

Shadow Report on the Kosovo-Serbia Normalisation Process

Between Agreement Implementation
and Managing Tensions

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I. Introduction

Three years after Belgrade and Pristina/Prishtinë accepted the Brussels–Ohrid framework in February–March 2023, the EU-facilitated normalisation process is the single most consequential and the most exposed test of the EU’s capacity to deliver durable security and enlargement outcomes in its own neighbourhood. In an era defined by Russia’s war in Ukraine, contested US engagement in Europe, and an enlargement agenda that the EU has explicitly re-centred as a geopolitical instrument, a stalled normalisation process is no longer a regional file. It is a credibility test: for the EU as a facilitator, for the Western Balkans accession path, and for the proposition that political conflicts in Europe can still be resolved through negotiated, rules-based frameworks rather than through unilateral measures and managed instability.

The dialogue on normalisation of relations, facilitated by the EU since 2011, has been in the focus of the public, political leaders, experts, and media for half a decade. With more than 30 meetings at a high political level, plus more of them at a technical level, and 38 different agreements reached under the auspices of this process,¹ the Kosovo-Serbia normalisation achieved multiple major milestones, but also faced many challenges which shaped the process so far. At the same time, the options for getting information for the interested public were limited: statements of political leaders, the Special Representative of the EU (EUSR), and generally EEAS communiqués and news articles. Oftentimes, conflicting information regarding the dialogue was circulated to the public by different actors, leaving the public and experts interested in the topic without an independent, methodologically transparent baseline against which to assess progress. As years passed and challenges increased, real progress in the normalisation grew difficult to assess in the cacophony of different voices. In that context, this Shadow Report aims to establish a clear, objective, multiperspective, evidence-based, and concise assessment of the implementation of the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation Between Kosovo and Serbia.

This Shadow Report is the first independent, jointly produced assessment of the Brussels–Ohrid implementation written from Belgrade and Pristina simultaneously, drawing on more than twenty years of combined institutional experience at the European Policy Centre (CEP) and Sbunker, and on methodological input from Carnegie Europe-affiliated experts. Its central contribution is the Normalisation Index – an original, replicable, twin-component tool that measures, on one axis, the implementation of each commitment under the Agreement and Annex, and on the other, the engagement of the EU and the United States as external actors. The Index is designed to be applied year on year, so that citizens, experts, governments, the EUSR, EU member states, and the United States can track real movement rather than diplomatic atmospherics. The Report combines this with structured fieldwork in Belgrade and Pristina, focus groups, and desk research to identify the structural challenges behind the implementation gap and to translate them into five sets of targeted, actor-specific recommendations: for the EU, the United States, the governments of Serbia and Kosovo, and civil society.

To set the stage, following the introduction, the Shadow Report first outlines the key developments since 2023 (Chapter 2). Second, to allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of implementation, a unique methodology, reflected in the Normalisation Index, was developed for the needs of the Shadow Report (Chapter 3). Furthermore, the Report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation progress (Chapter 4). Based on the results of the analysis, the Report maps key challenges of the normalisation process (Chapter 5) and offers five sets of concrete recommendations (Chapter 6). The first set of recommendations is aimed at the EU in order to improve its track record in the normalisation dialogue and its role as facilitator. Second addresses governments of Kosovo and Serbia in for them to use the full potential of the normalisation process and move forward with the reconciliation and their respective EU accession. Third targets the government of the United States, in order to maintain its role in the region while supporting the EU’s primacy in the process. Finally, the fourth set of recommendations is for the civil society organisations on all sides with concrete ideas on how they can assist the normalisation process and effectively play their role.

¹ See more at: Balkans Policy Research Group (BPRG), *The Brussels Dialogue Between Kosovo and Serbia: Achievements and Challenges*, Policy Report, September 2020, p. 6, and Ardit Orana & Ramadan Illazi, *Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue: Consequence of the Status Quo*, New Social Initiative (NSI), March 2022.

The argument advanced in the chapters that follow is direct: the normalisation process has stalled not because political will is temporarily absent, but because the architecture of the process itself – its reliance on unsigned commitments, ambiguous language, weak conditionality, and asymmetric incentives – has made non-implementation rational for both governments and unenforceable for the facilitator. The cautious reopening of dialogue in late 2025 and early 2026, including renewed high-level engagement under EUSR Sørensen, offers a narrow window to address those structural flaws rather than to repeat them. Whether that window closes the way the previous three years did, or instead produces specific, sequenced, and verifiable commitments backed by credible conditionality, will depend on choices made in Brussels, Washington, Belgrade, and Pristina in the coming months. This Report sets out, on the basis of empirical evidence, what those choices should be.

II. Overview of Key Developments in the Past Since 2023

A high-level meeting held in Brussels in February 2023, which resulted in reaching an agreement between all sides based on the Franco-German proposal, marked a new phase in the normalisation process. For this reason, this event is taken as a starting point of this Shadow Report and this chapter provides an overview of key developments since this point until April 2026. The period from reaching the Agreement until today can be separated into four main phases: 1) immediate aftermath after reaching the Agreement and multiple crises which peaked with the armed attack on Kosovo Police near village Banjska/Banjskë; 2) deadlock in the process following the 2023 crisis; 3) stagnation during most of 2024; and 4) cautious reopening of the dialogue by the end of 2025 and early 2026.

SERBIA – KOSOVO DIALOGUE · 2023 – 2026

Key Developments Roadmap

From the Brussels–Ohrid framework to the 2026 resumption of talks — in four phases.

4
PHASES



SERBIA-KOSOVO · KEY DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 2023

4-PHASE ROADMAP

II. 1) Phase 1: Agreement and Crisis

In February and March 2023, within the framework of the EU-facilitated dialogue, the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation and its Ohrid Implementation Annex were adopted without a formal legal signature due to a lack of willingness on the Serbian side. A high-level meeting was held in Brussels under the auspices of the EU, facilitated by Josep Borrell and Miroslav Lajčák, during which the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, and the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, accepted the text of the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation.² Although the agreement was not formally signed, both parties committed to its implementation, marking a significant diplomatic step forward and reviving expectations that the dialogue could move toward substantive normalisation. In March, in Ohrid, the Implementation Annex to the previously accepted agreement was reached under the facilitation of the EU.³ Aleksandar Vučić and Albin Kurti agreed on concrete steps and the sequencing of obligations, but without formally signing the document. The Annex addressed key issues such as mutual recognition of documents and the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb Majority Municipalities (ASM). These developments represented a significant diplomatic breakthrough, establishing a structured framework for normalisation and briefly revitalising the dialogue process. However, the absence of a formal signature left room for divergent interpretations and later implementation blockages. After months of Kurti insisting and conditioning the implementation with the signature of the agreements, it was refused by the Serbian side, weakening implementation prospects and limiting their long-term impact on sustained progress. This fragility became increasingly visible in the months that followed.

This fragile momentum soon gave way to escalation between April and June, when Serbian political actors boycotted local elections in the north of Kosovo, followed by municipal takeovers and an escalation of violence, including clashes involving KFOR. Within the broader context of the EU-facilitated dialogue, local elections were held in four municipalities in northern Kosovo, which were boycotted by Serb political actors with the backing of Serbia.⁴ Due to extremely low turnout, ethnic Albanian mayors were elected without meaningful legitimacy among the local Serb population. In May, the newly elected mayors took over municipal institutions with the assistance of special police units, despite warnings from the EU and NATO that such actions could trigger escalation. Protests by local Serbs followed, along with serious security incidents, including clashes with KFOR.⁵ Also, violent clashes occurred between local Serbs and KFOR forces in Zvečan/Zveçani that resulted in dozens of injuries, further escalating tensions.⁶ In June, the Kosovo government deployed special police units in northern municipalities, during which several arrests were made, while Serbian authorities arrested three Kosovo police officers, accusing them of illegal entry into central Serbia.⁷ These developments severely undermined the normalisation process by eroding local legitimacy and triggering a cycle of escalation and reciprocal actions. Instead of advancing implementation of the Brussels–Ohrid framework, the dialogue shifted into crisis-management mode, with trust between the parties significantly deteriorating, creating conditions for an even deeper security rupture later in the year.

Tensions escalated further between July and October, following expropriation measures in northern Kosovo, and culminated in the armed confrontation in Banjska/Banjskë. The government of Kosovo initiated land expropriation processes in northern municipalities for the construction of police infrastructure, which was strongly opposed by the local Serb population and criticised by Serbia as unilateral and unlawful.⁸ Pristina justified the action as a security necessity, while international actors expressed concern over escalation risks. In September, an armed confrontation occurred in Banjska/Banjskë in northern Kosovo, resulting in the death of a Kosovo police officer and several members of an armed group.⁹ Kosovo authorities accused Serbia of supporting an attempt to destabilise and annex the north, while Serbia denied direct involvement.

² European External Action Service (EEAS), *Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell*, 27 February 2023.

³ European External Action Service (EEAS), *Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Implementation Annex to the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation of Relations between Kosovo and Serbia*, 18 March 2023.

⁴ Official Journal of the European Union, C/2024/2654, 2024.

⁵ Balkan Insight, *Kosovo Serbs Continue Protests Against New Mayors in North*, 29 May 2023.

⁶ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), *Dozens of KFOR Troops, Protesters Injured as Clashes Break Out in Serb-Majority Towns in Northern Kosovo*, 29 May 2023.

⁷ Al Jazeera, *Serbia Arrests Kosovo Police Officers as Tensions Soar*, 14 June 2023.

⁸ European Commission, *Kosovo 2023 Report*, SWD (2023) 692 final, Brussels, 8 November 2023.

⁹ Al Jazeera, *Kosovo monastery siege ends following deadly attack on police*, 24 September 2023.

The incident was strongly condemned by the EU and international partners, raising serious security concerns. In October, Serbian authorities briefly detained Milan Radoičić, vice-president of the Serb List at the time, in connection with the Banjska attack, after he publicly acknowledged involvement in organising the armed group, but he was subsequently released without formal charges.¹⁰ On the other side, the court in Pristina has sentenced two persons involved in the Banjska incident to life sentences.¹¹ In response to the Banjska developments and broader tensions, Kosovo imposed restrictions on imports from Serbia, straining economic relations. This period marked a sharp deterioration in the normalisation process, as security concerns overtook political dialogue following the Banjska attack. The combination of unilateral measures, security incidents, and unresolved accountability issues deepened mistrust and effectively froze any prospects for meaningful implementation of prior agreements, a deadlock that carried directly into 2024.

II. 2) Phase 2: Stagnation and Unilateral Measures

In the period that marked the end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024, the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement remained largely stagnant despite increased EU pressure, alongside limited progress through partial technical agreements on freedom of movement. Over the following months, the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement remained stalled, with no significant progress achieved between Serbia and Kosovo.¹² Both sides continued to disagree on key obligations, particularly regarding normalisation steps and institutional commitments, while the EU maintained pressure without concrete breakthroughs. At the EU–Western Balkans Summit in December 2023 in Brussels, leaders reaffirmed that normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo remains a key condition for progress towards EU membership, increasing political pressure and further internationalising the issue of implementation.¹³ In January 2024, Serbia recognised and began to accept identity documents and licence plates issued by Kosovo, enabling freer movement of people, in line with earlier EU-facilitated agreements on freedom of movement and the Ohrid Agreement.¹⁴ However, this move should be understood in the context of contested parliamentary elections held in Serbia in December 2023 and increased inquiry of the European Parliament and Commission, and an attempt of the Serbian government to turn the EU’s attention away from electoral irregularities. At the same time, as of 1 January, visa liberalisation for Kosovo entered into force, granting visa-free travel in the Schengen area following a long process of fulfilling EU conditions, although this development remained formally outside the direct framework of the dialogue.¹⁵ Overall, these developments produced only limited and uneven progress in the normalisation process, as structural political disagreements continued to block implementation of the Ohrid Agreement despite sustained EU pressure. While the technical arrangements on freedom of movement and visa liberalisation improved practical mobility and reinforced Kosovo’s EU integration trajectory, they did not translate into progress on core political obligations, leaving the dialogue effectively stagnant at the level of partial, non-political measures.

The period of developments between April and August 2024 was marked by a Serb boycott of a referendum in northern Kosovo, alongside a dinar-related financial dispute and the dismantling of Serbian parallel institutions. In this period, the institutional tensions and political deadlock in northern Kosovo continued. In April, a referendum was held in the northern municipalities of Kosovo, but it was boycotted by the local Serb population and political representatives.¹⁶ As a result, voter turnout was extremely low, raising questions about institutional legitimacy in the area. The government in Pristina proceeded with the process despite the boycott, while Serbia criticised the lack of inclusion. In May, banking branches linked to Serbia operating in Kosovo were closed amid disputes over the use of the Serbian dinar.¹⁷ The measure was implemented by Kosovo authorities as part of efforts to assert financial sovereignty. Following these developments, a new

10 The Guardian, [Kosovo Serb Politician Arrested Over Role in Armed Ambush of Police](#), 3 October 2023.

11 Radio Free Europe, [Pristina Court Sentences 2 To Life Over Deadly 2023 ‘Terrorist Attack’ In Banjska](#), 26 April 2026.

12 European External Action Service (EEAS), [Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Statement by the High Representative on the anniversary of the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation and its Implementation Annex](#), 17 March 2024.

13 European External Action Service (EEAS), [EU–Western Balkans Summit: Brussels Declaration, 13 December 2023](#), Brussels, 14 December 2023.

14 Kosovo Online, [Borrell: EU Welcomes the Decisions of Kosovo and Serbia to Recognize Each Other’s License Plates](#), 7 January 2024.

