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SHIFTING REGIONAL DYNAMICS AND THE 3+3 PLATFORM

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The "3+3 Platform", launched through the initiative of Türkiye and Azerbaijan to enable regional countries and their close partners (both geographically and politically) to resolve regional issues among themselves, continues to exist with the same objective. Recent developments and the current state of affairs have once again demonstrated the importance of the parties' resolve to settle regional conflicts free from external interference.

Aimed at eliminating the instability that occurred following the Second Karabakh War, the Platform has hosted numerous meetings to date, facilitating a more constructive framework for consultations among regional countries. The momentum gained by the Azerbaijan-Armenia peace treaty process following the Washington Agreement, the progress made in recent years regarding the normalization of relations between Türkiye and Armenia, Russias stance regarding these relations, and the European Unions (EU) increasingly active involvement have all contributed to a better understanding of the Platforms purpose.

Noting that meetings had previously been held in Tehran, Moscow, and İstanbul, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova recently stated that the next meeting should be hosted by either Azerbaijan or Armenia and that they are awaiting proposals from the parties to reach a final decision.[1] In the same statement, Zakharova expressed the view that the Platform should take on an economic character and avoid politicization, thereby adding to the public record in a way that is consistent with earlier remarks by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov[2] regarding the importance Russia attaches to the Platform.

Developments regarding the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), Irans frequently voiced concerns about this corridor, and the balancing act Tehran maintains in its separate relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan all underline the importance of urgently convening the next meeting of the Platform. Considering the

principle that regional countries should resolve their own issues, the recent shift in the EUs South Caucasus policy is also noteworthy.

While the observer missions the EU deploys at Armenias borders exemplify its typical "observer" stance (distinct from the active interventions it pursues in other geographies), it must be noted that the EU has recently deviated from this established policy regarding the South Caucasus, adopting an attitude that, while not strictly active, cannot be described as merely passive either. This development, which conflicts with the logic of excluding third-party interventions that regional countries have successfully upheld until now, has served to emphasize the significance of the Platform.

In conclusion, the 3+3 Platform is not merely a temporary post-war entity with a short-term mandate. It is a rather significant organization with the potential to generate substantial benefits for the peace, prosperity, and stability of the region. Serving as a tangible indicator of the regional countries' resolve to address their own issues, the Platform has gained importance by demonstrating that their problems can be resolved through negotiations without external interference. The acceleration of peace and normalization processes, in addition to Irans efforts to establish a policy based on balance with regional countries, show that the Platform has not lost its functionality, but rather plays a more important role today than ever before.

*Image: Caucasus Watch

[1] Zaharova: 3+3 Görüşmelerinin Sırası Ermenistan ve Azerbaycan Tarafından Belirlenecek, *ArmenPress*, July 16, 2026, https://armenpress.am/tr/article/1255656.

[2] Russia Urges Armenia and Azerbaijan to Host Next 3+3 Meeting, *Caucasus Watch*, September 9, 2025, https://caucasuswatch.de/en/news/russia-urges-armenia-and-azerbaijan-to-host-next-33-meeting.html.

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