

‘A grateful France welcomes you, Missak and Mélinée,’ – Macron’s tribute at Manouchian pantheonization



Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and his wife Anna Hakobyan, together with French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron, attended the solemn pantheonization of WWII hero, Resistance fighter Missak Manouchian and his wife Mélinée in Paris on February 21.

Armenian and French government officials attended the event.

President Emmanuel Macron paid tribute to the memory of Missak Manouchian and his wife, Mélinée, also a Resistance fighter, during the ceremony when they were interred in the mausoleum housing France’s national heroes.

Macron said that as a free man Manouchian would walk the streets in Paris and envision his beloved Armenia.

“A grateful France welcomes you, Missak and Mélinée,” said Macron at a ceremony held exactly 80 years after they were killed. “The France of 2024 owes you this honor.”

Members of the French foreign legion carried the coffins of Manouchian and his wife, draped in French flags into the Pantheon. Manouchian’s final choice, Macron said, was freedom, and today, France is grateful to him and his wife.

The names of 23 of Manouchian’s fellow Resistance fighters will be engraved in the vault where the couple was laid to rest, France24 reported.

Missak Manouchian led a small group of foreign Resistance fighters against the Nazi occupation, carrying out attacks on German forces and acts of sabotage in Nazi-occupied France in 1943. Macron [said](#) in 2023 that Manouchian “embodies the universal values” of France and “carries a part of our greatness.”

In 1944, the group, which included a number of Jews, was put out of action when 23 of its members were rounded up and sentenced to death by a German military court. Manouchian was shot by the Nazis on February 21, 1944.

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Armenian, French Ministers commend bilateral defense cooperation

At a meeting in Yerevan, the Defense Ministers of Armenia and France Suren Papikyan and Sébastien Lecornu commended the defense cooperation between the two countries.

The Ministers also outlined several new areas for cooperation.

They emphasized the significance of Armenian-French military-technical cooperation within the context of the reforms of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia and the efforts to turn them into a long-term institutional basis.

Special attention was paid to issues



military education, combat training, various training programs, advisory and expert support.

The meeting also covered the current

status of military-technical cooperation and future actions to ensure its continuity.

Additionally, Suren Papikyan and Sébastien Lecornu exchanged views on regional security issues.

The Ministers highlighted that Armenian-French defense cooperation and joint endeavors are solely aimed at establishing long-term peace and stability in the South Caucasus region, as well as the development of

the defense capacity of the Armenian Armed Forces in order to strengthen the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia.

Armenian PM commends activity of EU civilian mission

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received Stefano Tomat, Commander of Civil Operations of the European Union External Action Service.

The Prime Minister welcomed Mr. Tomat's visit to Armenia and highlighted the activities of the EU civilian mission on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border. Nikol Pashinyan noted that the effective operation of the mission contributes



to ensuring peace and stability in the region.

Prime Minister Pashinyan and Commissioner Tomat referred to the results of the EU observation mission and issues related to its future activities.

Both sides emphasized the importance of continuous development of Armenia-EU multi-sectoral cooperation.

PM Pashinyan highlights the contribution of German Chancellor to Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received the delegation headed by Elisabeth Winkelmeier-Becker, Chair of the Legal Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag.

The Prime Minister welcomed the delegation's visit to Armenia and emphasized the importance of consistently developing and expanding cooperation with Germany. Nikol Pashinyan noted that political and economic cooperation has been dynamic in recent years and emphasized the fact of high-level bilateral as well as inter-parliamentary dialogue.

The Prime Minister emphasized



Germany's support in the effective promotion of democratic reforms in our country, as well as in ensuring peace and stability in the South Caucasus. In this regard, Nikol Pashinyan highlighted the contribution of Chancellor Olaf Scholz to

the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process, as well as the importance of the principles established by the quadrilateral declaration adopted as a result of a meeting with the German Chancellor, the President of France, the President of the European Council.

The interlocutors exchanged views on the deepening of Armenia-Germany, Armenia-European Union cooperation, the activities of the EU civilian mission on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border and other issues.

French Senate President reiterates full support to Armenia and Armenian people



On a working visit to France, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited the Senate and had a meeting with Senate President Gérard Larcher.

