1981. Arif Yunus eventually attained his doctorate in history in 1986. In 1992, working for the Presidential Office of Azerbaijan, he became the Head of Information and Analytical Department and served this

position for a year. He became the executive director of the Azeri Independent Information and Analytical Center. Having served his position at Azeri until September 1994, Yunus eventually became the Chief of Department of Conflictology and Migration Studies of Institute of Peace and Democracy. Yunus has published over 30 books and 190 articles related to Azerbaijani history and Armenian-Azerbaijani relations

- “War, social change and ‘no war, no peace’ syndromes in Azerbaijani and Armenian societies”, 2005
- “The Status of Nagorno-Karabakh: The Root of Conflict. – New Approaches to Nagorno-Karabakh – A Window of Opportunity? “, 1999
- “Karabakh: Past and Present”, 2005

7. Eldar Namazov

Eldar Namazov is a politician from Azerbaijan. Eldar Namazov studied at the Azerbaijan Pedagogical University in Baku. He then studied at the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography in Moscow from 1981 through 1985, obtaining PhD in History. He served as the head of the Presidential Secretariat of Azerbaijan Republic and the Presidential aide to Heydar Aliyev. Starting from 2001, Namazov has been serving as the President of social forum In the name of Azerbaijan, conducting political analysis for foreign policy of Azerbaijan, research on national security issues, conflict resolution, political and economic reforms in the country. He is also the founder of Center for International and Strategic Studies and had served as a deputy of National Assembly of Azerbaijan.

- “The Minsk Process Needs “Road Map””, 2012

8. Irada Bagirova

Irada Bagirova got her master degree in History from Moscow State University in 1979. Later she achieved a PhD degree in Institute of History at the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. Now Bagirova is Doctor of Historical Sciences, Institute of History of the Azerbaijani National Academy of Sciences. From 2002 to present Irada Bagirova is a Chief of Caucasus History Department in the Institute of History at the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

She was a participant of more than 35 local and international conferences dedicated on Scientific and Civil Society problems. Irada Bagirova is an author of 9 monograms and books, more than 60 publications and chief editor of 5 books.

- The Past and Future of Conflicts, Identity and Integration in the Central Caucasus.- “The Caucasus and Globalization”, 2012
- Legal Status of quasi-autonomies on USSR: Case of Nagorno-Karabakh’s Autonomous Oblast, 2013

9. Ali Abasov

Born on 11.10.1950 Baku, Azerbaijan.

Doctor of Philosophy, Professor.

Head of the "Problems of modern philosophy" Department in the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. Author of more than 150 scientific publications, 10 monographs, books and brochures, over 160 publications in the media.

- "What is the Culture of Peace?" Manual for secondary school. Baku, 2002 (Azeri)
- Brochure "Variants for a Solution of the Karabakh Conflict: Concepts and Reality" Baku-Yerevan, 2002 (with H. Khachatryan; Azeri, Armenian, English, Russia).
- Local Self-Government in Azerbaijan and Georgia. Baku, 2002 (collective monograph)
- Variants for a solution of the Karabakh conflict: concept and reality. – Journal for Perspectives of Economic Political and Social Integration. V. 1X, 2003, N 1-2. Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, Lublin, p.9 – 88 (in the co-authorship)
- Problems of Post-Soviet Development: Politics and Ethics - in mag.: "CaucasUS. Context", issue #2, 2003, Tbilisi, Georgia - pp. 21 - 35

6. Discussions in focus group

In order to get a wider information on circumstances in country, in the region and international community, there were organized 5 discussions in focus groups during the period from November 13, 2015 to January 25, 2016. The Public Council of Experts for Karabakh Conflict Settlement (Karabakh Council) discussed several topics listed above to analyze and give a detailed overview to the situation of Azerbaijan regarding Karabakh conflict from different perspectives: political atmosphere, relations that Azerbaijan has with stakeholders, political relations in the region, relations with global political players and which influence all named features have to the Karabakh Conflict.