15 European Commission, [Visa-Free Travel for Kosovo Citizens to the EU](#), 3 January 2024.

16 Associated Press, [Kosovo Serbs Boycott Vote in Northern Municipalities as Tensions Persist](#), 21 April 2024.

17 N1, [Kosovo Police Shut Down Serbian Bank Branches](#), 20 May 2024.

round of negotiations in Brussels ensued in June.¹⁸ Borell and Lajčák met with Kurti and Vučić separately on a bilateral basis, without a trilateral meeting, but no progress was achieved. Kosovo PM laid out three conditions before he can meet with Serbian President: 1) formal signature of the Agreement; 2) extradition of Milan Radoičić, accused of terrorism, and; 3) withdrawal of Serbia’s reservations to the Agreement expressed in the letter of PM Brnabić to the EU-WB Summit. In August, authorities in Kosovo moved to close the remaining Serbia-supported parallel institutions, including administrative structures in Serb-majority areas.¹⁹ The decision was justified by Pristina as an effort to ensure legal and institutional uniformity, while it was criticised by Serbia and local Serb representatives as a unilateral action. The sequence of events significantly weakened the prospects for meaningful progress in normalisation. As a result, the process shifted further away from implementation of existing agreements and into a prolonged phase of political and institutional confrontation with no effective mediation outcomes.

II. 3) Phase 3: Continued Deadlock Despite Renewed International Attention

In the period from January to April 2025, the closure of Serbian postal services in northern Kosovo coincided with partial Serb electoral participation and renewed international attention. In January, Kosovo authorities closed Serbian Post Office branches operating in northern Kosovo as part of a broader process of integrating public services under Kosovo’s institutional framework.²⁰ Serbia condemned the move, arguing it undermined the rights of the Serb community. In February, parliamentary elections were held in Kosovo,²¹ with participation from Serb political representatives, taking place against the backdrop of continued stagnation in the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. In April 2025, the situation in Kosovo was discussed at a session of the United Nations Security Council,²² where ongoing political tensions and security concerns between Kosovo and Serbia were highlighted. This period contributed more to procedural stability under contested conditions than to any meaningful progress in the dialogue, reinforcing a pattern of managed institutional consolidation by Kosovo authorities alongside persistent political disengagement between the parties.

From May through September 2025, EU parliamentary scrutiny of Serbia–Kosovo relations intensified, while persistent governance disputes in northern Kosovo and limited progress under the Growth Plan framework continued to constrain the normalisation process. In this period, the process remained largely stagnant, while broader regional and EU-related developments gained prominence. In May, the European Parliament held a debate on the progress of relations between Serbia and Kosovo,²³ emphasising the importance of implementing existing agreements and advancing normalisation. During June and July, the normalisation process remained largely stagnant, as no significant breakthroughs were achieved and disputes over governance and institutional control in northern Kosovo continued, with Serbia maintaining its challenges to Pristina’s authority in the area. In August, tensions persisted at a low level without any major incidents, reflecting a continued pattern of managed but unresolved instability. By September, diplomatic engagement remained limited, while attention increasingly shifted toward the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans and the administrative process of ratifying necessary international treaties with the EU, implementing Reform Agendas, and verifying progress. Although the Reform and Growth Facility²⁴ envisaged conditionality for Kosovo and Serbia, reflected in the payment requirement for constructive commitment of both sides in the normalisation process, it was not invoked, thus leaving the normalisation dialogue without meaningful momentum or substantive progress. The developments in this period indicate a continued stagnation of the normalisation process, as EU engagement through parliamentary debate and policy frameworks did not translate into concrete progress on the ground. Despite sustained institutional attention, persistent disputes over governance in northern Kosovo and the absence of political breakthroughs further entrenched

¹⁸ Marija Stojanović, *What are the takeaways from another unsuccessful round of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue?*, *European Western Balkans*, 27 June 2024.

¹⁹ Balkan Insight, *Kosovo Serbs Protest Closure of Serbia-Run ‘Parallel Institutions’*, 2 September 2024.

²⁰ Kosovo Online, *Kosovo Police Raided All Municipal and Post Office Buildings in Serbian System South of the Ibar River*, 15 January 2025, and KoSSev, *Closure of Serbian institutions: At least 59 services were closed*, 15 January 2025.

²¹ Associated Press (AP), *Kosovo’s governing party wins parliamentary election but without majority, preliminary results show*, 10 February 2025.

²² Kosovo Online, *Security Council Session on Kosovo: Who Was Deceiving Who*, 9 April 2025.

²³ European Western Balkans, *European Parliament Debates Annual Reports on Serbia and Kosovo*, 7 May 2025.

²⁴ Official Journal of the European Union, *Regulation (EU) 2024/1449 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on establishing the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans*, 2024/1449, 24 May 2024.

the deadlock between Serbia and Kosovo.

II. 4) Phase 4: Cautious Reopening of the Dialogue

In the final months of 2025, Serb political actors partially re-engaged through participation in local and snap parliamentary elections in Kosovo, accompanied by EU steps toward lifting restrictive measures and the reactivation of municipal governance structures in northern Kosovo. In October, local elections were held across Kosovo, with participation from Serbian political representatives, which was seen as a partial reintegration of Serb political engagement in Kosovo's institutional framework.²⁵ However, underlying political disputes between Kosovo and Serbia remained unresolved. In November 2025, regional leaders and EU officials assessed progress under the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans,²⁶ including discussions involving both Serbia and Kosovo, with emphasis on conditionality linked to normalisation. In December 2025, Serb representatives re-engaged in governance structures in northern municipalities, while the EU began the process of lifting restrictive measures.²⁷ At the same time, snap parliamentary elections were held in Kosovo, where Prime Minister Albin Kurti's party secured a near-absolute majority of the votes, paving the way for the formation of a new government after a year of political deadlock that had paralysed parliament and delayed access to key international funding.²⁸ These developments indicate a limited and partial reactivation of political and institutional engagement within Kosovo, particularly through the reintegration of Serb political actors into electoral and local governance processes. However, despite these procedural advances and the EU's gradual easing of restrictive measures, core political disagreements between Serbia and Kosovo remained unresolved, preventing any substantive breakthrough in normalisation. As a result, the dialogue showed signs of managed stabilisation rather than genuine progress, with improvements in participation and governance not translating into durable political agreement.

In the early months of 2026, the EU announced a resumption of high-level Serbia–Kosovo dialogue amid a government transition in Kosovo and ongoing political instability. At the beginning of 2026, the EU-facilitated dialogue remained largely stagnant, with only limited signs of re-engagement amid continued political uncertainty. In January, the Joint Commission for Missing Persons met in Brussels under EU facilitation, involving representatives from Serbia and Kosovo and focusing on unresolved cases from past conflicts.²⁹ In February 2026, a new government was formed in Kosovo after nearly a year of caretaker administration,³⁰ while the EUSR Peter Sørensen visited both Pristina and Belgrade, he facilitated an agreement on residence permits³¹ for Serbian healthcare workers, educators and students, and he also announced a new high-level meeting between the parties. Serbia and Kosovo expressed cautious readiness to re-engage in the process, but failure to elect a Kosovo President in March/April led to the dissolution of parliament and triggered new snap elections in Kosovo. This development postponed the planned new round of dialogue at the high level in Brussels, but the visit of Enlargement Commissioner Marta Kos to Pristina in May aimed to send a strong political message to Pristina: a promise on Kosovo coming closer to the EU, but also the necessity for making progress in the dialogue with Belgrade.³² These developments suggest a cautious reopening of the political phase of the dialogue after a period of stagnation, driven primarily by EU facilitation rather than substantive bilateral convergence. While the formation of a new government in Kosovo and the announcement of renewed high-level engagement created procedural conditions for reactivation, the process remained fragile and largely dependent on external mediation, with no evidence of immediate progress on core outstanding disputes.

25 European Western Balkans, *Kosovo country report – The One with the Wasted Year*, 6 November 2025.

26 European Commission (DG ENEST), *Western Balkans Leaders' Meeting in Tirana Takes Stock of EU Growth Plan Progress Two Years After Its Adoption*, 21 November 2025.

27 European Western Balkans, *The EU is lifting all punitive measures*, 18 December 2025.

28 Al Jazeera, *Kosovo votes in snap election to end a year of political deadlock*, 28 December 2025. and Koha, *LVV reaches 51 percent, Kurti receives over 400 thousand votes*, 7 January 2026.

29 European Western Balkans, *First Trilateral Meeting of the Joint Commission on Missing Persons Convened*, 23 January 2026.

30 European Western Balkans, *Kurti re-elected as PM, Government approves draft law on EU Growth Plan*, 12 February 2026.

31 European Western Balkans, *One-year residence permits agreed for Serbian students and workers*, 16 March 2026.

32 European Western Balkans, *Marta Kos: It is necessary to ensure political stability in Kosovo*, 15 May 2026.

III. Methodology of Monitoring Agreement Implementation

For the need of monitoring the progress, or lack thereof, in the normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, the partners developed a tailor-made methodology reflected in the Normalisation Index. Developed in the partnership of organisations from Serbia – European Policy Centre and Kosovo – Sbunker with proven experience and history in monitoring the normalisation process, and experts from Carnegie Europe,³³ the Normalisation Index is a one-of-a-kind, original, sustainable, and reliable tool for providing a comprehensive assessment of progress in the normalisation process. It is devised as a tool to guide policymakers in better assessing the developments on the ground beyond the mere descriptive reading of key challenges. The Normalisation Index is composed of two constituent modules: A) the **implementation component** – used for precise measuring of the progress in implementation of the Ohrid Agreement and its Annex, and B) the **engagement component** – used for measuring the EU and US engagement in the normalisation process. When two components are analysed in synergy, they can faithfully portray the state of play in the normalisation process.

III.1 Implementation component

The implementation component of the Index aims to precisely assess the situation on the ground, taking into account all articles of the Ohrid Agreement and Annex. Based on the 5-point scale (shown below), it measures the implementation of each article and the Agreement in general. The sources of verification are based on the fieldwork on the ground (expert exchange, interviews with relevant stakeholders, focus groups), analysis of primary and secondary literature, discourse analysis of relevant political figures (chief negotiators, prime ministers, and presidents of Serbia and Kosovo), and other relevant sources. The assessment of the implementation component is provided separately for Kosovo and Serbia.

5-point scale indicators:

- **4- fully implemented;** (90-100%)
 - All substantive obligations and provisions under the assessed article have been implemented in practice. Implementation is verified by researchers and is not contested by any actor in the process (EU, Kosovo, Serbia).
- **3- largely implemented;** (66-89%)
 - The core obligations of the article have been implemented and verified by researchers. Any remaining gaps are limited, technical, or minor in substance, and do not prevent the article from being considered largely fulfilled.
- **2- partially implemented;** (34-65%)
 - Some provisions or parts of the article have been implemented and verified by researchers, but important provisions remain unimplemented, only partly implemented, or insufficiently evidenced. This score also applies where implementation is claimed but remains contested and cannot be fully verified.
- **1- initial/early stage implementation;** (1-33%)
 - Limited steps toward implementation have been taken, such as preparatory measures, partial administrative action, or isolated implementation of minor provisions. While implementation has begun, it does not yet amount to substantive fulfilment of the article.
- **0 - not implemented.** (0%)
 - There is no verified evidence that the article has been implemented in practice. Claims of implementation, if any, are unsupported, purely formal, or credibly contested by multiple actors.

³³ Alongside authors of this Shadow Report, the Normalisation Index was developed in cooperation with Dimitar Bechev – Senior Fellow and Illiriana Gjoni – Research Analyst at Carnegie Europe.

III.2 Engagement component

The engagement component measures the level of engagement of two key international players in the normalisation dialogue: the **European Union** as a directly involved facilitator, and the **United States** as the most influential and interested actor for the normalisation process alongside the EU. The component takes these two actors from the following reasons: both have been directly or indirectly involved in facilitating agreements between Kosovo and Serbia in the last decade or so, the past experience shows that more engagement from these two actors is correlated with successes in the normalisation dialogue, and they are the only actors with a clear constructive focus on the Kosovo-Serbia dispute. For the needs of measuring the EU/US engagement, the 4-point engagement scale is used (explained below). The sources of verification for this component are based on the fieldwork on the ground (expert exchange, interviews with relevant stakeholders, focus groups), analysis of primary and secondary literature, discourse analysis of relevant political figures (EUSR, EEAS, US Department of State), and other relevant sources. The assessment of the engagement component takes Kosovo and Serbia jointly into account.

EU/US engagement scale:

- **Regional pivot:** strategic – The EU and/or US treat the dialogue as a sustained political priority and engage through continuous diplomatic involvement, coordinated initiatives, structured follow-up, and active agenda-shaping efforts. Engagement is proactive rather than crisis-driven.
- **Regional pivot:** reactive – The EU and/or US increase their involvement in response to crises, rising tensions, or political developments in the region. Engagement becomes more frequent and operationally relevant, but remains primarily crisis-driven, short-term, and reactive rather than agenda-setting.
- **Global focus:** engaging – The EU and/or US maintain a limited diplomatic presence through occasional statements, visits, meetings, or expressions of concern. Engagement is episodic and largely symbolic, without sustained political investment or follow-up, while global priorities still dominate their respective foreign policy agendas.
- **Global focus:** not engaging – The EU and/or US show little or no active involvement in the dialogue. Attention is focused primarily on other global or domestic priorities, with only minimal rhetorical references or routine diplomatic contact.

Engagement is observed across four phases, in which the normalisation process is divided from 2023 to 2026. **The criteria used for dividing phases are the following:**

1. *State of the dialogue itself* – is there an active framework being negotiated, frozen talks, or a resumption?
2. *Dominant type of event* – is there a diplomatic agreement, security incident, unilateral administrative action, international intervention, electoral cycle?
3. *Direction of momentum* – is there an escalation, de-escalation, or status quo?
4. *Natural temporal breakpoints* – is there a change in administration, elections, government reshuffle or similar?

The engagement component complements the implementation component of the Normalisation Index and shows how variations in Western bandwidth correlate with progress on the ground. Assessments reflect implementation from February 2023 until April 2026.

