

## Blinken reiterates US willingness to continue efforts towards Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

PM Pashinyan hailed the dynamics in bilateral relations with the US, noting that a very effective partnership was established with the launch of the Strategic Dialogue in 2019.

“This year is also important, we are looking forward for a for the meeting with our American partners with a rather extensive agenda. This will be a very good opportunity to discuss various issues to make our dialogue more effective,” the Prime Minister said.

Referring to regional issues, PM Pashinyan said at this moment there is a new phase of tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan, noting that the recent escalation resulted in losses.

Antony Blinken noted, in turn, that Armenia is a very valuable partner for the United States, and appreciated the latter’s commitment to lasting peace.

“We can also strengthen the ties between our countries in all directions. We have discussed all this with Prime Minister

Pashinyan,” Blinken said.

The interlocutors discussed topics on the agenda of Armenia-US relations, emphasized the consistent development of strategic dialogue.

Reference was made to the process of normalization of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations.

Nikol Pashinyan highly appreciated Mr. Blinken’s personal efforts in supporting the negotiation process and dialogue, in the direction of ensuring peace and stability in the South Caucasus region. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the readiness of the Republic of Armenia to reach concrete solutions, particularly on the basis of the principles already publicly recorded in writing on international platforms.

Antony Blinken emphasized the willingness of the US to continue its efforts in the negotiation and peace process and expressed hope for continued dialogue.

At the meeting, ideas were also exchanged on other issues of mutual interest.

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## Armenian Foreign Minister meets with Chair of European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defense

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan has met with MEP Nathalie Loiseau, the Chair of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defense.

"Armenia-EU Partnership agenda issues were discussed, where the EU legislative body has its unique role in advancing them. In this context, the prospects of deepening partnership and mutual efforts were discussed," the foreign ministry said in a readout.

The sides comprehensively discussed regional issues in the South Caucasus. Armenia's vision of overcoming the existing



challenges, including with international support, was presented to MEP Loiseau. The importance of suppressing territorial aspirations against Armenia and the

unconditional adherence to the territorial integrity and inviolability of borders was emphasized. The principled approach and documents adopted by the European Parliament, containing unambiguous assessments and messages, in difficult times for the people of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, were touched upon.

FM Mirzoyan thanked MEP Nathalie Loiseau for her significant contribution in advancing issues of key importance for Armenia and protection of humanitarian values and awarded her with the Medal of Gratitude of the Republic of Armenia.

## Azerbaijan looking for excuses for border escalations – Armenia MFA

The Armenian Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned Azerbaijan's latest provocation and reaffirmed the previously voiced proposals of the Armenian side to implement reliable measures aimed at increasing border security.

The statement comes after a fresh Azerbaijani provocation this morning left four Armenian soldiers killed and another wounded.

"Despite the February 12 statement from the relevant authorities of Armenia that the footage and information disseminated by Azerbaijani media outlets claiming that an Azerbaijani soldier was wounded in shooting by Armenian border guards was being investigated, the

Azerbaijani side resorted to aggressive actions in the morning of February 13. This shows that Azerbaijan is looking for excuses to carry out border escalations," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"These actions were preceded by belligerent statements of the military and political leadership of Azerbaijan, as well as informational and propaganda preparations in the past days. The Azerbaijani leadership is continuously trying to abort the efforts of the actors interested in the stability and security of the South Caucasus to resume negotiations aimed at the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan," the statement reads.

"We strongly condemn the military

provocations of Azerbaijan and urges to refrain from steps that destabilize the situation and to return to negotiations. Once again, we reaffirm the previously voiced proposals of the Armenian side to implement reliable measures aimed at increasing border security," the Ministry stated.



## Armenia, EU discuss opportunities for advancing Crossroads of Peace project



Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan in Brussels met with Gert Jan Koopman, the Director-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission.

Ahead of the Armenia-EU Partnership Council session, the sides discussed a broad range of bilateral agenda issues, particularly the effective application of the CEPA provisions and prospects of deepening partnership, the foreign ministry said in a readout.

In this context, they commended the visit of the delegation of the European External Action Service and the European Commission to Armenia in December 2023, and discussed the steps aimed at increasing Armenia's economic resilience.

FM Mirzoyan and Director-General

Gert Jan Koopman also discussed issues of Armenia's participation in regional economic and transport projects, as well as looked into the opportunities for further advancing the Crossroads of Peace project developed by the Armenian government.

The security situation in the South Caucasus and challenges in the direction of ensuring lasting stability were also discussed.

Efforts aimed at addressing the mid-term and long-term needs of the forcibly displaced Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh were discussed.



## Azerbaijan's strategy aimed at deepening enmity in the region: Armenian PM receives UK lawmakers



The strategy of the Azerbaijani government is aimed at deepening enmity in our region, which is a very disturbing fact, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at a meeting with UK parliamentary delegation led by MP John Whittingdale.

“Despite all these facts, our government is committed to the peace process, because our belief is that the peace process has no alternative. Of course, we should do everything to achieve concrete results in the peace process, and we are doing it. But unfortunately, it is not possible to do this without the political will of the other side. And today's incident that claimed the lives of four soldiers testifies not only to the lack of political will for peace, but also to Azerbaijan's intentions to deepen the enmity and military escalation, the Prime Minister said.

He said “this is evidenced by the events that took place yesterday and today.”

The statement came in the wake of a fresh [provocation](#) by Azerbaijan that left four Armenian troops killed and one wounded.

“The Azerbaijani press published information yesterday evening, according to which, in the area of today's incident, an Armenian border guard opened fire in the direction of the Azerbaijani positions. Immediately after that, the Military Police of Armenia announced that an investigation was initiated on the basis of this information, because there is a very strict order from the Ministry of Defense of Armenia not to provoke any escalation, not to give in to provocations,” PM Pashinyan noted.

