

## EUMA denies Baku's accusations about the military movements of Armenian armed forces



The statement released by the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan regarding the alleged concentrations and active movements of personnel, armored vehicles, artillery, and other fire means by the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia in various directions of the border doesn't correspond to reality.

Additionally, the Armenian Ministry of Defence reports that on March 30, photographs of a motorcade of recruit drivers who recently joined the ranks of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia as part of the training process were disseminated a number of Telegram channels, attempting to portray them as a military movement towards the borders, which is untrue.

The RA Ministry of Defence assesses the recent operational situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border as stable and does not perceive the need to implement additional measures to protect the border.

European Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA) has also denied Baku's false accusations about the military movements of Armenian armed forces.

"EUMA patrolled along the AM-AZ border all day long, everything is calm and quiet, no unusual movements observed. EUMA wishes everybody a peaceful Easter" wrote EUMA on X:

Toivo Klaar, the European Union (EU) Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia, also

responded to the post of the EU observation mission. "Good to have confirmation from @EUMARMENIA that no unusual military movements have been observed. That is what the purpose of the mission is: to provide greater transparency and build confidence. It remains open to more engagement also with the authorities of Azerbaijan" wrote Klaar on X.

Later, the Mission made another post on X: "On 31 March, EUMA dispatched patrols on Armenian side of-border to monitor & report on any out of the ordinary military movements in the border area. All patrols reported that the situation has been calm & quiet & that no such movements have been observed" EUMA said.

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## Upcoming Armenia-US-EU high-level meeting not directed against anyone – MFA



The high-level meeting of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan scheduled for April 5 in Brussels will be dedicated to strengthening Armenia-EU-US cooperation and is not and could not be directed against any third party, Spokesperson for the Armenian Foreign Ministry Ani Badalyan has said.

The comments come after the Azerbaijani side said the meeting “is not inclusive,” and may push Armenia to destabilize the situation in the region.

“As for Azerbaijan’s accusations of destabilizing the situation in the region and the non-constructiveness of the Armenian side in the negotiation process, let me confirm that Armenia is ready for immediate signing of a peace treaty, border delimitation and unblocking of regional communications based on the principles already agreed with Azerbaijan,” Badalyan said in comments to Armenpress.

She reminded that the principles are

as follows:

a) Armenia and Azerbaijan mutually recognize each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity based on the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration. This principle was agreed between Armenia and Azerbaijan on October 6, 2022 in Prague, through the mediation of French President Emmanuel Macron and EU Council President Charles Michel, then reaffirmed on May 14, 2023 and July 15, 2023 in Brussels through the mediation of EU Council President Charles Michel.

b) Delimitation and demarcation between the two countries are carried out on the basis of the Alma-Ata Declaration. This principle was agreed between Armenia and Azerbaijan on October 6, 2022 in Prague, through the mediation of French President Emmanuel Macron and EU Council President Charles Michel, then reaffirmed on May 14, 2023 and July 15, 2023 in Brussels through the mediation of EU Council President Charles Michel. This means that a new border between Armenia and Azerbaijan should not be created, but the borders that existed de jure within the framework of the USSR at the time of the adoption of the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration should be reproduced on the ground. After redrawing the border, de jure territories belonging to each country

must be under that country’s control.

c) Unblocking regional communications with respect to the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the countries through which they pass, on the basis of the principle of equality and reciprocity. This principle was agreed between Armenia and Azerbaijan on July 15, 2023 in Brussels through the mediation of EU Council President Charles Michel. Regarding the issue, the Republic of Armenia has expressed its willingness in the “Crossroads of Peace” project, which has been widely accepted by the international community.

“Unfortunately, the Azerbaijani side is delaying and undermining the peace process under various artificial pretexts, including continuously rejecting mediation proposals made by the EU and the US. Instead of complaining about inclusiveness, Azerbaijan may eventually accept the proposals to meet at the level of foreign ministers in Washington, and at the level of heads of state in Brussels. Perhaps it is also appropriate to mention the ongoing actions by Azerbaijan, the efforts to leave Armenia out of regional projects, to undermine the principle of inclusiveness in every possible way, a vivid example of which is the obstruction of Armenia’s participation in the Black Sea electric cable project,” the Spokesperson said.

## FM Mirzoyan briefs Argentine lawmakers on Armenia’s peace efforts

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan met with the chairmen of the Foreign Relations Committees of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Argentina.

The sides emphasized that Armenian-Argentine relations have always developed in an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding. Minister Mirzoyan added that Armenia views Argentina as a reliable partner in South America and is interested in the further development and deepening of multi-sector relations with Argentina in political, economic, cultural and other directions.

Minister Mirzoyan noted that Armenia values not only the bilateral political dialogue with Argentina, but also the

country’s constructive position on key issues related to Armenia. In this regard, the Armenian Foreign Minister emphasized that the support of international actors to the well-known principles of international law is important for curbing extremist aspirations and ensuring stability in the South Caucasus.

The sides emphasized the role of parliamentary diplomacy in the development of relations between the two countries.

Ararat Mirzoyan briefed the Argentine lawmakers on the efforts of Armenia aimed at establishing lasting peace in the South Caucasus. Minister Mirzoyan reaffirmed the position that there is a real possibility of peace in the region and it



can be implemented by Armenia and Azerbaijan respecting the key principles of territorial integrity, inseparability of borders, as well as the unblocking of regional channels. In this context, the head of the RA Department of Foreign Affairs presented the program “Crossroads of Peace” to the interlocutors.

## Armenian PM briefs French lawmakers on Crossroads of Peace project

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received the delegation led by Anne-Laurence Petel, the President of the France-Armenia friendship group at the French National Assembly.

The Prime Minister welcomed the visit of the members of the inter-parliamentary friendship group to Armenia and thanked them for their commitment to the Armenia-related agenda.

