



LINKS EUROPE ANNUAL REVIEW 2025

Editor:

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3 April 2025, conference on "The South Caucasus: Again in Transition", The Hague



24 November 2025, conference on "The residue of conflict: Landmines and other remnants of war in the South Caucasus, and its victims", Yerevan

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS 2025

3 April 2025, The Hague - Conference: The South Caucasus: Again in Transition

An expert conference on the theme “The South Caucasus: Again in Transition” was held on 3 April 2025 in The Hague. The Conference attracted a wide range of stakeholders, think tanks, diplomats, and policy practitioners from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, as well as from the European Union and Türkiye. Participants engaged in constructive dialogue outlining the foundations for long-term regional cooperation and sustainable peace in the South Caucasus.

The conference featured panel discussions on two external actors of growing significance to the region: the European Union and Türkiye. Speakers emphasised that sustainable peace in the region requires structured cooperation and the active engagement of both actors, highlighting the need for the EU to articulate a clear regional strategy and for Türkiye to more clearly define its interests and responsibilities.



The South Caucasus in Transition panel: **Tina Khidasheli**, Former Minister of Defence of Georgia, **Stepan Grigoryan**, Director of Analytical Centre on Globalisation and Regional Cooperation and **Craig Oliphant**, Senior Adviser, Foreign Policy Centre, London



Türkiye and the South Caucasus Panel: **Mitat Çelikpala**, professor, Kadir Has University **Johnny Melikyan**, Senior Research Fellow, Orbeli Research-Analytical Center, **Mehman Aliyev** Azerbaijani Expert/Journalist and **Amanda Paul**, Senior Policy Analyst, European Policy Centre

28 October 2025, Tbilisi - The 2nd South Caucasus Dialogue Forum

The 2nd South Caucasus Dialogue Forum was held in Tbilisi on 28 October 2025, bringing together experts, activists, diplomats, and journalists from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, alongside participants from across Europe. Organised by LINKS Europe in cooperation with regional partners, the forum built on the success of the first dialogue forum held in Kachreti in 2023 and provided a platform for regional dialogue, with the participation of representatives from the EUSR Office, EUMA, and several European embassies.

Keynote contributions by H.E. Kirsti Narinen, Ambassador of Finland, and H.E. Anne Toft Sørensen, Ambassador of Denmark, underscored the existing window of opportunity for peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This was followed by four panel discussions featuring speakers from the three countries. The panels addressed key themes, including regional connectivity, media, women’s participation, and youth engagement in the South Caucasus.



Media Panel discussion: **Leonid Nersisyan**, APRI Armenia, **Sargis Harutyunyan**, Yerevan Press Club, **Mehman Aliyev**, Azerbaijani expert/journalist, **Rusudan Tskhomelidze**, Adviser at Media Ombudsman and the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics



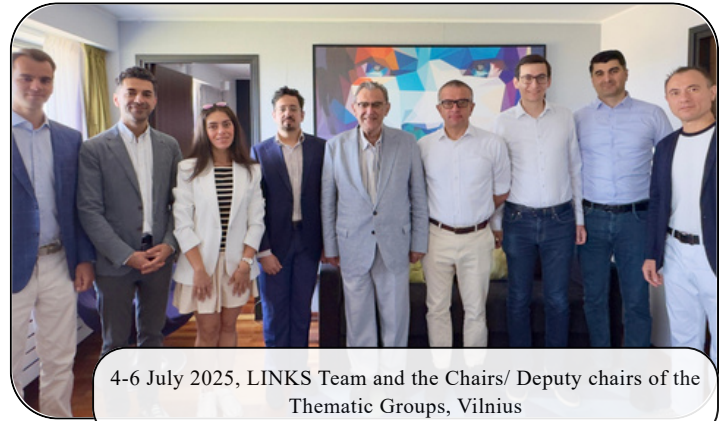
Diplomats, experts, activists, and journalists at “The 2nd South Caucasus Dialogue Forum”

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS 2025

4-6 July 2025, Vilnius - Chairs of the Thematic Groups meet in Vilnius

In Vilnius in early July, the chairs of the Thematic Groups for a New Armenian and Azerbaijani Dialogue met to discuss the organisational matters of the reports, including division of tasks, research topics and ideas.