“And that was a very clear message from Armenia, and the press release of the Military Police clearly stated that if that fact is proven, it would mean a violation of the order, resulting in legal consequences. But despite that, early this morning, Azerbaijan started a local but large-scale attack with the use of drones, and as I mentioned, unfortunately four servicemen were killed,” he added.

Referring to the relations between Armenia and the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister hailed the dynamics in bilateral relations over the past years. Nikol

Pashinyan voiced hope that this dynamic will not only continue, but will rise to a new level of relations.

Sir John Whittingdale expressed his condolences and support to the families of those killed as a result of Azerbaijan's military operation and to the Armenian people. At the same time, he expressed concern about the military operations and emphasized the need to implement steps aimed at strengthening peace and stability.

The interlocutors discussed a number of issues related to the Armenia-United Kingdom multilateral cooperation, strengthening of inter-parliamentary ties.

Reference was made to the democratic reforms implemented in Armenia, the steps taken by the Armenian government to fight corruption, and the issues related to the processes taking place in the Caucasus.

The UK parliamentarians also referred to the capabilities of the Armenian government in meeting the humanitarian needs of more than 100,000 forcibly displaced people from Nagorno Karabakh. Support from the international community was also highlighted.

## In delimitation process with Azerbaijan no new borders should be created, says FM Mirzoyan

In the process of delimitation between Armenia and Azerbaijan no new border has to be created, but the borders confirmed by the Alma-Ata declaration and later reaffirmed by the parties should be reproduced on the ground, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said at the end of the fifth meeting of the EU-Armenia Partnership Council during the joint press conference with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell.

“I reiterated Armenia's commitment to agreements reflected in statements adopted in quadrilateral meetings in Prague in



October 2022 and in Granada last autumn as well as the agreements, announced by the President of the European Council Charles Michel following the trilateral meetings with leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Brussels on May 14 and July 15, 2023.

We remain convinced that Armenia and Azerbaijan should reaffirm that they recognize each other's territorial integrity based on the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration and the most recent maps elaborated by competent and authorized bodies of the Soviet Union should become the basis for the delimitation of the borders between the two countries. This means that in the process of delimitation between Armenia and Azerbaijan no new border has to be created, but the borders confirmed by the Alma-Ata declaration and later reaffirmed by the parties should be reproduced on the ground,” said the Foreign Minister.

## US concerned about deadly clashes between Armenia, Azerbaijan – Miller



The US is concerned by the reports of deadly military-to-military clashes which resulted in several casualties, Spokesperson for the US Department of State

Matthew Miller said at a daily briefing today, commenting on the recent flareup between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

“We offer our heartfelt condolences to the families of those killed and injured. The use of force undermines negotiations. The only way to a sustainable peace is at the negotiating table,” Miller said, adding that “any ceasefire violations should be investigated and properly addressed.”

“As the Secretary continually emphasizes, the United States is committed to Armenia-Azerbaijan peace negotiations,”

the Spokesperson said.

Four Armenian servicemen were killed, one was wounded as Azerbaijan resorted to provocation in the early hours of February 13.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry strongly condemned the attack and reaffirmed the previously voiced proposals of the Armenian side to implement reliable measures aimed at increasing border security.

It accused Azerbaijan of looking for excuses to carry out border escalations.

## PM’s Press Secretary responds to Baku’s statements: Azerbaijan continues strategy of deepening enmity in the region

The press secretary of Armenian Prime Minister Nazeli Baghdasaryan has responded to several statements from official Baku, specifically noting that Azerbaijan continues its strategy of deepening enmity in the region, which poses a continuous threat of destabilization, Baghdasaryan wrote this on her Facebook page.

In response to several announcements from official Baku, I am authorized to announce:

The legislation of the Republic of Armenia is an internal matter of the Republic of Armenia, and no external force has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of our country.

As for territorial claims, Armenia is committed to the agreements reached

with Azerbaijan on international platforms to recognize each other’s territorial integrity on the basis of the Alma-Ata Declaration, to conduct the demarcation and delimitation of the borders between the two countries based on the Alma-Ata Declaration, to open the regional communications on the basis of the sovereignty, jurisdiction, the principles of equality and reciprocity.

Azerbaijan regularly violates these agreements by persisting in aggressive rhetoric, using force and the threat of force, that contradict the written agreements reached at international platforms. Additionally, Azerbaijan continues to occupy 31 vital territories belonging to the Republic of Armenia. All this shows

that Azerbaijan continues the strategy of deepening enmity in the region, which is a continuous threat of destabilization.

Armenia will continue its efforts to establish peace and again offers Azerbaijan the withdrawal of troops, based on the 1991 border line, which will be a cornerstone step for stability and mutual trust in the region. As for the peace treaty, there is an already agreed-upon point in the draft being negotiated between Armenia and Azerbaijan, according to which the parties cannot refer to their legislation to refuse to fulfill any provision of the peace treaty.

We repeat: Armenia and Azerbaijan have already reached an agreement on this point, and the statements from official Baku contradict this agreement as well.

## Vahan Kerobyan steps down as Minister of Economy

Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan has announced his resignation.

“During these three-plus years, I have worked with unwavering devotion, filled with love for every citizen of Armenia. I worked at least six days a week, from 8 am to 9 pm on average, with a total of 15-16 vacation days used over three years. I lived every day of my work with the dominant desire to have a strong Armenia as soon as possible. I was determined, honest and devoted to the motherland,” Kerobyan said in a Facebook post.