The Prime Minister emphasized the strong ties formed between the parliaments of Armenia and France and emphasized the fact of high-level intensive bilateral cooperation.

Anne-Laurence Petel noted that the friendly group includes representatives of all National Assembly factions, which have an unconditional political consensus on support for Armenia.

The interlocutors touched upon issues



related to Armenia-France multi-sectoral cooperation, inter-parliamentary cooperation, activities of French companies in our country, involvement in investment programs, implementation of projects in infrastructure, agriculture, energy and other directions.

The processes taking place in the South Caucasus were discussed. Prime Minister Pashinyan referred to the discussions on the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace treaty and

emphasized that the principles of the treaty were fundamentally agreed upon in the statement made within the framework of the quadrilateral meeting held in Prague on October 6, 2022. The possibilities of unblocking the regional infrastructure were also discussed. In this context, Nikol Pashinyan presented the Armenian government's "Crossroads of Peace" project and its principles.

Thoughts were exchanged on the activities of the civilian mission of the European Union in Armenia, the further development of Armenia-EU cooperation.

Reference was also made to the humanitarian problems of people forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh, the steps and plans of the Armenian government to solve them. In terms of solving the needs of forcibly displaced people, Prime Minister Pashinyan also emphasized the consistent support of the international community.

## FM Mirzoyan briefs Argentine lawmakers on Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization process



On March 26, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan had a meeting with the Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies of the Argentine Republic, Martin Menem. Members of the Chamber of Deputies and member of the Armenia-Argentina friendship group in Armenian National Assembly Tatevik Gasparyan also participated in the meeting.

Ararat Mirzoyan and Martin Menem

appreciated the high level of political dialogue between the two countries, as well as the willingness to expand sectoral cooperation in line with the developments of the 21st century, including in the fields of economy, information technologies and education.

The sides emphasized that interstate relations are based on long-term friendly ties between the Armenian and Argentine peoples, in which the Armenian community of Argentina plays a significant role. Reference was also made to the new possibilities of decentralized cooperation.

During the meeting, the role of parliamentary diplomacy in increasing cooperation between the two countries was also highlighted.

Minister Mirzoyan presented to the President and members of the Chamber of Deputies of Argentina the approaches of Armenia to the key issues of the process of normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which are also reflected in the statements adopted as a result of the meetings at the highest level, including delimitation on the basis of the Alma-Ata Declaration, and the de-blocking of regional infrastructures based on the principles of respect for sovereignty and jurisdiction, reciprocity and equality.

At the end of the meeting, Minister Mirzoyan invited his colleagues to visit Armenia. "You have friends in the Republic of Armenia, and we are waiting for you there."

## Friends of Armenia Network calls for “more Europe in Armenia, more Armenia in Europe”



*Former prime ministers, commissioners, ministers, and sitting parliamentarians have released a report calling for more Europe in Armenia; more Armenia in Europe.*

The Friends of Armenia Network, led by former Danish Prime Minister and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, on March 27 released a report which outlines a detailed vision for making Armenia’s Western trajectory irreversible.

This approach includes proposals for building up Armenian resilience and lessening its dependence on Russia; deepening trade ties between Armenia and the European Union; and enhancing Armenia’s border security and security cooperation with Europe.

Ultimately, the report argues that Armenia’s accession to the European Union is central to making Armenia’s foreign policy pivot and democratic transition last.

Speaking following the release of the report, Anders Fogh Rasmussen said: “Armenia is a democracy in an incredibly difficult geopolitical neighborhood. Prime Minister Pashinyan’s government has made the courageous decision to

diversify Armenia’s foreign policy and move towards the West.

“The world’s democracies—and the European Union, in particular—must act to support Armenia in this pivot.

“This support has become even more important following Azerbaijan’s 2023 offensive against the ethnic-Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and the continued threat posed by Azeri forces.

“Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine has shown that the European Union must do far more to stand up for democracies in its direct neighborhood.

“Europe has an opportunity to support a stable democracy and lasting peace in the South Caucasus. Today’s report outlines the tangible steps that can and should be taken, ultimately leading to Armenia joining the European Union.”

The full report is available [here](#).

List of signatories:

Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Chairman of the Friends of Armenia Network, Founder of Rasmussen Global, NATO Secretary General (2009-2014), Prime Minister of Denmark (2001-2009).

Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz: Member of the European Parliament (2019-...), Prime Minister of Poland (1996-1997), Poland’s Minister of Foreign Affairs (2001-2005).

Štefan Füle: European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy (2010-2014), Minister of European Affairs of the Czech Republic (2009).

Charles Flanagan: Member of the Irish

Oireachtas (2020-...), Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (2020-...), Ireland’s Minister of Justice (2017-2020), Ireland’s Minister of Foreign Affairs (2014-2017).

Raimundas Lopata: Member of the Lithuanian Seimas (2020-...), Chair of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with Armenia (2020-...)

Dietmar Nietan: Member of the German Bundestag (1998-2002, 2005-...), Treasurer of the Social Democratic Party.

Anne-Laurence Petel: Member of the French Assemblée Nationale (2017-...), Chair of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with Armenia (2022-...).

As observers:

Dalia Grybauskaitė: President of Lithuania (2009-2019), EU Commissioner for Budget (2004-2009).

Thorniké Gordadzé: Georgia’s State Minister for Euro-Atlantic Integration (2012), Georgia’s Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs (2010-2012).

Peter Semneby: EU Special Representative to the South Caucasus (2006-2011).

The report was drafted by the independent Friends of Armenia Network and does not represent the policy of the Armenian government.

Since March 2023, Rasmussen Global has been working with the Armenian government to improve connections with the European Union and the wider democratic world.

## French MPs visit Sotk gold mine with EU Mission in Armenia

The EU Mission in Armenia hosted the Ambassador of France to Armenia Olivier Decottignies and Members of the French National Assembly in Martuni.