The latter welcomed the Prime Minister's visit to Paris and noted that it is taking place in connection with the symbolic ceremony of enshrining Missak

Manouchian, the Armenian hero of the Resistance Movement, in the Pantheon of France's greatest figures. The President of the Senate emphasized that in this way France expresses its gratitude to Missak Manouchian and his comrades for their invaluable contribution to the country's liberation. Gérard Larcher emphasized the importance of friendly relations with Armenia and once again reaffirmed the full support of the Senate to Armenia and the Armenian people.

Prime Minister Pashinyan thanked for the warm reception, adding that the Armenian government and the Armenian people in general perceive Mr. Larcher as a close friend. Nikol Pashinyan thanked for the resolutions adopted by the French

Senate, which emphasize support for Armenia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and democracy. The Prime Minister noted that the relocating of the remains of Missak Manouchian in the French Pantheon once again emphasizes not only the political, economic, historical, but also the deep emotional connection between the Armenian and French peoples.

At the meeting, a number of issues related to the processes taking place in the South Caucasus region, the Armenian government's steps towards solving the humanitarian problems of people forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh, the "Crossroads of Peace" project presented by the Armenian government, and the Armenian-French inter-parliamentary cooperation were discussed.

Relations between Armenia and France at an exceptional dynamic stage – PM Pashinyan

Relations between Armenia and France are at an exceptional dynamic stage, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said alongside French President Emmanuel Macron ahead of their meeting at the Elysee.

The Armenian PM commended Macron's personal role and expressed gratitude for his approach to the development and deepening of Armenian-French relations. "Our ties are deepening in the field of economy, our ties are deepening politically. And I must also emphasize your contribution to creating a favorable environment around Armenia," he said.

Referring to the quadrilateral meeting in Prague on October 6, 2022, PM Pashinyan said the cornerstone principles of regional peace and stability were highlighted. "I am sure that if these principles are adhered to, peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan is indeed achievable and



realistic. And once again I emphasize our commitment to the agreements reached," he noted.

Nikol Pashinyan expressed special gratitude to Macron for his support in the resilience of Armenia. "We have actually established new relations in the field of defense, which is essential for ensuring security and stability in the region. In that regard, there is criticism, and I want to emphasize that the Republic of Armenia

recognizes the territorial integrity of all its neighbors. And in this sense, the development of the defense capabilities of the Republic of Armenia cannot cause worries for anyone, because our only task is to form the right balance in the region and only to protect the legitimate, sovereign, internationally recognized territory, borders, territorial integrity, and independence of the Republic of Armenia and increasing the resilience of our country," the Prime Minister stated.

"I also want to express my special thanks to you for your support to the democratic reforms of Armenia. In this context, we are indeed entering a new dynamic phase in our relations with the European Union. And here I must emphasize the support of France and personally you, because the European Union is also of key importance for the implementation of democratic reforms and development of institutional capacities of our country," PM Pashinyan said.

France ready to supply short to long-range missiles to Armenia

France is ready to supply various



range missiles to Armenia in case of necessity, Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu

said at a press conference in Yerevan after talks with his Armenian counterpart Suren Papikyan.

He said that no one can criticize Armenia for developing its military capabilities.

The minister recalled that arms acquisition agreements were signed when Papikyan visited Paris.

The French arms supplies to Armenia have defensive significance and it is important to ensure the protection of the population of Armenia and its borders.

He said that the signed agreements envisage supply of air defense systems to Armenia.

“No one can criticize Armenia for developing the capabilities of its army. Short, medium and long-range missiles will also be part of the development of defense capabilities if Armenia needs it,” he said.

The French minister added that training is an important component for the development of the Armenian Armed Forces. Under another agreement, Armenian military officers will train in France.

Armenia’s arms acquisitions exclusively for defensive purposes – Defense Minister

Armenia’s arms acquisitions aren’t directed against anyone, Minister of Defense Suren Papikyan has said.

Speaking at a joint press conference with French Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu, Papikyan said that Armenia seeks to modernize the capabilities of its military.

“This implies that we need to supplement these needs through our resources, and of course, support of partner countries would only help us. Our approach is the following: the Republic of Armenia is buying weapons and ammunition with



the purpose of protecting its territorial integrity and sovereignty. The weapons and ammunition bought by the Republic of Armenia are not meant for aggression

against any country,” Papikyan said.

He added that the country is facing dangers.

“Of course, I can’t deny that there is a danger, and that danger is visible from the existing rhetoric, and it is our duty to protect the country’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. And regardless what security environment we would have after signing a peace treaty in the future, the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia will continue acquiring defensive armaments,” Papikyan said.