The other aim of the discussions was to attempt to analyze attitude of different stratas of Azerbaijani society to European Union in order to understand which real potential EU has in settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Participants of the discussions:

Irada Bagirova

Eldar Namazov

Zardusht Alizade

Ali Abasov

Farda Asadov

Fuad Hasanov

Sajida Abdulvahabova

Arzu Abdullayeva

Ahmad Alili

Ismayil Abdullayev

Nijat Melikov

6.1 The overall situation in the country

- The impact of the economic crisis to Karabakh Conflict: lost opportunities

It was a sharp drop in oil prices that has taken the Azerbaijani authorities aback. As president Ilham Aliyev stated in Davos forum in January 2016 it transpired that the government did not expect this course of events and failed to work out an adequate plan of actions. A double

devaluation of the national currency, administrative restriction of dollar and euro circulation, instructions for traders to evade rise in prices, forcible suppression of spontaneous actions of the population against costliness, arrests of opposition activists under utterly hollow pretexts together with continuing militarist rhetoric and violations of ceasefire regime by both parties to the conflict – all these are illustrative that authorities were not ready for such a sharp economic crisis.

Situation in the country

Archaic nature and ineffectiveness of management system of Azerbaijan are factors to predetermine vulnerability of the state before external influences as testified by oil price reduction developments. Self-assured and negligent, the government proved to be impotent in opposing crisis tendencies: budget receipts reduced, the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan (SOFA) began impetuously dwindling to end with financial and political bankruptcy of the regime. It turned out that the government has no plans for emergency situations not because they have not been offered by experts but because it was unprepared, nor wanted or, perhaps, feared, to take them for consideration.

Oil prices are approaching a figure of \$ 20 per barrel, so the very existence of this parasitic state becomes impossible. Prime cost of the Azerbaijani oil is \$ 17 per barrel. Specialists consider this price to be understated to insist on \$ 25 per barrel. Hence, further drop in oil prices presupposes the moment when oil production becomes inevitably unprofitable. It is natural that after the reserves of the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan (SOFA) run out the government applies to the IMF for credits, and the latter will provide credits on condition that profound system and structural reforms are carried out in the country under tight control of the IMF.

If the government fails to accept IMF conditions, it is sure to be wiped off by protest waves. In the meanwhile, adoption of IMF conditions means the beginning of painful for elite process of curbing the corruption, demonopolization, reform in penal judicial system, conduct of honest elections and government's accountability to society. Beyond any doubts, the authorities will have to lift prohibitions and restrictions on civil society activities.

It is natural that the conduct of reforms in the underdeveloped country with no domestic production calls for sharp reduction of social payments to the population, substantial decline in living standards and ensuing rise in social tensions.

Liberal reforms will be impeded not only by criminal oligarchic top of the country but Russia as well with its tight control over the situation. Its resources are running out as well because this country's ruling regime is identical to the Azerbaijani one. This notwithstanding, Russia disposes of missile-nuclear weapons and is led by Putin who is capable of blackmailing Europe and demanding essential financial support to prolong his existence

The Public Council for Karabakh as advisory body of civil society activists has discussed the current situation to lay an emphasis on the following:

1. The government is incapable of evaluating the complexity of economic crisis properly and taking necessary steps.
2. The opposition is marginalized and oppressed so much that it is incapable of initiating topical social-political changes.
3. There were and are persons and organizations in civil society capable of providing realistic picture of the current situation and suggesting reforms to overcome the crisis.
4. Necessary and inevitable reforms were drawn up and elucidated in articles and monographs as far back as earlier the epoch of «big money» in 2006. President of the Public Forum, Eldar

Namazov held a series of round tables to discuss and provide forecasts for subsequent 10 years in various spheres of life in Azerbaijan. These books were circulated among various ministries and the Presidential Apparatus but were ignored and found no support.

5. The government is not minded to establish a dialogue with people, expert community and thus demonstrates its adherence to the traditional policy of ignoring society. Despite that Karabakh Council offered its recommendations on the resolution of the conflict

Example: Before the parliamentary elections of 2005, Karabakh Council offered the government holding elections in Karabakh District, where there weren't held any elections from the time conflict started. Karabakh Council offered to organize elections among all IDP communities on all the territory of the republic. In connection with this there were trained observers from civil society for monitoring the election process and results at all polling stations of the Karabakh Constituency. And instead of holding elections, the deputy of Nagorno-Karabakh was appointed as almost all other parliamentarians.

6. Oil reserves of Azerbaijan are sufficient for commercially profitable production within, at least, 30 years. Note that gas reserves are enough to meet country's needs within, at least, 100 years. But that's not to say that there is no need in economical attitude to these riches, however they were implemented in a way which was comfortable for the government and unrecognizably changed.