“We shared insights on our activities in the area and the security developments in the Sotk gold mine,” the EU Mission said in a post on X.



## Upcoming Brussels meeting to focus “purely on Armenia” – State Dept



The State Department said on March 27 that an upcoming high-level meeting in Brussels between Yerevan, the United States and the European Union will “purely” focus on Armenia-related issues.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan will meet with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on April 5. Baku has

voiced concern about the meeting and has accused the US and the European Union of sowing divisions in the region.

“The focus of this meeting is on economic resilience to help Armenia diversify its trade partnerships and address humanitarian needs. I fail to see why that would be escalatory or would be of a concern to any country in the world,” State Department Spokesman Matthew Miller said at a daily briefing.

“It’s purely Armenia, not Azerbaijan,” the Spokesperson said.

He did not rule out that issues related to the Armenia-Azerbaijan process may be discussed, but emphasized that the

focus of the talks will be “partnership” with Armenia.

“I suppose it’s always possible it could come up on the margins of the meeting, in that type of conversation, but that’s not the focus of the meeting. The meeting in Brussels is to focus on Armenia’s economic resilience as it works to diversify its trade partnerships and address humanitarian needs,” Miller said.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry [said on Wednesday](#) “the upcoming meeting in Brussels will be dedicated to strengthening Armenia-EU-US cooperation and is not and could not be directed against any third party.”

## Armenia and Korea discussed the possible cooperation in the sphere of nuclear energy

On March 28, in Yerevan, the 5th political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Korea were held, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia Mnatsakan Safaryan and Chung Byung-won, Deputy Foreign Minister For Political Affairs of Korea.

The parties discussed the prospects of bilateral cooperation, expressing readiness to strengthen the political dialogue and economic ties.

A wide range of issues of bilateral agenda were discussed during the meeting, in particular, possible cooperation in the sphere of nuclear energy, further expansion of the legal framework, promotion of educational and cultural exchanges. The sides touched upon the opportunities for cooperation in the fields of information technology, digitalization, artificial



intelligence and innovations, exchange of expertise in public administration, as well as programs implemented in Armenia through the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

During the consultations, the parties also touched upon the existing cooperation within international organizations and other multilateral platforms, the efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development goals, the protection of human rights and strengthening democratic

values.

Deputy Foreign Minister Mnatsakan Safaryan provided to his counterpart a detailed overview of the security situation in the region and Armenia’s efforts towards establishing lasting peace. He also briefed on the measures taken by the Government of Armenia to address the humanitarian issues of the Armenians forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh resulting from the ethnic cleansing by Azerbaijan, highlighting the importance of the support from international partners.

Within the framework of the visit, the delegation was received by Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan. During the meeting a range of issues of bilateral and multilateral agenda of Armenian-Korean relations as well as the regional developments were touched upon.

## Azerbaijan must create the conditions for a safe and secure return of Armenians to Nagorno Karabakh, UK Minister says

The UK Government is clear that Azerbaijan must create the conditions for a safe and secure return of ethnic Armenians who were displaced during September’s

military operation and want to return, Leo Docherty, Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office), said in response to a

question by MP Andrew Bridgen.

He was asked to comment on the diplomatic steps the UK Government is taking to help ensure the right of return to Nagorno-Karabakh of Christian Armenians.

“Ministers and officials have discussed these issues with the Azerbaijani Government and encourage Azerbaijan to be proactive in enabling the return of those who wish to do so,” Leo Docherty said.

## Rasmussen-led group's report urges political, material support for "Crossroads of Peace" project



The absence of a peace agreement should not be an impediment for investing in the "Crossroads of Peace" and other similar initiatives. On the contrary, such an initiative could defuse tensions and make a peace agreement more likely.

This is mentioned in the report by the Friends of Armenia Network, a high-level group launched in 2023 by former Danish Prime Minister and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The group

includes former prime ministers, parliamentarians, and diplomats.

The report focuses on Armenia's relations with the European Union, the necessity for further strengthening these relations, Armenia's potential full membership in the organization, and the ongoing situation in the South Caucasus, including the threats faced by Armenia.

Referring to the unblocking of transport connections in the South Caucasus, the report refers to the "Crossroads of Peace" initiative presented by the Armenian Government, which aims to create transport corridors through Armenia.

"Infrastructure would operate under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the country it passes through. The use of infrastructure would be based on the principle

of reciprocity and equality," it reads.

According to the authors of the report, the Crossroads of Peace initiative would boost trade, inter-dependence, and connectivity in the South Caucasus and would contribute to the full normalization of relations between Armenia and its neighbors. The initiative would require substantial investment in rail, road, and border infrastructure.

The report also refers to the activities of the European Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA), adding that Azerbaijan's refusal to allow the Mission on its territory and a refusal to engage in cross-border contacts are indicators of Baku's intentions.

It also mentions the need to increase the personnel of that mission and to develop their technical capabilities.

## Deputy Speaker Hakob Arshakyan discusses Yerevan-New Delhi direct flights with Indian counterpart

Within the framework of the 148<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union the Armenian National Assembly delegation led by the NA Vice President Hakob Arshakyan met with the parliamentary delegation led by the Deputy Speaker of the Indian Parliament Harivansh Narayan Singh.

According to the readout issued by the press service of the Armenian National Assembly, welcoming the delegation of India, the NA Vice President Hakob Arshakyan noted: "Armenia greatly highlights its partnership with India. Our friendly relations have a centuries-old history, and we can confidently state today that that traditional friendship is reflected in the relations of the two countries. The Armenian-Indian relations are at the new qualitative level, and both sides should get together the efforts for more developing those relations.

In the context of bilateral relations Hakob Arshakyan highly appreciated the effective dialogue between the legislative bodies of the two countries: "The

Armenia-India Friendship Group functions in the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, which I have an honour to lead."

