



**REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF MONITORING  
OF THE VARIOUS OPINIONS  
IN THE ARMENIAN MEDIA AND THE EXPERT  
COMMUNITY ON THE ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI  
RELATIONS, CONFLICT**

**November, 2023**

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# THE AIM AND METHODOLOGY OF THE PROJECT

**The aim of this component of the project** is to identify the media platforms and experts that can be used to promote the Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue in order to strengthen the culture of dialogue between the neighboring states and weaken the conflict narratives.

The following **methodology** was used - during the monitoring carried out by the Yerevan Press Club, it was revealed how often the following topics related to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations were covered in the selected ten Armenian media outlets selected according to the preliminary expert discussions:

1. *Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (in various official formats), evaluation of their effectiveness and prospects.*
2. *The border issues between the two countries.*
3. *Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and observer missions.*
4. *The policy of Baku and Yerevan towards Nagorno-Karabakh.*
5. *Unblocking the communications.*

It was also revealed which opinions are most often expressed on the mentioned topics: positive (they see the possibility of reaching an agreement / +), negative (they do not see the possibility of reaching an agreement / -), neutral (the possibility of reaching an agreement seems uncertain / 0).

During the monitoring of ten media outlets, Armenian experts' appearances, news, articles, and editorials on the five mentioned topics were examined.

Monitoring was carried out from June 1 to July 31, 2023 in the following ten Armenian media:

1. *1in.Am (video).*
2. *24 News (video).*
3. *A1+ (video).*
4. *Aravot (video and text).*
5. *Azatutyun (video).*
6. *CivilNet (video).*
7. *Factor TV (video).*
8. *First Channel Public Television of Armenia (video).*
9. *News.Am (video and text).*
10. *Noyan Tapan (video).*

During the monitoring, articles, interviews, talk shows, etc. were taken into account. Each publication (article, interview, talk show, etc.) was considered as a separate material, during which, however, often the guest (expert) addressed several of the above-mentioned five topics.

# RESULTS OF THE MONITORING OF THE ARMENIAN MEDIA

## 1. MEDIA OUTLETS

As a result of monitoring ten Armenian media outlets from June 1 to July 31, 2023, **536 publications** related to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations and the conflict were registered, during which the above-mentioned five topics were covered **792 times** (see **Table No. 1**).

Table № 1

№	Name of the Media Outlet (format of the publication)	Number of materials	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed		
			+	-	0
1.	Aravot (video and text)	122	146		
			+ / 6 (4.1%)	- / 79 (54.1%)	0 / 61 (41.8%)
2.	News.Am (video and text)	119	147		
			+ / 16 (10.8%)	- / 65 (44.2%)	0 / 66 (45%)
3.	1in.Am (video)	111	143		
			+ / 12 (8.4%)	- / 45 (31.5%)	0 / 86 (60.1%)
4.	24 News (video)	52	85		
			+ / 0 (0%)	- / 59 (69.4%)	0 / 26 (30.6%)
5.	Noyan Tapan (video)	45	73		
			+ / 2 (2.7%)	- / 22 (30.1%)	0 / 49 (67.2%)
6.	Factor TV (video)	42	72		
			+ / 10 (13.9%)	- / 29 (40.3%)	0 / 33 (45.8%)
7.	Azatutyun (video)	15	51		
			+ / 6 (11.8%)	- / 17 (33.3%)	0 / 28 (54.9%)
8.	First Channel Public Television of Armenia (video)	12	32		
			+ / 3 (9.4%)	- / 4 (12.5%)	0 / 25 (78.1%)
9.	CivilNet (video)	10	23		
			+ / 0 (0%)	- / 9 (39.1%)	0 / 14 (60.9%)
10.	A1+ (video)	8	20		
			+ / 0 (0%)	- / 10 (50%)	0 / 10 (50%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>536</b>	<b>792</b>		
			<b>+ / 55 (6.9%)</b>	<b>- / 339 (42.8%)</b>	<b>0 / 398 (50.3%)</b>

## **Comment to the Table No. 1:**

Although the topic is very important for Armenia and concerns the country's national security, significant differences have been registered in the coverage of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations by the Armenian media.

Almost 2/3 of the total coverage (**352 publications or 65.6% of the total**) falls on three media outlets, of which the first two (**Aravot, News.Am**) stand out for their criticism of the authorities and government policies on the issue of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations.

Only **6.9%** of the total number of publications contain a positive opinion about the prospects for resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and about Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. However, it can be considered encouraging that more than half of the publications (**50.3%**) contain neutral (not categorical) approaches to the prospect of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, i.e. do not reject the possibility of reaching agreements. This, in turn, means that a certain field of activity opens up within the framework of this project.

On the other hand, it is important to take into account that the media that most often cover the topic of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, i.e. the ones that show special interest in it, are generally pessimistic about the possibility of resolving Armenian-Azerbaijani relations.

