



**REPORT ON THE MONITORING  
OF REFERENCES BY THE MEDIA AND EXPERTS  
OF ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN ON THE TOPIC  
OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES  
IN FEBRUARY 2025**

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## OVERVIEW

While politicians discuss the prospects of the peace treaty and diplomats search for compromise formulas, the media remain the main actors in transmitting, generating and channeling public sentiments. How do Armenia and Azerbaijan see each other? What messages are broadcast on TV, featured on the front pages of online outlets and in the headlines of news feeds? What tendencies are inherent in this coverage? Another parallel media monitoring, carried out in February 2025 by Yerevan and Baku Press Clubs, provides some answers to these questions. The study covered 9 leading media in each country, creating an opportunity to compare thematic preferences, attitudes toward specific aspects of bilateral relations, differences in the content of narratives, as well as evaluate the changes relative to past periods.

### **Growth of interest in the topic and increase in the volume of publications**

What stands out first is the noticeable rise in the number of pieces dedicated to the topic of the conflict. In Armenia, 931 pieces were recorded (559 fully dedicated to the topic, and 372 partially), representing a 27.9% increase compared to the December 2024 monitoring. In Azerbaijan, 288 pieces were recorded (169 fully and 119 partially dedicated to the topic), which also demonstrates a steady growth compared to the previous studies.

Particularly noteworthy is the rise in activity of such Armenian media as *News.am* (+74.4%), *Factor TV* (+56.2%) and the *First Channel of the Public Television of Armenia*. In Azerbaijan, *Caliber*, *CBC TV* and *ITV* were the most active platforms. A substantial portion of their publications appeared in Russian, which can be viewed as an attempt to influence not only the domestic audience, but also regional and international ones.

### **Tone of references: predominantly negative, with a shift toward positivity**

The tone of references to the topic in the pieces of the monitored media in both countries remains mainly negative, although Armenian media showed a slight shift toward neutrality and positivity. Specifically, 56.9% of references to the thematic sections in Armenian media carried a negative tone, with 26.8% neutral and 16.2% positive. In Azerbaijan, the share of negative references is even higher, amounting to 77%, with 13.3% neutral and only 9.7% positive publications. At the same time, in Armenia, shifts towards a positive tone were recorded on platforms such as *News.am*-perceived as oppositional-(where negativity dropped from 73% to 24.8%) and *PTA First Channel*, where the share of positivity reached 50%. It should be emphasized that the monitoring team recorded as “positive” coverage any content where the possibility of overcoming contradictions and finding common solutions could be observed. Accordingly, “negative” coverage implied a rejection of such a possibility, while “neutral” indicated the absence of any stance on the issue.

In Azerbaijan, all media segments-state, pro-government and relatively independent outlets-displayed a predominantly pessimistic attitude regarding the prospects for rapprochement between the two sides' positions. This is particularly characteristic of state and pro-government media, where the share of negative pieces exceeds 79%.

## **Thematic highlights: from negotiations to prisoners of war**

### ***1. Peace treaty and negotiation process***

In Armenian media, the negotiation process and the signing of a peace treaty became the second most frequently mentioned topic after the conflictuality factors. A notable development in this section is the increase in positive tone compared to the previous monitoring, with 27.6% of references being positive versus 18.6%.

In Azerbaijan, the monitoring recorded 84 references to this topic. The main emphasis was placed on the appropriateness of signing a treaty without incorporating controversial provisions, the impact of international events (elections, wars) and the possibility of a bilateral format of negotiations without intermediaries.

In both countries, there were active discussions regarding the mediating role of Russia, the EU and the US. In Armenia, the EU mediation received the most positive assessments (54.5% of positive mentionings), while Russia was assessed most negatively (59.6% of negative pieces). As for bilateral negotiations without mediators, Armenian media assessed them with a slight advantage of positive references (43.5%) over negative ones (39.1%).

In Azerbaijan, the topic of mediation was more often covered from a negative perspective, though the tone toward the US and the EU was less critical than toward Russia. Only in the subsection on the bilateral format of negotiations were the majority of references (9 out of 11) positive, aligning with Baku's official position.

### ***2. Border delimitation and demarcation***

In Armenia, the monitoring team recorded 71 references to the topic of border delimitation and demarcation, with 36.4% negative, 27.3% positive and 40.9% neutral. In Azerbaijan, this topic received the least coverage, with just 15 references. Of these, however, 60% were positive, which probably indicates a certain degree of Baku's readiness to continue the process.

Armenia saw a decrease in positive assessments compared to the previous period, a change analysts attribute to the slowdown in the delimitation processes: during the previous monitoring, this topic was the only one with a predominantly positive tone, which, in all likelihood, was conditioned by the spring 2024 delimitation of the northern section of the border and the regulations of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border delimitation commissions, adopted in August of the same year.

### ***3. Unblocking of communications***

In Armenia, the topic of unblocking communications was discussed in 241 references, with most of them presented in a negative context, especially in relation to the idea of an extraterritorial corridor linking “mainland” Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan exclave. At the same time, the “Crossroads of Peace” initiative put forward by the Armenian government received more neutral and positive assessments.

In February, 48 references to this topic were recorded in Azerbaijan, the majority of which were positive or neutral in nature. Free communication through the Meghri section and the unblocking of communications in general, with no specific routes mentioned, were the issues that attracted the greatest interest.

#### **4. Elements of conflictuality**

The most extensive and emotionally charged thematic category in the media of both countries was the overcoming of elements conditioning the conflictuality between Armenia and Azerbaijan at the current stage. In Armenia, 635 references were recorded in this category (of which 476 were negative). The key topics included the fate of Karabakh Armenians, the rights of refugees and displaced persons, territorial claims, and the issue of prisoners of war. Notably, for the first time, the monitors recorded a portion of positive references on the topic of Karabakh Armenians (14 out of 89).

In Azerbaijan, this thematic section likewise registered the largest number of references, amounting to 417, of which nearly 80% were negative. The main emphasis was placed on accusations against Armenia-its reluctance to change the Constitution, militarization, blocking the rights of refugees and displaced persons, serving the interests of “third countries,” ideological revanchism, etc.

A separate note should be made regarding the attitude towards international structures: in Armenia, the EU mission was covered in a positive light, while in Azerbaijan the coverage was strongly negative.

#### **5. Other issues**

In Armenia, the “Other issues” category included pieces on hybrid wars, ecology, and the influence of external actors. In Azerbaijan, the main focus was on the anniversaries of the tragic events in Sumgait and Khojaly. Another actively discussed topic was the influence of the new US administration.

#### **Comparative trends**

If we try to highlight the common patterns identified by the monitoring in both countries, the mutual increase in interest in the topic of the conflict stands out, along with the persistent negative attitude towards its various components. The topic that remains most sensitive in the media of both countries is the emphasis on conflict-inducing perceptions of each other. As for the differences, one can observe in Armenia a certain increase in publications with a neutral and positive tone, even in the media known for their criticism of the government of Nikol Pashinyan and its peace agenda. Azerbaijani media remain distinguished by their more categorical assessments. Perhaps the most apparent difference lies in how the engagement of international actors in the Armenian-Azerbaijani settlement is perceived. While Azerbaijani media portray the engagement of third parties negatively, in Armenia, the engagement of the EU and the US is presented positively, with the bilateral format also viewed in a positive light.

#### **Conclusion: is there space for dialogue?**

The findings of the latest media monitoring in Armenia and Azerbaijan confirm that conflict-oriented rhetoric continues to dominate the information landscape in both countries. However, the Armenian media space shows emerging signs of softening and pragmatization of approaches. Meanwhile, in Azerbaijan, the political and informational line continues to be quite rigid, especially on issues related to the Constitution of Armenia and the unblocking of communications.

Nevertheless, the overall rise in the number of pieces dedicated to the settlement topic, along with the heightened interest in international formats, create the potential for a gradual shift in rhetoric toward a more constructive dialogue. In this regard, the next step could be intensifying efforts to promote a more balanced media discourse on both sides, with an emphasis on prospects for peace, economic cooperation and regional stability.

# **REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF REFERENCES BY THE MEDIA AND EXPERTS OF ARMENIA ON THE TOPIC OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN FEBRUARY 2025**

## **I. STUDY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND METHODOLOGY**

The goal of the study is to identify current tendencies, stereotypes, and expert community positions in the coverage of the Armenian-Azerbaijani settlement process in Armenian media. Building on this analysis, the study aims to develop proposals for stimulating peace-oriented discourse, as well as for enhancing the role of media platforms in holding internal and bilateral discussions on the prospects for overcoming the conflict.

The objectives of the study are the following:

1. Determining the frequency with which the studied media make detailed references to the monitoring topic and its specific thematic sections, by recording the number of pieces partially or fully (classified separately) dedicated to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.
2. Recording the references to the topic (in accordance with the thematic sections) by Armenian and Azerbaijani experts.
3. Determining and recording the attitude of Armenian and Azerbaijani media and experts each time they address the topic (in accordance with the thematic sections): "+" (positive attitude, seeing a possibility of reaching an agreement, coming to an accord, overcoming contradictions), "-" (negative attitude, not seeing a possibility of reaching an agreement, coming to an accord, overcoming contradictions; blaming the opposite side for everything); "0" (neutral or uncertain attitude to the topic; analysis, commentary without placing emphasis on the presence or absence of possibilities of reaching an agreement, coming to an accord, overcoming contradictions).
4. The pieces related to the monitoring topic were classified under the following thematic sections: a) Armenian-Azerbaijani peace negotiations, assessment of their efficiency and future potential; b) issues related to determining borders between the two countries; c) prospects for unblocking communications; d) overcoming the elements conditioning the conflictuality between Armenia and Azerbaijan at the current stage; e) other topics dedicated to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations.

The monitoring was carried out from February 1 to 28, 2025 and covered 9 media in each country, including public, conditionally pro-government, opposition-oriented (or associated with opposition forces) and independent media. In Armenia, these were *1in.am*, *First Channel of the Public Television*, *Aravot*, *CivilNet*, *24News*, *News.am*, *Noyan Tapan*, *Azatutyun*, and *Factor TV*. The monitors analyzed all text pieces from the online outlets *Aravot* and *News.am*, as well as two programs-the leading news broadcast and one analytical-discussion program-from each of the following media: *1in.am*, *24 News*, *Azatutyun*, *CivilNet*, *Factor TV*, *PTA First Channel*, and *Noyan Tapan*. In cases where an outlet lacked an evening news program, the two most important analytical-discussion programs aired each day were studied.

## II. GENERAL FINDINGS OF THE MONITORING OF ARMENIAN MEDIA

Throughout the one month period, the monitors studied **931** pieces from 9 Armenian media containing detailed references to the topic of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict (**559** fully dedicated to the topic, and **372** partially). Within these pieces, the monitors recorded **1330** references to various thematic categories addressing relations between the two countries (since a single piece often addresses several issues, the number of references to the thematic categories is higher than the pieces themselves). Each publication was considered as a separate piece, during which, however, the guests could touch upon several of the five topics mentioned earlier.

In 2023-2024, Baku and Yerevan Press Clubs carried out other studies on a similar topic. Minor changes in the methodology and the list of media studied do not generally hinder the tracking of the dynamics in the number of pieces dedicated to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations over nearly two years. In particular, the findings of the current monitoring indicate a significant rise in the frequency of references to the topic of the conflict: 931 pieces were analyzed compared to 728 recorded during the previous monitoring, carried out from November 18 to December 17, 2024. Notably, *News.am*'s interest in Armenian-Azerbaijani relations increased by 74.4%, while *Factor TV* emerged as the leading audiovisual media in terms of growth in interest (+ 56.2%).