According to the source, the NA Deputy Speaker underlined that Armenia is concerned about the development of mutually beneficial cooperation with the friendly India in different spheres, including the trade, transport and communication, defence, health, culture, science and education, information and high technologies, tourism and other spheres.

In this context the NA Vice President emphasized the issue of Yerevan-New Delhi direct flights.

Hakob Arshakyan presented the process of the Peace Treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the three principles of the establishment of peace: "The Crossroads of Peace" project is our roadmap towards peace. The project designs development of regional communications."

The Deputy Speaker of the Indian Parliament Harivansh Narayan Singh stressed the development of relations between Armenia and India, noting that Armenia



is one of their important partners: The events around Armenia are in the centre of their attention.

It is noted that Harivansh Narayan Singh expressed his support to the peace process and attached importance to the establishment of comprehensive peace and stability in this process, expressing hope that the development of the Armenian-Indian relations will promote the establishment of peace agenda.

The members of the Armenian NA delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Hasmik Hakobyan and Tsovinar Vardanyan attended the meeting.

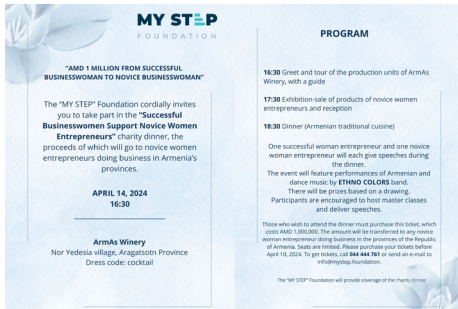
## Perspectives of US-Armenia commercial ties discussed at US Embassy

US Ambassador to Armenia Kvien hosted the AmCham Armenia Board to

discuss opportunities for improving the local business and investment climate and

deepening US-Armenia commercial ties, the US Embassy in Armenia informs.

## Charity dinner: “Successful Businesswomen Support Novice Women Entrepreneurs”



The “MY STEP” Charitable Foundation is organizing the “Successful Businesswomen Support Novice Women Entrepreneurs” charity dinner, the proceeds of which will go to novice women

entrepreneurs doing business in the provinces of the Republic of Armenia.

According to a press release from the Foundation, the charity dinner will take place at ArmAs Winery, on April 14. Accompanied by a guide, the guests of the evening will tour the production units of the winery, there will be an exhibition-sale of the products of novice women entrepreneurs.

The dinner will feature performances of Armenian ethnic and modern dances by ETHNO COLORS band, speeches by successful and novice women entrepreneurs,

there will also be a prize draw.

Those who wish to attend the dinner must purchase a ticket, which costs AMD 1,000,000. The amount will be transferred to a novice woman entrepreneur doing business in the provinces of the Republic of Armenia.

Seats are limited. The Foundation requests to purchase the tickets before April 10, 2024.

To get tickets, call 044 444 761 or send an e-mail to [info@mystep.foundation](mailto:info@mystep.foundation).

The “My Step” Foundation will provide coverage of the charity dinner.

## Consistent support to 16 Armenian Educational Institutions Operating in Lebanon

Hayastan All Armenian Fund has provided regular financial support to 16 Armenian educational institutions operating in Lebanon as part of the ongoing support to the Armenian community of Lebanon.

An amount of \$100,000, donated by the French Affiliate (Fonds Arménien de France), will be allocated to the teaching and technical staff of the following institutions: Central High School, Armenian Evangelical College, Armenian Evangelical Secondary School, Vahan Tekeyan School, Sahaguan Meguerditchian School, Yeghisheh Manouguian School,



Noubarian Kherimian School, Haratch Kaloust Gulbenkian School, AGBU School Parekordzagan Hovaguimian, M. & H. Arslanian College (Djemaran), Hriptsimiantz College, Sainte Croix Harboyan,

Mesrobian College, Azkayine Miatsial Varjaran, Mekhitarian College, Armenian Evangelical Chamlian Tatikian Torossian College.

This project supporting Armenian educational institutions in Lebanon was launched in December 2019, during Lebanon’s socio-economic crisis, which was further deepened by the catastrophic blast in Beirut in August 2020. Since 2019, the Fund has provided \$2,165,000 to address various needs of the Armenian community in Lebanon, including support for educational institutions.

## Armenia to deliver 29.94 tons of humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza

The Armenian government will allocate 19 million drams to provide food and medicine to 1.5 million people displaced from Gaza. The decision was approved at the cabinet meeting on March 28.

The humanitarian cargo will include canned food, dry food, medicines, including medicinal solutions and antibiotics.

Additional funds will be allocated to the Ministry of Defense to organize the delivery of the 29.94 tons of aid, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Arpine Sargsyan said.

Referring to the decision, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reminded that he announced the intention to deliver humanitarian aid during his official visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt. According to the Prime Minister, there were problems related to logistics, and there was a need for Egyptian government’s support in delivering humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.

“During the visit, we reached this agreement, because due to the situation, we cannot deliver the cargo directly to



the Gaza Strip and deliver it to the beneficiaries. For this reason, we also reached an agreement with the representatives of the Arab Republic of Egypt at the working level,” PM Pashinyan said.

## Contribution to the establishment of lasting peace and stability in the South Caucasus a top priority for Armenia – PM

The contribution to the establishment of lasting peace and stability in the South Caucasus is a top priority for the Republic of Armenia, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in an interview with Greek [Kathimerini](#) daily.

“In the process of the desired change, Armenia stresses the need to remove the blockade of infrastructure in the region. The “Crossroads of Peace” project includes, inter alia, a significant increase in the capacity to transport goods, cars, electricity transmission pipelines, and Internet cables between the Black Sea on the one hand and the Persian Gulf as well as the Gulf of Oman on the other, passing through the territories of Armenia,” the Prime Minister said.