Perhaps, there is an objective reason here: since after the Armenian-Azerbaijani war in 2020 and subsequent events, opinions and positions that reject the prospects of a constructive dialogue with Azerbaijan have become widespread in the Armenian society, the media cannot ignore the prevailing mood.

Maybe, it should be specifically noted that the **Public Television of Armenia** is one of the three media outlets (out of the 10 outlets studied) with the least coverage of the topic.

*The above-mentioned ten media are presented in various orders in three additional tables:*

- 1. According the frequency of statements in favor of the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio) - the media in **the green zone (Table No. 2)** .*
- 2. According the frequency of statements against the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio) - the media in **the red zone (Table No. 3)** .*
- 3. According the frequency of statements that do not focus on the existence or the absence of the possibility of reaching an agreement, or imprecise statements (in a percentage ratio) - the media in **the yellow zone (Table No. 4)** .*
- 4. According the frequency of statements in favor of the possibility of agreement and not focusing on the existence or the absence of the possibility of reaching an agreement (total indicator of the green zone and **the blue zone** - in a percentage ratio) - the media in the blue zone (**Table No. 5**).*

Table № 2

Media outlets in the green zone				
№	Name of the Media Outlet (format of the publication)	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed		Number of materials
		<i>Most often, the expressed opinions were in favor of the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio)</i>		
1.	Factor TV (video)	72		42
		+ / 10 (13.9%)	- / 29 (40.3%)	
2.	Azatutyun (video)	51		15
		+ / 6 (11.8%)	- / 17 (33.3%)	
3.	News.Am (video and text)	147		119
		+ / 16 (10.8%)	- / 65 (44.2%)	
4.	First Channel Public Television of Armenia (video)	32		12
		+ / 3 (9.4%)	- / 4 (12.5%)	
5.	1in.Am (video)	143		111
		+ / 12 (8.4%)	- / 45 (31.5%)	
6.	Aravot (video and text)	146		122
		+ / 6 (4.1%)	- / 79 (54.1%)	
7.	Noyan Tapan (video)	73		45
		+ / 2 (2.7%)	- / 22 (30.1%)	
8.	CivilNet (video)	23		10
		+ / 0 (0%)	- / 9 (39.1%)	
9.	A1+ (video)	20		8
		+ / 0 (0%)	- / 10 (50%)	
10.	24 News (video)	85		52
		+ / 0 (0%)	- / 59 (69.4%)	

## Comment to the Table No. 2:

It is noteworthy that even among the media that present the most positive views on the prospects for resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and on Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, the share of positivity in the overall coverage is small. **Factor TV has the best indicator - only 13.9%**. A completely different picture is observed in the case of the media that present the most pessimistic views - this circumstance will be covered in the next comment.

It should be noted that the most positive views on Armenian-Azerbaijani relations were presented by the media (**Factor TV, Azatutyun, 1in.Am**) where one can most often find opinions that the future of Armenia is about the integration with the European Union and the “collective West” in general, reinforcing democracy, human rights and country sovereignty.

Table № 3

Media outlets in the red zone					
№	Name of the Media Outlet (format of the publication)	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed			Number of materials
		<i>Most often, the expressed opinions were <b>against the possibility</b> of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio)</i>			
1.	24 News (video)	85			52
		- / 59 (69.4%)	+ / 0 (0%)	0 / 26 (30.6%)	
2.	Aravot (video and text)	146			122
		- / 79 (54.1%)	+ / 6 (4.1%)	0 / 61 (41.8%)	
3.	A1+ (video)	20			8
		- / 10 (50%)	+ / 0 (0%)	0 / 10 (50%)	
4.	News.Am (video and text)	147			119
		- / 65 (44.2%)	+ / 16 (10.8%)	0 / 66 (45%)	
5.	Factor TV (video)	72			42
		- / 29 (40.3%)	+ / 10 (13.9%)	0 / 33 (45.8%)	
6.	CivilNet (video)	23			10
		- / 9 (39.1%)	+ / 0 (0%)	0 / 14 (60.9%)	
7.	Azatutyun (video)	51			15
		- / 17 (33.3%)	+ / 6 (11.8%)	0 / 28 (54.9%)	
8.	1in.Am (video)	143			111
		- / 45 (31.5%)	+ / 12 (8.4%)	0 / 86 (60.1%)	
9.	Noyan Tapan (video)	73			45
		- / 22 (30.1%)	+ / 2 (2.7%)	0 / 49 (67.2%)	
10.	First Channel Public Television of Armenia (video)	32			12
		- / 4 (12.5%)	+ / 3 (9.4%)	0 / 25 (78.1%)	



### **Comment to the Table No. 3:**

Among the media that present the most pessimistic views on the prospects for resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and on Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, **24 News and Aravot** stand out, **with 69.4% and 54.1%**, correspondingly. Such high numbers may indicate a deliberate editorial policy against the real process of normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations.