“Compared to 2020, the GDP of Armenia in 2023 increased by about 100% in US dollars, and by about 50% in AMD. During this period, Armenia rose from 112th place to 86th place in terms of GDP

per capita, we surpassed Azerbaijan, Belarus and many other countries with this indicator for the first time. The budgeted programs of the Ministry of Economy increased from 12.5 billion drams in 2019 to 91 billion drams for 2024. Labor productivity, volume of investments, and foreign trade turnover of Armenia have increased sharply,” he noted.

He thanked the Prime Minister for the opportunity to serve the country. Vahan Kerobyan assumed office on November 20, 2020.



## France, Germany, Poland FMs call for fair and sustainable peace in the South Caucasus



The Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and Poland have called for a fair and sustainable peace in the South Caucasus.

“We call for a fair and sustainable peace in the South Caucasus and support the mediation efforts of the European Union and of the United States of America to facilitate dialogue between Armenia and

Azerbaijan,” Stéphane Séjourné, Annalena Baerbock and Radosław Sikorski said in a joint statement.

“We reiterate our support to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the states of the South Caucasus,” the Ministers said.

## Iran supports peace talks between Armenia, Azerbaijan – Raisi

Iran supports peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Iran’s President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi said at a meeting with Armenian Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan.

He emphasized the willingness and readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to guarantee the strategic security of the Caucasus region and the red lines of Iran.

emphasized the will and readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to guarantee the strategic security of the Caucasus region and the red lines of the Islamic Republic of Iran in this regard.

Dr. Raisi also stated: “We do not agree



with the presence of foreigners in the region under the pretext of solving problems, and we believe that their presence will not only not solve the problem, but will become a bigger problem for the nations and governments of the region.”

Referring to the willingness of the high officials of the two countries to develop

commercial and economic relations and to upgrade them to the level of the current political relations, the President said he supports the implementation of all agreements reached between Tehran and Yerevan.

Mher Grigorian, the Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia and the Chairman of the Joint Commission of Armenia and Iran, in turn, appreciated Iran’s support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia and emphasized the willingness of the Armenian government to develop economic and commercial relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially in the energy and mobility.

## Armenia opens diplomatic representation in Luxembourg

The Armenian flag was raised and the anthem was played as Armenia opened an office in Luxembourg. Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Luxembourg Ararat Mirzoyan and Xavier Bettel attended the official opening ceremony.

Addressing the attendees, Minister Mirzoyan said the event marks the beginning of a new chapter in the relations between the two friendly countries.

“The establishment of a resident diplomatic presence of Armenia in Luxembourg is an expression of our commitment to fostering closer relations and effectively advancing our multi-faceted cooperation. My Government’s decision to establish a resident diplomatic presence is also a

tribute to the values we share and the valuable support we have received from Luxembourg in recent years,” the Minister said.

He emphasized that Armenia and Luxembourg share historical parallels characterized by remarkable resilience and determination. “Luxembourg has managed to successfully overcome hardships, showing that even in the face of adversity, a small nation can carve its path to peace and prosperity,” he noted.

“In these challenging times, marked by unprecedented global uncertainties, Armenia’s strong commitment to achieving peace and stability in our region should be seen not only as a prerequisite for the

prosperity of our own citizens, but also as part of the collective vision of the European family aimed at promoting such shared values as democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. And, on this important path the genuine cooperation with like-minded partners is an invaluable asset,” Minister Mirzoyan stated.



## Armenia, Iran could soon enhance energy swap deal

Armenian Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures Gnel Sanosyan doesn't rule out that Armenia and Iran could soon increase the volumes of the gas for electricity swap deal.

The gas for electricity agreement between Armenia and Iran has been [extended](#) until 2030 and enables Armenia to import greater volumes of natural gas and export more electricity.

"I believe that in terms of the legal documentation we have implemented the important phase and soon, as required, according to needs and also infrastructures, we will be able to use that opportunity. New power transmission lines are under construction in order to be able to export greater volumes of electricity to Iran. Both sides have the desire to increase the volumes, and the changes will



be visible in various stages," Sanosyan told Armenpress.

The minister also spoke about the involvement of Iranian companies in construction projects in Armenia. He said that the bigger the project the harder it is to find contractors.

Iran, having highly developed construction firms and being Armenia's neighbor, can have participation in construction

programs in Armenia, and it has done so in some cases.

"I think this is a mutually beneficial process. We need a construction company, and they have the corresponding construction company, we are neighbors geographically, and it is easy to involve them in this work," Sanosyan said.

The minister confirmed that Iran is interested in the reservoir construction projects in Armenia.

Armenia plans to build 15 new reservoirs and 3 projects will soon be put for bidding.

An Iranian company that won the tender to construct the Kajaran-Agarak section of the North-South road is now transporting equipment and will launch the construction soon.

## Armenia to acquire former French President's mansion for its Embassy in Paris



Armenia will acquire the mansion belonging to 3rd President of France Valéry

Giscard d'Estaing since 1956 for its Embassy in Paris.

The government today approved 23 million euros for acquisition of premises in the 16th Arrondissement of Paris. The price has been agreed on as a result of long negotiations, while the real value of the building significantly exceeds the amount.

Deputy Foreign Minister Mnatsakan Safaryan said at the government sitting the building housing the Armenian Embassy

in France does not belong to Armenia and has been used free of charge. The contract signed in 1995 expires in 2025.

According to the Deputy Minister, due to the development of Armenian-French relations and the expansion of functions, the conditions of the current building are not sufficient, as our permanent representations in UNESCO and La Francophonie are also located in the Embassy.

## Iran ready to export medicine to Armenia

The Islamic Republic of Iran says it is ready to export Iran-made pharmaceutical products to Armenia, [Mehr News Agency](#) reports.

During the 18th meeting of the Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Commission held on February 14, the sides exchanged views to further expand economic cooperation.