*Below is the full text of the interview:*

**Kathimerini daily, Athanasios Katsikidis** – In your meeting with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, you highlighted the “Crossroads of Peace” project for the creation of a trade hub that will run from Armenia westwards through Turkey to the Mediterranean Sea and Greece. How would your proposed plan promote regional stability and security in the Caucasus to the Mediterranean?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – The contribution to the establishment of lasting peace and stability in the South Caucasus is a top priority for the Republic of Armenia. In the process of the desired change, Armenia stresses the need to remove the blockade of infrastructure in the region. The “Crossroads of Peace” project includes, inter alia, a significant increase in the capacity to transport goods, cars, electricity transmission pipelines, and Internet cables between the Black Sea on the one hand and the Persian Gulf as well as the Gulf of Oman on the other, passing through the territories of Armenia. The project also envisages the creation

of a rail link between the above-mentioned final destinations, which is possible if Armenia-Azerbaijan relations are normalized. It should be remembered that the optimal railway route from Georgia entering Armenia and continuing to the Islamic Republic of Iran passes through Nakhichevan, Azerbaijan, which has existed since the Soviet Union. This is the north-south wing of the “Crossroads of Peace.”

Still, there is the east-west wing, which can connect the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the Turkish Black Sea ports through the territory of Armenia. For this, highways, railways, pipelines, power transmission lines, and cables must enter Turkey from Azerbaijan through Armenia. And we are ready to provide such solutions.

So, for the operation of all these infrastructures we have adopted the commonly accepted principles in the “Crossroads” of Peace project, which are as follows: a) all infrastructures are under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the countries through which they pass; b) each country implements border and customs control on its territory through its state institutions, as well as takes the necessary measures for its security; c) the designated infrastructures can be used for both international and domestic transport; d) finally, all countries use the infrastructure for the transport of goods.

**Kathimerini daily, Athanasios Katsikidis** – The recent war in Nagorno-Karabakh has highlighted the necessity of international cooperation and defense partnerships, with Greece standing by the Armenian people by providing humanitarian aid. With regional risks and



threats on the rise, what does the defense memorandum you signed with your counterpart signify?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – Since the early years of the independence of the Republic of Armenia, the Armenian people have always enjoyed the support of Greece. I take this opportunity, once again, to express my gratitude to the Greek people and the Greek government for standing by us and supporting us in difficult times.

There is a long tradition of cooperation in the defense sector. In December last year (2023), the military-technical cooperation agreement between the two governments was signed, which entails the exchange of experience, knowledge and the development of joint projects. Many Armenian cadets have the opportunity to study in Greek educational institutions: these are just some of the points of cooperation in this field, and currently, regular military exercises are carried out. Despite the excellent cooperation in the defense sector, there is great potential for further development. In the near future, we hope that cooperation in this direction will be expanded.

I should mention that Armenia’s cooperation with its partners in the defense sector is not directed against any country. The development of Armenia’s defense capabilities is aimed at protecting Armenia’s independence, sovereignty,

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territorial integrity, and page 8 ➡ guarding its borders.

**Kathimerini daily, Athanasios Katsikidis** – The recent signing of the “Declaration on friendly relations and good neighborliness” between Greece and Turkey has reduced the tension between the two countries. As Turkey’s eastern neighbor, have you noticed the decrease in regional tension and in inflammatory statements?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – Turkey is a regional player and it is natural to expect that it should have a balanced position on the various developments in the region. No less attention is paid to Turkey’s official rhetoric, which can both promote and jeopardize the processes. On the other hand, Armenia expects that Turkey’s rhetoric will not be aimed at increasing regional tensions, but will contribute to promoting dialogue and cooperation in the region.

As you know, Armenia and Turkey have started the process of normalization of relations, which is aimed at establishing diplomatic relations between the countries and the full opening of borders. In the framework of this process, an agreement was reached on the opening of the Armenian-Turkish land borders for citizens of third countries and persons with diplomatic passports. So, we really believe that the implementation of this agreement will have a positive impact on regional dynamics as well.

I have to say that the developments between Greece and Turkey prove once again that it is possible to overcome differences and form a mutually beneficial agenda of cooperation between the neighbors.

**Kathimerini daily, Athanasios Katsikidis** – Armenia recently froze its participation in the Russian Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), while Russia’s soft stance on the Azeri attack has raised concerns among your citizens. Given these facts, are you willing to adopt

a more Western approach to international politics?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), in our assessment, has not fulfilled its security obligations to the Republic of Armenia, specifically in the period 2021-2022. The practical result (of this policy of the CSTO) is that we have effectively frozen our participation in the organization. As of September 2023, we do not have a permanent representative in the CSTO, and we do not participate in the CSTO negotiations at the high and highest level. However, we do not block the decisions of the CSTO, but neither do we participate in them.

Turning to the second part of the question, I can note that Armenia is open to establishing and developing mutually beneficial relations with all partners and has a clear position on the establishment of stable and lasting peace in the region. To this end, we are diversifying our relations on security issues.

**Kathimerini daily, Athanasios Katsikidis** – The Armenian community in Greece has more than 30,000 members, many of whom excel in the arts, academia and even engaging in politics. What initiatives are being considered to enhance people-to-people exchanges and cultural cooperation between Armenia and Greece?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – You are right. Both the Armenian community living in Greece and the Greek community living in Armenia are an important factor in strengthening our bilateral relations. It is important that the existing strong historical relations are strengthened by the contacts of the new generations of Armenians and Greeks, and we must take steps to create opportunities for mutual recognition. In this regard, I would like to stress the importance of both tourism, which is perhaps the best opportunity to strengthen people-to-people relations and joint scientific

and educational programs. In the near future, it is planned to sign a new program of bilateral cooperation in the field of education, which will provide new opportunities for student-faculty exchanges. Recently, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Armenian Government and the Democritus University of Thrace, where the Armenian Language and Culture Centre will operate. In the near future, a number of other joint initiatives in the scientific and cultural fields are planned, which will contribute to the strengthening of bilateral cultural relations.