The media, that cover the prospect of reaching an agreement between Baku and Yerevan in a negative light, are distinguished by sharp criticism of the current authorities of Armenia; some of them in public discourse are associated with the previous authorities or their individual representatives (**24 News, News.Am**).

It is also noteworthy that the same media more often express opinions in favor of deepening Armenian-Russian relations, and the Russian position regarding the processes in the international arena (the war in Ukraine, etc.) is presented more intensively.

Table № 4

Media outlets in the red zone				
№	Name of the Media Outlet (format of the publication)	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed		Number of materials
		<i>Most often, the expressed opinions did not focus on the existence or the absence of the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio)</i>		
1.	First Channel Public Television of Armenia (video)	32		12
		0 / 25 (78.1%)	+ / 3 (9.4%)	
2.	Noyan Tapan (video)	73		45
		0 / 49 (67.2%)	+ / 2 (2.7%)	
3.	CivilNet (video)	23		10
		0 / 14 (60.9%)	+ / 0 (0%)	
4.	1in.Am (video)	143		111
		0 / 86 (60.1%)	+ / 12 (8.4%)	
5.	Azatutyun (video)	51		15
		0 / 28 (54.9%)	+ / 6 (11.8%)	
6.	A1+ (video)	20		8
		0 / 10 (50%)	+ / 0 (0%)	
7.	Factor TV (video)	72		42
		0 / 33 (45.8%)	+ / 10 (13.9%)	
8.	News.Am (video and text))	147		119
		0 / 66 (45%)	+ / 16 (10.8%)	
9.	Aravot (video and text)	146		122
		0 / 61 (41.8%)	+ / 6 (4.1%)	
10.	24 News (video)	85		52
		0 / 26 (30.6%)	+ / 0 (0%)	

#### **Comment to the Table No. 4:**

The media, that present mostly vague (not categorical) opinions about Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, can be, in fact, considered a resource that can be used to achieve positive results within the framework of this project - in particular, they can be considered as a resource for presenting positions and views in favor of a constructive dialogue between the two countries.

In this regard, it is important that the top three “leaders” of such media include the **Public Television of Armenia, Noyan Tapan** and **CivilNet**, the first of which has a large audience in Armenia; the Russian-language content of the second one attracts attention in the region as a whole; and the third one is quite popular among people actively interested in politics and, in particular, international and regional processes.

#### **Conclusions and recommendations**

An obvious criterion for choosing those media that could serve as an effective platform for establishing and promoting the Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue could be found in the **Table No. 2** where the “leaders” are **Factor TV, Azatutyun, 1in.Am**. However, given the status of Azatutyun (funded by the US Congress) and the principles defining the determination of editorial and language policies caused by that status, the possibilities of interaction with this media outlet within the framework of this project may be limited.

As noted above, there is the possibility of considering, so to speak, the “undecided media” as a potential dialogue platform where a neutral attitude prevails towards the prospects of reaching agreement on various aspects of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. The “leaders” in this category, according to the **Table No. 4**, include the **Public Television, Noyan Tapan and CivilNet**. However, given the status of the **Public Television** and the principles for determining editorial and language policies determined by it, the possibilities of interaction with this media outlet within the framework of this project may be limited.

In light of the above, the most optimal decision seems to be the combination (sum) of indicators for the statements in favor of reaching an agreement between Baku and Yerevan, and those where the existence and absence of the corresponding prospects is not emphasized. In this case, the **Table No. 5** “rating” will look like this:

Table № 5

Media outlets in the blue zone				
№	Name of the Media Outlet (format of the publication)	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed		Number of materials
		<i>Most often, the expressed opinions allowed the possibility of reaching agreement and did not focus on the existence or the absence of the possibility of reaching an agreement (total of the green and yellow zones indicators - as a percentage of the total number)</i>		
1.	First Channel Public Television of Armenia (video)	32		12
		+ 0 / 28 (87.5%)	- / 4 (12.5%)	
2.	Noyan Tapan (video)	73		45
		+ 0 / 51 (69.9%)	- / 22 (30.1%)	
3.	1in.Am (video)	143		111
		+ 0 / 98 (68.5%)	- / 45 (31.5%)	
4.	Azatutyun (video)	51		15
		+ 0 / 34 (66.7%)	- / 17 (33.3%)	
5.	CivilNet (video)	23		10
		+ 0 / 14 (60.9%)	- / 9 (39.1%)	
6.	Factor TV (video)	72		42
		+ 0 / 43 (59.7%)	- / 29 (40.3%)	
7.	News.Am (video and text)	147		119
		+ 0 / 82 (55.8%)	- / 65 (44.2%)	
8.	A1+ (video)	20		8
		+ 0 / 10 (50%)	- / 10 (50%)	
9.	Aravot (video and text)	146		122
		+ 0 / 67 (45.9%)	- / 79 (54.1%)	
10.	24 News (video)	85		52
		+ 0 / 26 (30.6%)	- / 59 (69.4%)	

The final decision on the choice of media platforms, with the most effective interaction within the framework of this project, can be made after partner consultations with the editorial offices of the media that “took leading positions” in the Tables No. 2, No. 4, No. 5.