7. Civil society should convene a forum with the agenda as follows:

-Real state of affairs in the country;

-Proposals of civil society put forward 10 years ago, as well as new proposals that arose from realities of the present crisis;

-Creation of new organization structures capable of monitoring the situation, work up proposals to overcome crisis situations and form groups capable of crisis management.

8. Jointly with the EU and the Minsk Group for Karabakh, combined efforts with civil society for monitoring the situation around Karabakh, including that on the frontline. This step is urgent: availing of the extreme situation, one of the parties to the conflict may violate ceasefire arrangements and relapse the warfare. There is a danger that the warfare will break out.

6.2 Stages of development of the relations between Azerbaijan and EU

Relations of Azerbaijan with the European Union, they went through 4 stages. **The first stage** was during a period of 90-ies of the last century, when in its relations with the South Caucasus and Central Asia, the European Union began developing two major programs. It is a program of technical assistance to countries of the CIS (TACIS) and the bilateral Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which purpose was to create legal and political framework for economic assistance. Under these programs there was carried out mainly economic cooperation and financial assistance from the EU.

With the development of relations with the South Caucasus countries, and especially after them joining the Council of Europe in 2001, there has been a clear bias toward strengthening an active EU policy in the region. The South Caucasus region is beginning to be seen as a primordial part of the European civilization.

Since 2004 the ENP - European Neighborhood Policy starts into effect and according to it EU signs Action Plans with South Caucasus countries for a 10 year period. In addition there was signed

a separate Energy Memorandum of energy supplies to Europe with Azerbaijan. Regarding the Action Plans in the Azerbaijani version the first priority was allocated to the resolution of Nagorno Karabakh conflict, which was on the 7th place in the Armenian version. Thus, experts stressed that without solving the Karabakh problem the economic relationship cannot reach the desired level.

The third stage of cooperation started in 2009. After the Russian-Georgian conflict the EU has decided to strengthen its position in the South Caucasus and ensure safety, considering the unpredictable actions on the part of Russia. At this time by the initiative of Poland and Sweden there was adopted a program of Eastern Partnership, which included six post-soviet countries (3 countries of the South Caucasus, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus). Given the strong influence of Russia in the region, the EU has gone the way of the implementation of an integrated approach, which is economic integration, as well as the inclusion of the EP in the EU's energy network, as well as in the space of its cultural influence, gradually reducing the role of Russia in the region.

And finally **the 4th stage** that can be called the period of 2014-2015. During this period there is seen a sharp cooling of relations when between Baku and Brussels associated primarily with the issue of human rights and political prisoners that official Baku denies. The resolution¹⁷ of the European Parliament on 10 September 2015 harshly demanded the release of prisoners and the application of sanctions against the judicial staff who issued the sentences. This has resulted in a response statement of the Milli Majlis, which declared biased and slanderous approach of European institutions in Azerbaijan and announced withdrawal from the Euronest. Even Azerbaijan's participation in the Eastern Partnership program was put into question, although this issue is not on the agenda.

Eastern Partnership has been divided into two vectors:

- 1- Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine
- 2- Azerbaijan, Armenia and Belorussia

Azerbaijan at the moment refused the Eastern Partnership, but Armenia has also done the same. Eastern Partnership is not useful any more as an instrument for the Azerbaijani government. But there is still an advantage of the partnership for the civil society, because of the reason that European Parliament has two resolutions on the liberation of occupied territories of Nagorno-Karabakh. Sympathies of the EU towards Azerbaijan and Armenia can be characterized as 50/50, although Armenia is a Christian country according its cultural-religious characteristics. Sympathies of Eastern European countries like Ukraine, Moldova, Poland, Hungary and Baltic countries are more on the side of Azerbaijan, though they are a bit suspicious towards Armenia due to the fact that it's considered as a satellite of Russia. Though, Armenia applies all reforms requested by European Council and recommended by EU (except liberation of the occupied territories) and negotiates on associative agreement, especially before some special events like PACE meeting, discussion about Armenia in European Parliament and other inter-governmental organizations.

6.3 Civil society opinion on Azerbaijani-European relations

As for civil society, its activities are almost reduced to zero; many NGOs are closed due to inability to finance, some of their leaders are under arrest. Political parties exist only on paper, that is, on pages of a couple of newspapers published.