Of course, in order to intensify people-to-people contact, it is necessary that negotiations on the liberalization of the visa regime with EU countries be successful. Armenia has been ready to implement this process for a long time.

**Kathimerini daily, Athanasios Katsikidis** – How do you envision the future development of the bilateral relations between Armenia and Greece and what is your message to the Greek people?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – Relations between Armenia and Greece are based on a shared history and long-standing friendship, as well as a commitment to common values. It is in this context that we are also considering further development of bilateral relations. Armenia believes that its development can be achieved directly through the improvement of democratic institutions, while we are also trying to develop our cooperation with European institutions: first of all, with the European Union. In this direction, Greece’s experience and support are very important to us. So, I believe that the deepening of bilateral relations in all directions will prepare the ground for the development of close cooperation between Armenia and Greece to a higher strategic level. In conclusion, I would like to wish the friendly Greek people peace, prosperity and progress.

## “Regional Diplomacy: Evaluating Recent Events and Anticipating Future Developments”



Noyan Tapan once again welcomed Hovsep Khurshudyan, President of the “Free Citizen” NGO and an esteemed analyst, to delve into recent developments.

In the aftermath of the tragic act of terrorism at the Crocus City Hall concert, there has been a global outpouring of sympathy. Telegrams conveying condolences, including those from Armenian authorities, have flooded in, alongside notable expressions of support from nations like Germany and the United States. However, amidst this solidarity, the latest available information indicates that 11 individuals have been arrested, although details about them remain scant. Reports suggest they may be citizens of Tajikistan.

Meanwhile, amidst these developments, there have been insinuations from Azerbaijani and Russian bloggers regarding potential Armenian involvement, although nothing has been confirmed. The situation remains fluid, and further investigation is necessary to ascertain the facts surrounding these arrests.

“In fact,” said the Analyst, “the handwriting is very similar to the explosions of the buildings that took place on the eve of the attack on Chechnya in 1999. At that time, it was obvious to everyone that it was organized by the Russian special services, to mobilize the people and incline them to war. And now it seems to be the same manuscript, but it must be understood that it is a dangerous precedent, firstly from the

point of view that the door is opened to terrorist acts in this region, and secondly, it is dangerous from the point of view that Russia is entering the next stage and wants to act as a warring party in a new capacity. This means that he can also declare martial law in Russia.”

“We’ve warned our fellow citizens in Russia that Putin’s reelection will likely lead to the implementation of unpopular measures out of necessity. With his lack of technological superiority and intelligence deficiencies, he’s increasingly on the back foot. The only viable option now is a nationwide public mobilization, overturning restrictive laws and imposing new obligations—a risky move for those hoping to avoid such responsibilities,” cautioned the analyst during the conversation, urging all compatriots to return home before martial law and widespread military mobilization are declared in Russia.

The predominant speculation connecting the terrorists who attacked the Crocus City Hall with Armenians has largely stemmed from the Azerbaijani public, as underscored by analyst. As per the latest available data, none of those arrested in connection with the attacks have been identified as Armenians.”

Regarding the information available about the cooperation program signed in Rome, all that is known is the name “Armenia-Italy military cooperation program.” The analyst mentioned during the

conversation that he was unable to obtain further details about this cooperation, which is understandable as not all information should be publicly accessible. It is important to note that Italy, while not a leading producer of weapons, still holds significance in this realm. Unfortunately, Italy has had military cooperation plans with Azerbaijan, including the potential sale of a military transport aircraft. Whether this deal has been finalized remains unknown. However, the analyst stressed that our diplomatic efforts should aim to annul such risky agreements, ideally through the European Commission and with the support of our European Union allies, particularly France and Germany. The overarching goal is to advocate against the sale of weapons to authoritarian regimes such as Azerbaijan.

A meeting is scheduled to take place in Brussels on April 5 between Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, and United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken. The focus of the discussion will be on exploring avenues for trilateral cooperation aimed at fostering Armenia’s development.

Initial strides were made towards this end at the close of last year, when it was announced that the European Union, under Borrell’s leadership, stands ready to provide economic and security support. Consideration was given to Armenia’s accession to the European peace facility.

“Now, as we anticipate a higher-level meeting,” said the analyst, “three key directions outlined by Borrell are set to be formalized. Firstly, priority will be given to the economic diversification of Armenia, aiming to create conditions conducive to the export of Armenian products to Europe. Secondly, there will be a focus on implementing the European peace instrument, bolstering security measures. Lastly, discussions will revolve around attracting investments to Armenia, facilitating its growth and development.”

In Brussels, Pashinyan announced the decision to extend the operational period of the Metsamor

page 10 ➔ nuclear power plant in co-operation with The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) until 2036. According to him, “Nuclear energy is the cornerstone of Armenia’s strategy; it ensures the energy security of the country.” However, Azerbaijan is now raising concerns and lobbying for the cessation of the nuclear power plant’s operation.

The potential danger of this move is being debated. While the fuel for the nuclear power plant is currently supplied by Russia, the analyst noted that this may not pose a significant issue. Both France and the United States have the capability to safely provide the required fuel.

The Iranian ambassador’s remarks regarding Tavush underscored their deep concern about the events unfolding in the

region, emphasizing Iran’s unwavering commitment to safeguarding Armenia’s territorial integrity, which extends beyond the southern border. They emphasized the significance of the north-south route, highlighting the broader importance of Armenia’s territorial integrity to Iran.

Regarding Stoltenberg’s visit, the Iranian ambassador indicated that Iran evaluates such diplomatic engagements based on their tangible outcomes rather than merely the symbolic gesture of the visit itself. They emphasized that if such visits contribute to enhanced security in the region, Iran has no objections. Additionally, the analyst noted the warming of Iran’s relations with the West, citing recent developments such as Iran’s signing of \$13 billion worth of contracts with its

oil-producing companies. This may signal a strategic shift away from reliance on Russian oil producers, indicating a growing demand for Iran’s involvement in the oil market from Western perspectives.