## 2. THEMATIC AREAS

As a result of monitoring ten Armenian media outlets, it turned out that the above-mentioned five topics were covered **792 times**. Neutral positions prevail (**50.3%**), followed by negative (pessimistic) views (**42.8%**), while positive (optimistic) approaches comprise only **6.9%** of the total.

The Armenian media mostly covered the Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (**32.9% of the total**), whereas the unblocking of communications had the least coverage (**9.2% of the total**) (see **Table No. 6**). This can be explained by the obvious fact that the ongoing negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan are currently the dominant agenda in the relations between the two countries.

Table No 6

No	Thematic areas	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed		
1.	Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (in various official formats), evaluation of their effectiveness and prospects.	261		
		+ / 31 (11.9%)	- / 60 (22.9%)	0 / 170 (65.2%)
2.	The policy of Baku and Yerevan towards Nagorno-Karabakh.	189		
		+ / 2 (1%)	- / 125 (66.2%)	0 / 62 (32.8%)
3.	Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and observer missions.	178		
		+ / 16 (8.9%)	- / 89 (50%)	0 / 73 (41.1%)
4.	The border issues between the two countries.	91		
		+ / 2 (2.2%)	- / 44 (48.3%)	0 / 45 (49.5%)
5.	Unblocking the communications.	73		
		+ / 4 (5.5%)	- / 21 (28.7%)	0 / 48 (65.8%)
Total		792		
		+ / 55 (6.9%)	- / 339 (42.8%)	0 / 398 (50.3%)

The above-mentioned five topics are presented in three additional tables:

1. Topics on which the most often expressed opinions were in favor of the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio) - the topics in **the green zone (Table No. 7)**.
2. Topics on which the most often expressed opinions were against the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio) - the topics in **the red zone (Table No. 8)**.
3. Topics on which the most often expressed opinions did not focus on the existence or the absence of the possibility of reaching an agreement, or the statements were - the topics in **the yellow zone (Table No. 9)**

Table №7

Green zone			
№	Thematic areas	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed	
		<i>Most often, the expressed opinions allowed the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio).</i>	
1.	Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (in various official formats), evaluation of their effectiveness and prospects	261	
		+ / 31 (11.9%)	- / 60 (22.9%) 0 / 170 (65.2%)
2.	Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and observer missions	178	
		+ / 16 (8.9%)	- / 89 (50%) 0 / 73 (41.1%)
3.	Unblocking the communications	73	
		+ / 4 (5.5%)	- / 21 (28.7%) 0 / 48 (65.8%)
4.	The border issues between the two countries	91	
		+ / 2 (2.2%)	- / 44 (48.3%) 0 / 45 (49.5%)
5.	The policy of Baku and Yerevan towards Nagorno-Karabakh	189	
		+ / 2 (1%)	- / 125 (66.2%) 0 / 62 (32.8%)

Table № 8

Red zone			
№	Thematic areas	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed	
		<i>Most often, the expressed opinions were against the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio).</i>	
1.	The policy of Baku and Yerevan towards Nagorno-Karabakh	189	
		- / 125 (66.2%)	+ / 2 (1%) 0 / 62 (32.8%)
2.	Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and observer missions	178	
		- / 89 (50%)	+ / 16 (8.9%) 0 / 73 (41.1%)
3.	The border issues between the two countries	91	
		- / 44 (48.3%)	+ / 2 (2.2%) 0 / 45 (49.5%)
4.	Unblocking the communications	73	
		- / 21 (28.7%)	+ / 4 (5.5%) 0 / 48 (65.8%)
5.	Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (in various official formats), evaluation of their effectiveness and prospects	261	
		- / 60 (22.9%)	+ / 31 (11.9%) 0 / 170 (65.2%)

Table № 9

Yellow zone			
№	Thematic areas	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed	
		<i>Most often, the expressed opinions did not focus on the existence or the absence of the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio).</i>	
1.	Unblocking the communications	73	
		0 / 48 (65.8%)	+ / 4 (5.5%)
2.	Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (in various official formats), evaluation of their effectiveness and prospects	261	
		0 / 170 (65.2%)	+ / 31 (11.9%)
3.	The border issues between the two countries	91	
		0 / 45 (49.5%)	+ / 2 (2.2%)
4.	Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and observer missions	178	
		0 / 73 (41.1%)	+ / 16 (8.9%)
5.	The policy of Baku and Yerevan towards Nagorno-Karabakh	189	
		0 / 62 (32.8%)	+ / 2 (1%)

### Comment to the Tables №№ 7-9:

Among the five topics, the topic of Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations received the most positive reviews (an agreement seemed possible in **11.9%** of the total number of requests). The most negative (pessimistic) opinions were expressed regarding the policies of Baku and Yerevan related to Nagorno-Karabakh (an agreement seemed impossible in **66.2%** of the total number of requests), and the most neutral ones were about unblocking the transport communications (an uncertain attitude towards the possibility of reaching an agreement was expressed in **65.8%** of the total number of requests).