These discussions were intended to ensure a coordinated approach and to establish a clear roadmap for developing the thematic reports.



4-6 July 2025, LINKS Team and the Chairs/ Deputy chairs of the Thematic Groups, Vilnius

24 September, Yerevan - The Armenian members of the Thematic Groups meet in Yerevan

In Yerevan, in late September, LINKS Europe organised an event that brought together over thirty Armenian members of the Thematic Groups, diplomats, EU representatives, experts and analysts to discuss the Thematic Group reports.

At this event, the Topchubashov Center Deputy Director, Murad Muradov, also spoke at the event about his takeaways from the visit to Yerevan and its significance for the peace process. Murad Muradov, who is also the chair of the Peace and Security Thematic Report, also attended as a speaker alongside Dennis Sammut, Director of LINKS Europe, at the 108th Rose-Roth Seminar, organised by NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Yerevan. Murad's visit to Armenia was the first expert visit of its kind since the 2020 war.



22 September 2025, LINKS Europe Director, **Dennis Sammut**, chaired the first session at the 108th Rose-Roth Seminar, organised by NATO PA in Yerevan. The panel featured **Armine Margaryan**, **Murad Muradov**, and **Nigar Goksel**

27 September, Baku - The Azerbaijani members of the Thematic Groups meet in Baku

After the meeting in Yerevan, LINKS Europe organised a similar event in Baku, where the Azerbaijani members of the Thematic Groups met to discuss the progress of the reports.

Ambassadors and other representatives of EU member states, and others, as well as representatives of the EU Delegation, the EUSR office and other international institutions were in attendance.



24 September 2025, LINKS Team, the Armenian members of the Thematic Groups and representatives of the international community



27 September 2025, LINKS Team and the Azerbaijani members of the Thematic Groups

A NEW ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJAN DIALOGUE BEST SUITED FOR TODAY'S REALITIES

The Thematic Groups for a New Armenian-Azerbaijani Dialogue

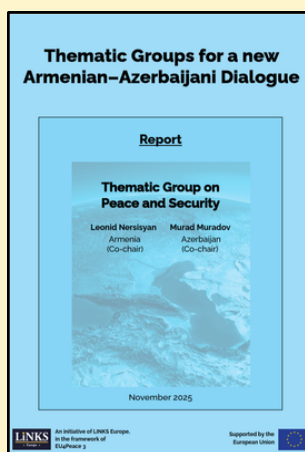
Over the year 2025, LINKS Europe initiated the Thematic Groups for a New Armenian-Azerbaijani Dialogue, a project supported by the European Union within the framework of the EU4Peace III programme. The initiative presented a vision for relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan grounded in the perspectives of local people. Each group formed by experts from both societies was led by one Armenian and one Azerbaijani chair and/or deputy chair. Their work over the year resulted in the publication of four landmark reports addressing the following themes:

1. Peace and Security
2. Regional Connectivity
3. Good Governance
4. Environment

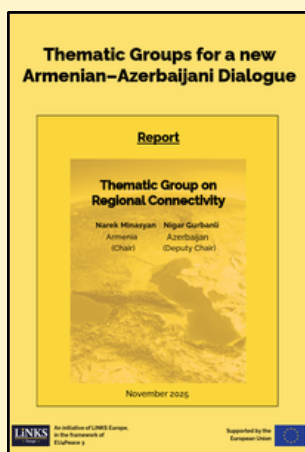
All reports were agreed upon by consensus within each group. The reports have been written in English and professionally translated into Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani. In total, 42 Armenians and Azerbaijanis were directly involved in drafting the four reports, including 18 women, while a further 30 participants from both societies contributed to the broader process.