In conclusion, recent developments in the region underscore the complexities of geopolitics and the delicate balance of power. From the aftermath of the Crocus City Hall tragedy to discussions on military cooperation and energy security, it’s evident that regional dynamics are evolving rapidly. The commitments made by leaders and the diplomatic engagements underway reflect both challenges and opportunities for stability and progress.

Translated by Liana Sargsyan

## Armenian, UK Defense representatives hold bilateral talks in London

Within the framework of defense cooperation between the Republic of Armenia and the United Kingdom, discussions on combating corruption were held in London from March 28 to 29, the Armenian Defense Ministry said.

The Armenian delegation was headed by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia, Hamlet Batikyan.

During the event, a meeting with the delegation of the UK Ministry of Defense led by the Director General of Security Policy, Paul Wyatt, and the Director of Defence Assurance, Guy Lester, took place.

Ambassador Extraordinary and



Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Varuzhan Nersesyan, also participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, issues related to

Armenia-UK cooperation in the fight against corruption were discussed.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Defense Hamlet Batikyan presented the current anti-corruption programs of the Ministry of Defence. The British delegation shared their expertise and methodologies in this field, expressing readiness to provide necessary assistance to the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia.

During the discussions, a number of agreements were reached in the direction of implementing joint projects, providing expert and methodical support.

## Armenia’s Matenadaran, National Archives of India mull cooperation in research, restoration, and digitization

Sanjay Garg, Director of the National Archives of India, visited Mashtots Matenadaran – repository of ancient manuscripts.

Sanjay Garg, accompanied by Vahe Torosyan, the deputy director of

Matenadaran, visited the Departments of Digitization and Archives and discussed the prospects of future cooperation with the management of Matenadaran.

The discussion mainly focused on research, restoration, and digitization of



manuscripts and archival documents.

## Failure to acknowledge the Artsakh Genocide sets dangerous precedent – Lemkin Institute



Failure to acknowledge the Artsakh genocide and hold Azerbaijan accountable for its atrocities not sets a dangerous precedent that could lead to the recurrence of similar tragedies in the South Caucasus as well as further afield, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention said in a statement six months after the ethnic cleansing in Artsakh.

“It has now been six months since the Artsakh Genocide. For half a year, the indigenous Armenian population of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) has grappled with the harsh reality of displacement amid global apathy and unpredictability. They live in harsh conditions in Armenia, international aid has been slow and meager, and many are migrating to Russia and other countries far away from their homeland,” the Lemkin Institute said.

“The ancestral homeland of the Artsakh Armenians became a battleground in 2020 following Azerbaijan’s military aggression against the enclave. Since then, Azerbaijan has launched repeated aggressions against the territory as well as against the Republic of Armenia. Azerbaijan

also imposed a devastating 10-month blockade that stripped the region of its basic necessities from December 2022 through September 2023, rendering survival a daily struggle. A final invasion on September 19, 2023 resulted in the terrorization and flight of virtually the entire population of 120,000 Artsakh Armenians. All of these things were done in violation of international law as well as of the November 9, 2023 Tripartite Statement that ended the 44-Day-War,” it stated.

“Compounding the predicament of refugees from Artsakh is the glaring absence of international recognition of what happened to Artsakh Armenians as genocide and the lack of condemnation of Azerbaijan for its genocidal intentions. This silence perpetuates a sense of abandonment among those who have lost loved ones and homes. Under the shadow of global interests, these displaced individuals navigate a landscape fraught with survival guilt and the enduring trauma of genocide,” the statement reads.

“Negotiating the uncertainty of their current situation, Artsakh refugees bear witness to systematic cultural genocide of Artsakh, as Armenian cultural landmarks, historical and religious sites, and cemeteries are destroyed by Azerbaijani forces. Azerbaijani soldiers have released videos on social media of themselves ransacking and mocking peoples’

homes and possessions. In the hands of Azerbaijan, the traces of the 4000-year-old Armenian heritage and identity in Artsakh are steadily being obliterated, while the world continues to turn a blind eye. Given the circumstances, it is necessary for the international community to take proactive measures to ensure that the rights of Artsakh Armenians are upheld. The international community’s failure to condemn Azerbaijan’s genocidal intentions has only made this work more difficult,” the Institute stated.

“Failing to acknowledge the Artsakh genocide and refraining from holding Azerbaijan accountable for its atrocities not only neglects the responsibility to safeguard and facilitate the safe return of Artsakh Armenians, but also sets a dangerous precedent that could lead to the recurrence of similar tragedies in the South Caucasus as well as further afield. By turning a blind eye to such atrocities, we risk perpetuating historical injustices and potentially facing similar tragedies within other Armenian communities, like those in Syunik or Tavush. Thus, advocating for recognition, accountability, and protection is crucial not only for justice in the present but also in the future, and it helps ensure the protection of all vulnerable populations worldwide. Only through concerted efforts to uphold human rights and international norms can we effectively confront and prevent genocide,” it concluded.

## World Weightlifting Championship 2027 to be held in Yerevan

The 2027 World Weightlifting Championship will take place in Armenia.

The International Weightlifting Federation has decided to award Armenia the right to host the 2027 World Championship. The application was submitted to the International Federation by Arayik Harutyunyan, Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. This will be the first



World Championship in an Olympic sport

to be held in Armenia.

At the European Weightlifting Championship held in Yerevan in 2023, Armenian weightlifters won a total of 36 medals, including 12 gold, 11 silver, and 13 bronze medals.

The heads of the European Federation awarded the Armenian side with souvenirs for the best organization of the European Weightlifting Championship.