It is noteworthy that the most positive (optimistic) opinions were registered on the most discussed topic, but at the same time, it is a matter for concern that the most negative (pessimistic) opinions were expressed regarding the possibility of rapprochement in the policies of Baku and Yerevan on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh - a root cause for the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. The persistence of deep contradictions on this issue may lead to a dead end in other aspects of bilateral relations.

And finally, it is noteworthy that the most neutral opinions were expressed related to the topic of unblocking communications, while, at the same time, that topic occupies the fourth place (second from bottom) in terms of the frequency of negative (pessimistic) opinions expressed. This can be probably explained by the passiveness of the negotiation process on this issue. However, given its pragmatic nature, the significance for a number of third stakeholders and the relatively neutral approach in the materials studied, the topic of unblocking communications can be given special attention in the process of establishing and promoting the Armenian-Azerbaijani expert dialogue on the media platforms.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Analysis of the content of the studied materials on the topic allows us to conclude that all the five topics taken as the basis for monitoring deserve to be included in the plan for bilateral expert dialogues on media platforms. At the same time, when organizing and producing relevant materials, it is necessary to take into account the specifics associated with each topic.

The specificity of the coverage of the negotiation process between Baku and Yerevan through various mediations differs greatly from period to period, which is conditioned by their supposed effectiveness in terms of progress in overcoming contradictions. In accordance with this, the mood in the comments of politicians, experts and journalists is changing. In this regard, the dialogue should be focused on discussing opportunities to ensure continuity and progression of the negotiation process. It is also important to pay attention to the factors that shape the atmosphere during direct official meetings between representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan and influence their effectiveness. They include proposals jointly developed during expert discussions on media platforms on how to activate factors favoring the constructive behavior of negotiators, and how to avoid circumstances that, on the contrary, create tension and confrontation.

Taking into account, as mentioned above, the fundamental nature of the problem of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Azerbaijani population that left the region as a result of hostilities in the 1990s, for the entire context of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, it is extremely important for the experts to discuss various models of peaceful and safe living of representatives of the two peoples in their native land, observing their rights and dignity. So far, more or less specific models are being developed by civil society organizations and think tanks, but their joint discussion on media platforms can contribute to the inclusion of the issue on the official agenda.

The problems of determining the existing borders, and, subsequently, the problems of demarcating and delimiting the borders, as well as unblocking communications, need to be discussed at a pragmatic expert level, taking into account the civilized international experience in achieving agreement between the parties. An important role in such discussions on media platforms should be played by taking into account the interests of people currently living in border areas (and people that will live there in the future), their safety and normal life. Currently, there is an obvious deficit in such approaches, and this project is intended to overcome it to a certain extent.

An objective assessment of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and the observer mission (primarily referring to EU observers) is difficult due to the lack of reliable information about their role, mandate, specific features of their work, etc. Therefore, expert discussions on this topic should first of all raise awareness of the media audience and, possibly, generate ideas about the further contribution of international structures to resolving the conflict.



### 3. EXPERTS

During the monitoring period, **88 Armenian experts** appeared in one form or another in the selected ten media outlets - broadcast and online resources - **186 times**. The five formulated topics were covered by them **298 times**.

Armenian experts expressed a **positive (optimistic) opinion** on all the five topics for **26 times (8.8%** - see the possibility of reaching an agreement / +), **128 times - a negative (pessimistic) opinion (42.9%** - do not see the possibility of reaching an agreement / -) and **144 times - neutral opinion** (they did not emphasize the existence or absence of prospects for reaching an agreement or expressed uncertainty) (**48.3%** - the possibility of reaching an agreement seems uncertain / 0).

The “rating” of the **Tables No. 10, 11, 12, 13** show which topics were most often addressed by Armenian experts, and which of them received a certain number of positive, negative or neutral opinions (in a percentage ratio).