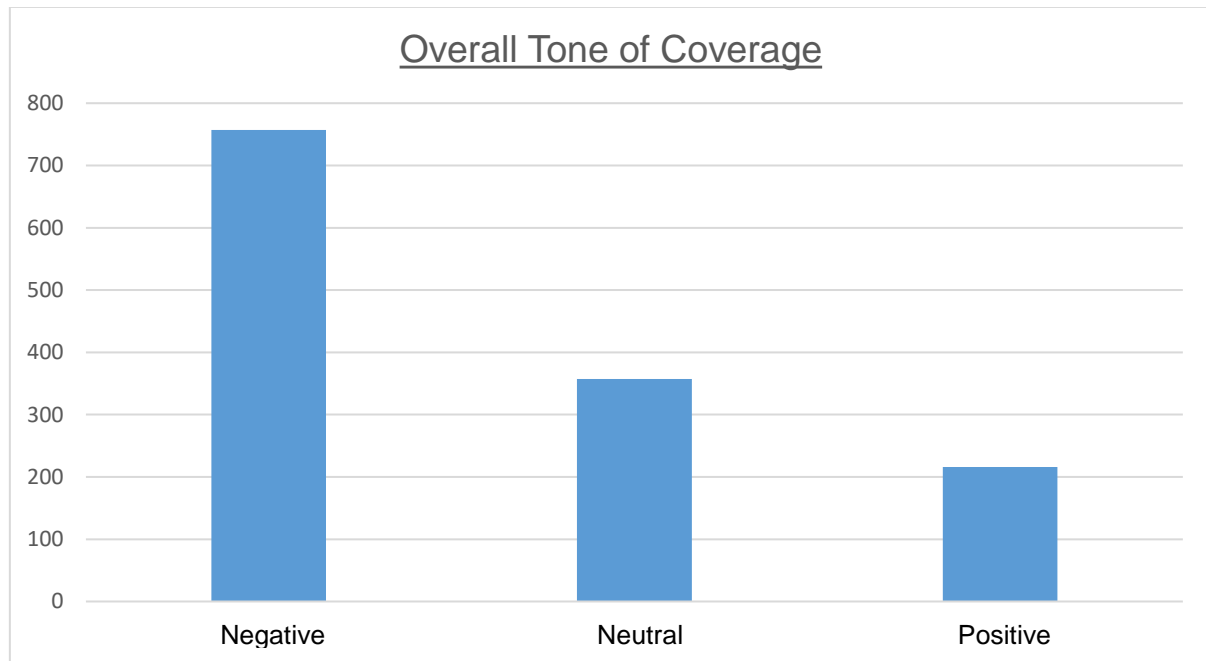
Table 1.

*A comparative analysis of quantitative data from the monitorings carried out with a similar methodology in November-December 2024 and February 2025. The media that showed an increase in the number of pieces dedicated to the topic of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations are marked in bold.*

Name of the media	Number of publications 18.11-17.12.2024	Number of publications 01.01-28.02.2025	Dynamics (%)
1in.am	25	20	- 20
Noyan Tapan	38	27	- 28.95
24News	30	29	- 33.3
<b>CivilNet</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8.33</b>
<b>Aravot</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>13.82</b>
<b>PTA First Channel</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>21.21</b>
<b>Azatutyun</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>36.07</b>
<b>Factor TV</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>56.25</b>
<b>News.am</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>74.43</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>27.88</b>

The overall review of references in Armenian media continues to display a negative background when it comes to the issues of the Armenian-Azerbaijani settlement. Out of the 1330 references to the thematic sections, the majority (757 or 56.9%) were negative, 357 (26.8%) were neutral and only 216 (16.2%) positive. The main negative narratives were tied to the legacy of the conflict, border security and the issue of prisoners of war and other detainees. At the same time, attempts were also made to positively cover the topics of economic cooperation and international mediation, especially from the EU and the USA.

*Table 2.*





### III. MEDIA PLATFORMS

The media selected for this study represent 3 conditional segments of Armenia's media landscape: pro-government (*1in.am*, *PTA*), opposition (which criticize the government and/or are associated with opposition forces) (*Aravot*, *CivilNet*, *24News*, *News.am*), and neutral/independent (*Noyan Tapan*, *Azatutyun*, *Factor TV*). It is essential to highlight that this categorization of the media is conditional, taking into account both their societal perception and certain de facto circumstances.

The distribution of all pieces on the monitoring topic and the tone of references to various thematic sections is organized in the following way:

Table 3.

Name of the media	Number of pieces on the monitoring topic	Number of references to the thematic sections	Sign of attitude to the topic (Qty.)			Sign of attitude to the topic (%)		
			“+”	“-”	“0”	“+”	“-”	“0”
1in.am	20	16	3	8	5	18.7	50	31.3
24News	29	11	1	8	2	9.1	72.7	18.2
Factor TV	26	20	4	6	10	20	30	50
News.am	307	101	35	25	41	34.7	24.8	40.6
CivilNet	13	8	0	5	3	0	62.5	37.5
Azatutyun	83	38	13	10	15	34.2	26.3	39.5
Aravot	346	98	17	48	33	17.3	49	33.7
PTA First Channel	80	50	25	5	20	50	10	40
Noyan Tapan	27	20	2	8	10	10	40	50
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>931</i></b>	<b><i>362</i></b>	<b><i>100</i></b>	<b><i>123</i></b>	<b><i>139</i></b>	<b><i>27.6</i></b>	<b><i>34</i></b>	<b><i>38.4</i></b>

Table 3 reveals a number of notable circumstances compared to the previous monitoring carried out in autumn 2024. In particular, the opposition outlet *News.am*, along with a substantial increase in interest in the topic of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, also displayed a noticeable change in the tone of its references. According to the findings of the previous monitoring (autumn 2024), nearly three-quarters (73%) of *News.am*'s 176 references were negative, with only 5% neutral, and 22% positive. Meanwhile, in the February 2025 monitoring, a shift toward positivity was recorded: only 24.8% of *News.am* references carried a negative tone, 34.7% were positive, and the largest share, 40.6%, was neutral. A positive shift in tone, as anticipated, was also observed in the coverage of the de facto pro-government *First Channel of the Public Television of Armenia*. While 46 percent of PTA references carried a positive tone in the previous monitoring, the results of this study show that positive references account for exactly 50% of the total number. *Azatutyun* radio also distinguished itself by a greater share of references with a positive tone (34.2% positive versus 26.3% negative), whereas *CivilNet*, perceived as an independent outlet, stood out in that not a single reference to the thematic sections on this

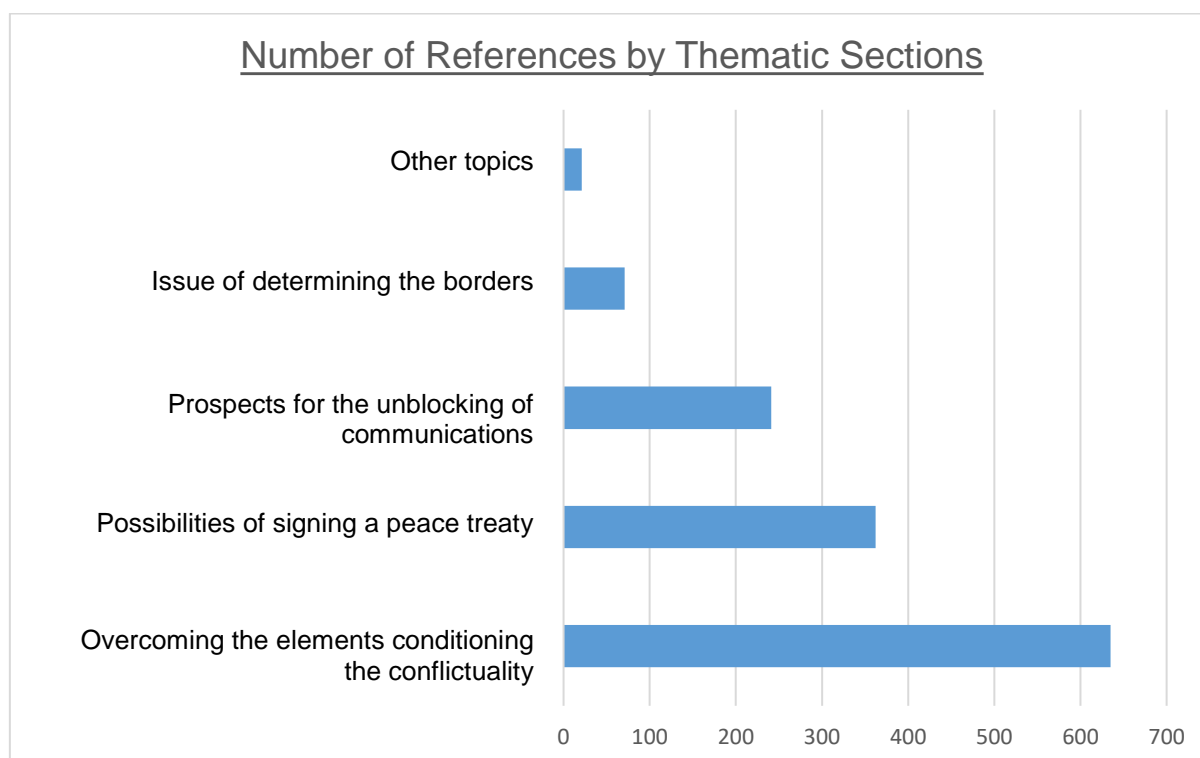
media's channel had a positive connotation. Nevertheless, in terms of the number of references with a negative tone (62.5%), *CivilNet* lags behind *24News*, the outright leader (72.7%), known as a media supporting Armenia's pro-Russian orientation.

In the pieces devoted to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Armenian media continue to criticize mainly the issues related to the prevalence of conflict-inducing elements, with 476 references being negative, 108 neutral and 51 positive. In general, looking at the aggregate indicators of the monitored media, a negative tone is dominant across all thematic sections. Moreover, while the previous monitoring conducted in autumn 2024 registered a predominance of positive coverage in the border delimitation and demarcation thematic section, the findings of the current study indicate that in this section as well, a negative attitude towards the process now prevails (24 negative versus 19 positive references). Apparently, this negative shift was influenced by the suspension of the border demarcation work, launched last year.

## IV. THEMATIC SECTIONS

As mentioned above, in the pieces dedicated to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, detailed references to 5 thematic sections were recorded. In each of them, several subtopics were formulated, for which a separate count was conducted. In total, 1330 references to all thematic sections were distributed among them in the following order:

Table 4.



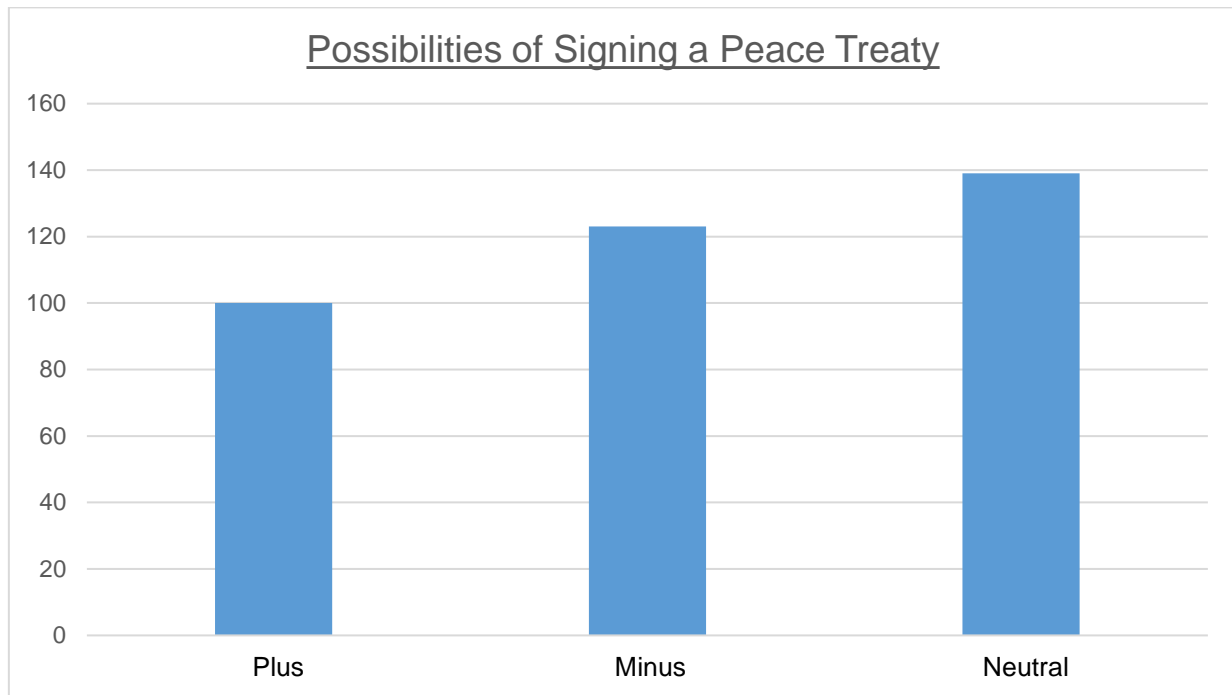
In comparison with the previous monitoring, the February 2025 study registered a reduction of two thematic sections. Firstly, for understandable reasons, the thematic section concerning the impact of the US elections on the Armenian-Azerbaijani process—an issue that held relevance in November 2024—was excluded. Secondly, the thematic section on negotiation formats was incorporated into the section on the possibilities of signing a peace treaty and normalizing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Thus, compared to the previous monitoring, the two topics that had the highest number of references—the possibility of signing a treaty and the topic of overcoming the elements conditioning the conflictuality—switched places. The analysis of individual thematic sections will be presented in the sequence that was initially determined.