Participant opinion:

¹⁷ European Parliament resolution of 10 September 2015 on Azerbaijan (2015/2840(RSP)) -

Unlike the civil society, ordinary citizens do not have a deep differential treatment to the European Union and the United States. They perceive them as a single unit - the West.

Educated youth and civil society are more oriented to the West, rather than the citizens of middle and old age. In addition to the artificially created negative image of the West in the official press and the European governmental and non-governmental organizations it is necessary to know and take into account five factors that affect to the negative attitude towards West and create nostalgic mood towards USSR inside the country:

1. Conflict with Armenia and the danger of a new war. Armenian - Azerbaijani conflict began during the collapse of the USSR and is continuing already 27 years without hope.
2. Social insecurity.
3. High prices for public utilities, essential goods and health care, international transport (the discrepancy between the world prices and the level of salaries). For example, housing payment in the Soviet period was 4 cop \ cents per month, and electricity also 4 cop \ cents for an k/h)
4. Failure to comply with the human rights of their workers by foreign employers of transnational companies. Namely: the absence of professional unions, the inability to protect their rights upon release from work, unequal payment for foreigners and local experts with a difference of a few times. Currently, due to the fall of rate of manat by 50%, the salary of workers has also been decreased by 50%. This is despite the fact that the implementation of the financial transaction between the companies place in the foreign currency and at the same time they continuing paying the salaries of employees in manats without indexation of today's rate.
5. Double standards regarding territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in comparison with Georgia and Moldova also have a big impact to the relations between EU and Azerbaijan.

Despite these negative factors, which are undoubtedly discussed and studied by various institutions of the European Union with the aim of their elimination, the policy of this interstate organization is perceived by the progressive part of the society as one mostly based on respect for democratic principles.

At the moment, Azerbaijan is not in a hurry to join the Euro-Atlantic structures and is presently ready to adopt the “Neutrality in Exchange for Peace in Karabakh” project; the whole question is whether Russia will offer such a plan to Azerbaijan? There is also another reason, why Azerbaijan is slow in joining the EU Associative membership: membership in these structures calls for profound democratic transformations in the country, including the establishment of political pluralism in society, respect for human rights, supremacy of law, free market and social justice, etc. all these demands threaten to undermine fundamentals of the country's authoritarian regime.

6.4 Azerbaijani Youth for Peaceful settlement of Karabakh Conflict and Karabakh Council discussion

#1 Optimism on the Pro-European orientation of Azerbaijan.

As it was expected, the opinion of youth was more optimistic on the Pro-European orientation of Azerbaijan. On their opinion, that they shared during the discussion the current troublesome times should be seen as something non-permanent. It can last more than expected and wished, but it is non-permanent. The main reason for this is the ‘balanced politics’ of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has active national strategy and could maneuver between the regional giants Turkey, Iran and Russia. Thought the obstacles provided by its geographic position Azerbaijan could

build its ties with the European countries and attract western companies (oil investment at the first place). There was and is a clear understanding that the 'balanced politics' is the only way for keeping its sovereignty and freedom. Otherwise, under strong economic and political presence of Russia, Azerbaijan can turn out to be 'Armenia-2' for Russia.

Since it's clear to everyone, it is within the interest of everyone to get back to the 'balanced' routine.

Regarding the reasons of the current situation, it can be explained as the system of Turkish-Azerbaijani-Russian diplomatic relations. As a NATO member, Turkey always was had a strong effect on Azerbaijan's balanced trajectory. The current Turkish-Russian enhanced cooperation has strong effect on Azerbaijan and its position.

#2 Popular support for Pro-European orientation.

One of the indicators of the Pro-European orientation of the population is the choice of educational institutions and the countries they're based on. According to the Min of Education, the distinctive majority of the state sponsored students studying abroad choose European countries such as UK, Netherlands, France and etc. for their education. TOP5 countries in the list are EU countries. Also, there are quite many self-sponsored students studying in the Eastern Europe, Italy, Germany and etc.

Another indicator of the pro-European orientation of the population is the attendance of the public events organized by the EU representatives in Azerbaijan. The recently held 'Eurovillage' could attract quite many visitors and tents were crowded. Non-European country representatives (Except Turkey) cannot attract so many people.

#3 Karabakh is the key factor affecting the political agenda.