The final results of the data gathered through the implementation and engagement components are aggregated in the final results, providing both statistical value and narrative explanation of the state of play in the process of normalising relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

IV. Results of Monitoring Agreement Implementation

IV.1 Serbia's Implementation Progress

Assessing Implementation of the Agreement

Serbia's implementation track record of the Ohrid Agreement is modest. Out of ten articles directly concerning Serbia, six have not been implemented, all the while, implementation of three articles has started, but it is in early stages, and only one article is partially implemented. The poor track record of Serbia's implementation progress aligns with findings of two focus groups, which suggest a lack of consistent political commitment to full implementation.³⁴ Overall, smaller technical aspects of the Agreement have been implemented, while politically sensitive points and articles considered more important from the other side have not. More than three years after the Ohrid Agreement was reached, almost two-thirds of the Agreement have not been implemented, while Serbia still shows reservations toward the Agreement.

Table 1. Agreement on the Path to Normalisation – Serbia's Level of Implementation

Article	Implementation
1. Good neighbourly relations	Partially
2. Sovereign equality	Early stage
3. Peaceful means	Early stage
4. International representation	Not implemented
5. No blocking	Not implemented
6. Deepen future cooperation	Not implemented
7. Autonomy	/
8. Permanent missions	Not implemented
9. Financial support	/
10. Joint Committee	Early stage
11. Implementation roadmap	Not implemented
Total balance score	13,9%

Article 1 envisages good neighbourly relations and mutual recognition of documents and national symbols, including passports, diplomas, licence plates, and customs stamps. Serbia has implemented this point of the Agreement **partially**. It has taken some steps toward recognising Kosovo's national symbols and documents, most notably the December 2023 decision to allow vehicles with Kosovo licence plates to circulate freely in Serbia without requiring stickers covering state symbols and allowing travel with Kosovo IDs without an entry/exit document. This subsequently meant Serbia recognised the national symbols of Kosovo, as the coat of arms is displayed on IDs and licence plates.³⁵ The partial implementation of plates, IDs, and electricity commitments is best understood as *crisis-management output rather than genuine fulfilment*, according to Aleksandar Šljuka, policy analyst from New Social Initiative (NSI), and explicitly echoed by an interviewee from Pristina.³⁶ Also, in the same year, Serbia quietly recognised Kosovo's customs stamp.³⁷ On the other hand, diplomas and other national symbols, such as the flag, have not been recognised by Serbia. At the same time, bilateral relations between Belgrade and Pristina have been far from good neighbourly.³⁸ Serbia has not taken broader steps toward treating Kosovo "on a basis of equal rights", and relations have

³⁴ Focus group 1, organised in North Mitrovica in December 2025.

³⁵ However, one should note that Serbian Government recognised these documents with a reservation that this move does not imply recognition of Kosovo as an independent state.

³⁶ Aleksandar Šljuka, New Social Initiative (NSI), interview conducted on 6 November 2025, and interview with anonymous civil society representative from Pristina, conducted on 5 November 2025.

³⁷ See more at: Zora Drčelić, *Pečat, šija i vrat*, NIN, September 2023.

³⁸ Miloš Pavković, *Three Years On, the Ohrid Agreement Remains Largely Unimplemented*, Sbunker, April 2026.

remained fraught with tensions, particularly in northern Kosovo following the violent incidents of 2023. The Security Council Report noted in October 2024 that little progress was made in the implementation of EU-facilitated agreements, and both the EU and Kosovo continue to contest Serbia’s fulfilment of the core provisions of this article.³⁹ Therefore, although certain steps were made by Serbia in respect to this article, passports and diplomas still remain to be recognised.

Article 2 puts in focus sovereign equality of states guided by UN Charter principles, including sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights, and non-discrimination. When observed in this context, Article 2 is assessed as being in an **early stage of implementation** in the case of Serbia. Its officials have consistently rejected interpretations of the Ohrid Agreement that would imply explicit or implicit recognition of Kosovo’s statehood. The then-outgoing government of Prime Minister Ana Brnabić sent a letter to the EEAS in December 2023 explicitly stating that the Ohrid Agreement is acceptable solely within the context that does not pertain to the de facto and de jure recognition of Kosovo.⁴⁰ Serbia’s position, reiterated by President Vučić on multiple occasions, is that recognising Kosovo’s sovereignty crosses a fundamental red line, rendering this article effectively unimplemented. Such positions indicate Serbia’s continued refusal to treat Kosovo as a sovereign equal in the political and legal sense envisaged under Article 2, limiting substantive implementation of this provision. On the other hand, Serbia has continued practical interaction with Kosovo institutions in areas such as customs, border/boundary management, energy, missing persons, license plates, and freedom of movement. One could argue that such conduct reflects a degree of de facto acceptance of coexistence and institutional equality.

Article 3 obliges parties to resolve issues by peaceful means and refrain from the threat or use of force. This article is in the **early stage** of implementation, earning this assessment more due to the lack of direct conflict than for genuine investment towards peace. While no open armed conflict has occurred between Serbia and Kosovo, the period since the Ohrid Agreement has been marked by serious security incidents attributed to Serbian actors, most notably the Banjska attack of September 2023, which involved heavily armed gunmen accused of ties to Serbian political and security structures. Banjska is repeatedly cited as a major setback that effectively pushed the process back to an earlier stage.⁴¹ This is confirmed in one of the experts’ interviews, as per Dragiša Mijačić’s observation that “after Banjska, literally everything collapsed”.⁴² This shows that the failure to prosecute has tangible reputational and political costs beyond the legal dimension. The European Parliament has repeatedly called on Serbia to prosecute those responsible, especially Milan Radoičić, the former vice president of Srpska Lista, but as of May 2026 no meaningful judicial proceedings have been initiated in Serbia.⁴³ The overall commitment to peaceful means remains nominal rather than substantive.

Article 4 specifically prohibits Serbia from blocking Kosovo’s membership in any international organisation. Serbia has **not implemented** this article of the Agreement. On the contrary, Serbia clearly violated this provision in April 2024 when its delegates to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (CoE) voted against Kosovo’s membership and threatened to leave the organisation if Kosovo were admitted. According to a Serbian expert, domestic dynamics encourage mutual blame and visible obstruction over constructive compliance, creating a cycle in which each side uses the actions of the other as justification for not implementing agreed commitments, including those related to Article 4.⁴⁴ On the other hand, a civil society representative from Pristina describes Serbia’s CoE lobbying as “a clear breach of commitments”.⁴⁵ The EU amended Chapter 35 accession benchmarks for Serbia in April 2024 to formally reflect this obligation, and the European Parliament has repeatedly called on Serbia to lift its opposition to Kosovo’s membership in international bodies.⁴⁶ Although the Brnabić letter qualifying the Agreement was reportedly withdrawn in

39 Security Council Report, *Kosovo*, Monthly Forecast, October 2024.

40 European Western Balkans, *Lajčák says Serbia has withdrawn letter on Ohrid agreement “red lines”, no reaction from Belgrade*, 9 September 2024.

41 Focus group 2, organised in North Mitrovica in December 2025.

42 Dragiša Mijačić, Institute for Regional Territorial Development (INTER), interview conducted on 26 March 2026.

43 European Parliament, *Draft report on the 2025 Commission report on Kosovo*, 6 March 2026.

44 Helena Ivanov, interview conducted on 27 March 2026.

45 Anonymous interviewee from Pristina, interview conducted on 13. November 2025.

46 European Parliament, *Report on the 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Serbia*, A10-0072/2025, 15 April 2025.

September 2024,⁴⁷ Serbia’s active opposition in international fora has not ceased.

Article 5 envisages separate EU accession tracks for Serbia and Kosovo and represents a safety mechanism from bilateral blocking or advocating among EU member states for blocking the other party, and it has **not been implemented** by Serbia. Serbian officials have continued to contest the legal validity of the Ohrid Agreement, with President Vučić repeatedly noting he would not sign any agreement implying recognition of Kosovo, and with former Prime Minister Brnabić’s letter formally qualifying Serbia’s commitments. Analysts cited in the March 2025 Prishtina Insight report noted that Serbia has obstructed or failed to implement any of the provisions of the Ohrid Agreement, while its actions in international forums have directly undermined Kosovo’s institutional standing.⁴⁸ Furthermore, since Kosovo’s (and any other European country’s) path to the EU leads through the Council of Europe, Serbia’s vote against Kosovo in CoE can be indirectly considered as contrary to Article 5. Serbia not only voted against Kosovo, but has actively lobbied against Kosovo’s accession to multiple international organisations, for instance Interpol alongside CoE. The EU has officially reacted and characterised these actions as breaching Article 5 of the Ohrid Agreement.⁴⁹

Article 6 sets out the stage for deepening future cooperation and additional future agreements. So far, this article has **not been implemented**. No concrete framework for deepening bilateral cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo has been established since the Ohrid Agreement. The Belgrade-Pristina dialogue has been nearly paralysed, and no high-level trilateral meetings have taken place since September 2023. The Security Council Report of October 2024 noted that the parties’ views on how to proceed remain far apart. Without even basic structured bilateral contact, substantive cooperation envisioned under this article remains entirely absent.

Article 7 is not applicable to Serbia. Article 7 pertains to Kosovo’s obligation to establish appropriate arrangements for the self-governance of its Serb community, including the Association/Community of Serb-Majority Municipalities (ASM). This article imposes no direct obligation on Serbia, however, Serbia’s political insistence that ASM precedes every other obligation is the single most-cited driver of stagnation across the interviews. Therefore, a note on this article is necessary for a better understanding of how it influences the implementation of other articles. While Serbia bears no direct obligation, its sequencing demands have de facto blocked progress on Articles 4, 6, 8 and 11. Mijačić is explicit on this: “ASM is the gateway issue for any meaningful progress”, and Šljuka confirms that an unofficial sequencing was discussed but never made transparent.⁵⁰ The insistence on ASM gained traction and became an unofficial condition for Kosovo to join the CoE.

Article 8 concerns the establishment of permanent missions of the two parties at each other’s capitals, and it remains **not implemented**. Article 8 requires both parties to upgrade their existing liaison offices to permanent missions. Both offices continue to operate from the EU Delegation premises in their respective capitals, well below the level envisioned by the Agreement. Serbia has resisted expanding the offices beyond EU premises, viewing any move to independent premises as implying a form of recognition of Kosovo. As documented in research on the liaison offices, Serbia insisted that offices remain within EU premises and refused to allow stamps with Kosovo’s state symbols.⁵¹ One Pristina interviewee called them likely to become “glorified liaison offices” with persistent ambiguity about their mandate, all the while Šljuka argued the term is deliberately ambiguous so that both parties can save face.⁵² No formal steps toward establishing permanent missions have been taken so far.

Article 9 creates a commitment for the EU to establish a special investment and financial support package, and therefore it is **not applicable** to Serbia. This article is coded in Section IV.3 – Implementation Overview, where commitments referring to the EU are covered.

47 Al Jazeera, *Lajčak: Postignut dogovor o sastanku u Briselu, razgovaralo se i o mostu na Ibru*, 6 September 2024.

48 Prishtina Insight, *Two Years On, Kosovo-Serbia Normalisation Deal Still Pending*, 18 March 2025.

49 N1, *EU: Serbia violating agreement on path to normalization of relations with Kosovo*, 13 June 2024.

50 Ibid, interviews with Mijačić and Šljuka.

51 The Dialogue, *Exchanging Liaison Officers*, 2021.

52 Ibid, interviews with anonymous interviewee from Pristina and Aleksandar Šljuka.

Article 10 is at an **early stage** of implementation since the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) was formally established within the required 30-day deadline after Ohrid, with EUSR Miroslav Lajčák as chair and Serbia represented by chief negotiator Petar Petković, as confirmed by the EEAS in April 2023.⁵³ This constitutes a procedural step forward. However, the Committee has met infrequently and has not exercised genuine oversight, given the broader paralysis of the dialogue. A January 2025 JMC meeting was cancelled after Kosovo closed Serbian-run social centres in northern municipalities, illustrating the fragility of even this basic institutional mechanism.⁵⁴

Article 11, which provides for a roadmap for Agreement implementation, is also among the group of **non-implemented** articles. No concrete roadmap for the implementation of the Agreement’s provisions has been agreed upon by Serbia. President Vučić stated after Ohrid that he would work on implementation only insofar as it did not require de jure recognition of Kosovo, effectively conditioning the entire implementation process on political red lines. Two recent publications, a policy brief and study on normalisation of relations published in 2025, both concluded that two years after the Brussels-Ohrid Agreement was reached, the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and the implementation of the agreement have both reached a deadlock, with no substantive roadmap having materialised.⁵⁵ In his interview, Šljuka referred to an *informal implementation timeline* reportedly envisaging Kosovo initiating ASM steps before further measures, which is concrete evidence that a roadmap of sorts existed but was never formalised or made transparent. Thus, the issue is not the absence of any roadmap but absence of a *public, agreed, and enforceable one*.

Assessing Implementation of Annex

When it comes to the Implementation Annex, the state of play is more encouraging compared to the Agreement itself. Serbia has achieved more progress in implementing different points from this document. Four out of twelve points have been fully implemented, while for three of them the implementation is in early stages. Two points are not applicable to Serbia. Point 5 refers to the ASM arrangements, which are Kosovo’s obligations, and Points 3 and 7 refer to amending Chapter 35 benchmarks and the donor conference, which is the EU’s obligation. The impression is that technical aspects in the Annex are more easily implemented compared to sensitive political issues in the Agreement.