### **Thematic section 1. Possibilities of signing a peace treaty and normalizing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan**

**Subtopics:** 1.1. Appropriateness of signing a treaty without incorporating controversial provisions; 1.2. Signing a treaty/normalization of relations with the mediation/participation of the RF; 1.3. Signing a treaty/normalization of relations with the mediation/participation of the EU; 1.4. Signing a treaty/normalization of relations with the mediation/participation of the USA; 1.5. Bilateral format for signing a treaty (without intermediaries and mediators); 1.6. Other negotiation formats (conditional 3+3, Iran, Georgia, etc.); 1.7. Building relations

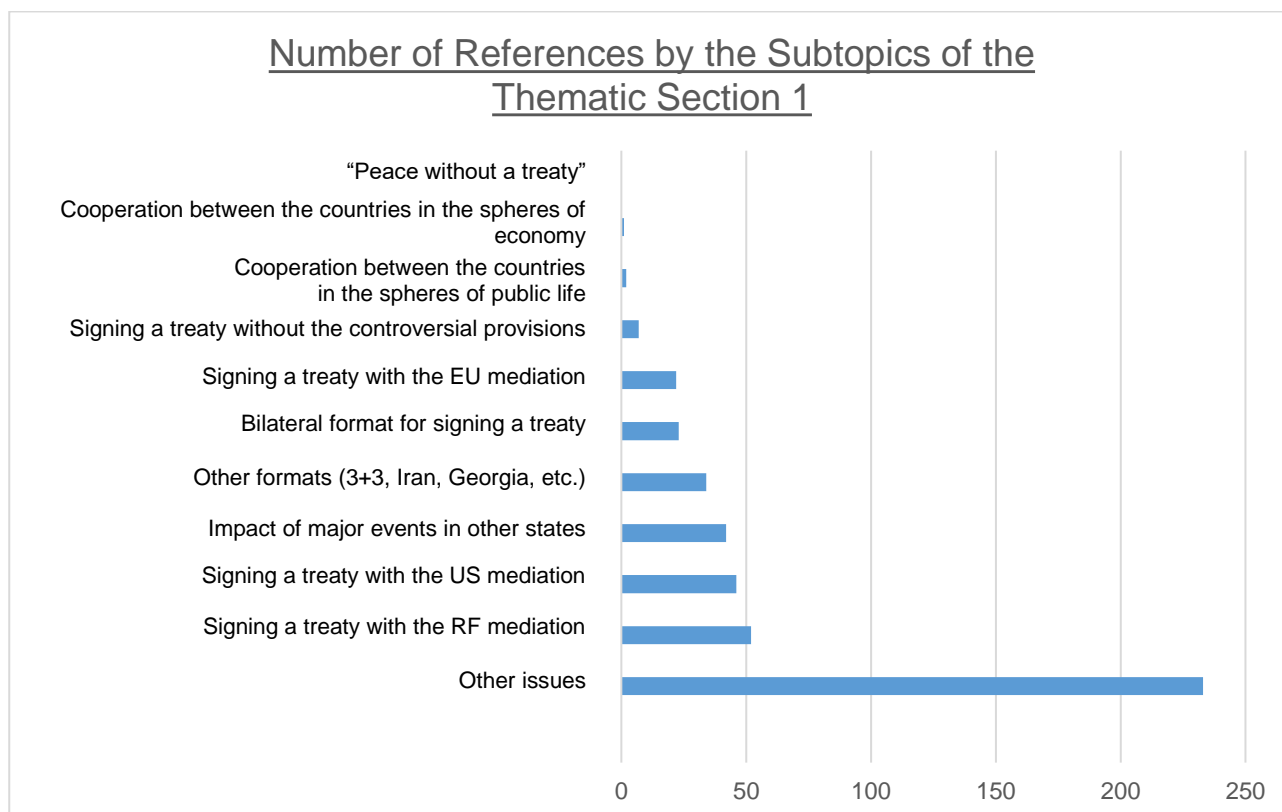
*in the context of “peace without a treaty”; 1.8. Impact of major events in other states and regions on the conclusion of peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia (wars, elections, government changes, etc.); 1.9. Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the spheres of economic life, energy, trade, along with diplomacy and public administration; 1.10. Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the spheres of public life and humanitarian issues; 1.11. Other issues.*

Table 5.



In the thematic section related to the signing of a peace treaty and the normalization of relations between the two countries, the monitors recorded 362 references, of which 107 were fully dedicated to the topic and 255 partially. At the same time, compared to the previous monitoring, the number of references with a positive connotation increased considerably, although negative ones continue to dominate. While in autumn 2024, only 18.6% of all references in this thematic category were positive and 45.7% negative, according to the February 2025 monitoring results, 27.6% of references were positive, and 34.0% were negative.

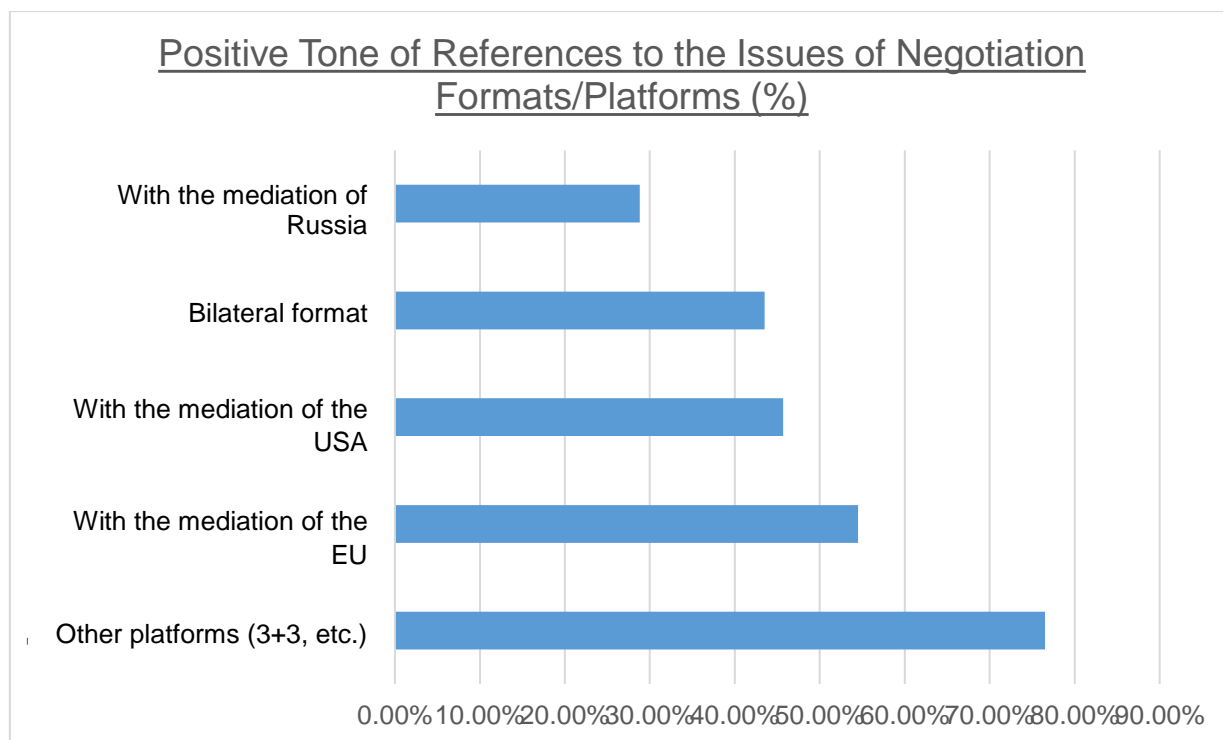
Table 6.



In the 11 subsections of this thematic section, the greatest interest (aside from the “other issues” subsection) was aroused by negotiation formats and platforms, particularly the discussions on holding negotiations with the mediation of Russia, the USA and the EU, along with the possibility of bilateral negotiations without intermediaries. It is noteworthy that references to Russia’s mediation were still dominated by a negative tone in all the monitored media, accounting for 59.6%, while the share of positive ones was 28.8%. The US mediation, on the contrary, was more often discussed in a positive context (45.7% with a “plus” sign versus 15.2% with a “minus” sign). In the Armenian media under review, the tone of references to the mediation of the European Union remained distinctly positive (54.5% marked with a “plus” sign and 22.7% with a “minus” sign). In the case of bilateral negotiations without intermediaries, the monitored media showed a slight predominance of positive references (43.5% versus 39.1% negative).

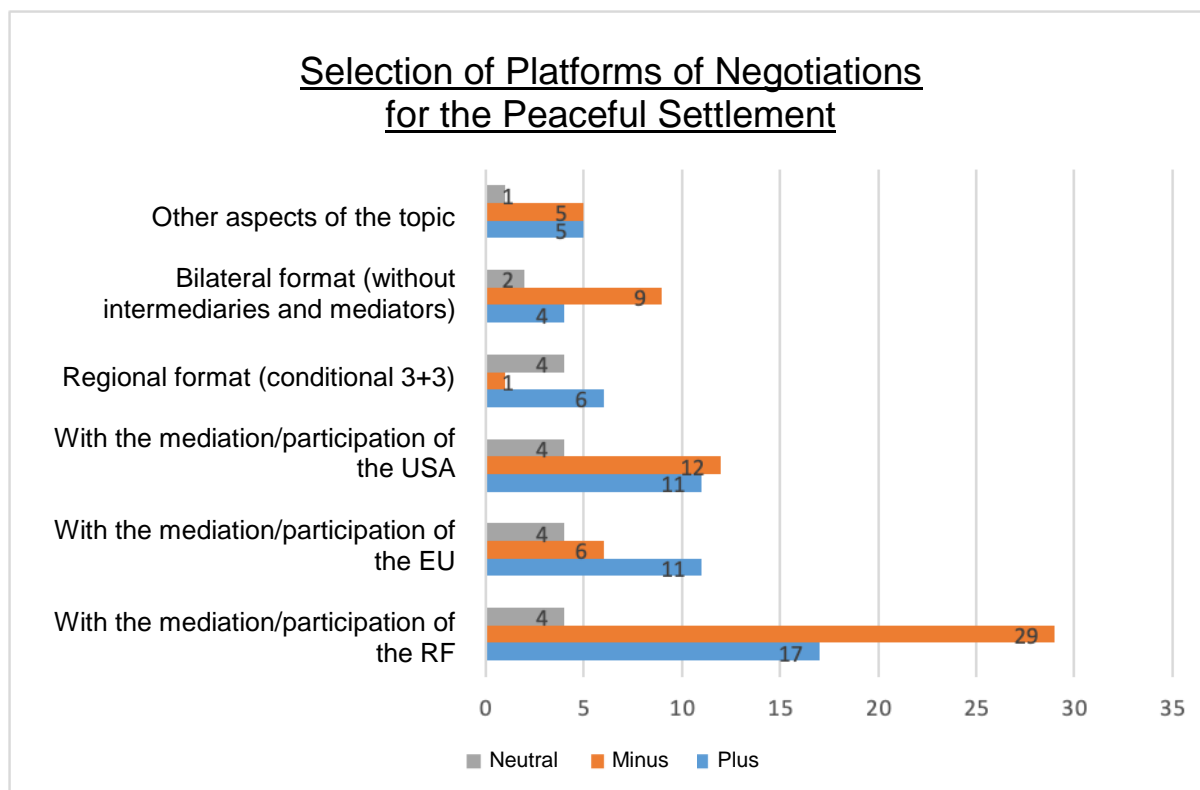
Another noteworthy point concerns the way certain media cover the topic of mediation in the negotiations by specific geopolitical centers. On *1in.am*, for instance, the overwhelming majority of references to Russia’s mediation were negative. A similar trend was observed on the *PTA First Channel*, as well as on *Factor TV* and *Noyan Tapan*. Meanwhile, *24news.am* and *News.am* cover Russia’s mediation mainly in a positive light. In the case of *Aravot* and *Azatutyun*, the references to this thematic subsection were evenly split between positive and negative ones. With a few exceptions, the picture was almost the mirror opposite when it came to references concerning the US mediation. The majority of them were positive on *PTA*, *1in.am*, *Factor TV*, *Noyan Tapan*, and *Azatutyun*. In contrast, on *24News* and *News.am* they were negative, while *Aravot* displayed a balanced distribution. At the same time, *Azatutyun* also had a greater share of positive coverage. Other subtopics of this thematic section also exhibit notable patterns (see attached the monitoring documents).