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is one of the major factors affecting the mood of population and political agenda. In the narratives, the OSCE Minsk Group attached to the stand of EU and USA over the conflict. Each unproductive attempt by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs are seemed as the pro-Armenian stand on the conflict.

#4 The tension between Azerbaijan and EU is in favor of Russia and Armenia

“The eurointegration is mentioned as the general direction in the security conception of Azerbaijan. Most of oil and gas is going to be exported to Europe. Separately, Azerbaijan is also a member of Eastern Partnership Program. Considering all this factors, strategic relations between Azerbaijan and European Union meet the national and security interests of Azerbaijan. Attenuation of these relations is in favor of Russia and Armenia. It shouldn't be allowed. That is why it is needed to enlarge the dialogue in Brussels and discuss common problems together instead of cutting or freezing relations with EU. ”

Also the Karabakh Council discussed the situation created around Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the status of current negotiations. Experts, who mentioned that Russia can benefit the tension between Azerbaijan and European Union told about disadvantages, that this situation could bring into the regulation of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: “The aim of Russia is not to fairly regulate the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but to enter their “peacekeepers” around the Nagorno-Karabakh region liberating some of the regions. In this case the peacekeeping troops will never exit from Azerbaijan and the fair resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be impossible.”

6.5 Russian- Turkish relations discussions in Focus group

The Russian-Turkish crisis will not affect the Nagorno Karabakh conflict until the crisis grows into armed conflict which is hardly possible. Should a war break out, the Russian military base in Armenia would be targeted by the Turkish army. As for the stage of political-diplomatic disputes and information war, neither Armenian, nor Azerbaijani leaderships would be involved in the vicissitudes of the Russian-Turkish crisis.

It has to be kept in mind that the Russian Federation enjoys a monopoly influence both on the conflict and parties to the conflict. The whole conflict fomentation process and its bringing to the present state pursue a single purpose: to keep the conflict under Russian control.

In considering that the conflict and mediation in the conflict is highly effective instrument of the implementation of economic and geopolitical interests of mediating countries, Russia has from the very outset plotted a plan that enables it to keep challengers for conflict regulation far away from the region. That's why all the attempts of Iran, Turkey, European countries and the United States have successfully been torpedoed by Russia or latently through pressuring a party or parties simultaneously or directly through removing disobedient leaders and structures as was in Armenia and Azerbaijan. The current plan in South Caucasus is practically perfect for maintaining the Russian influence at the level that secures interests of Russia in the region. For this reason, Russia refrains from any actions capable of disturbing the strongly beneficial plan.

Hence, it may be supposed that the lack of emergency situations, specifically, aggravation of the Russian-Turkish relations, will not urge Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to take step that may violate the current status quo.

It should be noted that the visit of Mevlud Chavushogly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and former president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, to Azerbaijan, pursued an aim to influence the RF through Azerbaijan, including a certain progress in the conflict resolution. However, Turkish Foreign Minister's visit was a failure. The visit of the Turkish Prime Minister Davudogly pursued the same purpose. It is safe to say that the position of Azerbaijan remained unaltered. Azerbaijan did not agree to speed up its Karabakh policy with Turkey's direct involvement. So Russia may be easy on that score: nothing threatens its position in South Caucasus.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Recommendations for international and local NGOs on peace building:

It is essential to apply the system-functional approach:

- to regard and implement the peace process as a complex process: multi-level and multi-lateral to embrace all spheres, from economy and law to ecology and culture with the involvement in the peace process of the representatives of various strata of society at local, bilateral, regional and international levels.

1. at domestic level: Expert Council of Think tanks properly be organized and co-ordinated to prepare societies for peace, according of Denville Statement¹⁸. Target groups should be composed of different groups/strata of societies: Journalists, Women, Youth and teens, Refugees and IDPs,

¹⁸ Russia, USA and France made a joint statement on Karabakh -

Intelligentsia, including writers, scientists (historians, economists, etc.), art people, sportsmen, NGOs, Officials

Work instruments: Think tanks work, elaboration by experts the proposals on different (economic, political and cultural) topics for the conflict settlement: Peace education based on specific approach for each, Awareness raising (Peace PR), Social media for Peace (Light Peace Fire)

2. At a bilateral level:

- It is necessary to unite efforts and opportunities of influential representatives of intellectual elite of the conflicting parties, hold effective debates, thrash out the situation with due regard for many concomitant factors, draw up and submit intelligible models (a positive precedent is the HCA and I IKV PAX Christy Independent-initiated Minsk Process) where a dialogue and talks between the parties were followed by a single command Armenian-Azerbaijani format. As a consequence, an agreement was reached in December 2010 – January 2011 and later stated and distributed in the so-called Tbilisi Declaration (document attached).