Head of Iran's Food and Drug Administration (IFDA) Heidar Mohammadi voiced the country's readiness to export domestically produced drugs to Armenia.

Iran enjoys self-sufficiency in the production of drugs and pharmaceutical

equipment, he underlined.

For her part, Deputy Minister of Healthcare of Armenia Lena Nanushyan said that Iran has made significant progress in the production of medicines and medical equipment.

Armenia welcomes cooperation with Iran in the field of health tourism, pharmaceutical insurance, and healthcare, the official added.

In a related development, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari held talks with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of

Armenia Vahan Kostanyan.

During the meeting, Kostanyan welcomed the presence of Iranian companies in the road construction projects of Armenia.





## EU increases humanitarian aid to Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh with €5.5 million

The European Commission is allocating an additional €5.5 million in humanitarian aid to support the Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. Many of the people who fled to Armenia during the last year's mass exodus took little to no belongings with them, leaving them dependent on emergency aid.

€1.5 million of this funding is assigned for disaster preparedness to enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities to potential crises. The remaining €4 million of humanitarian funding is mainly focusing on providing the displaced Karabakh

Armenians with regular cash transfers and vouchers to help them cover their basic needs.

Through its humanitarian partners, the EU aims to support people in need with access to food, shelter healthcare, mental health services, and protection.

Underlining EU's humanitarian support to Karabakh Armenians, Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič, said: "This is the first winter for thousands of Karabakh Armenians who fled to Armenia last Autumn. In these

challenging times, it is our humanitarian duty to provide protection and assistance to the people most in need. With this new €5.5 million funding, we will aim to further strengthen the existing EU humanitarian response to the displaced people in Armenia, by providing them with access to basic services."

This funding comes in addition to the €12.2 million already announced by the European Commission in response to the mass exodus of Karabakh Armenians in September 2023.

## U.S. additional funding bill includes Nagorno-Karabakh aid

The U.S. additional aid legislation includes humanitarian assistance for vulnerable people who have been impacted by conflicts around the world, including in Nagorno-Karabakh, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said at a press briefing.

On February 13, the United States Senate passed a \$95bn bill with aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

The legislation will now head to the Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

"Yesterday, the Senate took important action to advance America's core national security interests by overwhelmingly passing the national security supplemental agreement," Sullivan said. "This bipartisan legislation will allow the United States to continue to support the people of Ukraine,



alongside our allies and partners, as they fight every single day to defend their freedom and independence.

"It will provide Israel what it needs to defend itself against Hamas terrorists and other terror threats, and help replenish Israel's air defenses so they're prepared against threats they face from Iran and Iranian-backed militia groups like Hezbollah.

"It will provide resources for our troops in the Middle East who have faced attacks from Iran-backed militias as they continue the important mission of defeating ISIS, as well as our forces who are protecting international commerce in the Red Sea from persistent attacks by the Houthis.

"The bill will provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance for vulnerable people who have been impacted by conflicts around the world. That includes millions of Ukrainians who have been displaced by Russia's brutal invasion. It includes conflicts in Sudan and Nagorno-Karabakh. And this support also includes dealing with the urgent needs of the more than 2 million innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza, the vast majority of whom have nothing to do with Hamas."

## Amazon Web Services interested in strengthening cooperation with Armenia

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met Michael Punke and Max Peterson, vice presidents of Amazon Web Services, in Munich.

Issues related to the cooperation between the Armenian Government and Amazon Web Services, implementation of joint programs were discussed.

The representatives of the company emphasized their willingness to develop and further strengthen the cooperation

with Armenia and added that they are in the stage of discussions and dialogue with the Ministry of High-tech Industry.

In particular, during the meeting, reference was made to the implementation of programs in the field of digitization and the future joint works planned in this direction.

Prime Minister Pashinyan emphasized that digitization works are among the

priorities of the Armenian government and emphasized the importance of close cooperation in this direction.

Prime Minister Pashinyan also participated in "Digital trust and government continuity. Cloud computing in the era of shifting geopolitics" round table discussion, which was held behind closed doors. The event was organized by Amazon Web Services and the Munich Security Conference.

## EU expresses commitment to stand by Armenia to strengthen its resilience – joint statement



Armenia and the EU released a joint statement after the Armenia-EU Partnership Council met for the fifth time in Brussels on 13 February 2024.

The meeting confirmed the mutual interest and commitment of Armenia and the EU to strengthen and deepen their relations based on common values. To this end, they agreed to launch work on a new Armenia-EU Partnership Agenda, establishing more ambitious joint priorities for cooperation across all dimensions, reads the statement.

“The EU announced an additional €5.5 million in humanitarian aid to support the displaced Karabakh Armenians. This funding comes in addition to the €12,2 million to address urgent humanitarian needs, as well as the recent adoption of €15 million budget support for socio-economic needs.

“The Partnership Council reviewed the implementation of the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). The EU welcomed Armenia’s commitment to CEPA implementation, appreciated the progress achieved and encouraged Armenia to pursue its reform agenda. The new Armenia-EU Partnership Agenda will aim to unlock the full potential of the CEPA.

“The Partnership Council reiterated the shared commitment of Armenia and the EU to human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles. The Partnership Council welcomed the accomplishments to date on the implementation of justice reform and the fight against corruption, the creation of a Ministry of Interior and the reform of the police service in Armenia, with EU support. The parties also acknowledged remaining challenges in the

fight against discrimination, hate speech and disinformation, and Armenia committed to work towards further progress in these areas. The EU commended Armenia on recently becoming the 124th state party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and encouraged Armenia to consider relevant capacity-building opportunities.