## Armenian Minister of Education, French Ambassador visit the site of future Academic City

Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Zhanna Andreasyan and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France to Armenia Olivier Decottignies visited the construction site of the Academic City, the area adjacent to the 17th district of Yerevan.

Accompanying them were Deputy Minister Artur Martirosyan, chairman of the Higher Education and Science Committee Sargis Armenian, the rector of the French University in Armenia Salwa Naccouzi and others.

The Minister of Education emphasized the importance of active participation of interstate universities in the implementation of the Academic City project.

Zhanna Andreasyan briefed the



Ambassador on the details of the preliminary master plan of the Academic City. The Minister informed that the full plan of the Academic City is currently in the development and design stage and will be ready in the coming months.

Within the framework of the concept of the project, parallel works are being carried out in the direction of landscape design, road network and necessary infrastructure design. In addition, one of the

main goals in the first stage will be the start of the works towards the operation of the railway.

Ambassador Olivier Decottignies and Rector of the French University in Armenia Salwa Naccouzi commended the large-scale works carried out within the framework of the project, labeling it “bold, ambitious and attractive.”

The French side has expressed willingness to consider the agenda of development and expansion of the activity of the French University in Armenia within the framework of the Academic City project.

According to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, the cooperation with international partner structures will be continuous.

## Culture Moves Europe: Organizations from Armenia and Georgia selected as residency hosts



Two cultural organizations from Armenia and one from Georgia are among the 114 selected in the second call for residency hosts under the Culture Moves Europe project, funded by the EU's Creative Europe programme, *EU Neighbors East* reports.

The total estimated grant is more than €1.8 million with individual grant per project depending on its duration (between 22 and 299 days) and the number of invited artists.

The selected projects plan to host 449 artists and cultural professionals coming from different Creative Europe countries, who will be selected in the second phase of the procedure.

The residency projects will take place in 35 different Creative Europe countries.

Visual arts, music and performing arts are the sectors with the most projects selected. Cultural heritage, design and fashion design, literature and architecture account for a little over 30% of selected projects all combined. A third of selected hosts applied with projects that engage with the New European Bauhaus.

In Armenia, the selected projects will be hosted by the [HayArt cultural centre](#), in the music sector, and [Art Basis](#) in the visual arts sector.

In Georgia, the [National Trust of](#)

[Georgia](#) will host a project in the literature section.

Selected hosts have until 15 June to confirm the names of artists they are inviting, and the first projects might start already beginning of April.

For artists interested in participating in those projects, match-making sessions with host organizations will be organized online on 5 April and 12 April.

A [third call for residency hosts](#) is currently open under the Culture Moves Europe project, open to organizations registered and based in one of the [40 Creative Europe countries](#). It supports them to welcome up to 5 international artists and cultural professionals for a residency project lasting between 22 and 180 days. The deadline for applications is 15 May.

## TUMO center officially opens in Mannheim



TUMO Center officially opened in Mannheim on March 26.

Over 200 guests attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony, including government officials, educational leaders, and the inaugural cohort of students.

The center is gearing up to welcome 1,000 students weekly, offering 8 skill areas: programming, music, robotics, 3D modeling, filmmaking, game development, graphic design, and photography.

TUMO Mannheim was made possible thanks to the support of our partners, including the Dietmar Hopp Foundation, the City of Mannheim, Starkmacher, KfW and Next Mannheim.

## “Wings of Tatev” opens a new tourist season

The world’s longest reversible passenger aerial tramway “Wings of Tatev” is ready for the new tourist season. Guests of the cable car will be able to enjoy a flight with panoramic views to the ancient Tatev Monastery, walk along hiking trails, take advantage of jeep tours, visit a medieval oil mill and the exhibition “Hidden Facts about Tatev”.

Prior to the cable car flight, the exhibition “Hidden Facts about Tatev” is open to the public near the Halidzor station. Guests will be able to learn about the centuries-old history of Tatev, its role in the development of Syunik, as well as interesting facts, figures and events of the region.

On the way to Tatev Monastery, the cable car cab offers panoramic views of the picturesque Vorotan Gorge, the natural attraction “Devil’s Bridge” and the Great Hermitage of Tatev. Arriving at Tatev Monastery, the spiritual center of the region, guests can also visit the monks’ cells and a museum in a medieval oil mill.

For those who prefer activities, “Wings of Tatev” offers a variety of hiking routes and jeep tours - awe-inspiring adventures to the abandoned medieval villages



around Tatev.

“Tatev has become one of the most popular tourist destinations in Armenia. Every fifth guest of the country includes the cable car on their route. Thanks to this, the tourist flow to the Syunik region has increased 17 times compared to 2010. We hope that this trend will continue and more people from different parts of the world will be able to discover this unique region,” commented Maria Butenko, CEO of Impulse Business Management Company, which manages the cable car.

For more than 13 years of operation, “Wings of Tatev” has welcomed more than 1 million visitors. “Wings of Tatev” not only reveals previously inaccessible parts

of Armenia to travelers but also elevates the country’s recognition. It was included in the Guinness Book of Records as the longest passenger cable car in the world (5752 meters). Another notable achievement is the shortest construction period for such a large-scale engineering structure (10 months). The cable car was twice recognised as the best in the world according to the World Travel Awards. The first award went to “Wings

of Tatev” in 2021, the second – in 2023.

The construction of “Wings of Tatev” was carried out by the Austrian-Swiss company Doppelmayr/Garaventa, a leader in the field of ropeway construction. Every year, “Wings of Tatev” is successfully tested for compliance with international safety standards.

“Wings of Tatev” project is a part of “Tatev Revival” program, initiated by Ruben Vardanyan and Veronika Zonabend. The cable car is a non-profit project, and all its proceeds are directed towards the restoration of the Tatev Monastery and community development. The cable car is managed by Impulse Business Management.

# ARMENIA

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