



Little Women, Peace and Security, and Even Less Youth, Peace and Security, in the Belgrade-Prishtina Dialogue



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Started in 2011 and facilitated by the EU, the Belgrade-Prishtina Dialogue is a legally-binding, top-down normalisation process. Currently, it is stalled, and while leaders continue to heighten political tensions, they fail to recognise or address issues relevant to everyday life. Furthermore, heated rhetoric has more general consequences, including insecurity for marginalised groups, as well as women and youth.

The core message of both the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda is that sustainable peace is impossible without women's and youth leadership and meaningful participation. Both also call for increasing their involvement in decision-making and peace negotiations, making these agendas highly relevant in this context.

While all parties are committed, in different capacities, to the implementation of the WPS, and to a far lesser extent, the YPS, reports continue to indicate a lack of inclusion of women and women's perspectives in the Dialogue process. Normative frameworks and some monitoring mechanisms exist for the WPS agenda, but the same cannot be said for the YPS agenda, especially on the local level.

The EU itself commits to the WPS Agenda through several key policies, namely the [Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030 \(GES\)](#) and the EU's [Gender Action Plan \(GAP\)](#), while the new standalone successor to the 2019-2024 WPS Action Plan will be issued in 2027.

The newly adopted GES, in line with the WPS agenda, will prioritise gender equality as a key to the Commission services and the European External Action Service (EEAS) efforts. The GAP, through one of its pillars, focuses on integrating and increasing women's participation in all matters related to peace and security, prioritising it in EU external policies and actions.

While acknowledging the underrepresentation of women mediators and negotiators, the EU objectives related to the WPS should be achieved, among other actions, by ensuring women's participation and leadership in all peace and security-related contexts. The Plan also encourages third parties to take actions to fulfil its objectives, including by increasing women's participation in peace and security processes.

At the same time and without an explicit reference to the YPS, it recognises young women and girl activists and notes that they should be given a platform to engage.

Additionally, the [Youth Action Plan \(YAP\) in EU external action 2022 – 2027](#) focuses on contributing to the implementation of the YPS to enhance the youth dimension in peace mediation. Unfortunately, similar to GAP for women, YEP seems to focus more on building capacities than directly involving youth in peace-related processes, including as negotiators and mediators.

The [Kosovo Country Level Implementation Plan 2021-2025 \(CLIP\) for GAP III](#) observes that, despite commitments to UNSCR 1325, women's priorities have been underrepresented in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. It commits to advancing the WPS and emphasises the need to engage women and their CSOs in political dialogues and peace processes. Similarly, [the EU Gender Country Profile for Serbia](#) recommends promoting action „to integrate women and women's organisations in the dialogue, peacebuilding and reconciliation between Serbia and Kosovo."

[Serbia's Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030](#) (SGE) recognises the Belgrade-Prishtina Dialogue in the WPS context of the WPS agenda, more specifically, UNSCR 1325. It points out that women did not participate in the conclusion of the numerous technical agreements reached during the Dialogue, nor in the Brussels Agreement of 2013. It also notes that the findings of independent monitoring of the negotiations from a women's perspective indicate that women have been systematically marginalised in formal Dialogue and peacebuilding processes, suggesting that there is no adequate mechanism or political will for women's inclusion. Further, it mentions that women's CSOs, feminists, and peace activists have continuously advocated for dealing with the past and prosecuting war crimes, and for transitional justice to be placed on the political agenda in the Dialogue and the process of normalisation of relations.

Previously, the [Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020-2024 \(KPGE\)](#) focused on peace, security, and equal participation in the security sector. Currently, the Agency for Gender Equality in the Office of the Prime Minister is leading the drafting of the new [KPGE for 2025-2035](#), with one of the three pillars being on WPS. It remains to be seen whether it will also recognise the need to include women's perspectives in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, as its predecessor did not.

Kosovo's current legal framework [does not contain explicit commitments to UNSCR 1325 or its "sister" resolutions](#). At present, there is also no Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325; however, the [Regional Centre of Excellence for Women, Peace and Security \(WPS\)](#) was established in 2024.

In 2025, five years after the last one, Serbia adopted the third [National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2025-2027](#) (NAP). The NAP neither pays attention to the

importance of involving women in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, nor does it mention the process at all. Additionally, [as noted by the European Commission](#), women's rights CSOs were not consulted during the drafting phase.

This is a significant deviation from SGE, as well as the [NAP 2017-2020](#), which established a collaborative approach between institutions and CSOs, strengthening inter-sectoral partnerships. Previous NAP emphasised the incorporation of a gender perspective and the increase in women's participation in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, focused on women's contributions to dealing with the past and prosecution of war crimes, which are important aspects for the normalisation of relations.

Lastly, European Commission Reports for [Serbia](#) and for [Kosovo](#) are also significant indicators of the progress or lack thereof. In both reports, the chapter on Normalisation of Relations remains largely gender-blind. In general, the disregard for the WPS within the framework of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, despite numerous requests by women CSOs, [as noted by Kvinna till Kvinna](#), "taints the EU's reputation as a credible actor on UNSCR 1325." It also remains unclear how current and future agreements will address the security needs of women and girls, especially as they are not represented in any official negotiations.

For this reason, Kvinna till Kvinna also recommends that a gender perspective be included in the section on Normalisation of Relations, and report on the WPS as part of the EU-facilitated Dialogue. Additionally, [Kosovo Women's Network](#) suggests that the Commission could have encouraged government engagement of more diverse women in Track 1 and 2 Dialogue.

Neither of the Commission reports recognises youth, beyond youth and labour policies, especially not in the context of YPS, Dialogue or the normalisation process.

Despite cooperation and reconciliation efforts on the ground, [driven by civil society and young people](#), institutions in Serbia and Kosovo have not committed to the YPS agenda, as neither have standalone NAPs or dedicated programmatic efforts. Only the role of governments in the establishment and funding of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), as an indirect contribution to the agenda's objectives,

can be acknowledged. With that, young people remain invisible in the Dialogue process.

Despite repeated expressions of commitment to WPS, women and their priorities have remained underrepresented in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. The normalisation process continues to be gender-blind, and even more so, continues to exclude young people. This is not only a missed opportunity but also undermines the sustainability of any agreement reached and its relevance to the lives of communities and people.

As implementation of both WPS and YPS objectives is one of the EU's own stated priorities, it should be far more visible in its approaches to the Belgrade-Prishtina Dialogue as well. The EU's credibility as a norm-setter depends on whether it holds itself and third parties to the same standards it promotes.

WPS and YPS as global commitments can be applied in this very concrete, ongoing Dialogue and peace process. To this end, all parties involved must live up to their commitments not only through policies that recognise women and youth in this context, but also through deliberate actions.