Armenia ready to contribute to EU civilian missions, top security official says

The EU Mission in Armenia performs an important function of observing the internationally recognized border between Armenia and Azerbaijan along the entire length, Secretary of Armenia’s Security Council Armen Grigoryan said at the event dedicated to the first anniversary of deployment of the EU Civilian mission in Armenia.

“Our assessment is that the mission contributes to the stability of the region and is an important factor in ensuring transparency regarding current events,” Grigoryan said, adding that the criticism of the mission from various countries is unjustified and unacceptable.

“We are grateful to more than two

dozen EU member states, the leadership in Brussels and, of course, the staff of the mission for contributing to this important mission. We hope and expect that we will soon see the representatives of all EU member states in the mission. We welcome Canada’s participation and Norway’s willingness to join the mission,” he added.

At the same time, Armenian Grigoryan noted that “we do not want to be only a consumer of security, and in that context, Armenia has informed Brussels that it is ready to contribute to EU civilian missions.”

Armenia’s top security official commended the expansion of Armenia-EU relations over the past years, noting that

the relations have expanded from economic cooperation and institutional reforms to embrace security. We consider the EU and its member states as important partners in Armenia’s security and economic diversification.

He emphasized that the mission is also one of the important links of cooperation with the EU. “It raised Yerevan-Brussels relations to a new level and, as we often mention, had a positive impact on the public opinion in Armenia about the EU.

“We share the same democratic values with the European Union and we are happy to note that the partnership based on common values has also included the security sphere,” Armen Grigoryan stated.

European Parliament to discuss resolution on visa liberalization with Armenia next week – MEP



The European Parliament will discuss a resolution on visa liberalization with Armenia next week. German member of the European Parliament, Viola von Cramon-Taubadel told *Armenpress*.

“Now we are pushing in a [European

Parliament] resolution for next week, to the plenary session, we push for a real visa action plan. We aim to strengthen other institutional ties with Armenia to ensure that the Armenian population feels welcomed.

We really would like to see Armenia at some point being or becoming a part of the European Union. So at least if we come with a visa action plan or liberalization action plan, this is something tangible for the people and also in terms of trade and liberalization of our markets,” she said.

To the question of whether there are any obstacles for the European Union to

start talks with Armenia on visa liberalization, the member of the European Parliament answered that it is not the European Parliament that would probably block or who has blocked so far. She detailed that the problem has always existed in the European Council.

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel noted that the diplomats of Armenia should carry out some work on this issue with some EU member countries, without clarifying which countries in particular. She said that some EU member states have deep-rooted concerns regarding visa liberalization with Armenia.

France was the first to respond to Armenia’s decision to diversify defense cooperation – PM

France was the first to respond to Armenia’s decision to diversify its defense cooperation, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said as he welcomed the delegation led by French Minister of Armed Forces Sebastien Lecornu.

“Our relations are very deep and multi-layered and it is logical that this should find its reflection in the field of defense and security, as well,” PM Pashinyan said.

The Prime Minister also noted that the security component has always been present in his discussions with French President Emmanuel Macron. “Now I am glad that these discussions are getting a concrete expression, including with your support,” he said.

Sebastien Lecornu, in turn, expressed gratitude for the warm reception. “You



thrilled the French with your presence at the Pantheon. This was a very unique week for our two republics. Indeed, there was a certain divide between the warm friendly relations we had, and cooperation in the defense sector, which had been fully realized.”

“I think that your personal relationship with the French President also plays a big role in this progress. I think it’s based on trust, and our mutual trust as well. I think

that you, the Minister of Defense, and our teams have mapped out a very specific path for us. And taking into account the threats Armenia is facing, we are forced to move forward faster. That is, it is very important for us to react quickly and organize the steps,” he added.

The interlocutors discussed the work carried out in the direction of defense cooperation and upcoming plans.

The parties emphasized Armenia-France cooperation within the framework of the reforms of the Armenian armed forces, including military education, combat training and other directions.

Thoughts were also exchanged on issues related to regional security and stability.

Russia to contact Armenian colleagues for clarification regarding CSTO – Peskov

Yerevan has not sent official notifications regarding the freezing of membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told the Zvezda TV channel.

“The Armenian side has not taken any official actions in this regard. We intend to contact our colleagues for clarification

of the statements,” he said.

The comments come after Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in an interview with France 24 that Armenia’s participation in the CSTO is actually frozen.

Peskov noted that in this case it is very

important to understand the details. “Let’s hope that our Armenian friends will explain everything to us,” he added.