Table 2. Implementation Annex – Serbia’s Level of Implementation

Point	Implementation
1. Integral part of the Agreement	Fully implemented
2. Fully commit to honour all Articles of the Agreement	Not implemented
3. Integral part of EU accession process	Fully implemented
4. Endorse Declaration on Missing Persons	Fully implemented
5. ASM arrangements	N/A
6. Joint Monitoring Committee	Early stage
7. Donor conference	N/A
8. Independent implementation of articles	Early stage
9. Paragraphs order without prejudice to the order	Early stage
10. No blocking of any articles	Not implemented
11. All discussions under EU-facilitated Dialogue	Fully implemented
12. Direct negative consequences of failure to honour obligations	N/A
Balance Score Total	52,8%

53 European External Action Service, *Belgrade–Pristina Dialogue: Establishment of a Joint Monitoring Committee in line with Ohrid commitments*, 18 April 2023.

54 Balkan Insight, *Kosovo Seeks ‘Balanced Approach’ From New EU Special Envoy*, 28 January 2025.

55 See more at: Igor Miroslavljević & Nikola Burazer, *Analysis of the Implementation of the Brussels - Ohrid Agreement*, National Convention on the European Union Working Group for Chapter 35, 2025, and Miloš Pavković, *From Brussels to Ohrid, Belgrade and Pristina on a crossroad: Uncovering divergent narratives in Kosovo and Serbia about the EU-facilitated normalisation process*, European Policy Centre (CEP), 2025.

Annex Point 1 – Integral part of the Agreement (Fully implemented): Both parties acknowledged that the Implementation Annex constitutes an integral part of the Agreement, as explicitly stated in the Annex text published by the EEAS.⁵⁶ Serbia has not formally disputed the Annex’s integral status, even if it has contested some of its political implications. The full text of the Annex was published and accepted without objection as a procedural matter, satisfying this largely formal requirement.

Annex Point 2 – Fully commit to honour all Articles (Not implemented): Despite formally acknowledging the Annex, Serbia has, in practice, failed to honour its obligations. President Vučić publicly stated after Ohrid that he would not sign the Agreement and set explicit red lines around recognition, while the Brnabić letter formally communicated Serbia’s reservations to the EEAS. The 2025 European Parliament’s Research Service briefing stated that Serbia is still awaited on initiating recognition of Kosovo’s documents, symbols and institutions, demonstrating that substantive commitment has not been translated into action.⁵⁷

Annex Point 3 – Integral part of EU accession process (Fully implemented): The Annex’s provisions were formally incorporated into Serbia’s EU accession framework. The EU Council amended Chapter 35 benchmarks for Serbia in April 2024 to reflect Serbia’s new obligations stemming from the Agreement and Annex, as explicitly envisioned in the Annex text. This amendment was confirmed by the European Commission and Parliament, making the Agreement and Annex formally binding within Serbia’s accession process.⁵⁸

Annex Point 4 – Endorse Declaration on Missing Persons (Fully implemented): Serbia and Kosovo both endorsed the Declaration on Missing Persons at the Brussels high-level meeting of May 2023, with President Vučić and Prime Minister Kurti both supporting the declaration.⁵⁹ In December 2024, the two sides’ dialogue envoys, Besnik Bislimi and Petar Petković, agreed to implement the declaration, and the European Parliament welcomed the establishment of a Joint Commission on Missing Persons in December 2024.⁶⁰ After one failed attempt at organising the meeting, although the January 2025 commission meeting was subsequently cancelled, the kick-off meeting was organised in January 2026.⁶¹ The spirit of the Annex and Agreement is that parties showcase constructive cooperation in the Commission.

Annex Point 5 – ASM arrangements (Not applicable): This point relates exclusively to Kosovo’s obligation to initiate negotiations for the Association of Serb Majority Municipalities (ASM) in compliance with prior dialogue agreements. Serbia’s role under this point is that of a stakeholder insisting on Kosovo’s compliance, not a party bearing a direct obligation.

Annex Point 6 – Joint Monitoring Committee (Early stage): As noted under Article 10, the Joint Monitoring Committee was established within the prescribed deadline, in April 2023, constituting an early-stage implementation of this Annex point. However, the Committee’s functioning has been severely limited. Meetings have been sporadic, and the January 2025 meeting was cancelled due to bilateral tensions. The Prishtina Insight analysis noted that dialogue remains nearly paralysed, confirming that the Committee has not effectively fulfilled its supervisory mandate.⁶²

Annex Point 7 – Donor conference (Not implemented): The donor conference envisioned within 150 days of the Agreement’s adoption was never held. Radio Free Europe reported in June 2023 that the conference was cancelled due to the failure of both parties to fulfil their respective obligations. The analysis published by NCEU confirmed that the financial incentive mechanism remains entirely dormant, as full implementation, the precondition for any disbursement, has not been achieved by either party.⁶³

56 European External Action Service, [Belgrade–Pristina Dialogue: Implementation Annex to the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation of Relations between Kosovo and Serbia](#), 18 March 2023.

57 European Parliamentary Research Service, [Belgrade–Pristina Dialogue: The rocky road towards a comprehensive normalisation agreement](#), Briefing PE 779.231, November 2025

58 European Parliament, [Report on the 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Serbia](#), A10-0072/2025, Committee on Foreign Affairs, 15 April 2025.

59 European External Action Service, [Belgrade–Pristina Dialogue: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell after the High-Level Meeting](#), 2 May 2023.

60 European External Action Service, [EU-facilitated Dialogue: Successful conclusion of the negotiations for the 2023 Declaration on Missing Persons’ implementation](#), 17 December 2024.

61 Xhorxhina Bami & Milica Stojanovic, [Kosovo and Serbia Kick Off Joint Commission on Missing Persons](#), Balkan Insight, 26 January 2026.

62 Antigone Isufi & Ardita Zeqiri, [Two Years On, Kosovo-Serbia Normalisation Deal Still Pending](#), Prishtina Insight, 18 March 2023.

63 Igor Miroslavjević & Nikola Burazer, [Analysis of the Implementation of the Brussels - Ohrid Agreement](#), National Convention on the European Union Working Group for Chapter 35, 2025.

Annex Point 8 – Independent implementation of articles (Early stage): The Annex stipulates that all articles shall be implemented independently of each other, so that progress on one cannot be made conditional on another. Serbia has, in practice, applied conditionality, linking its own steps to Kosovo’s implementation of the A/CSM. The Security Council Report of October 2024 explicitly noted that “diverging views on the sequencing of the implementation have hindered concrete progress,” demonstrating that the principle of independent implementation has only been nominally accepted.⁶⁴

Annex Point 9 – Paragraphs order without prejudice (Early stage): This provision clarifies that the order of paragraphs in the Annex does not determine the order of implementation. While Serbia has formally acknowledged this provision, its practice of conditioning steps on sequencing and reciprocity effectively undermines it. Both sides have used sequencing arguments to justify inaction, as documented in the Security Council Report and the 2025 EPRS briefing. The provision is therefore acknowledged in principle but not applied in practice.

Annex Point 10 – No blocking of any articles (Not implemented): Serbia has blocked or failed to implement virtually all substantive articles of the Agreement. The 2025 European Parliament report explicitly called on Serbia to lift its opposition to Kosovo’s membership in regional and international organisations, directly referencing Serbia’s violation of the no-blocking commitment. The NCEU analysis⁶⁵ concluded that Serbia has been unwilling to take any step that could be interpreted as a move toward recognising Kosovo, constituting a systematic pattern of blocking.

Annex Point 11 – All discussions under EU-facilitated Dialogue (Fully implemented): Serbia has maintained its engagement within the EU-facilitated dialogue framework and has not sought to transfer discussions to other international forums. Even during periods of heightened tension, Belgrade has continued to work through the EUSR-chaired process and has not unilaterally withdrawn from the EU-facilitated mechanism. This procedural commitment has been consistently upheld throughout 2023–2025, as confirmed by the continued participation of Serbian envoys in dialogue meetings.

Annex Point 12 – Direct negative consequences of failure (Not applicable): This point creates the obligation for the EU, not Serbia, and is therefore analysed in the Section IV.3 – Implementation Overview.

Assessing Engagement

The second component of the Normalisation Index – engagement – covers and maps the focus and type of engagement of two key external actors for the normalisation process: the EU and the US. It captures their focus, differentiating between global, outside WB, and regional, WB-focused actions. Moreover, it introduces binary engagement coding: engaging or not engaging. Focus and engagement are measured against the backdrop of four phases between 2023 and 2026, with the aim to explain implementation progress or lack thereof.

Table 3. Engagement scale

Phase	US		EU	
	Global focus	Regional Pivot	Global Focus	Regional Pivot
Phase 1 (Feb – Oct 2023)	Not Engaging	Reactive	Engaging	Strategic
Phase 2 (Nov 2023 – Dec 2024)	Not Engaging	Reactive	Not Engaging	Reactive
Phase 3 (Jan – Sep 2025)	Not Engaging	Reactive	Not Engaging	Reactive
Phase 4 (Oct 2025 – May 2026)	Engaging	Strategic	Engaging	Reactive

⁶⁴ Security Council Report, [Kosovo](#), Monthly Forecast, October 2024.

⁶⁵ Ibid, Igor Miroslavljević & Nikola Burazer.

Phase 1 – Agreement and Crisis

US Global Focus – Not Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive

During Phase 1, the United States was largely absorbed by the war in Ukraine and its broader global agenda, leaving Kosovo-Serbia dialogue facilitation primarily in the EU's hands. The State Department issued supportive statements welcoming the February and March 2023 agreements, but played no active facilitation role. The US posture shifted briefly to reactive mode following the Banjska attack of September 2023, when Secretary of State Blinken called President Vučić directly,⁶⁶ the White House declassified intelligence on Serbian troop movements near the Kosovo border/administrative line, and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan spoke with Kosovar officials,⁶⁷ but this engagement was entirely crisis-driven rather than sustained or strategic.

EU Global Focus – Engaging; Regional Pivot – Strategic

Phase 1 represents the peak of EU strategic engagement in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. High Representative Borrell personally chaired the Brussels high-level meeting that produced the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation,⁶⁸ followed by a full day of negotiations in Ohrid, which produced the Implementation Annex.⁶⁹ EUSR Lajčák was described by Borrell as working “around the clock” and engaged 24/7. Within 30 days of Ohrid, the EU formally established the Joint Monitoring Committee,⁷⁰ and in May 2023, both leaders endorsed the Declaration on Missing Persons at a further Borrell-chaired high-level meeting in Brussels. This level of personal, structured, and continuous top-level engagement with concrete institutional outputs qualifies unambiguously as strategic.

Phase 2 – Stagnation and Unilateral Measures

US Global Focus – Not Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive

In Phase 2, US engagement dropped to near-zero as the Biden administration's attention remained focused on Ukraine, the Middle East, and domestic politics ahead of the November 2024 elections. The US Mission to the OSCE issued statements reiterating support for the Ohrid Agreement and calling on Serbia to hold Banjska perpetrators accountable⁷¹, but no high-level US visits or initiatives targeting the Kosovo-Serbia track took place. Analysts at the DGAP noted that the Western Balkans had been progressively sidelined in Washington's global calculus,⁷² with engagement limited to reactive statements rather than any proactive diplomatic push.

EU Global Focus – Not Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive

During Phase 2, EU engagement became reactive and increasingly inconsistent. Borrell's attempt to convene a high-level trilateral meeting in Brussels collapsed entirely, with both parties failing to meet pre-conditions, and Borrell acknowledged publicly that “the parties' views on how the normalisation process should proceed remain far apart”.⁷³ The EU amended Chapter 35 accession benchmarks in April 2024 but was unable to impose any real consequences on Serbia for non-compliance, as Hungary blocked punitive measures in the EU Council. Closed personal ties between former Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán and Serbian President Vučić were used in this case, but with political changes in Budapest, things might change. In December 2024, EUSR Lajčák brokered an agreement to operationalise the Declaration on Missing Persons, but the Joint Commission meeting scheduled for January 2025 was immediately cancelled due to bilateral tensions. EU engagement was therefore ad hoc and crisis-oriented rather than strategic throughout this phase.

66 U.S. Department of State, *Secretary Blinken's Call with Serbian President Vučić*, 29 September 2023.

67 The American Presidency Project, *Readout of National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan's Call with Prime Minister Kurti of Kosovo*, 29 September 2023.

68 European External Action Service, *Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell after the Ohrid Meeting with President Vučić and Prime Minister Kurti*, 19 March 2023.

69 European External Action Service, *Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Implementation Annex to the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation of Relations between Kosovo and Serbia*, 18 March 2023.

70 European External Action Service, *Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Establishment of a Joint Monitoring Committee in line with Ohrid commitments*, 18 April 2023.

71 U.S. Mission to the OSCE, *On Recent Developments in Kosovo*, 15 February 2024.

72 Milan Nič & Frauke Seebass, *How the US Elections Could Shake Up the Western Balkans*, DGAP Memo No. 20, 16 October 2024.

73 Security Council Report, *Kosovo, Monthly Forecast: October 2024*, 30 September 2024

Phase 3 – Internationalisation and Deadlock

US Global Focus – Not Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive

Phase 3 saw the Trump administration settle into office with no substantive engagement on the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue. Trump referenced his 2020 Washington Agreement in passing, but these were more rhetorical than substantive, and the region was not central to his agenda.⁷⁴ USAID cuts drastically reduced American-funded programming in the Western Balkans, and reports emerged of possible KFOR drawdown discussions.⁷⁵ The absence of any structured US initiative on Kosovo-Serbia throughout this period confirms a classification of globally focused and non-engaging, with only reactive statements around specific incidents such as UN Security Council debates.

EU Global Focus – Not Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive

Phase 3 opened with the appointment of Danish diplomat Peter Sørensen as the new EUSR on 1 February 2025,⁷⁶ signalling a fresh attempt to restart the process. However, political uncertainty in Kosovo following the February 2025 elections paralysed the dialogue throughout more or less whole year. Sørensen conducted shuttle visits to Pristina and Belgrade and coordinated with the State Department. EU High Representative Kallas visited the region in April 2025 and acknowledged that the EU was identifying mistakes in its facilitation approach.⁷⁷ This confirmed the necessity for the EU to change the focus and approach, which were reactive and not sufficiently engaging. With no high-level meetings and no deliverables produced, EU engagement remained reactive throughout Phase 3.