“The Partnership Council acknowledged Armenia’s willingness to start a visa liberalisation dialogue with the EU, and the EU’s preparedness to continue to undertake further efforts to explore options to do so, further to the November 2023 Foreign Affairs Council. The EU welcomed the implementation of the Visa Facilitation agreement and of the Readmission agreements by Armenia and encouraged Armenia to sustain and further up its efforts.

“The EU expressed its commitment to stand by Armenia to strengthen its resilience in different sectors, notably trade, energy and connectivity. The Partnership Council noted that while CEPA did not provide for preferential tariffs for trade in goods, it contained important potential for increasing bilateral trade flows. The parties committed to unlocking this potential through joint efforts. The parties committed to further cooperation to prevent sanctions circumvention while the EU commended Armenia’s efforts in this regard.

“The EU underlined the importance of applying administratively the Common Aviation Area Agreement, which has the potential to create new and more direct air transport connections and generate economic benefits to both sides. The parties discussed ways to advance the energy transition of their economies to become more resilient and competitive. The EU reiterated its support to Armenia’s participation in the Black Sea electricity cable project. The parties will continue to work together to enhance Armenia’s energy production from renewable sources, including through investments under the Economic and Investment Plan, as well

as to ensure nuclear safety.

“The parties also reaffirmed the importance of combating climate change, and in this context welcomed Armenia’s adoption of a Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy, and encouraged Armenia to further scale up its ambitions to reach climate neutrality.

“The Partnership Council discussed the progress made in reforms of the education, research, health, social protection and civil protection sectors. The parties acknowledged the positive evolution of Armenia-EU cooperation on research & innovation, and discussed how to use the unexploited potential on digital connectivity.

“The Partnership Council underlined the importance of the Eastern Partnership framework as a regional cooperation platform. The Partnership Council noted that the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) has successfully mobilised over €550 million worth of investments in Armenia. It supported amongst others regional connectivity, access to finance for SMEs, green buses and energy efficient public buildings, and the socio-economic development of Syunik, which also benefits from a dedicated Team Europe Initiative. The Partnership Council expressed a commitment to continue fostering sustainable development in Armenia by leveraging public and private investments and welcomed the recently launched Armenia-EU Investment Coordination Platform.

“The EU side also expressed its strong condemnation of Russia’s illegal aggression against Ukraine and the negative effects this unjustified war has for the wider Eastern Partnership region, Europe as a whole and globally.

“Armenia informed the EU about the humanitarian and human rights impact of Azerbaijan’s use of force in Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023 and the subsequent displacement. The EU reiterated its rejection of the use or the threat of use of force, also in the context of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations and supports a peaceful conflict resolution.



page 8 ➔ “The parties further stressed the absolute necessity of establishing durable peace and stability in the South Caucasus. The EU reiterated its commitment to support the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan based on the principles of mutual recognition of territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders based on the 1991 Almaty Declaration. The EU welcomed the policy direction of the Government of Armenia aimed at working towards peace and normalisation in the region, including the opening of regional transport links under the countries’ sovereignty and national jurisdiction, as well as

according to the principles of equality and reciprocity, which also underpin Armenia’s “Crossroads of Peace” project. Armenia welcomed the ongoing strengthening of the EU Mission in Armenia. The parties confirmed the need to fully, immediately and effectively implement all the International Court of Justice orders in the case on the Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan).

“Ahead of the Partnership Council, the EU issued the Partnership Implementation Report on Armenia-EU relations since the previous Partnership Council in May 2022. The report underlined that Armenia

continued implementing an ambitious reform agenda with strong EU support including financial assistance. It concludes that Armenia-EU relations have never been stronger.

“The Partnership Council was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr Josep Borrell. The Armenian delegation was led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Mr Ararat Mirzoyan. The European Commission’s Director-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Mr Gert Jan Koopman, also participated in the meeting.”

## Armenia, EU launching work on new ambitious partnership agenda – Josep Borrell

Armenia and EU have decided to launch work on an ambitious new partnership agenda, EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Josep Borrell said at a joint press conference with Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan in Brussels.

“This decision sends us a strong signal of mutual interest in a new strategic phase in our relations and will provide a clear roadmap and vision for the way forward,” he said, adding that “the future starts today.”

Mr. Borrell welcomed the steps taken by Armenia in the fight against corruption and urged Armenia to further address the challenges in the fight against discrimination, hate speech and disinformation.

He also congratulated Armenia on becoming the 124th state party of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,



describing it as a “very important and courageous decision.”

“We discussed options to start visa liberalization dialogue,” Borrell said, encouraging Armenia to step up reforms to progress in the issue.

He reiterated EU’s commitment to support Armenia’s participation in the Black Sea Electricity Cable project and other regional connectivity projects.

Referring to regional security issues, the EU High Representative said the latest

shooting at the border was deplorable. “It again illustrates the urgent need for the distancing of forces, something the European Union has been advocating for for a long time,” Borrell said.

“Today I have to reiterate the European Union’s full commitment to supporting a sustainable and lasting peace based on the principles of sovereignty, inviolability of borders and territorial integrity. The EU Mission in Armenia has recently been reinforced and will continue to contribute to ensuring an environment conducive to normalization efforts,” he stated.

The High Representative noted that the EU will continue to support Armenians displaced from Nagorno Karabakh, adding that the Commission [has announced](#) an additional €5.5 million in humanitarian aid.

## Armenian PM, OSCE Chair discuss developments in the South Caucasus

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a meeting with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of Malta Ian Borg within the framework of the Munich Security Conference.

Nikol Pashinyan and Ian Borg exchanged thoughts on the developments

taking place in the South Caucasus. The Prime Minister referred to the principles of the Armenian side in the process of normalizing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

At the same time, the effective use of the tools of the organization in accordance with the OSCE mandate to contribute

to regional stability and security was emphasized.