Table № 10

No	Thematic areas	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed		
1.	Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (in various official formats), evaluation of their effectiveness and prospects	102		
		+ / 20 (19.6%)	- / 24 (23.5%)	0 / 58 (56.9%)
2.	Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and observer missions	76		
		+ / 5 (6.6%)	- / 45 (59.2%)	0 / 26 (34.2%)
3.	The policy of Baku and Yerevan towards Nagorno-Karabakh	63		
		+ / 1 (1.6%)	- / 34 (53.9%)	0 / 28 (44.5%)
4.	The border issues between the two countries	32		
		+ / 0 (0%)	- / 17 (53.1%)	0 / 15 (46.9%)
5.	Unblocking the communications	25		
		+ / 0 (0%)	- / 8 (32%)	0 / 17 (68%)
Total		298		
		+ / 26 (8.8%)	- / 128 (42.9%)	0 / 144 (48.3%)

Table № 11

Green zone			
№	Thematic areas	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed	
		<i>Most often, the expressed opinions by Armenian experts allowed the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio).</i>	
1.	Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (in various official formats), evaluation of their effectiveness and prospects	102	
		+ / 20 (19.6%)	- / 24 (23.5%)    0 / 58 (56.9%)
2.	Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and observer missions	76	
		+ / 5 (6.6%)	- / 45 (59.2%)    0 / 26 (34.2%)
3.	The policy of Baku and Yerevan towards Nagorno-Karabakh	63	
		+ / 1 (1.6%)	- / 34 (53.9%)    0 / 28 (44.5%)
4.	Unblocking the communications	25	
		+ / 0 (0%)	- / 8 (32%)    0 / 17 (68%)
5.	The border issues between the two countries	32	
		+ / 0 (0%)	- / 17 (53.1%)    0 / 15 (46.9%)

Table № 12

Red zone			
№	Thematic areas	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed	
		<i>Most often, the expressed opinions were against the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio).</i>	
1.	Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and observer missions	76	
		- / 45 (59.2%)	+ / 5 (6.6%)    0 / 26 (34.2%)
2.	The policy of Baku and Yerevan towards Nagorno-Karabakh	63	
		- / 34 (53.9%)	+ / 1 (1.6%)    0 / 28 (44.5%)
3.	The border issues between the two countries	32	
		- / 17 (53.1%)	+ / 0 (0%)    0 / 15 (46.9%)
4.	Unblocking the communications	25	
		- / 8 (32%)	+ / 0 (0%)    0 / 17 (68%)
5.	Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (in various official formats), evaluation of their effectiveness and prospects	102	
		- / 24 (23.5%)	+ / 20 (19.6%)    0 / 58 (56.9%)

Table № 13

Yellow zone			
№	Thematic area	Number of times the thematic areas were addressed	
		<i>Most often, the expressed opinions did not focus on the existence or the absence of the possibility of reaching an agreement (in a percentage ratio).</i>	
1.	Unblocking the communications	25	
		0 / 17 (68%)	+ / 0 (0%)
2.	Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (in various official formats), evaluation of their effectiveness and prospects	102	
		0 / 58 (56.9%)	+ / 20 (19.6%)
3.	The border issues between the two countries	32	
		0 / 15 (46.9%)	+ / 0 (0%)
4.	The policy of Baku and Yerevan towards Nagorno-Karabakh	63	
		0 / 28 (44.5%)	+ / 1 (1.6%)
5.	Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and observer missions	76	
		0 / 26 (34.2%)	+ / 5 (6.6%)

### Comments to the Tables №№ 10-13

The fact, that Armenian experts have expressed more positive opinions about the Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations and more negative opinions about the activities of mediators and peacekeepers, is perhaps an additional argument in favor of Armenian-Azerbaijani bilateral, direct contacts and negotiations. Regardless of the specific topic to be discussed by Armenian and Azerbaijani experts on media platforms within the framework of this project, this issue should be given additional attention.

13 out of 88 experts see the possibility of reaching an agreement within the framework of any of the five topics mentioned above (they spoke positively/optimistically at least once).

Table No. 14 presents the experts who are most positive/optimistic (in a percentage ratio/green zone) about reaching an agreement within any of the five topics.

Table № 14

№	Experts	Number of appearances			Topics														
		Number of times the thematic areas were addressed			Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations			The border issues between the two countries			Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and observer missions			The policy of Baku and Yerevan towards Nagorno-Karabakh			Unblocking the communications		
1.	Vardan Harutyunyan (human rights activist)	1			1			0			1			0			0		
		2																	
		+/2 (100%)	-/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	+/1	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/1	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0
2.	Gagik Safaryan (historian)	1			1			0			0			0			0		
		1																	
		+/1 (100%)	-/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	+/1	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0
3.	Mushegh Khudaverdyan (turkologist)	1			1			0			0			0			0		
		1																	
		+/1 (100%)	-/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	+/1	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0
4.	Mikayel Zolyan (political scientist)	2			1			0			2			0			0		
		3																	
		+/2 (66.6%)	-/0 (0%)	0/1 (33.4%)	+/1	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/1	-/0	0/1	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0
5.	Ruben Mehrabyan (political scientist)	7			6			0			0			0			6		
		12																	
		+/5 (41.6%)	-/5 (41.6%)	0/2 (16.8%)	+/5	-/0	0/1	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/5	0/1
6.	Armine Margaryan (political scientist)	1			1			0			1			1			0		
		3																	
		+/1 (33.4%)	-/0 (0%)	0/2 (66.3%)	+/1	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/0	+/0	-/0	0/1	+/0	-/0	0/1	+/0	-/0	0/0