Table 7.



To gain an understanding of the dynamics in the coverage of the topic of negotiation platforms and formats during the previous (November-December 2024) and current (February 2025) monitorings, we present the findings of the first study below.

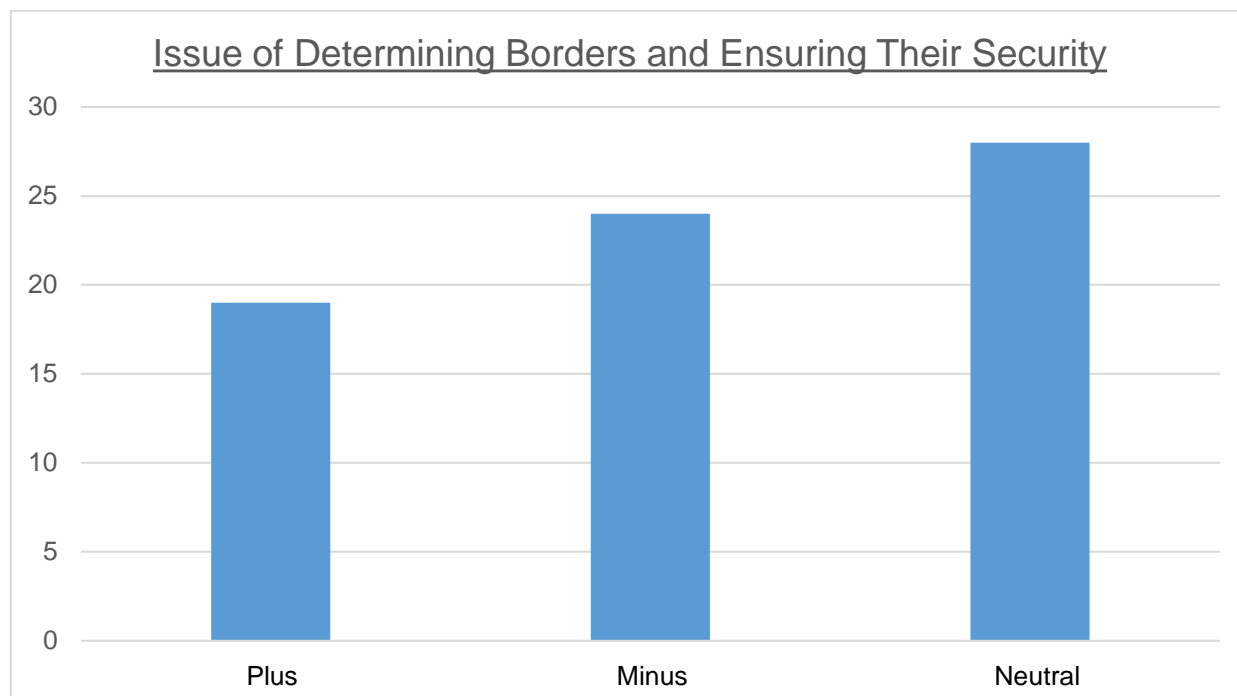
Table 8.



## **Thematic section 2. The issue of determining borders and ensuring their security**

**Subtopics:** 2.1. Process of delimitation and demarcation of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border; 2.2. Resolution of the issue of enclaves through compromises; 2.3. Stability and security in the demarcated and conditional sections of the border; 2.4. Other issues

Table 9.



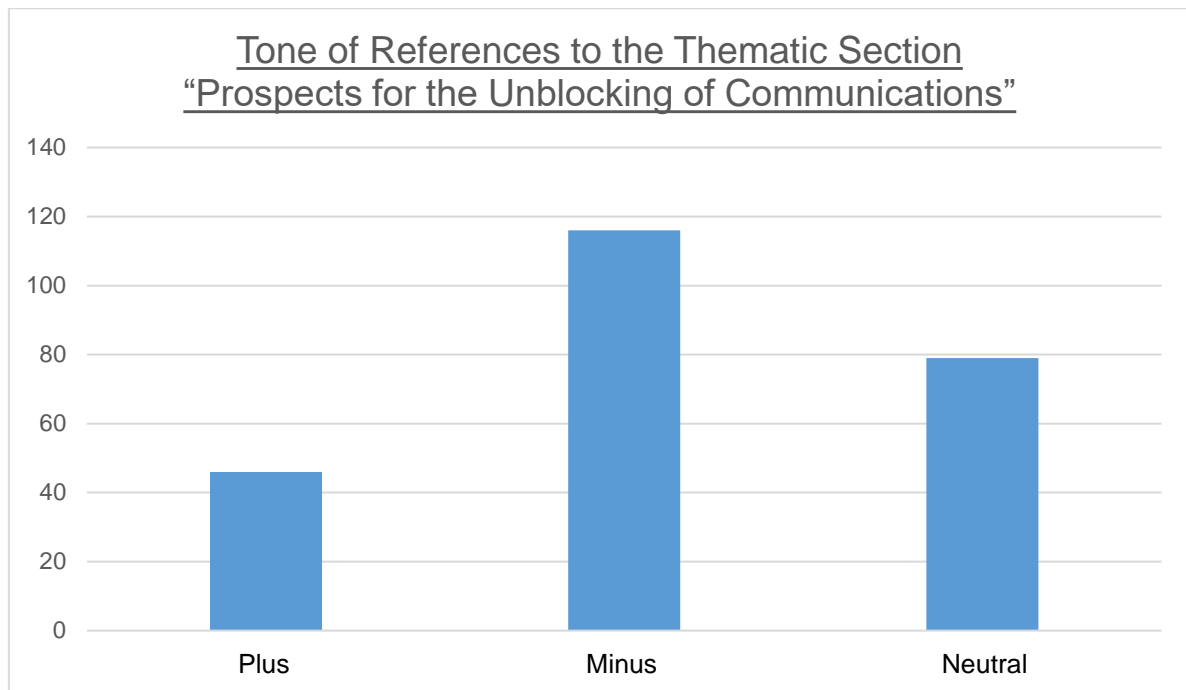
In the thematic section “The Issue of Determining Borders and Ensuring Their Security,” the monitors recorded 71 references, 21 of which were fully devoted to the topic, and 50 partially so. Out of the 4 subtopics grouped under this thematic section, the subtopic on the process of delimitation and demarcation of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border received the overwhelming majority of references (66). Moreover, the majority of references (27 or 40.9%) were neutral in tone, while 24 references, or 36.4%, were negative, and only 18 (27.3%) were positive. As mentioned earlier, during the previous monitoring, this topic stood out as the only one with a prevailing positive tone. This tendency was, in all likelihood, conditioned by the spring 2024 delimitation of the northern section of the border and the regulations of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border delimitation commissions, adopted in September of the same year.

## **Thematic section 3. Prospects for the unblocking of communications**

**Subtopics:** 3.1. Unblocking of the Meghri (Syunik, Zangezur) road/corridor under the supervision of the RF FSB border guard troops; 3.2. Unblocking of the Meghri (Syunik, Zangezur) road/corridor with the engagement of other international actors; 3.3. Functioning of the Meghri road within the bounds of Armenia’s full sovereignty; 3.4. Free (extraterritorial, on privileged conditions) communication between “mainland” Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan exclave; 3.5. Unblocking of other communications; 3.6. Unblocking of “communications” with no specification; 3.7. “Crossroads of Peace” project proposed by Armenia; 3.8. Other issues.

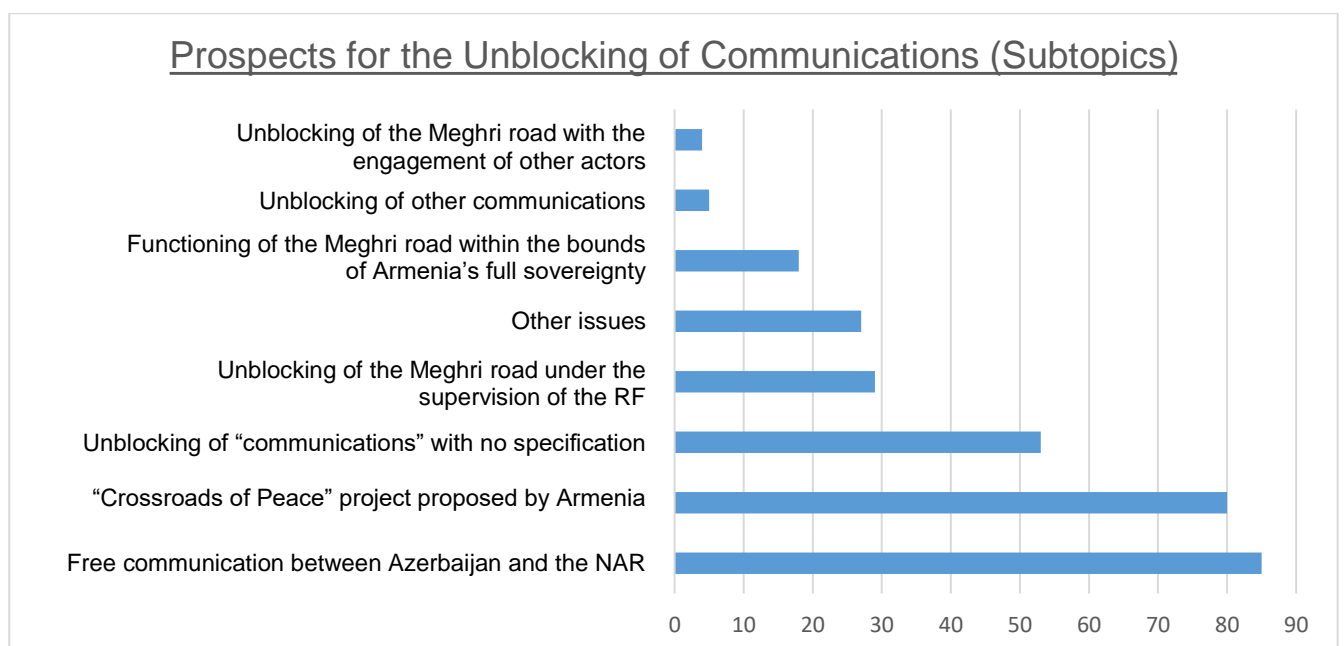
The monitoring team recorded a total of 241 references in the thematic section, of which 60 fully dealt with the topic and 181 addressed it partially. Table 10 below shows the tone of all references related to this section, with the coverage in a negative context significantly prevailing.

Table 10.



The following table presents data on the references concerning different subsections of the topic of unblocking communications, structured in ascending order. It can be observed from the table that the topics generating the highest level of interest were free communication between the mainland part of Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan autonomous region, along with the “Crossroads of Peace” project presented by the Armenian government.

Table 11.



It is worth noting that the issue of free communication between the eastern part of Azerbaijan and the NAR was covered in a negative context in the overwhelming majority of cases (87.1%), with 12.9% neutral and no positive reference. As for the Armenian government’s “Crossroads of Peace” initiative, references to this topic were mostly neutral

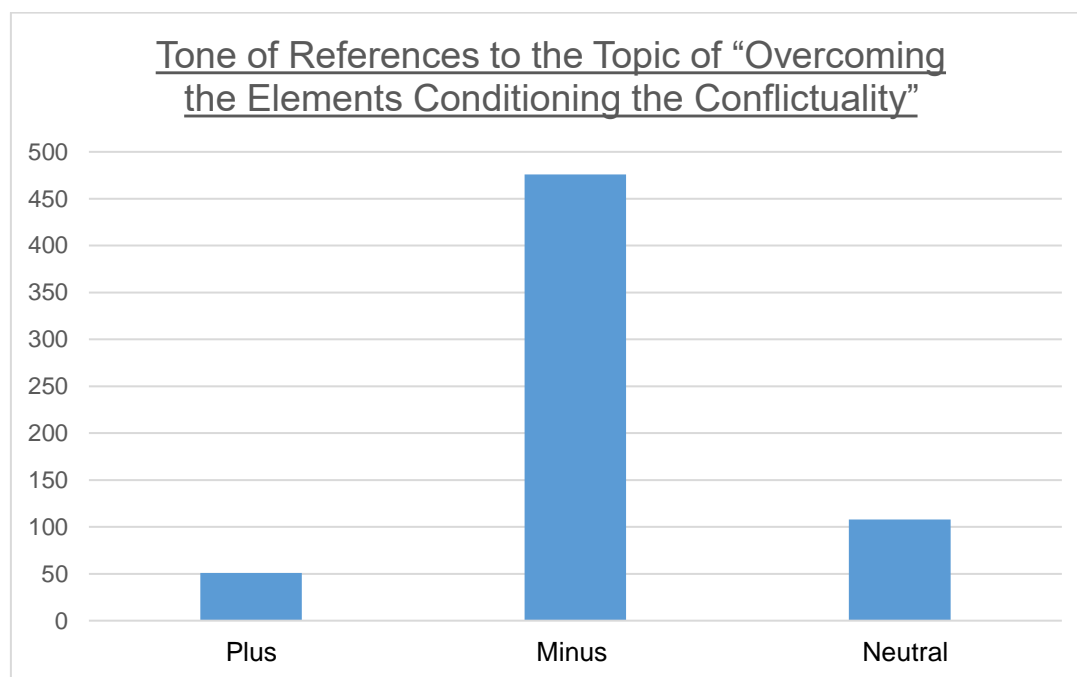


(51.3%) or positive (35.0%). Meanwhile, references to the possible opening of the road through Meghri under Russian supervision were mostly negative (58.6%), with 17.2% positive and 24.1% neutral.