Issues related to multi-sectoral cooperation and further development of ties between Armenia and Malta were discussed. The organization of bilateral high-level reciprocal visits was emphasized.

## Azerbaijan's Balancing Act Between West and Russia; Aliyev seems to choose the lesser evil for himself



During his recent interview to Noyan Tapan, Analyst Hovsep Khurshudyan discussed a pivotal shift in geopolitical dynamics. He highlighted the United States' strategy of distancing Turkey from Russia by dismantling the Russian-Turkish alliance. Khurshudyan elucidated that breaking this alliance opens the door for Armenia's liberation from the Kremlin's influence, marking a significant change expected before spring.

Khurshudyan suggests that the West, led by the USA, is orchestrating a plan, applying substantial pressure on Turkey, causing it to reconsider its close ties with Russia. This shift signals the end of the Russian-Turkish alliance, a relationship once crucial for Russia's transport logistics and as a potential Trojan horse in NATO.

The analyst draws historical context from the concept of the "Russian-Turkish cage," a term borrowed from Hrant Ter Abrahamyan's series. For centuries, this cage has persistently shaped and influenced Armenia's geopolitical landscape. It intermittently loosened its grip, notably during the Soviet Union era when Turkey was firmly aligned with the United States. Consequently, upon Armenia gaining independence, it could navigate the regional dynamics autonomously, unburdened by apprehensions of Turkish interference. Thus, during the Soviet Union era, the cage periodically weakened.

Khurshudyan emphasizes the impact on Russia-Turkey relations, pointing out

that the USA's influence is causing Turkish banks to withdraw from financing Russian-Turkish trade. He also notes the potential consequences for Azerbaijan, particularly in its relationship with Russia, emphasizing the intricate geopolitical maneuvering in the South Caucasus.

Khurshudyan draws attention to the intricate dynamics involving Aliyev and Azerbaijan's geopolitical choices. He notes the connection between Aliyev's return to the Western platform, specifically the European one, and the settlement of the Artsakh and Azerbaijani conflict. Recognition by powerful nations, as he highlights, is crucial for Aliyev's presidency, given the intricate nature of international politics.

Khurshudyan expresses skepticism about Aliyev's intentions, citing past instances of deception, such as an incident involving Charles Michel in August 2022. Aliyev's return, he emphasizes, is a significant political and symbolic step that puts him at risk of damaging relations with Russia.

The analyst discusses Aliyev's strategic moves, including calling for early elections and demonstrating an ability to address bilateral issues with Armenia. He acknowledges the role of Armenia in inadvertently supporting Aliyev's position through agreements and concessions, which portrayed the ability to solve issues without Western influence.

Aliyev's recent election process, according to Khurshudyan, did not make any progress in relations with Armenia due

to additional conditions posed by Aliyev that Armenia cannot accept. The elections have concluded, yet progress in diplomatic relations with Armenia remains stagnant. It is now imperative for him to declare his allegiance, prompting recognition or potentially facing international isolation akin to the situation in North Korea. In opting for the lesser of two evils, severing ties with Russia poses significant risks, given the commitments Aliyev made, notably during the period of ethnic cleansing in Artsakh.

Should Aliyev choose to re-engage with Western Platforms, it essentially means returning to a metaphorical Granada. In this context, the Granada document awaits his signature as a testament of loyalty to Western civilization and political principles, requiring him to substantiate his commitment on these prominent platforms.

The imminent decision for Aliyev to align with the West or break ties with Russia poses significant challenges, with potential repercussions for promises made to Russia, particularly regarding ethnic cleansing in Artsakh.

Continuing the discussion, Khurshudyan highlights the evolving rhetoric among Azerbaijani experts. He notes that recent statements signal a shift in perspective, emphasizing the importance of strengthening relations with the West. This departure from earlier considerations of forming a new world order with China, Turkey, Iran, and Russia reflects a nuanced approach.

The analyst refers to a similar logic expressed by Putin in a recent interview, emphasizing the economic significance of BRICS compared to the G-7. He distinguishes between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and purchasing power, stating that China has surpassed the United States in purchasing power.

Azerbaijan, Khurshudyan suggests, strategically positions itself based on cooperation terms with the West. If the West is unwilling to collaborate on their terms, the possibility of aligning with Russia becomes a viable



option, rejecting the initially proposed world order. However, recent indications from Azerbaijani experts emphasize a renewed commitment to strengthening ties with the West, dispelling previous notions of potential aggression against Armenia, which were attributed to Russia's influence.

The postponement of the meeting between Erdogan and Putin is highlighted, which was supposed to take place on February 12, but it was postponed again and moved to after Putin's election, that is, May. Khurshudyan speculates on potential reasons and the impact on Aliyev's return

to the Western platform. He also addresses misinformation about Turkey's Ministry of Defense presenting an axe to Putin, clarifying that such gestures are unofficial and aimed at signaling support to Azerbaijan. Khurshudyan advocates for Western pressure on Azerbaijan, proposing potential military sanctions if energy sanctions prove ineffective. He explains that such measures could restrict Azerbaijan from acquiring new weapons that rely on Western technologies, thus restoring the military balance. The analyst raises questions about mutual judicial processes and their impact on the peace process, urging

transparency and accountability for crimes committed by both sides in the conflict. In conclusion, Khurshudyan underscores the pivotal role of Turkey in this geopolitical realignment. As Turkey leans towards the West, Azerbaijan may reassess its allegiance with Russia, potentially reshaping the regional power dynamics. The analyst encourages the West to leverage diplomatic pressure, including potential military sanctions, to influence Azerbaijan's alignment and maintain a delicate balance in the region.