7.	<b>Stepan Danielyan</b> (political scientist)	2			1			0			1			1			0		
		3																	
		+1 (33.4%)	-2 (66.3%)	0/0 (0%)	+0	-1	0/0	+0	-0	0/0	+1	-0	0/0	+0	-1	0/0	+0	-0	0/0
8.	<b>Areg Kochinyan</b> (political scientist)	5			5			2			5			3			1		
		16																	
		+4 (25%)	-2 (12.5%)	0/10 (62.5%)	+3	-0	0/2	+0	-0	0/2	+1	-2	0/2	+0	-0	0/3	+0	-0	0/1
9.	<b>Davit Stepanyan</b> (political scientist)	7			6			0			2			0			1		
		9																	
		+2 (22.2%)	-2 (22.2%)	0/5 (55.6%)	+2	-0	0/4	+0	-0	0/0	+0	-2	0/0	+0	-0	0/0	+0	-0	0/1
10.	<b>Stepan Grigoryan</b> (political scientist)	2			1			0			2			2			0		
		5																	
		+1 (20%)	-1 (20%)	0/3 (60%)	+1	-0	0/0	+0	-0	0/0	+0	-0	0/2	+0	-1	0/1	+0	-0	0/0
11.	<b>Boris Navasardian</b> (political analyst)	5			4			0			1			1			1		
		7																	
		+1 (14.3%)	-0 (0%)	0/6 (85.7%)	+1	-0	0/3	+0	-0	0/0	+0	-0	0/1	+0	-0	0/1	+0	-0	0/1
12.	<b>Armen Hovhannisyan</b> (political scientist)	5			3			0			4			0			1		
		8																	
		+1 (12.5%)	-3 (37.5%)	0/4 (50%)	+1	-0	0/2	+0	-0	0/0	+0	-3	0/1	+0	-0	0/0	+0	-0	0/1
13.	<b>Tigran Grigoryan</b> (political scientist)	7			6			3			6			6			3		
		24																	
		+1 (4.2%)	-9 (37.5%)	0/14 (58.3%)	+1	-3	0/3	+0	-1	0/2	+1	-2	0/3	+0	-3	0/3	+0	-0	0/3

## Conclusions and Recommendations

To determine the experts who should be kept in mind when preparing and organizing discussions on media platforms within the framework of this project, a series of seminars with potential dialogue participants will be required, with the involvement of consultants/trainers from both Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as from third countries. When inviting Armenian experts to seminars, in addition to the monitoring results, one should take into account the political situation that could hypothetically influence the nature of statements in the media, the previous experience of participation in dialogue initiatives, as well as the audience's perception of the narratives they express (in cases when viewers'/readers' comments are available). Also, when compiling a list of potential participants in discussions on the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, it is necessary to take into account the willingness of experts to use vocabulary, concepts and designations that will not prevent any of the audiences from perceiving the essence of what is said, and will minimize the negative emotional reaction.

In addition to the 13 experts presented in **Table No. 14** that expressed positive/optimistic statements on the five topics formulated for the study, it makes sense to apply the above-listed criteria while considering the possibility of involving "neutral-speaking" experts in the project.

It is also necessary to take into account the views of partners on the Azerbaijani side about the acceptability of inviting certain Armenian experts to discussions on media platforms within the framework of this project.

# **THE COVERAGE OF THE ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI RELATIONS IN THE ARMENIAN MEDIA AND THE EXPERT COMMUNITY: AUGUST-NOVEMBER, 2023**

In addition to the monitoring of the Armenian media coverage of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, conducted in June-July 2023, and, in order to track the further dynamics of the coverage of this topic, the Yerevan Press Club organized a discussion among the representatives of the Armenian media community and experts, which took place on November 24 in Yerevan. The participants shared the following observations.

In June-July 2023, the topic of Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations was in the first place in terms of frequency of references in the Armenian media (both in information and discussion-analytical programs), whereas the topic of the Yerevan and Baku policy towards Nagorno-Karabakh started prevailing from the moment the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh escalated in the following months up to the mass exodus of the Armenian population from the region.

During the corresponding two months, the issue of replacing the President of Nagorno-Karabakh was actively discussed. The media, that are close to the oppositional political circles, presented Arayik Harutyunyan's resignation on August 31 in a positive light, emphasizing that, in their opinion, he was under the influence of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, and could not promote the interests of Artsakh, whereas the media close to governmental circles presented the change of power (including the election of Samvel Shahramanyan as a President by the Parliament on September 9) almost as a coup d'état, some of them suggesting it was inspired by Moscow.