#### **Thematic section 4. Overcoming the elements conditioning the conflictuality between Armenia and Azerbaijan at the current stage**

**Subtopics:** 4.1. The issue of Karabakh Armenians; 4.2. The rights of other forcibly displaced persons and refugees who left their places of residence throughout the entire course of the conflict (1987-2024); 4.3. References to the presence of territorial claims in the Constitutions of Azerbaijan and Armenia; 4.4. Accusations of expressing territorial claims in other forms; 4.5. Accusations of serving the interests of third countries; 4.6. Preservation of the OSCE Minsk Group; 4.7. Preservation of the EU mission in Armenia; 4.8. Withdrawal of lawsuits filed by Armenia and Azerbaijan (Armenians and Azerbaijanis) against each other in international courts; 4.9. Accusations of destruction of cultural heritage; 4.10. Release of prisoners of war and other detainees; 4.11. Stereotypes of an ethnic, religious, cultural and other nature toward each other; 4.12. Increase in military expenditures and the arms race as factors intensifying the distrust between the parties; 4.13. Other issues.

Table 12.



The thematic section “Overcoming the elements conditioning the conflictuality between Armenia and Azerbaijan” emerged as the most popular, with 635 references recorded. Of these, 403 references were fully dedicated to this topic, and 232 addressed it partially. As indicated in *Table 12*, it was in this thematic section that the highest number of references with a negative tone was recorded.

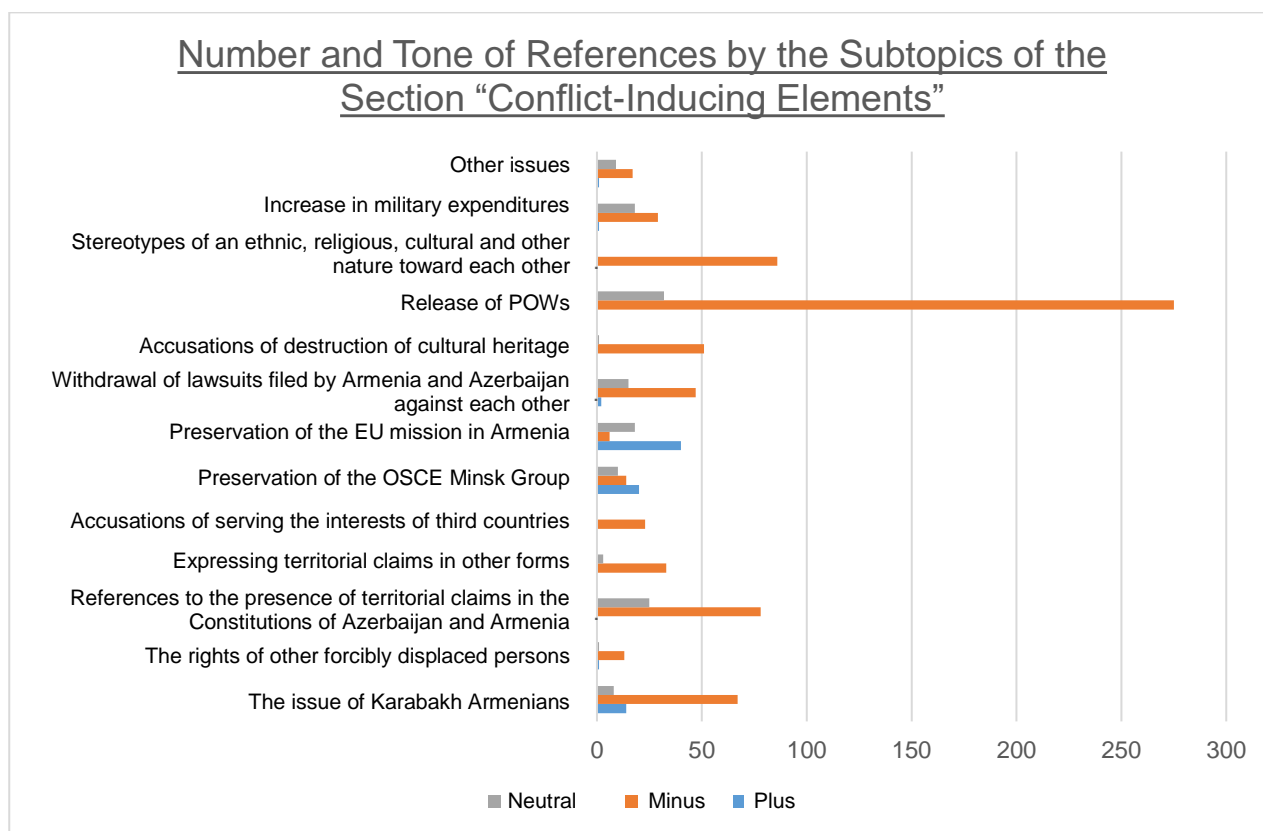
The issue of the release of prisoners of war and other detainees received the highest number of references (307). Of these, 275 were negative and 32 were neutral. No positive reference was recorded.

The subtopic that attracted the second highest level of interest is the one related to territorial claims against each other in the constitutions of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Here, too, there were no positive references: out of the 103 recorded, 78 were negative and 25 were neutral.

As for the issue of Karabakh Armenians, out of 89 references recorded, 14 were positive in tone, and 67 were negative. Interestingly, the previous monitoring (autumn 2024) produced nearly identical figures regarding this topic (86 mentionings), which could indicate the continuing relevance of the issue for Armenian society. The only difference is that, the previous monitoring registered no positive references, whereas the February study recorded 14 of them.

Only two subtopics in this section demonstrated a predominance of positive references: These were the “Preservation of the EU mission in Armenia” (40 positive, 6 negative, and 18 neutral references) and the “Preservation of the OSCE Minsk Group” (20 positive, 14 negative, and 10 neutral references).

Table 13.



### **Thematic Section 5. Other issues**

All topics not included in the above-mentioned thematic sections were grouped in the section titled “Other Issues”. A total of 21 such references were recorded, 20 of which were fully dedicated to the topic and 1 partially. The “Other Issues” section mainly covers issues of Azerbaijan’s and/or Armenia’s participation in hybrid wars (Russia-West, Turkey-Israel, China-USA, etc.). Although the fourth thematic section includes a similar subtopic (“Accusations of serving the interests of third countries”), in this case, the focus is on the impact of hybrid wars. Additionally, this thematic section covers environmental issues as conflict-inducing elements. In particular, discussions centered on the politicization of the mining industry (environmental effects for neighboring countries), the use of water resources, etc. Out of the 21 references recorded in this thematic section, 18 were classified as negative and 3 as neutral by the monitoring team.

## V. CONCLUSION

The February monitoring of Armenian media, carried out within the framework of the Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue project, recorded a substantial increase in the number of pieces dedicated to the topic of the conflict between the two countries and the settlement of bilateral relations. Overall, Armenian media space demonstrates a steady growth in interest regarding this topic, although the dominant tone remains negative.

Noteworthy is the dynamics of coverage in individual media. For instance, *News.am*, previously critical, saw a sharp reduction in the share of negative pieces and an increase in neutral and positive ones. A similar trend was observed on the *Public Television of Armenia* and *Azatutyun* radio. Meanwhile, *24News*, whose pieces evidently reflect pro-Russian and opposition sentiments, remains the most negative in tone (72.7% of negative references). Attention should also be given to the topic of the “Unblocking of Communications” (241 references), where the idea of an extraterritorial corridor between “mainland” Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan autonomous region is viewed in an especially negative light (87.1% of references marked with a “minus” sign). At the same time, the Armenian “Crossroads of Peace” initiative prompted mostly neutral or positive responses.

Despite the prevalence of negativity, the monitoring records the first signs of a shift in media discourse towards a more balanced and pragmatic approach to the peaceful settlement. The topics of international mediation, humanitarian cooperation and re-evaluation of approaches to historically conflict-inducing topics remain important channels for advancing a peaceful narrative.

# **REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF REFERENCES BY THE MEDIA AND EXPERTS OF *AZERBAIJAN* ON THE TOPIC OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN FEBRUARY 2025**

## **I. STUDY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND METHODOLOGY**

The goal of the study is to contribute to supporting the existing media platforms and creating new ones for internal, inter-community and inter-conflict discussions on peace and conflict-related issues, as well as to build the capacity of experts to participate in discussion programmes.

The objectives of the study are the following:

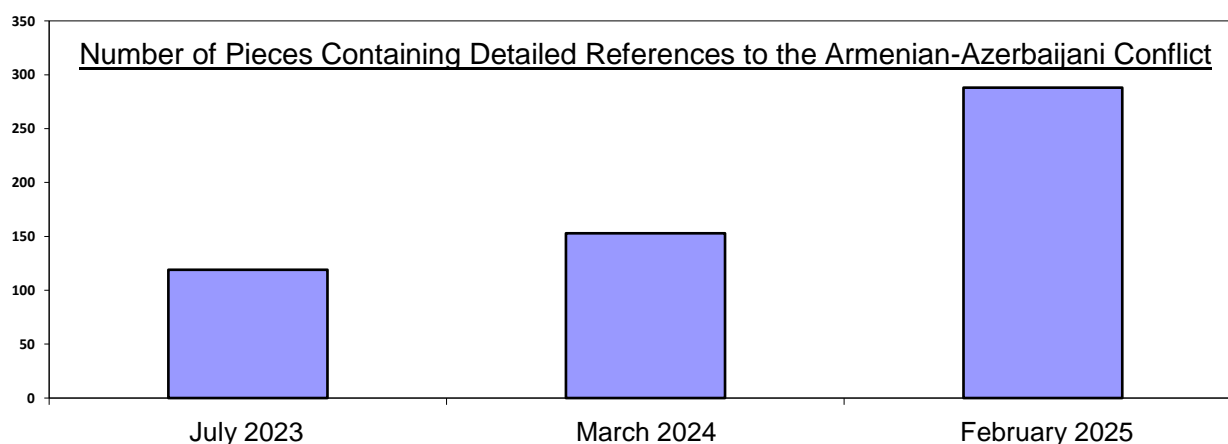
1. Determining the frequency with which the studied media make detailed references to the topic of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and its specific aspects, by recording the number of such references for further analysis of the collected data by the following thematic sections: a) Armenian-Azerbaijani peace negotiations (in different formats), assessment of their efficiency and future potential; b) issues related to determining borders between the two countries; c) prospects for unblocking communications; d) overcoming the elements conditioning the conflict; e) detailed references to other monitoring topics that do not fall into any of the specified categories.
2. Recording the attitude to the topic (in accordance with the thematic sections) by Armenian and Azerbaijani media: “+” (positive attitude, seeing a possibility of reaching an agreement, coming to an accord, overcoming contradictions), “-” (negative attitude, not seeing a possibility of reaching an agreement, coming to an accord, overcoming contradictions; blaming the opposite side for everything); “0” (neutral or uncertain attitude to the topic; analysis, commentary without placing emphasis on the presence or absence of possibilities of reaching an agreement, coming to an accord, overcoming contradictions).
3. Recording the references to the topic (in accordance with the thematic sections) by Armenian and Azerbaijani experts and determining their attitude towards it.

The current monitoring was carried out from February 1 to 28, 2025 and covered 9 media in Azerbaijan: national (state) TV channels *AzTV*, *ITV*, *CBC*, pro-government information portals *Caliber and Report*, Internet channel *TV Musavat*, independent agency *Turan*, Internet channel/website *Pressklub*, and *Zerkalo.az* website. The monitoring addressed every publication from the studied outlets, which contained detailed references to the topic of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, along with the leading news and analytical programs of the specified TV channels aired in prime time (2 pieces per day).