Additional instruments: Study tours into the former conflict regions with partly or fully positive experience of conflict resolution.

3. At a regional level.

- To promote correlation of the work of expert community (think tanks, peacemakers, representatives of civil society of the South Caucasian countries). To benefit from the experience of Standing Conference of South Caucasian Citizens for Peace, Democracy and Regional Integration (Standing Conference) on joint monitoring of the agreements achieved, retrace negative and dangerous tendencies and developments, and suggest ways and methods of their neutralization and elimination.

- To provide communities with the results of joint work on the real situation in South Caucasus, region's place in Euro-integration and global expanse. To demonstrate the real situation in the conflict-involved countries through efforts of intellectuals who are conducting dialogue without double standards and false diplomacy, which may fail potential of adherents of conflict freezing and its prolongation by means of manipulating minds of people deprived of veracious information;

- To elaborate proposals for the creation of the regional South-Caucasian structures with purpose of joint programs of South Caucasus in the spheres where the collaboration is possible. So (perhaps: Ministry of Regional Security and Euro-integration; Institute of Crisis Situations Control; Ministry of the Unified Legal Policy of South Caucasus; South Caucasian Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, etc.)

- To provide societies of South Caucasus with probable models of honorary and mutually advantageous conflict resolution, ways of ensuring the guarantee regional security and prosperity;

- To mobilize mass media to explain and discuss the models above;

4. at an international level:

- It is appropriate to arrange close cooperation between western think tank, analytical centers and international NGOs and the South Caucasian ones.

- The cooperation of experts from the Black Sea:

The start of the joint work has to be forestalled by study both of positive and negative experience of conflicts worldwide, their cause and effect, external influences, role of traditions and culture. It'd be very helpful to conduct a comparative analysis of some conflicts to thus identify their typology and generic signs. What democratic institutions of the West – so far lacking in South Caucasus – are capable of easing or solving conflicts?

It is imperative for governments to create opportunities to drawing up alternative proposals for non-governmental and international organizations to influence decision-making process. In so doing, participants of Standing Conference will be in position to lobby interests of their peoples and countries not only before their societies and political parties but also before international organizations, diasporas whose interests are not always concurrent with interests of their historical homeland and peoples of South Caucasus.

It is essential to organize the advocacy and lobbying programs in the international inter-governmental organizations.

7.2 Recommendations for the EU (on the basis of “Eastern Partnership for Peace Program”)

- Including a peace program to Eastern Partnership policy
- Cooperating with GUAM member-countries faced with ethnic-territorial with conflict resolution
- Carrying out EU own decisions on strengthening their role in settling the South Caucasian conflicts.
- Organizing special courses, trainings and workshops to be attended by representatives of parties of the conflict (refugees, displaced persons, representatives of power, NGOs, journalists, scientists, politicians, etc.). Teaching them not only peacemaking principles but protection of their rights to comply with international law provisions. Courses should be run on-site and EU countries.
- Informing the Eastern Partnership public about collaboration with governments in the matter of security and peacemaking.
- Financing NGO research work on peacemaking, conflict resolution and bringing results of the work into governments and members of the Minsk group's notice.
- Setting up a coordination board for conflict resolution between EaP participating countries within the framework of «Eastern partnership program».
- Carrying on an explanatory work on the genuine essence of «color revolutions» and «hybrid wars» causing particular apprehension of the authorities and a part of the public.
- Revealing distinctions between federalization projects of conflict parties as set forth by Russia and the EU. Publishing results.
- Announcing a competition for draft constitutions for conflict-exposed states
- Arranging regular trips of representatives of conflict parties to the EU countries with their own ethnic-confessional problems.
- Holding a new conference to deal with conflicts on the post-Soviet expanse
- Suggesting representatives (politicians and analysts) of secession regimes to submit alternative studies over the situation in the separation years, present-day political structure, economy, democracy, human rights, future prospects, acceptable plans of conflict resolution.
- Regarding recipients of grants, participation of random people is not acceptable in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution, because a well-written grant proposal cannot be criteria of choosing partners for EU.
- EU delegation in Azerbaijan and Armenia must have an opportunity of choice as experts and peace activists known for their work on conflict resolution on the basis of their criteria. It would be useful to involve local experts for development of criteria.

