



**Universitat Autònoma
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Faculty of Political Science and Sociology
Executive summary

**THE ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE IN THE CONFLICT
BETWEEN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN IN NAGORNO-
KARABAKH**

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This paper aims to analyse the development and evolution of the OSCE's role in the peace process of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, focusing on the importance of peace-making actions in the mediation process by the Minsk Group. It will try to determine what tools and mechanisms have been implemented in terms of peace-making and analyse whether they have been effective or not. To do so, I have reviewed extensive literature from which I have been able to analyse trends in mistakes in the mediation process.

To address the research questions, the Minsk Group's actions have been analysed through the lens of peace-making. Thus, the first part of the paper has presented the conflict and the characteristics of the peace-making prism, and the second part has discussed the general trends that have led to the impossibility for the organisation to lead the peace process.

The Nagorno-Karabakh dispute arose in the context of the dissolution of the USSR and the emergence of new states. In this climate of tension, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe was conceived with pretensions of being a leader in conflict management in the region. During this period until 1994, the conflict was characterised by intermittent armed violence between the two actors and an independence referendum that created the *de facto* Republic of Artsakh. In 1994, a ceasefire was brokered by Russia, resulting in a territorial gain for Armenia. However, this ceasefire was violated several times until the latest escalation of the conflict in 2020. The OSCE created several bodies to handle the issue, such as the Minsk Group. The Minsk Group wanted to lead the process but has only maintained the situation of "no war, no peace".

Both combatants perceive the security system as a zero-sum game so that one side's gain is perceived as the other's loss (Kolodziej and Zartman 1996). This results in little room for negotiation. It is also characterised by inflexibility and the inability of both sides to formulate alternative solutions. Therefore, Hopmann argues that in order to transform the conflict model towards a more zero-sum and problem-solving approach, the involvement of third parties as mediators can be helpful (Hopmann, 1996). In the absence of willingness on both sides to engage in direct negotiations, the OSCE, among other external factors, will attempt to mediate a settlement. This study has only analysed the proposals related with peace-making, which is a process of encouraging the parties to reach a sustainable agreement to end hostilities essentially through peaceful means as envisaged in Chapter VI of the UN Charter. While peacekeeping and peacebuilding focus on attitudes and behaviours, peace-making is about addressing the incompatibility between the parties, the structural factors that lead to the dispute (Galtung, 1985).

The peace process is stuck in a stable and self-interested stalemate between the parties (Hopmann, et al., 2010). But why?

1. There are no durable solutions, only small compromises. Although the aim of peace-making is to seek sustainable solutions that bring about a change in their long-term incompatibilities rather than short, friendly agreements or fragile truces, we see no proposals from the Minsk Group to change attitudes or bring about reconciliation between the two disputants. Simply ceasefires with no subsequent agreement.
2. There is a high degree of secrecy in the peace process. Despite the importance of transparency in the peace process, the conflict is characterised by a high degree of secrecy and little transparency that only encourages rumours (highly dangerous). In addition, there is no clear interlocutor.
3. There is no recognition between the actors. Recognition of the legitimacy of the parties to participate in mediation is key to peace-making proposals. This is impossible in the measurement of the conflict under study, as the Arsaj authorities themselves do not participate.

All this has led the OSCE to lose its leadership, and its fundamental role as an organisation. In the conclusions, I have put forward three proposals that the OSCE could implement in order to break the deadlock in the negotiations:

1. International actors could exert international pressure on local leaders. An example of such pressure could be the suspension of investments until an agreement is adopted.
2. Create incentives and reduce risks to ensure cost-effective implementation of agreements. To reduce the risk of non-cooperation in the interim period, the holding of a referendum on self-determination could be made conditional in some way.
3. Change the format of mediation to create a sense of urgency. The fact that there are many mediators proposing different solutions creates a lack of sense of urgency on both sides to end incompatibilities because there is always a facilitator on hand to mediate.

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