Phase 4 – Cautious Reopening of the Dialogue

US Global Focus – Engaging; Regional Pivot – Strategic

Phase 4 marks a clear shift in US engagement. Secretary of State Rubio met with Serbian Foreign Minister Đurić in Washington in August 2025 and agreed to launch a formal US-Serbia strategic dialogue aimed at deepening economic and security ties and de-escalating tensions in the Western Balkans.⁷⁸ Simultaneously, in September 2025, the US suspended its own strategic dialogue with Kosovo, citing Kurti's destabilising actions, a structured coercive signal designed to reshape Pristina's behaviour.⁷⁹ The timing of this decision is interesting, as it happened prior to local elections, as was sometimes seen as trying to influence internal political developments. Moreover, the US National Strategy adopted in November 2025, in its opening pages, explicitly states the role of President Trump in negotiating peace between Kosovo and Serbia.⁸⁰ On the other hand, it is important to mention in this case that the US have not nominated ambassadors to Belgrade and Pristina since 2022 and 2024, respectively. The combination of a formal strategic dialogue launch with Serbia, diplomatic activity of the White House, and deliberate pressure on Kosovo constitutes a clear regional pivot with structured follow-through.

EU Global Focus – Not Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive

In Phase 4, EU engagement became more active following the December 2025 snap elections in Kosovo. Sørensen's mandate was extended for two years,⁸¹ indicating a longer-term institutional commitment. The EU began lifting some restrictive measures against Kosovo in late 2025, and in January 2026, the Missing Persons Working Group reconvened. In February 2026, Sørensen visited the new Kosovo government and

74 Atlantic Council, *Trump Should Kickstart Kosovo-Serbia Talks into Making Real Progress*, 25 August 2025.

75 European Western Balkans, *Talk of KFOR Drawdown Reveals a Changing US Approach to the Balkans*, 21 March 2026.

76 Council of the European Union, *Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: EU Appoints a New Special Representative*, January 27 2025

77 Prishtina Insight, *EU Assessing Ongoing Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue: Foreign Policy Chief*, 8 April 2025.

78 U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, *Secretary Rubio's Meeting with Serbian Foreign Minister Đurić*, 6 August 2025.

79 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, *Why the US Suspended a 'Strategic Dialogue' With Kosovo Before It Even Began*, 16 September 2025.

80 The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, November 2025, p. 8.

81 BalkanWeb, *Dialogue with Serbia/ EU envoy visits Kosovo today: Parties must understand the damage they are doing to the country if there is no progress*, 14 January 2026.

separately held coordination talks with US State Department official Brendan Hanrahan in Washington, signalling renewed transatlantic alignment.⁸² The coordination with the US represents an important indicator of the EU’s focus on its posture towards the Kosovo-Serbia normalisation. EU High Representative Kallas indicated readiness to host a new high-level dialogue meeting. However, no such meeting had yet taken place due to the collapse of the Kosovo Government in April 2026, and engagement remained structured but not yet strategically consolidated.

IV. 2 Kosovo’s Implementation Progress

Assessing Implementation of Agreement

Kosovo’s implementation track record of the Brussels Agreement and the Ohrid Implementation Annex is mixed and uneven. In formal terms, Pristina has accepted the Agreement as part of the EU-facilitated dialogue framework and has continued to participate in dialogue meetings, the Joint Monitoring Committee format, and the missing persons track. It has also implemented selected measures that can be interpreted as supporting the Agreement’s logic, including reciprocal recognition of vehicle-registration arrangements, implementation of the Constitutional Court judgment concerning the Visoki Dečani Monastery⁸³ land and cooperation on the Declaration on Missing Persons. However, Kosovo has not taken the decisive step that the EU and several member states have treated as the first practical trigger of the implementation sequence: submitting the EU draft statute for the Association of Serb Majority Municipalities to the Constitutional Court. As a result, Kosovo’s implementation is assessed as more advanced on procedural and technical points, but limited or absent on the politically central obligations concerning self-management, institutional arrangements, and sequencing.

According to the experts, the conflict is rooted in fundamentally incompatible goals: “Serbia does not recognise Kosovo’s independence; Kosovo seeks full sovereignty”. This makes any sustainable compromise inherently difficult, but the situation has now gone beyond difficulty into political deadlock.⁸⁴ ASM is considered an important and necessary step (as a prior commitment), but not a solution to deeper problems, especially interethnic mistrust. Additionally, there are concerns that it could even create new tensions or fears, depending on perceptions.⁸⁵

Table 4. Agreement on the Path to Normalisation – Kosovo’s Level of Implementation

Article	Implementation
1. Good neighbourly relations	Partially
2. Sovereign equality	Partially
3. Peaceful means	Partially
4. International representation	Partially
5. No blocking	N/A
6. Deepen future cooperation	Early stage
7. Autonomy	Not implemented
8. Permanent missions	Not implemented
9. Financial support	N/A
10. Joint Committee	Early stage
11. Implementation roadmap	Not implemented
Total Balance Score	27,8%

⁸² IBNA – International Balkan News Agency, [EU-US coordination on the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue: Sorensen’s message from Washington at a fragile moment](#), 21 March 2026.

⁸³ Xhorxhina Bami, [Kosovo to Implement Court Ruling Awarding Serbian Monastery Disputed Land](#), BIRN, 13 March 2024.

⁸⁴ Interview with Helena Ivanov, March 2026, Belgrade.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Articles 1, 2 and 3 are therefore coded as **partially implemented**. Kosovo has contributed to the practical side of good-neighbourly relations by accepting reciprocal⁸⁶ freedom of movement and licence-plate arrangements and it has framed measures such as the euro-only cash regulation and closure of Serbia-run structures as enforcement of sovereignty and rule of law. Nevertheless, these actions were repeatedly criticised by the EU and the United States as unilateral and insufficiently coordinated, particularly because they directly affected the Serb community in Kosovo and were not resolved through the dialogue.⁸⁷ The closure of Post of Serbia branches in August 2024 was explicitly described by the EU as a unilateral and uncoordinated step that violated dialogue agreements, while the dinar dispute prompted EU and US calls for postponement and a negotiated transition.⁸⁸ However, the EU and US recognised Kosovo's sovereign right to regulate services within its territory, which remains the central argument of the Kosovo side. To some extent the implementation was treated as a technical exercise ("tick the box") rather than meaningful integration, according to experts. Focus was on dismantling parallel structures, not building sustainable alternatives. This approach led to fragile outcomes that later collapsed (e.g., withdrawal of Serbs from institutions).⁸⁹

Articles 4 and 5 are assessed differently because they impose asymmetrical obligations. Article 4, on non-representation of the other party, is coded as largely implemented for Kosovo: Pristina does not claim to speak on behalf of Serbia and has largely focused on its own international legal personality, membership aspirations and bilateral recognition agenda. Article 5 is coded as not applicable/no direct obligation for Kosovo because the operative commitment not to object to Kosovo's membership in international organisations falls on Serbia.

Kosovo's Council of Europe bid illustrates the practical importance of this asymmetry: Pristina sought membership, while the main implementation debate concerned Serbia's opposition and Kosovo's parallel obligation to move on the ASM. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe considered the ASM an important post-accession commitment, while several governments later linked advancement in the Committee of Ministers to concrete Kosovo steps on the Association.⁹⁰ This means Kosovo cannot be coded as blocking Article 5, but its lack of movement on Article 7 indirectly weakened the international representation gains that Article 5 was meant to unlock. According to Dragisa Mijačić, Serbia's stance on Kosovo's UN and other organisations' membership is for internal audiences, not decisive internationally.⁹¹

Articles 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 show limited institutionalisation of the Agreement. Kosovo has participated in cooperation formats, including missing persons discussions and chief negotiators meetings, but there is little evidence of sustained new cooperation in areas such as economy, connectivity, green transition or broader sectoral normalisation.⁹² **Article 8** on permanent missions is **not implemented**. Liaison arrangements from the pre-existing dialogue framework remain relevant, but no new permanent missions have been opened under the Brussels-Ohrid framework. **Article 9** is **not implemented** because the donor conference and special investment/financial package have not materialised, largely because the Agreement has not been fully implemented.

Article 10 is coded as an **early stage** because the EU established the Joint Monitoring Committee in 2023 and Kosovo has accepted the format, but the committee has not generated a verified implementation roadmap or measurable compliance. Article 11 is not implemented because there is still no agreed, operational and public sequencing roadmap that both parties follow.

Article 7 remains the central gap in Kosovo's implementation and is coded as an **early stage**. According to the experts, despite the agreements, Kosovo Serbs feel marginalised within Kosovo institutions and betrayed by Serbia, which accepted Kosovo's legal framework in practice.⁹³ Instead of a reactive approach,

86 Milica Stojanovic & Perparim Isufi, *Kurti Cautious as Serbia Moves to Allow Kosovo Licence Plates*, Balkan Insight 27 December 2023.

87 Guy Delauney, *Pressure grows on Kosovo Serbs with currency curb*, BBC, 2 February 2024.

88 EEAS Press Team, *Kosovo: Statement by the Spokesperson on police operations against post offices in the north*, 5 August 2024.

89 Interview with Maja Bjeloš, March 2026, Belgrade.

90 Dimitar Bechev, Iliriana Gjoni, Lukáš Macek, Milan Nič, Nikola Xaviereff, Wouter Zweers, *Overcoming Inertia in Kosovo*, Carnegie Europe, 22 Maz 2025.

91 Interview with Dragisa Mijačić, March 2026, Belgrade.

92 EEAS Press Team, *Statement by the EUSR for the Belgrade Pristina Dialogue on the occasion of the first trilateral meeting of the Joint Commission on Missing Persons*, 23 January 2026.

93 Interview with Sanja Sovrlić.

there are suggestions that Kosovo should use the dialogue as an instrument to strengthen its statehood and advance its international standing. Membership in the Council of Europe would represent an exceptionally significant step toward international affirmation. This strategy should be built on three main pillars, which are not separate but complement one another: the integration of Serbia-backed parallel structures, the development of social dialogue with Kosovo Serbs and addressing the issue of the Association of Serb Majority Municipalities (ASM).⁹⁴

Assessing Implementation of Annex

Table 5. Implementation Annex – Kosovo’s Level of Implementation

Point	Implementation
1. Integral part of the Agreement	Fully implemented
2. Fully commit to honour all Articles of the Agreement	Not implemented
3. Integral part of EU accession process	Fully implemented
4. Endorse Declaration on Missing Persons	Fully implemented
5. ASM arrangements	Not implemented / early stage
6. Joint Monitoring Committee	Early stage
7. Donor conference	N/A
8. Independent implementation of articles	Early stage
9. Paragraphs order without prejudice to each other	Early stage
10. No blocking of any articles	Early stage
11. All discussions under EU-facilitated Dialogue	Largely implemented
12. Direct negative consequences of failure to honour obligations	N/A
Total Balance Score	48,8%

The Annex is coded as fully implemented only on the points where Kosovo’s commitment is formal or procedural rather than substantive. **Point 1** is **fully implemented** because Kosovo has accepted the Annex as an integral part of the Agreement in the EU-facilitated framework. **Point 3** is also coded as **fully implemented** because the EU has incorporated the Brussels-Ohrid obligations into the enlargement conditionality architecture for Kosovo, including through annual reporting and the broader Growth Plan logic. **Point 4** is **fully implemented** at the level of endorsement because Kosovo, together with Serbia, endorsed the Declaration on Missing Persons in May 2023. Practical implementation remains slower, but the table codes the explicit Annex obligation to endorse the declaration. **Point 11** is **largely implemented** because Kosovo has continued to discuss contested issues within the EU-facilitated dialogue, although some major steps in the north were taken outside an agreed dialogue sequence.

The main negative coding in the Annex relates to good-faith implementation and ASM sequencing. **Point 2** is coded as **not implemented** because Kosovo has not fully honoured all articles of the Agreement, especially Article 7 and because several steps affecting the Serb community were taken without prior agreement in the dialogue. **Point 5**, on ASM arrangements, is coded as **not implemented/early stage**: there is an EU draft statute and Kosovo has engaged politically with the issue, but no decisive institutional act has followed, most importantly, no submission to the Constitutional Court. **Point 10**, can be considered in the **early stages of implementation**, as the relevant commitments have been formally acknowledged but there is still no consistent or operational practice in place to fully translate them into sustained application.” **Point 8**, which says that each party’s implementation obligations are independent of the other party, is coded as an **early stage** because Kosovo has often linked further movement to Serbia’s signature, Serbia’s conduct after the Banjska attack, or reciprocal guarantees, even though the Annex discourages blocking implementation on that basis. The Banjska attack was really putting a lot of pressure on the dialogue process, according to the experts. First, it gave the credibility and legitimacy for Kurti to say, “No”, “I’m not going to do anything

94 Seb Bytyçi, *Trekëndëshi i suksesit: integrimi i strukturave paralele, dialogu social me serbët dhe çështja e Asociacionit*, Sbunker, 1 April 2026.

now because you see, we are going to make peace and then somebody is attacking my policeman”. On the other side, Serbia didn’t do anything to bring to justice the people who were engaged in this process.⁹⁵

The remaining Annex points reflect the limited enforcement architecture. **Point 6**, the Joint Monitoring Committee, is coded as an **early stage** because the mechanism exists under EU chairmanship and Kosovo participates, but it has not produced meaningful compliance or a visible monitoring cycle. **Points 7 and 12** are coded as **not applicable** as they are primary obligation for the EU and is therefore covered in the following section.