- The choice of organizations for peace process support is a very serious question as a choice of partners from both sides. It is possible to achieve effectiveness in peace building and conflict resolution only working as a team. If there is no trust, competition or suspect among partners it cannot bring to the positive results in work.

Afterword

Unfortunately the latest events, i.e. four-days escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict showed that our expectations and fears named in this study became true. The author considers it very necessary to share here her appeal that was widely spread, regarding the recent four-day clash.

“Dear colleagues, dear friends and allies, I’m writing to you in difficult and troubled times: dangerous hostilities have resumed in Karabakh in earnest. A beginning of a new great war cannot be ruled out; a war with tens of thousands of dead and wounded, with hundreds of thousands of new refugees. Do our nations need it? Of course not. Will our conflict be resolved by a war? Of course not. A military solution is possible only in one case: the Armenian army captures Baku and orders the capitulation of Azerbaijan, or the Azerbaijani army captures Yerevan and orders the capitulation of Armenia. Raise your hand if you believe in this wild idea. Raise your hand so everyone can see it and so no decent person ever shakes that hand again.

The conflict has brought a lot of misery to our peoples, has taken away a number of our loved ones and belongings. 17 thousand dead and 20 thousand wounded in Azerbaijan; 6 thousand killed and over 10 wounded in Armenia... Hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani people lost their homes in Armenia; hundreds of thousands of Armenians lost their homes in Azerbaijan. They’ve all become refugees. Hundreds of thousands of people were forcibly displaced. Hundreds of villages, dozens of cities were burned down and destroyed. Our societies were thrown back to the past, into the Middle Ages. Who’s happy about that? Who is proud of that? Raise your hand so that we can see and recognize the enemy of the human race. So that Armenians and Azerbaijanis can see and recognize the gravediggers of the joint, peaceful life of the peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

To my deep regret, the recent escalation of hostilities has disturbed the peace of mind of some of our most valued colleagues; they have succumbed to the war hysteria and have made a number of bellicose statements. I believe that the relentless times and the difficult circumstances of the life in the stuffy and poisonous atmosphere of our authoritarian and corrupt societies have undermined the foundations of our peoples’ moral resistance. Nevertheless, most of the members of our family of peacekeepers and human rights activists managed not to yield to the spur-of-the-moment influence. Those, who failed to resist the hysteria, have lost their unique identity and have become “like everybody else.” By doing so they have lost themselves, they have cheated on themselves, on their glorious and honest past and perhaps even the future. Believe me, true and sincere peacekeepers and human rights activists have always been and still are an exception: a rare and valuable exception against the ignorant and callous masses of ordinary people infected with the bacillus of chauvinism.

All these years Armenian and Azerbaijani peacekeepers have tirelessly been working towards peace. We've agreed on matters of principle; namely, that the key to the democratization of our societies is a peaceful resolution option that would allow Armenians and Azerbaijanis to live together in harmony. First, in Karabakh, then, God willing, in Baku and Yerevan. Apartheid, segregation, the victory of the myth about the "cultural and ethnic incompatibility" of our peoples will only perpetuate the victory of the criminal-oligarchic clans whose power feeds off the crowd's hatred and intolerance.

My health has deteriorated; temporarily, I hope. Therefore, I was unable with the same promptness to respond to the current developments. Many years of hard work, hardship, moral pressure and misunderstanding have undermined the health of civil society actors. All I wanted to say to the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples I have already said; all I wanted to advise, I have already advised. I am not easily influenced by the moment. I'm glad that a younger generation of Armenian and Azerbaijani peacekeepers has grown. We know more, they can do more. I really hope they will be able to explain to our nations better than us that happiness is not about a larger state territory, but about a country with a reliable Constitution, a country where courts are just and independent, where officials serve the people and do not rob them, where citizens are confident no one will dare to drown out their voices.

Only in such countries will our people be able to live in dignity and happiness. Today's Armenia and Azerbaijan, for which young people are killed, have to become such in order to ensure the conditions for a dignified and happy life of our nations. The path to the establishment of such countries lies through a peaceful conflict resolution based on compromise and consideration of the interests of each of the parties".

The text was originally written in Russian.

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