After the mentioned events in Nagorno-Karabakh, the sharp criticism of Russia became a priority thematic focus in the Armenian media environment in October. To a certain extent, the tone here was set by the representatives of the political leadership of Armenia and the expert community close to them - they quite intensively voiced critical assessments of the behavior of both Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh and the Kremlin. At the same time, discussions on the issue of a decisive change in the foreign policy vector and rapprochement with the West have intensified. Not only pro-government media, but also those, positioning themselves as independent media, participated in the promotion of these narratives.

The opposition press also did not hide its disappointment with Russia's position, but in this case, according to the observations of the participants in the discussion on November 24, this was more characteristic of those politicians and other influencers who are in one way or another connected with the Republican Party and the third President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan. It was noted that a wave of criticism of the Kremlin from this political camp also rose after the early parliamentary elections in June 2021, when the opposition, in its own assessment, did not receive the expected support from Moscow. Both then and in October-November 2023, the media campaign of the corresponding segment of the opposition, according to the discussion participants, was coordinated. One could even hear assumptions

from representatives of these circles that the leadership of the Russian Federation is interested in seeing the current ruling team at the helm of Armenia.

Two other more or less influential camps of the Armenian opposition, having consolidated around the first and second Presidents of the Republic of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan, also expressed dissatisfaction with Russia's actions, but accused, first of all, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of violating Moscow's alliance obligations - the non-acceptance of Pashinyan by the Kremlin leadership became the main reason for the attitude towards Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and in Armenia itself.

According to the three above-mentioned opposition segments, any movement of Armenia towards the West will lead to an increase in Turkey's influence in the region, since the West is largely represented in the region through Ankara.

In October-November 2023, the attention to the topics selected for monitoring in June-July of this year was distributed in the following order:

1. Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations (in various official formats), evaluation of their effectiveness and prospects.
2. Evaluation of the activities of mediators, peacekeepers and the EU observer mission.
3. Policy of Baku and Yerevan regarding Nagorno-Karabakh.
4. Issues related to the borders between the two countries.
5. Unblocking the communications.

In the context of discussions regarding Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations and mediation, there were many references to potential platforms where negotiations between Yerevan and Baku could move forward, and the attitude of Armenia and Azerbaijan towards these platforms was also discussed.

It was emphasized, in particular, that Baku actually refuses Western mediators. President Ilham Aliyev's refusal to participate in the third European Political Community Summit in Granada, as well as Baku's rejection of the invitation of the President of the European Council Charles Michel to negotiations in Brussels, were widely covered and analyzed. The refusal of Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov to meet with his Armenian counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan in Washington received no less attention. Instead, official representatives of Azerbaijan, according to publications in the Armenian media, promoted the Russian negotiation platform, although, in the November publications, one could find a change in Azerbaijan's position, the essence of which was the following - no mediators are needed to regulate the relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and it is necessary to get ready for a bilateral format on a "neutral site" - in Georgia or directly on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. Perhaps, as some Armenian commentators noted, Baku therefore considered it advisable not to be closely associated with Moscow, thus avoiding image losses in the eyes of the international community. In November, the media attention also focused on the British initiatives to facilitate negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, although no specific attitude towards them was formed on the part of public opinion leaders.

In contrast to the Azerbaijani position, official Yerevan, over the past few months, and especially after the exodus of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh, has expressed a strong interest in negotiations on Western platforms and in the presence of mediators that are ready to play the role of guarantors if agreements are reached. This line was especially actively



promoted by the pro-government media, as well as those largely positioning themselves as independent media.

Differences in the issue of negotiation platforms were actually presented, in a context that was common with the foreign policy priorities of Baku and Yerevan. The media paid much attention to various signs of Armenia's "turn" towards the West - Pashinyan's interviews with American and European journalists, his speech at the European platform, the quadripartite statement signed in Granada, Yerevan's claims in the ECHR and the UN International Court of Justice in The Hague. The activity towards the western direction was countered by Armenia's refusal to participate at the proper level in events within the CSTO and the CIS. In contrast to the pro-government and independent media, the opposition harshly condemned the foreign policy of the Prime Minister's team and Moscow's refusal to mediate, emphasizing that such behavior creates threats to the Armenian statehood.

In the same way, in publications, Baku's refusal from Western negotiation platforms was linked to the deterioration of Azerbaijan's relations with the European Union and the United States. Particular attention was paid to harsh statements regarding each other, on the one hand, by Azerbaijani officials, and on the other, by representatives of Washington and Brussels.

The topic of unblocking communications relatively remained in the shadow both during the two-month monitoring and during the period of additional observations, but in this November, after the widespread announcement by the Armenian side of the "Crossroads of Peace" project, it became "loud and clear", and was quite often mentioned in the general context of the settlement of the conflict as a whole, including the negotiation process itself.



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