Translated by Liana Sargsyan

## Armenia is not Russia's ally in matter of Ukraine, reiterates Pashinyan

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has reiterated that Armenia is not Russia's ally in the Ukraine conflict.

"The situation is difficult, so is our stance," Pashinyan said during his meeting with the Armenian community in Germany where he was on a visit for the Munich Security Conference, when asked on Yerevan's position in the Ukraine issue.

He said that the Alma-Ata Declaration is the basis for recognition of the independence and territorial integrity of the republics that gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

"We recognize the Alma-Ata Declaration, but it's not just for us. 13



Soviet republics have acknowledged the Alma-Ata Declaration, including Russia and Ukraine. By the way, they are the ones who initiated it, because Russia, Ukraine and Belarus decided with the Belovezha Accords that the Soviet Union no longer

exists, and that they become independent states and recognize each other's borders. Our perception in the matter of Ukraine is that the basis for recognizing the independence and territorial integrity of the republics is the Alma-Ata Declaration. In our logic, the same should apply in case of Ukraine, because that document pertains to us all. And if we tear it down, then we tear everything down. I've said this long ago, Armenia is not Russia's ally in the matter of Ukraine, and this is our sincere stance. I said this for the first time two years ago, and we very much regret that we can't have any impact on that situation. The Ukrainian people are a friendly people to us," Pashinyan said.

## Pashinyan meets with the Director General of the International Organization for Migration

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with Amy Pope, Director General of the International Organization for Migration.

Issues related to cooperation between the Armenian government and the International Organization for Migration were discussed.

The Prime Minister referred to the reforms implemented in the field of migration in our country, including the steps

towards digitization, his office said.

According to the source, Nikol Pashinyan presented the Armenian government's steps aimed at solving the humanitarian problems of forcibly displaced people from Nagorno Karabakh, and at the same time emphasized the continuous support of the international community.

Amy Pope emphasized the effectiveness of the reforms implemented in the

field of migration in Armenia and noted that the organization, in turn, is ready to contribute to their further effective implementation through close cooperation. The Director General of the International Organization for Migration praised the Armenian government's steps towards solving the humanitarian problems of forcibly displaced people from Nagorno-Karabakh.

## Azerbaijan shows no intent to comply with international law, Armenian envoy tells UN Security Council



Azerbaijan has no intention of complying with the international law, Armenia's Permanent Representative to the UN Mher Margaryan said the UN Security Council Open Debate on "The impact of climate change and food insecurity on the maintenance of international peace and security."

He said it is evidenced by Baku's continued denial to comply with the eight provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice in the period of 2021-2023.

"For months, Azerbaijan manipulated disingenuous environmental agenda to justify the imposition of a total blockade on a population of 120,000 people in Nagorno-Karabakh, in gross violation of the international humanitarian law. Notwithstanding the order of the International Court of Justice issued in February and reaffirmed in July 2023, which obliged Azerbaijan to "take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions", Azerbaijan has failed to implement the Court's legally binding Order, opting, instead, for manipulative misinterpretations in order to perpetuate the conditions of a man-made humanitarian crisis," Amb. Margaryan said.

He noted that the blockade, which was imposed on the ethnic Armenian population from December 2022, culminated

in September last year with the use of deadly military action against civilian population, in realization of the criminal goal of conducting ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh.

"We have been consistently alerting the UN and this very Council that, emboldened by the results of the use of force in the past, Azerbaijan has been seeking to normalize violence and aggression in order to engage in the acquisition of territories by force, to impose unilateral solutions and to resolve international disputes through military means. Azerbaijan's repeated transgressions, including the armed attacks against Armenia's territory in May 2021 and September 2022, have led to significant ecological damage. Those acts of aggression have brought about forest fires and land degradation and included an attack against a water reservoir with potentially devastating humanitarian and environmental consequences," Mher Margaryan stated.

"Azerbaijan continues to justify its unlawful conduct with unfounded land mine accusations – a claim that has been twice rejected by the International Court of Justice. Armenia has made all the possible efforts to revisit and update the information it has in its possession regarding the presence and distribution of landmines in the territories, which, for many years, have been characterized by the dynamic of shifting control lines. Despite being under no legal obligation to do so, Armenia has recently presented a comprehensive package of the reviewed landmines data as a gesture of good will, and we have invited the relevant international partners to participate in the verification of the accuracy of all the available information," he added.

The Ambassador reminded that in December 2023, as part of an agreement and as a confidence building measure, Armenia withdrew its bid to host COP29 and lifted objections for the nomination of Azerbaijan. "We note that hosting this major international event on climate comes with a set of responsibilities and requires a spirit of constructive cooperation. Regrettably, we have come to observe further transgressions and violence, contrary to the spirit of the agreed arrangement," he noted.

"On the night of 13 February, Azerbaijan conducted an armed attack against the territory of Armenia, which resulted in human losses. Such brazen transgressions demonstrate, time and again, that Azerbaijan has no intention of complying with the international law, as also evidenced by its consistent denial to comply with the eight provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice in the period of 2021-2023," the Permanent Representative stated.

"It is incumbent upon the UN Security Council, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, to take effective measures and to ensure that justice can be served and that breaches of international law can be essentially prevented in the future. Manifestly, failure to do so only serves the interests of those who seek to undermine the viability of international law and to challenge the integrity and credibility of the international legal system," he said.

"The United Nations has the ultimate responsibility to uphold compliance, ensure justice and accountability and to fight impunity, to the pursuit of which Armenia is fully committed," the Ambassador concluded.



## Los Angeles Mayor, Council President lead groundbreaking ceremony for TUMO L.A.



Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass was on hand for the groundbreaking ceremony at the future home of the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies L.A. headquarters in North Hollywood, located at 4146 Lankershim Boulevard, *Asbarez* reports.