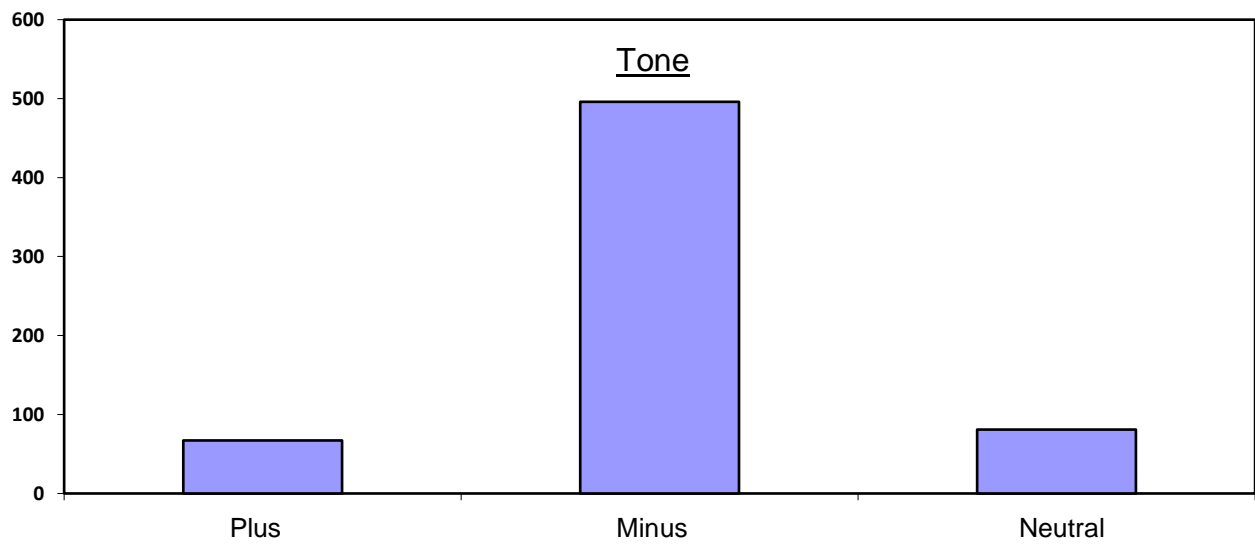
## II. GENERAL FINDINGS OF THE MONITORING OF AZERBAIJANI MEDIA

Throughout the one month period, 288 pieces containing detailed references to the topic of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict (169 fully dedicated to the topic and 119 partially) were recorded and analyzed in 9 Azerbaijani media. Within these pieces, the monitors recorded 644 references to various thematic categories related to the conflict (usually a single analytical piece addresses several thematic categories).

In 2023-2025, Baku and Yerevan Press Clubs conducted other monitorings on a similar topic. Minor changes in the methodology and the list of media studied do not generally hinder the tracking of the dynamics of change in the number of pieces dedicated to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations over these years.



Thus, the monitoring shows a consistent rise in the number of pieces dedicated to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, which may point to an increase in the intensity of the relations themselves. Nevertheless, no substantial changes in the quality of coverage can be observed: the media's attention is still focused on contradictions and problems, rather than exploring ways for their resolution. There is a lack of unbiased discussion regarding the reasons for the "neither peace nor war" situation, along with an analysis of the arguments and views of the opposing side, as well as international organizations whose stance on a number of issues does not align with that of Azerbaijan. This leads to a multifold preponderance of references with a "negative" tone to all the thematic sections over "neutral" and "positive" ones.



### III. MEDIA PLATFORMS

The outlets and TV channels selected for the study represented 3 categories of media present in the country: a weak independent sector (*Turan*, *Zerkalo*, *Pressklub*), a sizable pro-government sector (*Caliber*, *Report*, *TV Musavat*), and a strong government/public sector in every respect (*AzTV*, *ITV*, *CBC TV*).

All the pieces dedicated to the monitoring topic and references to various thematic sections are distributed among these media in the following manner:

Name of the media	Number of pieces on the monitoring topic			Number of references to the thematic sections
	Total pieces	Fully dedicated to the topic	Partially dedicated to the topic	
Caliber	71	54	17	145
ITV	57	45	12	100
CBC TV	46	22	24	134
TV Musavat	33	12	21	61
AzTV	29	8	21	89
Pressklub TV	24	12	12	51
Zerkalo	13	10	3	27
Report	12	6	6	34
Turan	3	0	3	3

The fact that *CBC TV* and *Caliber* rank among the top three media, with the bulk of their content produced in Russian, indicates that a considerable portion of information on the topic under review is aimed at an external audience. This circumstance, naturally, affects its content.

The same logic is reflected in the fact that almost half of all analytical pieces and more than half of the references to various thematic sections are attributed to the state television companies *AzTV*, *CBC TV* and the public *ITV* channel. This is an indicator of the government's interest in covering the topic with a broad presentation of its perspective on the situation for both external and internal audiences.

The data from other government and pro-government outlets and channels, with the exception of *Report*, which overall has little analytical content, serve as an additional argument in favor of this conclusion.

Independent media stand out for their more restrained coverage of the monitoring topic, compared to other categories of Azerbaijani media. For a clear understanding of the situation, it is worth highlighting that they generally lag behind state and pro-government media in terms of the volume of disseminated pieces, which is conditioned by their limited financial and human resources. These very constraints led to the suspension of *Turan's* activities during the monitoring period, a circumstance reflected in the agency's indicators.

Media status	Share in the total number of pieces on the monitoring topic	Share in the total number of references to the thematic sections
State/public media	45.8%	50.1%
Pro-government media	40.3%	37.3%
Independent media	13.9%	12.6%

The monitoring shows that in pieces dedicated to the conflict between Baku and Yerevan, Azerbaijani media are highly critical (77% of references to all thematic sections carry a negative tone). Criticism is mainly directed at Armenia's reluctance to eliminate the obstacles hindering the achievement of peace in the region: its refusal to make the constitutional changes demanded by Azerbaijan, serving the interests of "third powers," the swift military build-up, etc.-that is, everything that is regarded by Baku as a potential threat and "fueling revanchism."

In 7 monitored media, the references carrying a negative tone significantly exceed the combined number of "positive" and "neutral" references. In the case of *Pressklub*, there is virtually no difference among them.

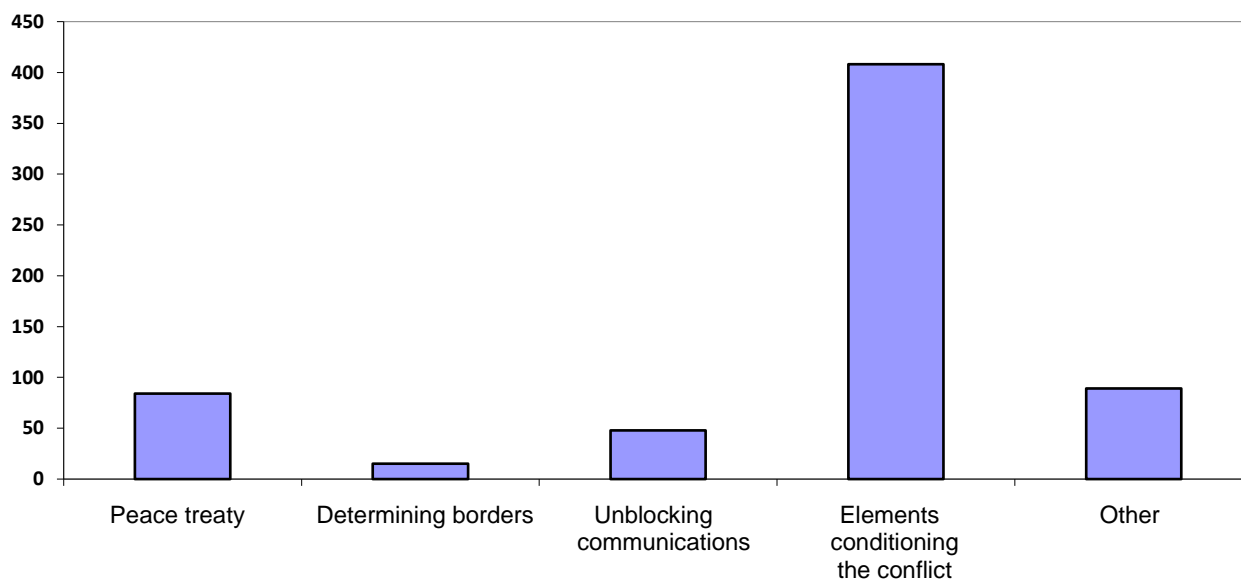
Media status	The tone of media references to all thematic categories		
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
State/public media	11.1%	79%	9.9%
Pro-government media	10.4%	79.2%	10.4%
Independent media	7.4%	63%	29.6%



## IV. THEMATIC SECTIONS

In the pieces dedicated to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, detailed references to 5 thematic sections were recorded. In each of them, there were subtopics, for which a separate count was conducted.

In total, 644 references to all thematic sections in 288 pieces were distributed among them in the following order:



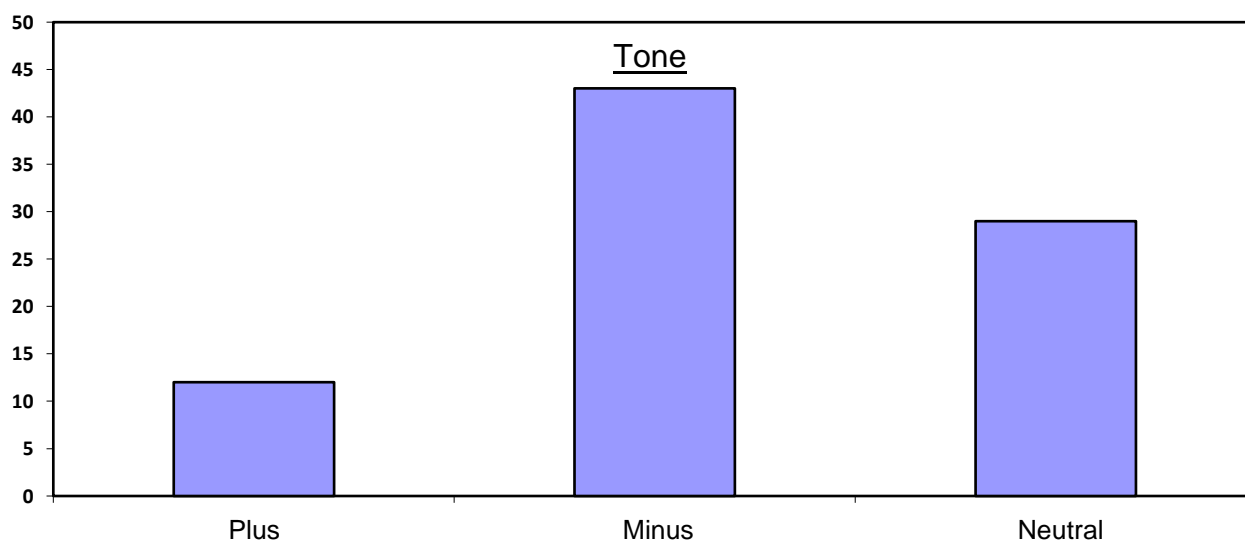
### **Thematic section 1. Possibilities of signing a peace treaty and normalizing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan**

**Subtopics:** 1.1. Appropriateness of signing a treaty without incorporating controversial provisions; 1.2. Signing a treaty/normalization of relations with the mediation/participation of the RF; 1.3. Signing a treaty/normalization of relations with the mediation/participation of the EU; 1.4. Signing a treaty/normalization of relations with the mediation/participation of the USA; 1.5. Bilateral format for signing a treaty (without intermediaries and mediators); 1.6. Other negotiation formats (conditional 3+3, Iran, Georgia, etc.); 1.7. Building relations in the context of “peace without a treaty”; 1.8. Impact of major events in other states and regions on the conclusion of peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia (wars, elections, government changes, etc.); 1.9. Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the spheres of economic life, energy, trade, along with diplomacy and public administration; 1.10. Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the spheres of public life and humanitarian issues; 1.11. Other issues.

A total of 84 references were directly dedicated to the topic of negotiations. They were devoted to different aspects of the topic, but the media was mainly interested in three questions: the impact of elections, wars, and government changes in other states on the conclusion of peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia; the appropriateness of signing a treaty without incorporating controversial provisions; a bilateral format for conducting negotiations without intermediaries.