Assessing Engagement

Table 6. Engagement scale

Phase	US		EU	
	Global Focus	Regional Pivot	Global Focus	Regional Pivot
Phase 1 (Feb – Oct 2023)	Not Engaging	Reactive	Engaging	Strategic
Phase 2 (Nov 2023 – Dec 2024)	Not Engaging	Reactive	Engaging	Reactive
Phase 3 (Jan – Sep 2025)	Not Engaging	Reactive	Not Engaging	Reactive
Phase 4 (Oct 2025 – May 2026)	Engaging	Strategic	Engaging	Strategic

Phase 1 – Agreement and Crisis

US Global Focus – Not Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive
EU Global Focus – Engaging; Regional Pivot – Strategic

The engagement scale for Kosovo mirrors the broader pattern of implementation. Higher EU and US involvement correlated with crisis containment, but not with full implementation. In Phase 1, the EU was strategically engaged because it brokered the Agreement and Annex, chaired the emerging monitoring architecture and pushed the ASM draft-statute process, while the United States was less globally focused but regionally reactive, intervening strongly during crises in the north. This helped prevent wider escalation after the municipal crisis and Banjska attack, but it did not produce a stable implementation sequence.

Phase 2 – Stagnation and Unilateral Measures

US Global Focus – Not Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive
EU Global Focus – Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive

In Phase 2, EU engagement became more reactive and crisis-oriented, focused on dinar, banking, post offices and Serbia-supported parallel institutions, while the United States repeatedly criticised unilateral moves and prioritised de-escalation. This period produced limited technical management, but little implementation of core political obligations.

Phase 3 – Internationalisation and Deadlock

US Global Focus – Not Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive
EU Global Focus – Not Engaging; Regional Pivot – Reactive

In Phase 3, both EU and US engagement remained reactive, while global bandwidth was constrained by wider geopolitical priorities. The dialogue continued at a technical level and the EU maintained conditionality through reporting, restrictive measures and financial instruments, but domestic deadlock in Kosovo and continued disputes over the north, limited the impact of external pressure.

⁹⁵ Interview with Dragiša Mijačić, March 2026, Belgrade.

Phase 4 – Cautious Reopening of the Dialogue

US Global Focus – Engaging; Regional Pivot – Strategic
 EU Global Focus – Engaging; Regional Pivot – Strategic

Phase 4 is coded as stronger strategic engagement because the EU began to ease measures conditionally, the Growth Plan increased the cost of non-functioning institutions and a renewed high-level dialogue was announced under the new EU Special Representative. The United States also returned to a more strategic posture by linking security, minority rights/inclusion and regional stability. Nevertheless, the engagement record shows that external pressure has been more effective in opening channels and preventing escalation than in compelling Kosovo to implement Article 7 or in producing a jointly accepted roadmap. The new envoy, Peter Sørensen, has not managed to achieve a visible impact yet, adding that coordination between the EU and the US is uncertain compared to previous periods.⁹⁶ According to experts, the EU continues to demand implementation but fails to enforce it effectively.

IV. 3 Implementation Overview

The general overview of the overall implementation does not leave much room for optimism. None of the articles from the Ohrid Agreement has been fully implemented, neither by Serbia nor by Kosovo. Article implementation has rather been sporadic and partial. On the other hand, the track record is slightly better when it comes to the implementation of Annex points. The results of the implementation assessment lead to three key conclusions. There is a **symmetrical non-implementation on the political core** (Articles 6, 8, 11) as neither side has moved on cooperation frameworks, missions, or a roadmap. Second, there is an evident **asymmetrical implementation of individual obligations**. For instance, Serbia's non-compliance with Articles 4 and 5 (international blocking) is matched by Kosovo's non-compliance with Article 7 (ASM). Each side's failure justifies the other's in the "blame game" patterns.⁹⁷ Third, a **crisis-driven partial implementation** on technical issues (Article 1, plates and IDs) is produced not by political will but by crisis-management imperatives, which leaves these gains fragile.

Table 7. Comparative overview of Agreement implementation (Serbia, Kosovo, and the EU)

Article	Implementation Serbia	Implementation Kosovo	Implementation EU
1. Good neighbourly relations	Partially	Partially	N/A
2. Sovereign equality	Early stage	Partially	N/A
3. Peaceful means	Early stage	Partially	N/A
4. International representation	Not implemented	Partially	N/A
5. No blocking	Not implemented	N/A	N/A
6. Deepen future cooperation	Not implemented	Early stage	N/A
7. Autonomy	N/A	Not implemented	N/A
8. Permanent missions	Not implemented	Not implemented	N/A
9. Financial support	N/A	N/A	Not implemented
10. Joint Committee	Early stage	Early stage	Early stage
11. Implementation roadmap	Not implemented	Not implemented	/
Percentage	13,9%	27,8%	12,5%
TOTAL		21,1%	

96 Interview with Sanja Sovrlić.

97 Interview with Helena Ivanov.

Table 8. Comparative overview of Annex implementation (Serbia, Kosovo, and EU)

Point	Implementation Serbia	Implementation Kosovo	Implementation EU
1. Integral part of the Agreement	Fully implemented	Fully implemented	N/A
2. Fully commit to honour all Articles of the Agreement	Not implemented	Not implemented	N/A
3. Integral part of EU accession process	Fully implemented	Fully implemented	Fully implemented
4. Endorse Declaration on Missing Persons	Fully implemented	Fully implemented	N/A
5. ASM arrangements	N/A	Not implemented / early stage	N/A
6. Joint Monitoring Committee	Early stage	Early stage	Early stage
7. Donor conference	Not implemented	Not implemented	Not implemented
8. Independent implementation of articles	Early stage	Early stage	N/A
9. Paragraphs order without prejudice to each other	Early stage	Early stage	N/A
10. No blocking of any articles	Not implemented	Early stage	N/A
11. All discussions under EU-facilitated Dialogue	Fully implemented	Largely implemented	N/A
12. Direct negative consequences of failure to honour obligations	N/A	N/A	Partially
Percentage	52,8%	48,8%	43,8%
TOTAL	45,5%		

When it comes to the general assessment of implementation progress, it is worth noting that some articles of the Agreement and points of the Annex have shared accountability between parties. For instance, the creation of JMC is a shared responsibility of Serbia, Kosovo and the EU. On the other hand, there are several articles/points which are the sole responsibility of the EU, and which also need to be taken into consideration when providing the overall assessment. Organisation of the donor conference, securing negative consequences when parties fail to honour obligations, and legally tying Agreement commitments to the EU accession process are notable examples of concrete actions required from the EU. Implementation of these is also assessed in Tables 7 and 8, therefore, providing a full picture of the implementation progress.

Article 9 creates a commitment for the EU to establish a special investment and financial support package, and it is closely tied with the Implementation Annex point envisioning the EU organising a donor conference within 150 days to set up an investment and financial aid package for Serbia and Kosovo, conditional on full implementation of all provisions.⁹⁸ The donor conference was never held due to the failure of both parties to comply with their obligations. Radio Free Europe reported as early as June 2023 that the conference was cancelled because of non-implementation, and no subsequent rescheduling has been announced.⁹⁹ The financial incentive mechanism tied to this article has therefore remained entirely dormant. The Annex stipulates that failure to honour obligations may have direct negative consequences for the parties' EU accession processes and financial aid. This article has been **partially implemented** by the EU. While the EU formally incorporated the Agreement into Serbia's Chapter 35 benchmarks in April 2024, tangible negative consequences for Serbia's non-compliance have not materialised. The EU News analysis noted that

⁹⁸ European External Action Service, *Belgrade–Pristina Dialogue: Implementation Annex to the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation of Relations between Kosovo and Serbia*, 18 March 2023.

⁹⁹ Radio Slobodna Evropa, *Zbog neispunjenja dogovora, za sada ništa od donatorske za Kosovo i Srbiju*, 9 June 2023.

attempts to impose measures against Belgrade were blocked by Hungary's veto in the EU Council, and no meaningful financial or accession penalties have been applied.¹⁰⁰ The consequence is that the mechanism, therefore, remains formally acknowledged but unenforced in the case of Serbia. On the other hand, a different picture is painted when it comes to Kosovo, as negative consequences have materialised more clearly for Kosovo than for Serbia. The EU imposed restrictive measures after the 2023 northern escalation and later began easing them only gradually, while access to parts of EU financial support and the Growth Plan has been shaped by political functionality and normalisation conditionality.¹⁰¹ However, conditionality has not created equal or decisive incentives for both parties, nor has it produced full implementation of the Agreement. In practice, the Annex has therefore functioned more as a political benchmark than as an enforceable implementation instrument.

The assessment of the EU's implementation progress does not significantly vary from the progress achieved by Kosovo and Serbia. However, in cases when the EU shares implementation responsibility, like with JMC, it depends on constructive engagement of Kosovo and Serbia, which can limit progress. On the other hand, lack of implementation sometimes is justified, such as in the case of the donor conference. Therefore, the EU is not the actor holding the implementation progress, rather, when it fails to fully implement articles, it is due to other actors intentionally slowing down or blocking the implementation.

Finally, when observing overall implementation, it is crucial to put it against the backdrop of the engagement component of the Normalisation Index. In other words, the focus and pivot of two key international stakeholders, the US and the EU, can to a high degree explain mainly modest implementation results. Results of engagement of these two actors towards Kosovo and Serbia are similar. Both actors' focus in the past three years was elsewhere, while engagement was mainly reactive, to address immediate incidents, tension, or political crisis. At no point have both actors engaged strategically with a clear focus towards both Kosovo and Serbia. In that context, governments in Belgrade and Pristina have not felt enough pressure, nor have they expected concrete rewards for moving forward with the implementation. A slow change of focus and pivot of the EU and the EU is observed in the case of Kosovo since October 2025. However, in order to improve implementation track-record and achieve a breakthrough in the normalisation dialogue, one of the key preconditions would be to have clear focus and strategic engagement of the EU and US long term.

V. Identifying key challenges for the normalisation process

Following the extensive fieldwork and desk research, data collection revealed six **structural challenges** that recur across nearly every interlocutor in both Belgrade and Pristina. These challenges are closely related to the implementation progress of the Agreement, or better, the lack thereof. This part of the Shadow Report is specifically relevant for the final section on recommendations, since the work follows the logic of tying recommendations to specific challenge identified in this section.

Challenge 1: The dominance of domestic political logic over normalisation

This is the single most consistent finding across the project's interviews and is well-articulated in the country assessment sub-chapters. Both Vučić and Kurti are described as making decisions calibrated to their domestic political survival rather than to the Agreement.¹⁰² Even technical steps are publicly framed differently in each capital. This produces a structural pattern in which commitments are made in Brussels but abandoned upon return to domestic arenas. Therefore, the issue here is not a simple "lack of political will", but the presence of incentives that systematically reward non-implementation.

100 EUNews, [One year after Ohrid agreement, there is little commitment from Kosovo and Serbia to its implementation](#), 18 March 2024.

101 International Crisis Group, [Kosovo Tests the Limits of EU Patience](#), 16 October 2025.

102 According to interviews conducted with Helena Ivanov, Sanja Sovrić and anonymous journalist from Pristina in March 2026 and November 2025.

Challenge 2: Constructive ambiguity has reached its expiry date

Multiple Pristina interlocutors converged on this point: one said “the era of constructive ambiguity has exhausted its usefulness”¹⁰³, while the other interviewee called the Agreement “flawed from the outset due to its lack of operational specificity”¹⁰⁴. Marko Savković identified “over-reliance on constructive ambiguity” as one of the EU’s principal communication failures. This is a design challenge, distinct from political-will deficits, and it has direct policy implications: any future agreement (or implementation roadmap for the existing one) must be specific, sequenced, and verifiable.

Challenge 3: Eroding EU credibility and the asymmetry perception

There are two sub-themes that are closely related but strongly affect the EU’s credibility in the Dialogue. Perception of the erosion of the EU’s capacity and asymmetry of its actions towards Belgrade and Pristina. These two need to be carefully distinguished and explained, because they are often conflated. When it comes to **capacity erosion**, the EU is widely seen as lacking enforcement tools (“sticks”) and credible incentives (“carrots”).¹⁰⁵ In this context, the donor conference’s non-occurrence is interpreted as a signal of EU resignation rather than EU strength. On the other hand, the **perception of asymmetry** was mapped with several interlocutors¹⁰⁶ from Pristina, who argue Kosovo faces restrictive measures while Serbia does not, undermining EU impartiality. In Belgrade, the framing differs but converges on lost credibility.¹⁰⁷ Both feed EU scepticism, but the policy responses differ. Capacity erosion calls for new instruments, all the while, perception of asymmetry calls for visibly even-handed application of existing ones.

Challenge 4: The ASM as gateway and pretext

The ASM appears in nearly every interview but plays different functions in each. Based on an analytical assessment of the interviews, the ASM should be treated as a *triple-function* issue. First, **as a case of Kosovo’s non-implementation**: the formation of ASM represents a genuine treaty obligation Kosovo has not fulfilled.¹⁰⁸ Second, as a **Serbian gateway demand** for moving forward in the Dialogue. This has been identified in previous studies,¹⁰⁹ but confirmed by Mijačić, who sees ASM as “the gateway issue for any meaningful progress” and Savković describing ASM as “a precondition for Serbia’s engagement”.¹¹⁰ Third, as a **securitized public-discourse object**, it produces negative consequences for the Agreement implementation. Maja Bjeloš describes how ASM has been “portrayed as something like Republika Srpska, increasing resistance”.¹¹¹ Focus Group 2 explicitly mentions concerns, fuelled in part by disinformation, that the establishment of the ASM could replicate the Republika Srpska model. These different functions of the ASM do not exclude each other. Treating the ASM as a single “stumbling block” obscures the fact that the policy response to each function is different. Legal-technical for the first, political bargaining for the second, and communication and counter-disinformation for the third.