The process was deliberately flexible, granting the groups full autonomy over their composition and the content of their reports. This approach allowed the groups to adapt to developments on the ground, particularly in response to the changes following the Washington meeting between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan on 8 August 2025. Moreover, by remaining flexible, locally grounded, and consensus-driven, the process brought people together, strengthened mutual understanding, and produced shared, credible policies that support sustainable peace in the region.

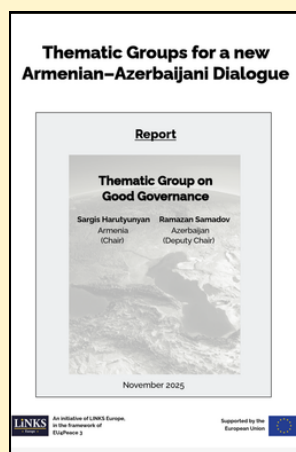
THE FOUR REPORTS PRODUCED BY THE THEMATIC GROUPS



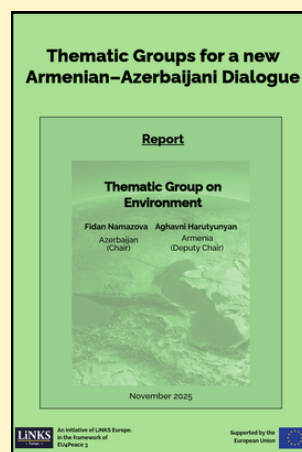
Peace and Security



Regional Connectivity



Good Governance



Environment

The Thematic Groups for a New Armenian-Azerbaijani Dialogue: Report on Peace and Security



The Report on Peace and Security analyses the risks to the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including, among others, the issue of the Armenian constitutional referendum and the opening of communications. The report emphasises the need to embed normalisation between Baku and Yerevan into a larger regional framework that would make the South Caucasus as a whole more resilient and sovereign. The analysis also highlights an overview of the international environment around the South Caucasus, including the interests of major actors and how they may be affected by the peace treaty.

The report ends with an extensive list of recommendations for the peace process. It goes beyond immediate security interests by focusing on responsible media, identities and practical aspects of peaceful coexistence.

The Thematic Groups for a New Armenian-Azerbaijani Dialogue: Report on Environment



The Report on Environment underscores that the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan impacted the environment in the region. It is argued that policymakers should think about how to bring both nations together to solve growing ecological problems in the region. Most importantly, the report states that bridging societies through environmental solutions can bring a much more solid and comprehensive peace rather than a narrow political one.

The authors focus on two main topics: Environmental Education and Climate Change Adaptation in Ecosystems in Armenia and Azerbaijan. The paper covers the background of both problems and focuses on joint policy approaches to the problems.

The Thematic Groups for a New Armenian-Azerbaijani Dialogue: Report on Regional Connectivity



The Report on Regional Connectivity finds that strengthening connectivity in the South Caucasus has the potential to transform the region into a more stable, economically resilient, and cooperative space.

A SWOT analysis identifies both challenges and opportunities: slow implementation processes and external political pressures remain constraints, but the region's strategic location, evolving infrastructure plans, and growing interest from external partners provide a strong basis for forward movement. The Vision 2040 framework set out in the report advocates for connectivity as a driver of shared prosperity, with objectives that include modernised transport corridors, harmonised regulations, and expanded people-to-people exchanges.

The Thematic Groups for a New Armenian-Azerbaijani Dialogue: Report on Good Governance



The Report on Good Governance outlined a vision for the South Caucasus up to 2040, in which transparency, proactive disclosure, openness, accountability, equal access to services, data protection, and a citizen-centred governance system become the norm.

The authors argued that Armenia and Azerbaijan should share good practices and should not shy away from learning from each other. In addition, the report finds that while the political situation remains complex, cooperation on technical issues is possible: environmental monitoring, the creation of an institutional bridge for sustained management, and digital governance were identified as entry points.