N	Thematic section 1. Possibilities of signing a peace treaty and normalizing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan	Number of references to the thematic section	Sign of attitude		
			+	-	0
1.8	<i>Impact of major events in other states and regions on the conclusion of peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia</i>	24	1	10	13
1.1	<i>Appropriateness of signing a treaty without incorporating controversial provisions</i>	14		9	5
1.5	<i>Bilateral format for signing a treaty</i>	11	9	1	1
1.2	<i>Signing a treaty/normalization of relations with the mediation/participation of the RF</i>	8		6	2
1.4	<i>Signing a treaty/normalization of relations with the mediation/participation of the USA</i>	7		5	2
1.3	<i>Signing a treaty/normalization of relations with the mediation/participation of the EU</i>	3		3	
1.9	<i>Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the spheres of economic life, energy, trade, along with diplomacy and public administration</i>	2	1		1
1.6	<i>Other negotiation formats (conditional 3+3, Iran, Georgia, etc.)</i>	1			1
1.7	<i>Building relations in the context of "peace without a treaty"</i>	1	1		
1.11	<i>Other issues</i>	13		9	4

This thematic section was most often addressed by *CBC* (21 references), *ITV* (13), *Caliber* (12), *Pressklub* and *TV Musavat* (10 references each). The format of negotiations without intermediaries drew the most positive attitude here. Overall, however, negative coverage in this category slightly outweighed the neutral and positive attitudes combined.



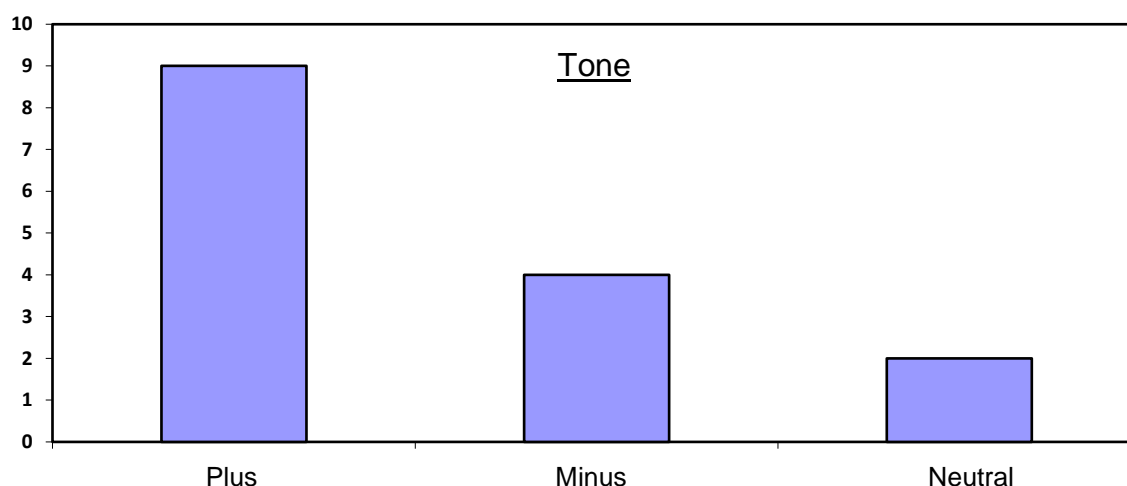
## **Thematic section 2. The issue of determining borders and ensuring their security**

**Subtopics:** 2.1. Process of delimitation and demarcation of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border; 2.2. Resolution of the issue of enclaves through compromises; 2.3. Stability and security in the demarcated and conditional sections of the border; 2.4. Other issues

This topic received the least coverage among all the aspects of the issue under review, with only 15 references. It did not appear at all on *Turan.az*, *Zerkalo.az* websites and in *TV*

*Musavat's* programs. The reason lies in the fact that in February 2025, no significant developments took place either on the border itself or at the level of the delimitation and demarcation commissions. The topic was most often addressed by *AzTV* (4 references), followed by *CBC* and *Report* (3 references each). The outlets underlined the successful launch of the process in April 2024, mentioning the need for its continuation even in the absence of a peace treaty between the two sides. At the same time, this is the only thematic category where the level of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan is portrayed in such a positive manner.

N	Thematic section 2. The issue of determining borders and ensuring their security	Number of references to the thematic section	Sign of attitude		
			+	-	0
2.1	<i>Process of delimitation and demarcation of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border</i>	9	8		1
2.3	<i>Stability and security in the demarcated and conditional sections of the border</i>	4	1	2	1
2.4	<i>Other issues</i>	2		2	



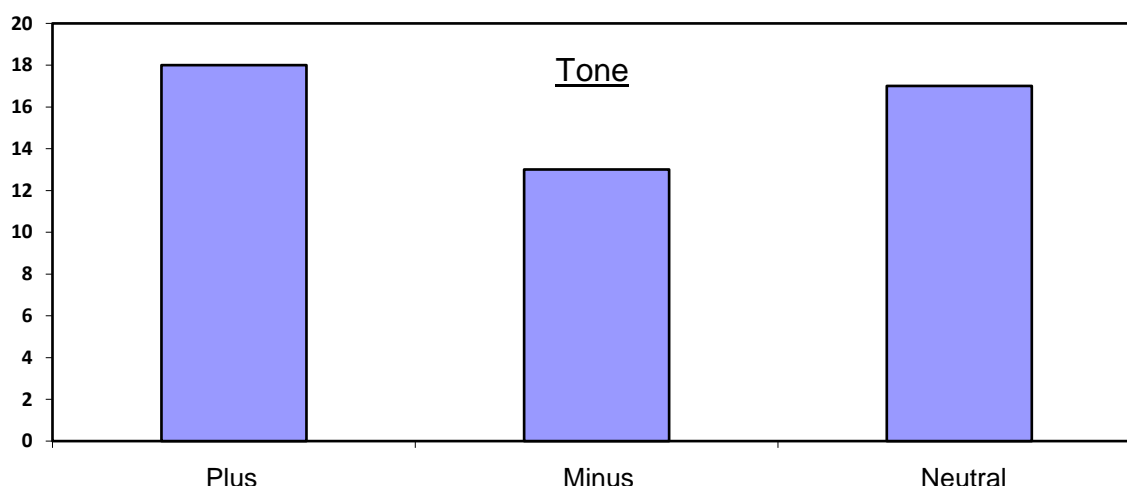
### **Thematic section 3. Prospects for the unblocking of communications**

**Subtopics:** 3.1. *Unblocking of the Meghri (Syunik, Zangezur) road/corridor under the supervision of the RF FSB border guard troops*; 3.2. *Unblocking of the Meghri (Syunik, Zangezur) road/corridor with the engagement of other international actors*; 3.3. *Functioning of the Meghri road within the bounds of Armenia's full sovereignty*; 3.4. *Free (extraterritorial, on privileged conditions) communication between "mainland" Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan exclave*; 3.5. *Unblocking of other communications*; 3.6. *Unblocking of "communications" with no specification*; 3.7. *"Crossroads of Peace" project proposed by Armenia*; 3.8. *Other issues*.

In the context of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, the "Prospects for the unblocking of communications" can be described as a "smoldering topic." Throughout various monitorings conducted between 2023 and 2025, it never rose to the forefront of attention, nor was it particularly pressing, but it always retained its significance as an issue of media interest. During February of this year, the monitors recorded 48 analytical pieces, with 8 media addressing the topic—all except *Zerkalo. Caliber* (10 references), *Pressklub* and *TV Musavat* (8 references each) touched upon it more often than others. The issues most often discussed included the unblocking of communications with no specification, and free communication between "mainland" Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan exclave.

N	Thematic section 3. Prospects for the unblocking of communications	Number of references to the thematic section	Sign of attitude		
			+	-	0
3.6	<i>Unblocking of “communications” with no specification</i>	31	12	6	13
3.4	<i>Free (extraterritorial, on privileged conditions) communication between “mainland” Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan exclave</i>	6	5		1
3.1	<i>Unblocking of the Meghri (Syunik, Zangezur) road/corridor under the supervision of the RF FSB border guard troops</i>	4		3	1
3.2	<i>Unblocking of the Meghri (Syunik, Zangezur) road/corridor with the engagement of other international actors</i>	2	1	1	
3.3	<i>Functioning of the Meghri road within the bounds of Armenia’s full sovereignty</i>	2			2
3.7	<i>Other issues</i>	3		3	

The ideas regarding the unblocking of communications with no specification, along with the establishment of free communication between Azerbaijan’s mainland and its Nakhchivan autonomous region received predominantly positive assessments. This is one of the two thematic categories where pieces with a positive tone prevail over neutral and negatively toned ones.



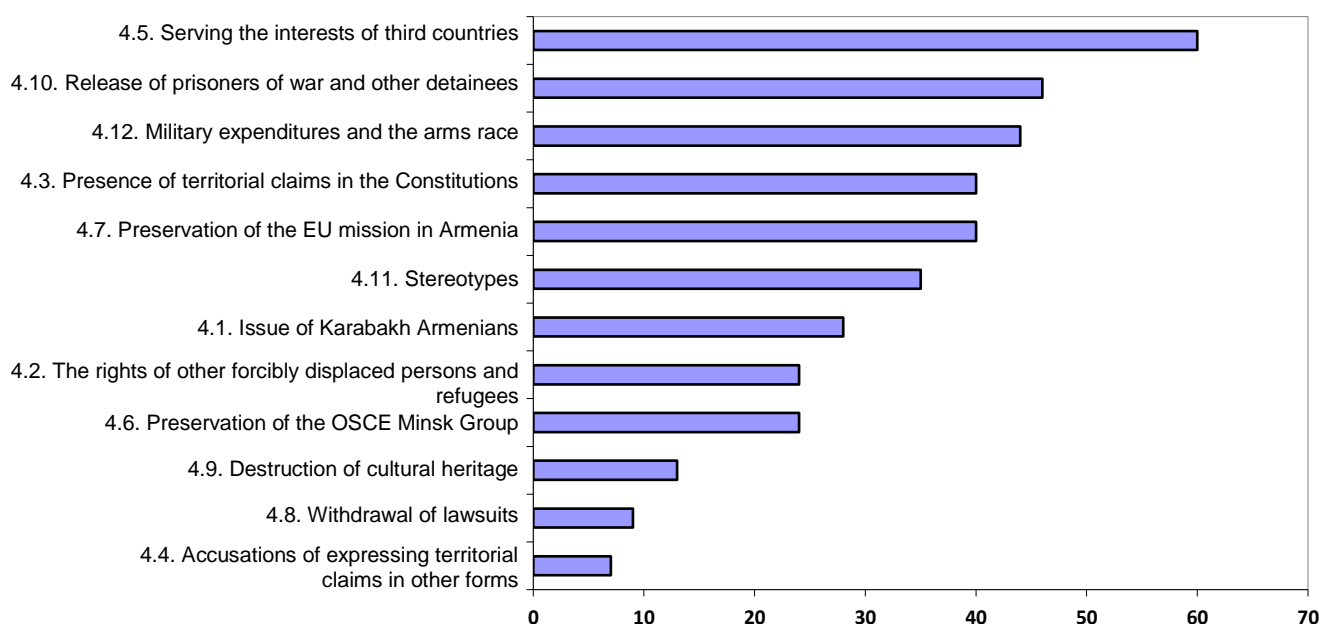
#### **Thematic section 4. Overcoming the elements conditioning the conflictuality between Armenia and Azerbaijan at the current stage**

**Subtopics:** 4.1. *The issue of Karabakh Armenians*; 4.2. *The rights of other forcibly displaced persons and refugees who left their places of residence throughout the entire course of the conflict (1987-2024)*; 4.3. *References to the presence of territorial claims in the Constitutions of Azerbaijan and Armenia*; 4.4. *Accusations of expressing territorial claims in other forms*; 4.5. *Accusations of serving the interests of third countries*; 4.6. *Preservation of the OSCE Minsk Group*; 4.7. *Preservation of the EU mission in Armenia*; 4.8. *Withdrawal of lawsuits filed by Armenia and Azerbaijan (Armenians and Azerbaijanis) against each other in international courts*; 4.9. *Accusations of destruction of cultural heritage*; 4.10. *Release of prisoners of war and other detainees*; 4.11. *Stereotypes of an ethnic, religious, cultural and other nature toward each other*; 4.12. *Increase in military expenditures and the arms race as factors intensifying the distrust between the parties*; 4.13. *Other issues*.