Challenge 5: Trust-deficit and the integration model’s structural failure

Integration of Serbs in the political and legal system of Kosovo was one of the primary goals of the normalisation process. However, despite early success in this area, the **trust deficit** between Serbs and central institutions in Pristina is visible, and there are some **structural failures** in the integration model. First, the implementation of agreements has been treated as a “tick-the-box” exercise, focused on dismantling parallel structures rather than building sustainable alternatives.¹¹² Second, integrated Serbs in Kosovo institutions were perceived as a “fifth column,” undermining trust on both sides. Third, economic and social conse-

103 Anonymous interviewee from Pristina, interview conducted online on 7 November 2025.

104 Anonymous interviewee from Pristina, interview conducted on 7 November 2025.

105 According to an anonymous journalist from Pristina, interview conducted on 6 November 2025, Maja Bjeloš, interview conducted on 24 March 2026, and results of Focus Group 2 conducted on 15 December 2025.

106 According to interviews with Emir Abarashi and an anonymous civil society representative, conducted in November 2025.

107 According to Helena Ivanov, interview conducted on 27 March 2026.

108 According to Jeta Xharra and multiple anonymous Pristina interviewees, interviews conducted in November 2025.

109 Miloš Pavković, *From Brussels to Ohrid, Belgrade and Pristina on a crossroad: Uncovering divergent narratives in Kosovo and Serbia about the EU-facilitated normalisation process*, European Policy Centre (CEP), 2025.

110 According to interviews conducted with Dragiša Mijačić and Marko Savković on 26 March 2026.

111 Ibid, Maja Bjeloš, March 2026.

112 Ibid, Maja Bjeloš.

quences such as employment and livelihoods of integration were ignored, leaving outcomes “reversible and unstable”.¹¹³ Fourth, different legal and institutional frameworks (e.g., school viability standards) create practical barriers that no political agreement can overcome without harmonisation work. Finally, focus group observation reinforces this with a useful societal-level observation: “day-to-day coexistence often appears more functional and less tense than political rhetoric would suggest,” while institutional relations are stagnant.¹¹⁴ Thus, the gap between societal pragmatism and institutional dysfunction needs to be addressed in the future in order to make the integration sustainable and avoid scenarios such as November 2022 when Serbs started boycotting Kosovo institutions and reversing the integration process.

Challenge 6: Uncertain US engagement

The role of the US in the Dialogue is very important, as it can be supportive for the EU or distracting, as was the case during the first Trump presidency, which culminated in the Washington Agreement. The interviews capture a US role that is **structurally uncertain** rather than simply absent. According to Mijačić, the US has “stepped back”, while Ivanov describes any Trump-era engagement as “high-profile but unlikely to produce sustainable, long-term solutions”. One interviewee makes a very pointed argument: “renewed US engagement would signal EU failure”.¹¹⁵ The interview findings suggest a more nuanced challenge: how to retain US engagement as a complement without it crowding out an EU process that is already perceived as weak.

VI. Conclusion

This Shadow Report has laid the groundwork for monitoring one of the most important peace and reconciliation processes in Europe, and certainly in the Western Balkans region. It provided a comprehensive, original, tailor-made methodology for measuring progress in the implementation of the Agreement (and Annex), and engagement of key external actors in the process, reflected in the Normalisation Index. One of the greatest advantages of the Normalisation Index is that it is built to monitor progress over time, and it can be employed annually on a long-term basis. Therefore, it can help governments of Kosovo and Serbia to map gaps in implementation and improve their track record, and subsequently the whole normalisation process, but it can also help the EU and EUSR in facilitating the normalisation process.

This report also provided a short overview of key developments since the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation of Relations was reached in February 2023. It divided this period into four phases characterised by ups and downs, escalatory events, and political developments on the ground. Since the February–March 2023 Brussels–Ohrid Agreement and its Implementation Annex, the EU-facilitated normalisation process between Serbia and Kosovo has moved through four distinct but cumulatively disappointing phases. An initial diplomatic breakthrough was almost immediately undermined by the absence of a formal signature, divergent interpretations, and a rapid descent into crisis, culminating in the violent escalation in northern Kosovo and the armed confrontation in Banjska/Banjskë in September 2023. The subsequent period was defined by stagnation and unilateral measures, particularly Pristina’s dismantling of Serbia-supported parallel institutions, banking branches, and postal services, alongside disputes over the dinar and contested local governance, which entrenched mistrust rather than advancing implementation. Throughout 2024 and most of 2025, sustained EU parliamentary scrutiny, conditionality under the Growth Plan, and procedural engagement failed to translate into substantive political progress, leaving the dialogue in a prolonged deadlock under managed instability. Only in late 2025 and early 2026 did cautious signs of reopening emerge, through partial Serb reintegration into Kosovo’s electoral and municipal structures, the EU’s gradual lifting of restrictive measures, the formation of a new Kosovo government, and announcements of renewed high-level engagement, although new snap elections in Kosovo and the absence of bilateral convergence on core issues kept the process fragile. Taken together, these developments demonstrate that the normalisation process

¹¹³ Ibid, Maja Bjeloš.

¹¹⁴ Focus group 1, conducted on 15 December 2025.

¹¹⁵ Anonymous interviewee from Pristina, interview conducted on 13 November 2025.

has been driven far more by external EU facilitation than by genuine political will on either side, with procedural stabilisation consistently substituting for, rather than enabling, durable agreement on the substantive obligations contained in the Brussels–Ohrid framework.

When it comes to assessing implementation progress, statistical analysis offers mixed results and does not support optimism. Neither Kosovo nor Serbia have implemented fully any of the Agreement articles. Implementation levels are rather low, with less than a third of commitments implemented. On the other hand, the implementation of the Annex records much better results, with around half of the whole document implemented, and multiple points on both sides fully implemented. Three patterns emerge from this record: first, a symmetrical non-implementation on the political core of the Agreement (Articles 6, 8, and 11), where neither side has advanced on cooperation frameworks, missions, or a roadmap for normalisation; and second, an asymmetrical non-compliance on individual obligations, most visibly in Serbia’s continued international blocking of Kosovo under Articles 4 and 5 and Kosovo’s failure to establish the Association of Serb-Majority Municipalities under Article 7, with each side’s inaction conveniently serving to justify the other’s in a self-reinforcing “blame game”. Third, the only tangible progress, such as the partial arrangements on licence plates and identity documents under Article 1, has been driven not by genuine political will but by crisis-management imperatives, which leaves even these limited technical gains fragile and reversible whenever tensions resurface.

The fieldwork and desk research identified six interlocking structural challenges that explain why implementation has stalled and that any future re-engagement will need to confront. First and most consistently, the dominance of domestic political logic means that both Vučić and Kurti calibrate their moves to political survival at home rather than to the Agreement, producing a system in which non-implementation is actively rewarded. Second, the era of constructive ambiguity has exhausted its usefulness, exposing a design flaw that demands any future roadmap be specific, sequenced, and verifiable. Third, EU credibility has eroded along two distinct tracks: a perceived loss of enforcement capacity and “carrots” on one hand, and a perception of asymmetric treatment of Belgrade and Pristina on the other, each requiring a different policy response. Fourth, the Association of Serb Majority Municipalities operates simultaneously as a genuine Kosovo non-implementation, a Serbian gateway demand, and a securitised object of public discourse fuelled by disinformation, meaning it cannot be addressed through a single instrument. Fifth, the integration model itself suffers from a structural trust deficit, having been pursued as a “tick-the-box” dismantling of Serbia-supported parallel structures without sustainable alternatives, producing a stark gap between functional day-to-day coexistence on the ground and dysfunctional institutional relations above it. Finally, the role of the United States remains structurally uncertain, posing the delicate challenge of retaining American engagement as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, an already weakened EU-led process. Taken together, these challenges form the analytical backbone for the targeted recommendations that follow.

VII. Recommendations

Given the comprehensive overview of developments in the Dialogue, assessment of the Agreement implementation, and identification of key challenges for the normalisation process, this chapter offers multiple sets of recommendations. First and foremost, recommendations for the EU as a facilitator in the dialogue are presented. These are followed by recommendations for the US as the second most important actor, although not officially involved in the dialogue on normalisation. Based on the findings of the Shadow Report, concrete recommendations are developed for the governments of Serbia and Kosovo, and finally for the civil society organisations in both countries.

a. European Union

- **Abandon constructive ambiguity and define an end-game scenario.** Future agreements and any implementation roadmap should be specific, sequenced, and verifiable.
- **Publish a transparent implementation roadmap with realistic sequencing.** The existence of an informal sequencing arrangement that was never made transparent has allowed both sides to evade their obligations.
- **Strengthen and visibly equalise the application of conditionality.** The Chapter 35 amendments are formal but unenforced. Restrictive measures applied to Kosovo without comparable consequences for Serbia produce the asymmetry perception.
- **Use the EU Growth Plan as concrete leverage tied to implementation milestones.** Several Pristina interviewees noted that the Growth Plan is a tool the EU has so far used cautiously. Tying disbursement explicitly to specific implementation steps would convert it into a credible incentive.
- **Reinforce the EUSR with unified political backing from the High Representative and member states.** The EUSR's effectiveness is widely seen as constrained by limited authority. Adding political weight and authority of the High Representative would be beneficial for stimulating dialogue and encouraging implementation progress.
- **Consider a joint EU accession negotiations track for the governments of Kosovo and Serbia.** Under the assumption that Kosovo will progress on its European path, organise joint inter-governmental conferences between the EU, Serbia, and Kosovo, once Kosovo opens negotiations. This forces structural alignment between dialogue progress and accession progress.
- **Invest in countering disinformation around the ASM** specifically, including a clear, public legal model for the ASM compatible with Kosovo's constitutional framework.
- **Refocus EU programming on integration sustainability** (employment, education, healthcare interoperability) rather than parallel-structure dismantling. Serbia-supported parallel structures providing basic social and communal services alongside health and education institutions should be integrated into the Kosovo system, securing their functionality, instead of simply closing them down.

b. United States

- **Engage in close, visible coordination with the EU rather than parallel tracks.** Stronger US engagement should complement, not overshadow, the EU-led process.
- **Nominate ambassadors to Belgrade and Pristina.** The current ambassadorial vacuum signals deprioritisation regardless of stated intentions.
- **Use US economic and security leverage as a backstop for EU enforcement,** not as a substitute.
- **Avoid parallel initiatives to EU-led facilitation.** Opening parallel process undermines achieved progress in the EU-facilitated normalisation so far. Past US-led initiatives (e.g., the Washington Agreement) lacked sufficient political substance, per several interlocutors.

c. Serbia

- **Cease active opposition to Kosovo's membership in international organisations** (Articles 4 and 5 of the Agreement). Serbia should drop its opposition to Kosovo joining the CoE and EU, while leaving the question of UN membership for the later stage of the normalisation process and subject of negotiations under EU-facilitated Dialogue.
- **Move beyond ASM as a precondition** and engage on Articles 6, 8, and 11, which can be a low-hanging fruit and build the momentum for moving forward with ASM.
- **Ensure full judicial accountability for the Banjska attack.** This is the single most-cited reputational gap in the interviews. Therefore, Serbia needs to establish cooperation with the competent Kosovo authorities through EULEX and finalise court proceedings against those involved in the incident and available to the Serbian judiciary.
- **Develop a sustainable, transparent strategy for Kosovo Serb welfare** focused on livelihoods, education, and healthcare, rather than parallel-institution maintenance as a political instrument. Ideally, this should be established through ASM as envisaged in the Brussels and Ohrid Agreements.
- **Communicate the practical, citizen-level dimensions of the dialogue more clearly.** Focusing on these aspects would ease communication and facilitate the normalisation process.

d. Kosovo

- **Initiate negotiations on the ASM Statute in good faith, within Kosovo's constitutional framework.** Frame ASM publicly as a service-delivery mechanism (education, healthcare) rather than as a sovereignty concession.
- **Refrain from unilateral measures in the North that are perceived as forceful,** particularly where they involve police deployment in Serb-majority municipalities without prior coordination.
- **Re-engage Kosovo Serb representatives substantively in institutional decision-making,** not only through electoral participation.
- **Avoid framing implementation as conditional solely on Serbia's actions.** Bringing up unilateral conditions for implementing one's own obligations is not conducive to normalisation dialogue and progress in implementing the Agreement.
- **Communicate the practical, citizen-level dimensions of the dialogue more clearly.** Focusing on these aspects would ease communication and facilitate the normalisation process.

e. Civil Society

- **Sustain independent monitoring of Agreement implementation, with public reporting.** Civil society organisations have proven to be useful mechanisms and additional to formal procedures and institutions in assessing progress and contribution to its improvement.
- **Build cross-border civil-society work that targets the institutional/societal gap.** Day-to-day coexistence is more functional than political rhetoric suggests. Civil society can amplify and stabilise this rather than only react to crises.
- **Counter ASM-related disinformation with substantive, accessible explanatory content** (e.g., the legal model, comparative cases).
- **Promote youth and student exchanges,** which Focus Group 2 specifically highlighted as a priority confidence-building measure.
- **Advocate for a fully transparent implementation roadmap** and for the publication of the EU draft ASM Statute.