ACTION COMMITTEE FOR A NEW ARMENIAN- AZERBAIJANI DIALOGUE

On 30 October 2025, the work of the Thematic Groups formally concluded. To ensure continuity and carry forward the outcomes of the process, the Action Committee for a New Armenian–Azerbaijani Dialogue was established on 1 November 2025. The Action Committee has already shared the reports with the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments and with the international community at two briefings on the four reports in Baku and Yerevan in late November 2025.

The Action Committee is composed of eight members, four from Armenia and four from Azerbaijan, namely Murad Muradov, Leonid Nersisian, Narek Minasyan, Fidan Namazova, Sargis Harutyunyan, Nigar Gurbanli, Aghavni Harutyunyan, and Ramazan Samadov. The eight persons were the Chair, co-Chair and Deputy Chair of the four thematic groups that produced four reports outlining a vision for a new Armenian-Azerbaijani relationship between now and 2040.

The main objectives of the Action Committee are:

- 1. To disseminate the four reports produced by the Thematic Groups.**
- 2. To continue the conversation on the themes of the four reports**
- 3. To promote Armenia-Azerbaijan peace and reconciliation.**
- 4. To advance dialogue and co-operation in the South Caucasus.**



25 November 2025, Briefing of the 4 Reports in Baku



25 November 2025, Briefing of the 4 Reports in Yerevan



28 October 2025, Strategic Expert Platform meeting

STRATEGIC EXPERT PLATFORM:

The Strategic Expert Platform, formed by three Armenian and three Azerbaijani experts, working under the auspices of LINKS Europe, advised LINKS Europe and the Thematic Groups during the process.



LANDMINE FREE SOUTH CAUCASUS

In September 2025, LINKS Europe launched the campaign Landmine Free South Caucasus 2025/2026. This is the fourth Landmine Free South Caucasus campaign that LINKS Europe has coordinated since 2019. This year's campaign holds special significance following the progress in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Process and the historic meeting between the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders, together with the US president, in the White House on 8 August 2025.

LINKS Europe, throughout the years, insisted that a regional approach is necessary for successful mine action in the South Caucasus. It consistently held that mine action should serve as a confidence-building measure. The Regional Campaign Landmine Free South Caucasus 2025/2026 called for three important initiatives:

- ◆ **Recognising the problem of landmines and unexploded remnants of war as a regional challenge and the creation of a working group appointed by the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to start articulating a regional response.**
- ◆ **Establishing mutually agreed landmine and UXO-free zones in border areas, with all parties committing to clearing and maintaining contamination-free zones.**
- ◆ **Remain committed to highlighting the plight of those killed or injured by landmines and other remnants of war, and their families and communities, as well as the hundreds of people who live close to contaminated areas.**

In Yerevan, at the end of November 2025, a meeting was held on the theme “The residue of conflict: Landmines and other remnants of war in the South Caucasus, and its victims”. This meeting marked 30 November as the Day of Solidarity with the victims of landmines and other remnants of war in the South Caucasus and addressed how landmines undermine peace and development and pose a grave humanitarian situation in the region. Similar events will take place in Baku and Tbilisi in the next year.

30 November

The Regional Campaign “Landmine Free South Caucasus” marks 30 November as the Day of Solidarity with the victims of landmines and other unexploded remnants of war in the South Caucasus. Thousands of people have been killed or injured across the region over the last three decades.

We call on all citizens, organisations, and governments to work with us for a **Landmine Free South Caucasus.**



**Landmine Free
South Caucasus
2025/2026**

INFOGRAPHICS ON THE CONTAMINATION OF LANDMINES IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

LINKS Europe developed infographics on the landmine exposure in the region by gathering information from international organisations and local partners. The purpose of these is to raise awareness about one of the most underestimated humanitarian crises: landmine contamination in the South Caucasus.