Nearly two-thirds (417 out of 644) of all references to the monitoring topic overall concern these issues, ranking first across all media, except *Turan*. Since the elements conditioning the conflictuality between Baku and Yerevan at the current stage are drawing such high level of attention from the media, a table is provided below with the indicators for each channel or outlet separately:

Media	Number of references to the Thematic Section 4	Percentage share of all references	Sign of attitude		
			+	-	0
Caliber	102	70.3%	6	92	4
CBC	98	73.1%	4	87	7
AzTV	65	73.0%	8	55	2
ITV	56	56%	3	51	2
Pressklub	27	52.9%		20	7
Zerkalo	24	88.9%		22	2
TV Musavat	24	39.3%	1	20	3
Report	21	61.8%		21	
Turan	0	0			

Based on how pieces in this section are distributed across subtopics, the conflict elements in the relations between the two countries that receive greater coverage in Azerbaijani media (or were covered during the monitoring period) are presented below:

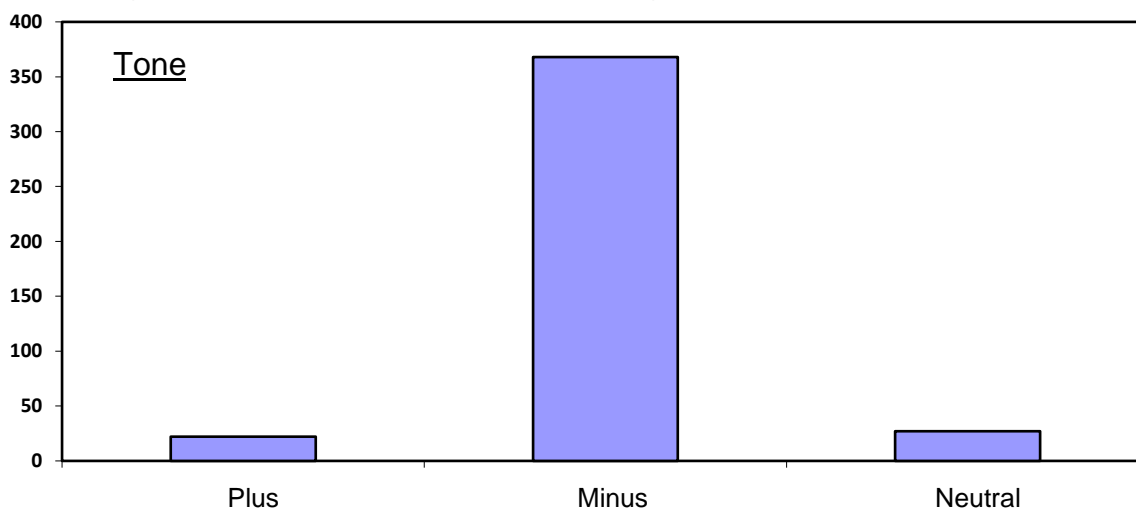


The overwhelming majority of pieces in this section accuse Yerevan of serving the interests of third countries, primarily France, purchasing large quantities of arms with revanchist intentions, showing unwillingness to eliminate the provisions containing territorial claims from the Constitution and recognize the right of Azerbaijani refugees to return to their homes in Armenia, manipulating the problems of Karabakh Armenians, displaying ethnic, cultural and other phobias, using international courts to file unjustified lawsuits against Azerbaijan, etc. There is an unequivocally negative attitude expressed toward the preservation of the OSCE Minsk Group and the EU mission in Armenia.

The high rating of the subtopic “Release of prisoners of war and other detainees” is linked to the ongoing trial in Baku of persons referred to by the Armenian side as “prisoners of war” and “NKR leaders,” and by Baku media as “war criminals” and “separatist leaders.”

Quite a large number of pieces in this category fell under the “Other issues” section (47 references), with approximately half of them devoted to the problem of minefields in Azerbaijan. The two explosions in Karabakh in February exacerbated this problem, which is one of the elements conditioning the conflictuality in relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan at the current stage. A number of references in this thematic category were devoted to the ideology of revanchism, which, according to Azerbaijani media and experts, is actively propagated in Armenia through the efforts of the opposition and the diaspora. Other relevant problems include river pollution from Armenian mining enterprises, and the reluctance of respective Armenian bodies to cooperate with the Azerbaijani side in the search for people who went missing during the First Karabakh War.

Given the category name, a higher number of negative assessments compared to neutral and positive ones was expected. However, such a strong imbalance once again highlights that media and experts are not yet focused on finding ways to resolve conflict issues, but on proving the other side’s guilt in exacerbating them.



### **Thematic section 5. Other issues related to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations**

This category included references that did not fall under any of the four preceding thematic sections. The monitors recorded 80 such references. Their high number has its explanation:

- February is the month of the Sumgait and Khojaly tragedies, and every year Azerbaijani media in this month see a surge of pieces dedicated to those unforgettable events from years ago;
- following Donald Trump's return to power in January 2025, the question of how decisions by the US administration might affect Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, as well as every contact between US representatives and the leaders of the South Caucasus countries gained particular importance for the media and drew extensive commentary by local experts. Within the first thematic category, point 1.8 covered references to this issue in relation to the possibility of achieving peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, in a number of instances, for example, regarding Prime Minister Pashinyan's trip to Washington, Trump's suspension of USAID activities, etc., journalists and experts went beyond the boundaries of this specific topic;
- the historical aspect of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations-especially its “dark” chapters-remains among the popular topics addressed especially by TV companies and Internet channels.

Within the analytical articles and TV programs under review, the media addressed these three topics alone in almost 50 pieces. In addition, there were extensive commentaries on the decisions of international organizations and statements of the foreign ministries of other states, which were accused of applying double standards towards Azerbaijan, together with pieces devoted to Russian-Armenian or Russian-Azerbaijani-Armenian relations, etc.

The tone of most of these references was negative (68), while significantly fewer were classified as “neutral” (6) or “positive” (6).

## V. EXPERTS

Out of the 288 analytical pieces of the media studied, 229 (79.5%) included experts. Although 142 individuals were included in the list, only 42 experts were approached by journalists for comments more than once a month. (Interestingly, both this figure, and the overall composition of experts have shown almost no change over the past two years.) The following political scientists were in greatest demand in February 2025:

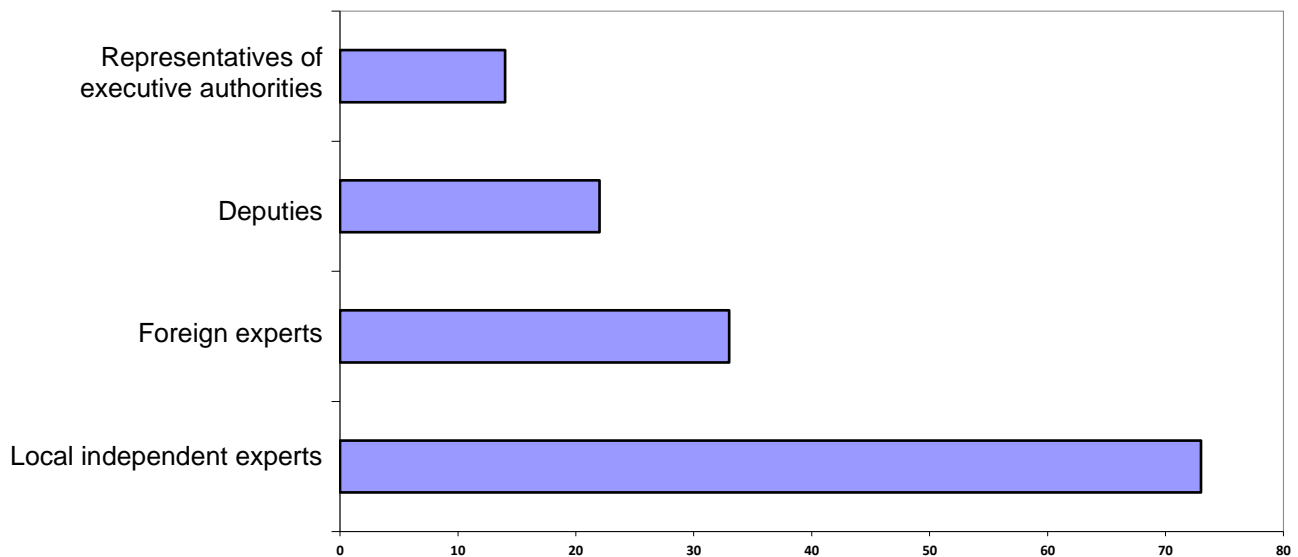
Expert name	Total number of media references to experts in February 2025	Number of references per media
Rasim Musabekov	8	AzTV: 1, CBC: 3, Caliber: 2, ITV: 2
Farhad Mamedov	7	Caliber: 1, ITV: 3, Pressklub: 3
Azer Allahveranov	6	AzTV: 2, CBC: 2, ITV: 2
Hikmet Babaoglu	6	AzTV: 1, ITV: 4, TV Musavat: 1
Elkhan Shahinoglu	5	ITV: 1, TV Musavat: 3, Pressklub: 1
Elchin Mirzabeyli	5	AzTV: 1, ITV: 4
Matin Mammadli	5	AzTV: 3, ITV: 2
Fikret Sadikhov	5	AzTV: 1, CBC: 3, Caliber: 1
Sahil Iskenderov	5	AzTV: 2, CBC: 3
Bahruf Maharramov	4	AzTV: 3, ITV: 1
Sevinj Fatalieva	4	CBC: 4

(For comparison, tables based on the 2023–2024 monitoring findings are presented)

Expert name	Number of media references to experts in March 2024	Expert name	Number of media references to experts in July 2023
Rasim Musabekov	11	Rasim Musabekov	15
Hikmet Babaoglu	6	Farhad Mamedov	10
Farhad Mamedov	5	Ahmad Alili	6
Murad Sadaddinov	5	Rauf Mirkadyrov	5
Elkhan Shahinoglu	5	Tofiq Zulfugarov	5
Ahmad Alili	4	Arif Yunus	5
Eldar Namazov	4	Orkhan Amashov	5
Azer Gasimli	4	Ramiz Yunus	4
Anar Aliyev	4	Murad Sadaddinov	4
Ilham Ismayil	3	Hikmet Babaoglu	4

Overall, the media under review sought commentary on issues of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations from a range of experts: parliamentary deputies (22), representatives of executive authorities and their think tanks (14), local independent political scientists, economists and military specialists (73), as well as foreign experts (33).





Among foreign experts, the largest number came from Russia (8), followed by Azerbaijani political scientists based abroad (7), and experts from Israel (3), Turkey (3), Georgia (3) and Kazakhstan (3). During the monitoring period, the participation of 4 experts from Armenia was also recorded in the analyzed pieces (one in an *ITV* program and three in the episodes of *Pressklub TV*'s "Line of Contact" program).

The monitoring also shows that there is still a serious imbalance in the gender composition of experts: out of 142 experts, there were only 13 women-10 local and 3 foreign specialists (7 in 2023 and 12 in 2024).

## VI. CONCLUSION

1. In comparison to previous monitorings, the current monitoring registered a rise in the number of pieces devoted to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations in the studied media. The most discussed topic in the media is not peace negotiations, but the elements conditioning the conflictuality between the parties at a specific stage. This suggests that deep-seated contradictions still exist, the conflict is capable of undergoing transformations and, once resolved in one dimension, moving to another, taking on new forms of manifestation.
2. A significant factor is the substantial predominance of pieces with a negative tone over those with a “positive” and “neutral” tone regarding the topic of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations in general (77% versus 23%). This, on the one hand, indicates the persistence of serious disagreements and low level of trust between the parties, while on the other hand, it suggests that media and the expert community are starting to openly discuss the issues that spark the most acute reactions, although there is no sign of a serious commitment to finding solutions. Meanwhile, it is noteworthy that “positive” assessments in two thematic categories (“The issue of determining borders and ensuring their security” and “Prospects for the unblocking of communications”) still outnumber “negative” ones, which contrasts with last year's findings.
3. Threats, accusations, and disparaging tone continue to reinforce negative stereotypes, especially among young people. Further efforts are required to adjust the narrative and change the language of communication. There is a need for more pieces regarding the benefits of cooperation, the possibility of coexistence, and the commonality of a number of interests. To this end, it is essential to engage with the expert community, but above all, media and journalists, who are the ones most often setting the negative tone.
4. The monitoring findings allow us to assert that when selecting media platforms for internal and inter-community debates on peace-related issues, independent Internet channels and websites should be prioritized. They are more unbiased and open to debate. However, the number of independent media in Azerbaijan is limited and continues to shrink. Under the current circumstances, cooperation with some state and even pro-government media, which maintain leadership in covering this topic, could serve as an additional resource in terms of increasing audience reach. However, it should be taken into account that their programs may have a certain ideological orientation that is inconsistent with the initiative's goals.