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Annex I

Interview questions

1. What is your general assessment of the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement so far? How would you describe the progress of Kosovo and Serbia?
2. Article 4 of the 2023 Agreement stipulates that Serbia shall not oppose Kosovo's membership in any international organisation. However, Serbia has objected to Kosovo's application for membership in the Council of Europe and has reiterated its opposition to Kosovo's participation in other international bodies. Do you consider this a violation of Article 4?
3. Article 8 provides for the establishment of "Permanent Missions". In diplomatic law, a permanent mission typically represents a state to an international organisation. Do you interpret these "Permanent Missions" as diplomatic representations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, or rather as liaison offices without formal diplomatic status? How should those be different from existing liaison officers in Belgrade and Pristina?
4. The 2023 Agreement bears similarities to the 1972 Basic Treaty between two Germanies, particularly in enabling international recognition without formal diplomatic recognition. How do you assess the parallels between these two agreements?
5. The Implementation Annex foresees the establishment of a Joint Monitoring Committee, which was created in April 2023. However, no information has been made public regarding its activities since then. Given the limited engagement of both parties in the dialogue, do you believe that this lack of political will has affected the Committee's functioning?
6. The EU committed to organising a donor conference to support the implementation of Article 9 of the Agreement. However, the conference has not yet been convened. Has there been any communication from the parties involved regarding its organisation or potential timeline? What message does the EU send by delaying the donor conference?
7. Kosovo has been without a functioning government since February 2025, while Serbia's internal political crisis has further stalled the Dialogue. The new EUSR has yet to facilitate any meetings under the Dialogue process. In your view, what approach is the EUSR likely to adopt — to focus primarily on implementation or to seek additional agreements between the parties?
8. Has the lack of progress in the Dialogue been reflected in Serbia's and Kosovo's respective EU integration processes, given that both are currently grappling with broader domestic and regional challenges?
9. The establishment of the Association/Community of Serb Majority Municipalities (ASM) remains one of the main stumbling blocks in the process, with both sides showing little willingness to compromise. Article 7 of the 2023 Agreement foresees an appropriate level of self-management for the Serbian community in Kosovo, including service provision in specific areas, potential financial support from Serbia, direct communication channels with the Government of Kosovo, and the formalisation of the status of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In late 2023, the EU proposed a draft Statute of the ASM/CSM, but it remained hidden from the public. Do you expect that impasse regarding ASM/CSM will be overcome? To what extent do you believe the ASM/CSM issue will continue to serve as an excuse for Serbia to delay the implementation of the 2023 Agreement?
10. How do you perceive the potential role of a future Trump administration in the process? Recently, Kosovo's President Osmani met Serbia's Foreign Minister Đurić in New York, with Richard Grenell acting as mediator. Do you expect the United States to become more actively involved, particularly if the EU fails to achieve tangible progress — and could this undermine the EU's role in the process?
11. How do you assess activity of the EU and EUSR when it comes to the normalisation dialogue since the Ohrid Agreement was accepted?
12. Do you have any specific recommendations either for the Kosovo government, Serbian government or the EU?

Interviewees List

	Name	Title/Organisation	Date
1.	Emir Abrashi	Democracy Plus	4 November 2025
2.	Eraldin Fazliu	Journalist	4 November 2025
3.	Jeta Xharra	BIRN	5 November 2025
4.	Jeta Loshaj	KCSS	5 November 2025
5.	Besar Gergi	GLPS	5 November 2025
6.	Anonymous	Civil society representative	5 November 2025
7.	Arber Fetahu	KCSF	5 November 2025
8.	Aleksandar Šljuka	NSI	6 November 2025
9.	Miodrag Milićević	NGO Aktiv	6 November 2025
10.	Anonimous	Journalist	6 November 2025
11.	Anonimous	Civil society representative	6 November 2025
12.	Anonimous	Pristina expert	7 November 2025
13.	Anonimous	Pristina expert	7 November 2025
14.	Maja Bjeloš	BCSP	24 March 2026
15.	Marko Savković	ISAC	25 March 2026
16.	Sanja Sovrlić	N1	26 March 2026
17.	Dragiša Mijačić	INTER	26 March 2026
18.	Helena Ivanov	Henry Jackson Society	27 March 2026

Annex II

Focus groups – list of participants:

1. Dragana Vasilijević-Valent
2. Dajana Božović
3. Dejana Cvetković
4. Ana Jakovljević
5. Nebojša Đerić
6. Alsea Ymeri
7. Eriona Hoti
8. Violeta Blakqori
9. Refik Tupella
10. Yllnora Elshani
11. Ermal Boshnjaku
12. Dardane Alimusaj
13. Gentiana Shala
15. Gentrin Krasniqi

Focus groups were organised in North Mitrovica on 8 December 2025 as part of the Winter School titled *Bridging the Gap Between Serbia and Kosovo*. Participants of the Winter School were young people, students, professionals, journalists and academics interested in the process of normalisation or relations from Kosovo and Serbia. Participants were divided into two groups randomly.

Annex III

Methodological explanations

Chapter 3 introduces the Normalisation Index, sets out its two components (implementation and engagement), and presents the 5-point and 4-point scales used to score them. This Annex complements that chapter by documenting the operational rules that govern how the scales are applied in practice: how individual article-level codes are converted into numeric scores, how those scores are aggregated into the country-level and overall percentages reported in Chapter 4, how non-applicable obligations are treated, how contested or ambiguous cases were resolved, and what the Index does and does not measure. The purpose is to make the methodology fully transparent, reproducible by independent researchers, and applicable on an annual basis without recourse to the original coding team.

The Implementation Coding Scale

Each article of the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation and each point of the Implementation Annex is assigned a single ordinal code on a five-point scale, separately for Serbia and for Kosovo. The five values, their narrative anchors, and their corresponding implementation bands are summarised below. Articles that impose no direct obligation on a given party are coded as Not Applicable (N/A) and excluded from that party's denominator (see Section 4).

Score	Category	% band	Operational definition
4	Fully implemented	90–100%	All substantive obligations under the article are implemented in practice and verified by researchers. Implementation is not contested by any of the three reference actors (EU, Kosovo, Serbia).
3	Largely implemented	66–89%	Core obligations are implemented and verified. Remaining gaps are limited, technical, or minor and do not prevent the article from being considered largely fulfilled.
2	Partially implemented	34–65%	Some provisions of the article are implemented and verified, but important provisions remain unimplemented, only partly implemented, or insufficiently evidenced. The score also applies where implementation is claimed by one party but contested and not independently verifiable.
1	Initial / early stage	1–33%	Limited steps toward implementation have been taken -- preparatory measures, partial administrative action, or isolated implementation of minor provisions. Implementation has begun but does not yet amount to substantive fulfilment.
0	Not implemented	0%	No verified evidence that the article has been implemented in practice. Any claims of implementation are unsupported, purely formal, or credibly contested by multiple actors.
N/A	Not applicable / no direct obligation	excluded	The article imposes no direct obligation on the party in question (e.g., Article 7 for Serbia; Article 5 for Kosovo; Annex Points 3 and 7 for both parties, as obligations of the EU). These articles are excluded from the denominator of that party's aggregate score.

From Categorical Codes to Numerical Codes

Each categorical code is mapped to a numeric value on the same scale: 4 points for Fully implemented, 3 for Largely implemented, 2 for Partially implemented, 1 for Initial/early stage, and 0 for Not implemented. When article or point is coded in between two categories, for instance early stage/partially implemented, 1.5 is the value taken in statistical calculation. Articles coded N/A are excluded from the calculation entirely; they do not contribute to either the numerator or the denominator.

For each party (Serbia, Kosovo), and separately for the Agreement and the Annex, the aggregate implementation score is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Aggregate score (\%)} = (\Sigma \text{ article scores} \div (n \times 4)) \times 100$$

where Σ article scores is the sum of the numeric scores assigned to all articles applicable to the party, and n is the number of applicable articles (i.e., excluding those coded N/A). The denominator ($n \times 4$) therefore represents the maximum possible score the party could attain on the articles that actually apply to it. This formulation has three deliberate properties. First, it ensures that parties are evaluated only against obligations they actually bear; Serbia is not penalised for non-implementation of Article 7 (which is Kosovo's obligation), nor Kosovo for Article 5 (which is Serbia's). Second, despite statistical calculation, the Normalisation Index should be interpreted with narrative explanations for each coded article of the Agreement. Chapter 4 reports the narrative coding alongside the percentage precisely to avoid this misreading. Third, the percentage output is comparable across parties and across editions of the Index, even where the set of applicable articles differs.

Overall (Joint) Implementation Score

The overall implementation score for each instrument (Agreement and Annex) is the arithmetic mean of the Serbia and Kosovo aggregate scores. Where one party's denominator differs from the other's because of N/A coding, this is a simple unweighted average – each party contributes equally, regardless of the number of applicable articles. The rationale is normative rather than statistical: the normalisation process is bilateral, and neither party's obligations are weighted as more important than the other's for the purposes of headline reporting.

Code Assign Method and Cross-Validation

All article-level codes were assigned independently and in parallel by the lead author in Belgrade (Pavković) and the lead author in Pristina (Gashi), using the operational definitions in Section 2 and the source rules in Section 3. The two sets of codes were then compared; agreement was reached on every article either at first pass or following structured discussion with reference to the underlying evidence. The reviewers (Bechev, Gjoni, Subotić) independently validated the final codes against the underlying evidence and the operational definitions before publication.

Potential Limitations of Normalisation Index

Three limitations of the Normalisation Index, as currently constructed, deserve explicit acknowledgement.

- **Ordinal granularity.** The five-point scale cannot capture every meaningful distinction between articles. An article moving from genuine 2-grade activity to substantial 3-grade activity is treated identically to one moving from minimal 2-grade activity to threshold 3-grade activity. The narrative explanations in Chapter 4 are therefore essential reading alongside the numeric scores; the Index is not designed to be reported without them.

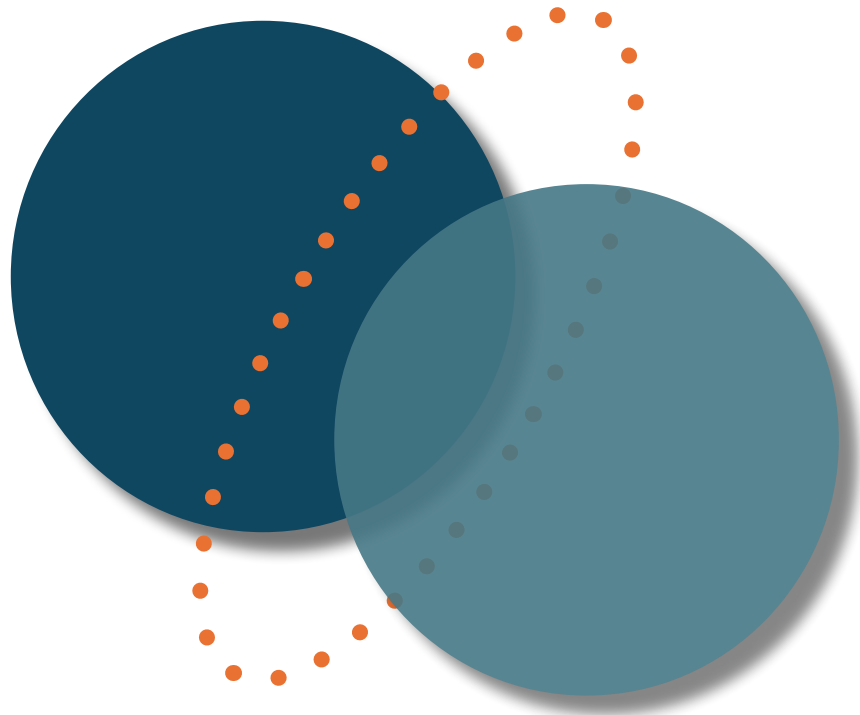
- **Article weighting.** All articles enter the denominator with equal weight, regardless of their political centrality to the Agreement. Article 7 (autonomy for Kosovo Serbs), Article 6 (deepening cooperation), and Article 11 (implementation roadmap) carry disproportionate political weight in the dialogue, but in the Index, they each count as one of eleven. This is a deliberate design choice – weighting would require a defensi-

ble normative ranking of articles, which the partners judged would Page Annex III compromise the Index's neutrality – but it means a high aggregate score can mask non-implementation of the most consequential provisions.

- Implementation is not impact. The Index measures whether obligations have been fulfilled in practice, not whether their fulfilment has produced normalisation outcomes on the ground. A party can score highly on procedural points (for instance, Annex Point 11 on conducting all discussions under the EU-facilitated framework) without contributing meaningfully to substantive reconciliation. The challenges chapter (Chapter 5) and the recommendations (Chapter 6) address the gap between implementation and impact.

Replication

The Normalisation Index is designed for annual replication. A future research team applying the Index to a subsequent twelve-month period should follow five steps: (i) compile the evidence base for each article using the four source categories specified in Section 3, with a clear temporal cut-off date; (ii) assign categorical codes independently by at least two coders, ideally one based in each capital; (iii) resolve coding divergences by reference to the operational definitions and the conservative-coding rule; (iv) apply the aggregation formula in Section 4 to produce per-country and overall percentages, reporting both the raw aggregate and the floor-adjusted figure where the floor effect is material; (v) interpret the percentages alongside the narrative coding and the engagement component, not in isolation. The authors invite other researchers and institutions to apply the methodology, and CEP and Sbunker will make the coding sheet and source database available on request to support replication.



Shadow Report on the Kosovo-Serbia Normalisation Process

Between Agreement Implementation
and Managing Tensions

European Policy Centre (CEP) is a non-governmental, non-profit, independent think tank, based in Belgrade. It was founded by a group of professionals in the areas of EU law, EU affairs, economics and public administration reform, with a shared vision of changing the policy making environment in Serbia for the better – by rendering it more evidence based, more open and inclusive and more substantially EU accession driven. Profound understanding of EU policies and the accession process, the workings of the Serbian administration, as well as strong social capital combine to create a think-tank capable of not only producing high quality research products but also penetrating the decision-making arena to create tangible impact. Today, CEP organises its work into four programme areas: Good Governance, Internal Market and Competitiveness, Regional Policy, Energy and Environment and Our Europe.

Sbunker is a non-governmental media organization, founded in 2016, which is committed to providing analytical and substantive views on important political, security, economic, social and cultural issues in Kosovo, the Western Balkans and beyond. Furthermore, through the "Disinfo" program, Sbunker monitors the content published daily in the local media and identifies fake news with tendencies to misinform the public, including foreign malign influences. In addition, Sbunker offers various podcasts where philosophical and theoretical views are elaborated, books by various authors are discussed and political trends in the region are analyzed.

Through research, journalism and technology initiatives, Sbunker has established itself as a trusted voice for citizens who want a more transparent and responsive government - and for institutions that want to demonstrate their commitment to serving the public.