Misinformation and a lack of awareness surrounding this issue of contamination mean that it remains under-exposed and under-funded. Raising awareness is the first step towards a landmine-free South Caucasus.

More infographics can be found on LINKS Europe's LinkedIn page.



Landmine Free South Caucasus

FACTS

In Georgia:

- 1,307+ mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) victims
- &
- 344,000+ people live in contaminated areas.

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Landmine Free South Caucasus 2025/2026

FACTS

The areas of contamination part I:

- = 2.2 km² = "Red Bridge" is the largest minefield along Georgia's borders with Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- 4,400 residents live within this contaminated area
- Kirach-Muganlo village particularly affected.

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Landmine Free South Caucasus 2025/2026

FACTS

In Armenia there have been register:

- 800+ victims including
- 10+ women
- 790+ males

due to landmine and unexploded ordnance contamination.

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Landmine Free South Caucasus 2025/2026

FACTS

People living in endangered zones per region:

- Tavush Region: 65,475
- Syunik Region: 88,993
- Gexarquniq Region: 25,910
- Vayots Dzor region: 18,268

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Landmine Free South Caucasus 2025/2026

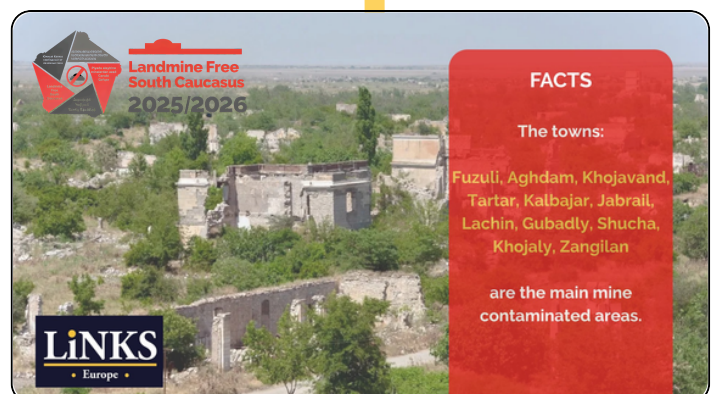
FACTS

In Azerbaijan over the last 30 years there have been:

- 3400 victims including
- 359 children
- 38 women

due to landmine contamination.

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Landmine Free South Caucasus 2025/2026

FACTS

The towns:

- Fuzuli, Aghdam, Khojavand, Tartar, Kalbajar, Jabrail, Lachin, Gubadly, Shucha, Khojaly, Zangilan

are the main mine contaminated areas.

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COP30: IMPLICATIONS FOR CLIMATE PEACE AND SECURITY

The Hague Conversations on Climate Change, Peace and Security is a LINKS Europe ad hoc programme that provides a platform for experts, NGOs, academics, Think Tanks, and youth to discuss the topic of climate change in relation to themes such as peacebuilding, conflicts, resilience, human rights, and others. In addition, participants explore ways in which civil society organisations can shape this discourse and support the work of governments ahead of COP conferences.

In 2024, The Hague Conversations on Climate Change, Peace and Security supported the work of the Bonn Contact Group, which was tasked with preparing analytical reports to inform discussions and decision-making ahead of COP29. This work included engagement with COP Troika countries and other state and non-state actors in the lead-up to COP29 in Baku.

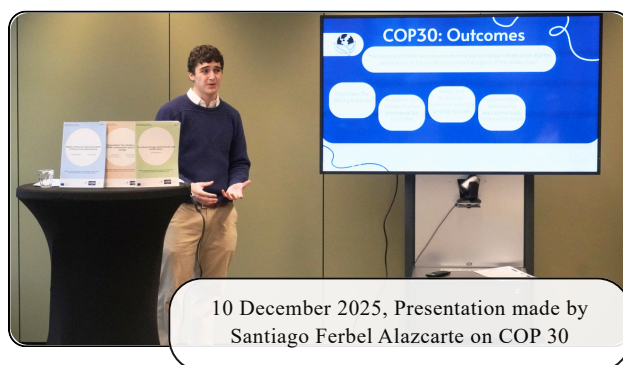
In 2025, LINKS Europe continued to take this work further. It held an event titled Understanding COP30: Lessons from COP30 and the Journey Ahead to COP31 in the Hague on 10 December 2025. The event presented the growing inseparability of climate change, peace, and security, underscoring that climate change acts as a threat multiplier rather than a stand-alone environmental issue.