"We are committed to empowering Los Angeles' next generation of youth to gain skills that will prepare them for jobs in the technology industry," said Mayor Bass.

"TUMO LA will provide much needed design and technology education to local youth through after school and weekend programs completely free of charge. This Center will allow Los Angeles youth to maximize their potential by discovering their passions for creative technologies and building the cutting-edge skills essential for navigating the ever-evolving digital world," Bass added.

Mayor Bass was joined by L.A. City Council President Paul Krekoian, Former Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, who is running for a Los Angeles City Council seat in district 2, and TUMO Founder Sam Simonian at the ceremony.

"The creation of TUMO in the East San Fernando Valley will bring much needed creative and educational resources to low income youth and teenagers that would otherwise not be exposed to the fantastic learning opportunities that TUMO creates" said Krekorian. "This center will shape the next generation of creative leaders that will keep our entertainment industry strong and thriving."

TUMO LA will provide much needed design and technology education to local teens for after school and weekend programs completely free of charge. TUMO centers globally serve more than 25,000 teens each week, in 13 centers across nine countries.

This first TUMO center in the United States was made possible through a \$23.25 million dollar grant from the State of California, secured by former Assemblymember Nazarian, as well as an additional \$3 million dollars in Community Development Block Grand funds from the City of Los Angeles, secured by Krekorian.

"As a former State Assemblymember of the East San Fernando Valley, I am proud to announce the establishment of a TUMO Technology Learning Center in North Hollywood. The TUMO Technology Learning Center focuses on placing teenagers, aged 12 to 18 years, in control of their learning experiences and enabling them to unlock their full potential by identifying their passions and equipping them with the skills necessary to shape their future. This



Center will create life-changing experiences for our children and build the next generation of leaders for our communities" said Nazarian.

The TUMO Center for Creative Technologies is a free-of-charge educational program that puts teenagers in charge of their own learning. Founded by engineer and entrepreneur Sam Simonian, TUMO's mission is to allow teens to maximize their potential by discovering their passions and building the skills and self-confidence required to shape their future.

This program offers free education and training to teens in 14 different subjects, from music, filmmaking and animation to programming, robotics and 3D modeling.

## Armenia, Hungary to develop healthcare cooperation

Armenia and Hungary are developing an agreement on healthcare cooperation, Minister of Healthcare Anahit Avanesyan has said.

Avanesyan visited Hungary February 5-7 as part of President Vahagn Khachaturyan's delegation.

In Budapest, Avanesyan met with Minister of Interior Sándor Pintér to discuss partnership and prospects of signing a memorandum of cooperation.

"During the meeting with my counterpart we discussed all the issues of mutual interest. We agreed to work together on

the text of a bilateral agreement. I hope we will sign it in the coming months after finalizing it. I am happy that we are restarting the highly important dialogue and work with Hungary in healthcare," Avanesyan said.

The minister pointed out the enhancement of Armenian-Hungarian cooperation in pharmaceuticals, education and health insurance sectors. "Hungarian pharmaceutical production is very well known in Armenia, and we attach importance to the development of our relations in this sector. We agreed to work around an exchange

program for medical university students and specialists in Hungary. Hungary also has a very important system in terms of providing scholarships to foreign students, thus I attach importance for Armenia to have access to this as well. In addition, in terms of introducing an insurance system, studying the experience of European countries is highly important and interesting for us. I have to say, we outlined quite similar directions which we plan to place at the foundation of our system. This works in Hungary. They have a stable and good health insurance system," Avanesyan said.



## Armenian weightlifter Alexandra Grigoryan crowned European Champion

Armenian weightlifter Alexandra Grigoryan, 19, was crowned champion at the European Weightlifting Championships under way in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The Armenian snatched the gold in the 55 kg category with a total result of 196 kg. She also won a small gold medal in the clean and jerk event.



European bronze medalist Isabela Yailyan was the second in the same weight category. She won the 7th place in the doubles with a result of 180 kg.

Gor Sahakyan (67 kg), the champion of the European Championship held in Yerevan, will take the stage on Wednesday, February 14.

## Louvre Abu Dhabi to expand cooperation with Armenian museums

On a working visit to the United Arab Emirates, Armenian Minister of Education and Culture Zhanna Andreasyan visited the Louvre museum in Abu Dhabi.

The Minister toured the museum, watched the exhibitions and met with the director, Manuel Rabaté.

The possibility of expanding the cooperation between the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the museums of Armenia, as well as



the implementation of cultural and educational programs were discussed.

The Minister referred to the new management model of cultural institutions introduced in Armenia. An agreement was reached to organize mutual visits, exchange experience and develop joint projects.

During the meeting, the parties discussed a number of other issues of mutual interest.

## Medieval rock-hewn tomb discovered in Armenia's Ohanavan

A medieval rock-hewn tomb has been uncovered in the area of Ohanavan community, the Kasakh Gorge, the Ministry

of Education, Science, Culture and Sport informs.

the monument during earthworks on his property.

The incident was recorded by the Aragatsotn regional service of the Service for the Protection of Historical Environment and Cultural Museum-Reserves SNOG and the work was halted.

The necessity of handing over the archaeological objects to the state and the need for urgent excavations were discussed. The newly discovered monument will be certified in the near future.

Specialists of the Historical and Cultural Monuments Protection Department of the Ministry of Culture, the Service for the Protection of Historical Environment and Cultural Museum-Reserves and the Historical and Cultural Heritage Scientific Research Center toured the site of the newly discovered tomb and a number of other historical and cultural monuments.



munity, the Kasakh Gorge, the Ministry

A resident of the village discovered



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