DID YOU KNOW...

The Bonn Contact Group produced three reports in 2024 that remain relevant today. The first report covers the nexus between climate change and land contamination and degradation resulting from the remnants of armed conflict. The second looks at the nexus between climate change and water scarcity. The last one analyses the nexus between climate change and food insecurity, particularly that which was accentuated by conflict. The three reports can be found on the LINKS Europe website.

During the event, it was argued that COP30 marked a crossroads for global climate governance, as while climate diplomacy remains alive, it is increasingly fragile. The event noted a few action points that need to be taken by the international community moving forward:

- ◆ **Secure long-term, predictable climate finance that matches the scale and urgency of the crisis;**
- ◆ **Strengthen implementation mechanisms by introducing robust monitoring, transparency, and enforcement frameworks, moving beyond voluntary commitments and encouragement alone;**
- ◆ **Scale up deep adaptation efforts that address interconnected risks related to water, food security, health, migration, and ecological stability;**
- ◆ **Integrate climate and security policy to ensure climate action contributes to conflict prevention, resilience-building, and sustainable peace;**
- ◆ **Focus on locally driven strategies that strengthen governance, resilience, and social cohesion in climate-affected communities;**
- ◆ **Promote inclusive diplomacy by meaningfully elevating Indigenous peoples and frontline communities from consultation roles to decision-making positions.**





COMMUNICATIONS AND ONLINE OUTREACH

In 2025, LINKS Europe continued to use a range of online tools to disseminate its research and amplify diverse perspectives related to its fields of work. These included the news portal commonspace.eu, three fortnightly electronic newsletters, Arabia Concise, Caucasus Concise, and Central Asia Concise, as well as the bi-monthly South Caucasus Landmine Observer newsletter. In 2026, we launched changes to the newsletter to make it more useful and informative.

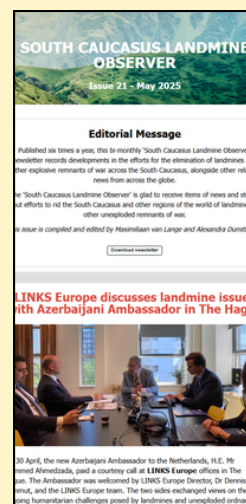
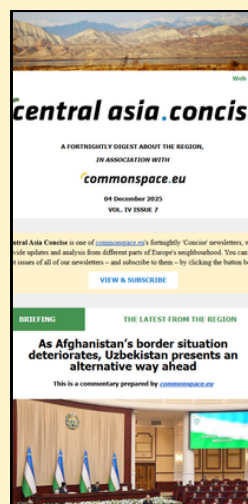
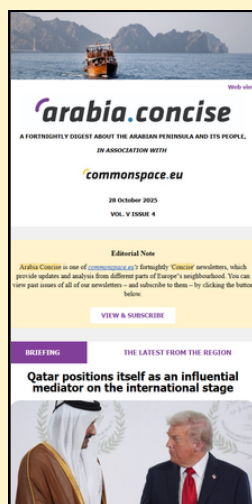
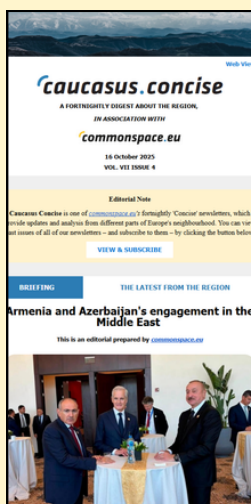


10 December 2025, LINKS Europe Junior Assistants at the The Hague Conversations on Climate Change, Peace and Security

OUR FLAGSHIP WEBSITE COMMONSPACE.EU

As part of our online activities, LINKS Europe owns and manages commonspace.eu, an independent, informative, and analytical website providing original content on a range of issues affecting Europe and its neighbourhood. It aims to provide accurate news, original analysis, and a forum for diverse views and opinions. In 2026, commonspace.eu will become more central in our work and more useful for its readers.

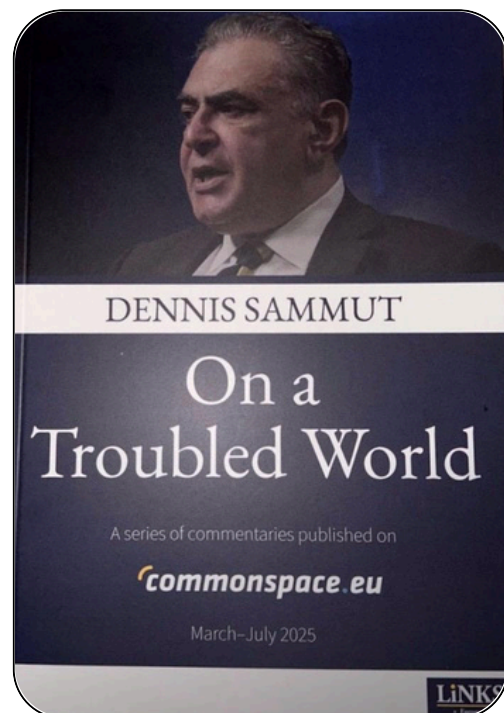
OUR FORTNIGHTLY 'CONCISE' NEWSLETTERS SERIES



LINKS EUROPE PUBLISHES A BOOK WRITTEN BY DENNIS SAMMUT

“On a Troubled World” is a book consisting of a series of commentaries published on commonspace.eu by LINKS Europe Director, Dennis Sammut. The book explores events and developments worldwide between March 2025 and July 2025.

The chapters follow the transition of Europe post-Ukraine war, events in the Middle East, the fate of multilateralism under Trump’s administration, climate hazards in the Sahel, and developments in the three countries of the South Caucasus.



In the introduction of the book, Dennis Sammut notes: “For 20 weeks, every Monday, from 17 March to 28 July 2025, I wrote a commentary for the website commonspace.eu on the events shaping the world, especially as they affected Europe and its neighbourhood. The commentaries were shared on social media and attracted more attention than I had expected. They are personal reflections, informed by a life of travel and engagement, but very much focused on contemporary issues.

This is a difficult time for the world, with many risks, which some see as opportunities. Europe, somewhat unexpectedly, finds itself in the eye of the storm, with wars raging on the continent and around it. Gone are the genteel days of the three decades after the end of the Cold War, when peace and prosperity seemed permanent, and European norms and values appeared to offer a model for the world. Ukraine is now on the mind of every decision-maker, and other conflicts not so far from European shores add to the discomfort. The tragedy in Gaza is a stain on the world, and European leaders agonise over a response. Other wars and conflicts in Yemen, Sudan, the Sahel and elsewhere present a picture that makes even ardent optimists wince.

My commentaries reflect my belief in the importance of a just peace. Peace only makes sense if it is based on justice. Putin’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, and the suffering he has brought upon the Ukrainian people, as well as on Russians, cannot be the basis for a just peace. Ukrainians have the right to defend themselves, and we must help them do so.

In many other situations and settings, conflict can be avoided, and peace can prevail or be restored — not through force of arms but by using soft power tools. This is why civil society remains such an important medium for conflict prevention and resolution. I argue this in many of my commentaries. As always, I do not expect everyone to agree with everything I wrote, but I hope the 20 commentaries, and this publication, will contribute to the debate on these pressing issues of the day.”

Learn more on our website

www.links-europe.eu

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