Yerevan has missed meetings in some integration formats. In particular, PM Nikol Pashinyan did not attend the CSTO summit in Minsk.

India-Armenia forum held during Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi

Armenian Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Narek Mkrtchyan is participating in the Raisina Dialogue, India's premier conference on geopolitics and geo-economics committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community.

Every year, leaders in politics, business, media, and civil society converge in New Delhi to discuss the state of the world and explore opportunities for cooperation on a wide range of contemporary matters. The Dialogue is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion, involving heads of state, cabinet ministers and local government officials, who are joined by thought leaders from the private sector, media and academia.

The conference is hosted by the Observer Research Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs of India.

The event began with the India-Armenia Dialogue forum.



In his remarks, Minister Mkrtchyan emphasized the importance of the effective partnership between Armenia and India and spoke about the mutual steps for strengthening cooperation. He said that the relations with India have been actively developing, which is among Armenia's foreign policy priorities.

"Cooperation between Armenia and India gained momentum in several sectors, including in trade, economy, high technologies, education and culture. The age-old mutual respect and trust between the two nations contributes to intensification of

people-to-people exchanges in various sectors," Mkrtchyan said.

Speaking about reforms in the employment migration, he said that the ministry is developing new approaches to ensure the required regulations. He also mentioned the MoU signed with Skill India in 2022, enabling training and skill development opportunities.

Mkrtchyan highlighted the potential of cooperation in AI and proposed to consider the idea of creating a global AI innovation platform to facilitate exchange of research and solutions and promote social benefits through international cooperation.

In context of the importance of peace, cooperation and mutual respect between nations, the minister also spoke about the Crossroads of Peace project, emphasizing that security, economic stability and development must be viewed as a collective global responsibility.

Representatives of French defense industry visit Engineering City in Armenia

Representatives of the defense industry companies accompanying French Defense Minister on an official visit to Armenia visited the Engineering City. The delegation, accompanied by the Deputy Minister of High-tech Industry of the Republic of Armenia Ruben Simonyan, visited the "Engineering City" on February 23.

Chairman of the board of Engineering Association Aram Salatyran presented the



details of implementation of the Engineering City project, the Factory City project, and the companies already operating in

the Engineering City. He voiced hope that French companies will also be represented in the Engineering City in the near future.

The members of the French delegation, accompanied by Deputy Minister of High-Tech Industry Ruben Simonyan, also toured the Engineering City and got acquainted with the ideas of Armenian engineers and the already developed products.

Armenian, French PMs discuss trade and economic relations

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal in Paris.

The Prime Minister of France welcomed the visit of Nikol Pashinyan and emphasized the readiness of the government led by him to consistently develop cooperation with Armenia.

The Armenian PM once again congratulated Gabriel Attal on the occasion of assuming the post of Prime Minister and

wished him success. The Prime Minister highlighted the deepening and expansion of cooperation with the French government in various fields.

In particular, the interlocutors discussed a wide range of issues related to trade and economic relations, cooperation and implementation of joint projects in the fields construction, infrastructure development, energy, water sector management,

tourism.

Prime Minister Pashinyan emphasized the support of the French government to Armenia in the direction of diversification of markets, as well as introduction of standards.

Nikol Pashinyan invited Gabriel Attal to Armenia on an official visit. The French Prime Minister gladly accepted the invitation.

Armenia, the UAE to sign an agreement on liberalization of trade, investment and services

The Armenia-UAE economic relations, which experienced a sharp boost of development last year, may evolve in a new way.

The Armenian Ministry of Economy, said in response to Armenpress query, presenting the most promising directions capable of giving a fresh breath to the economic cooperation between the two countries.

The ministry has stated that the expansion and deepening of the cooperation in the fields of tourism, infrastructure, renewable energy, construction, agriculture, food industry, high technologies, digitalization, cybersecurity and innovation are particularly attractive. Cooperation in these areas promises to be mutually beneficial.

In 2023, the UAE became the second trade partner of Armenia by the volume of goods turnover, at the same time topping the list of countries that made foreign direct investments in Armenia. Last year, exports from Armenia to the UAE amounted to approximately \$2.2 billion, indicating 3.2 times increase compared to 2022. The volume of imports was relatively modest - about 600 million dollars. The indicator of 2022 was exceeded by 36.7 percent. The total trade turnover reached \$2.8 billion, marking a 1.9-fold increase

in just one year.

According to the Ministry, the export structure has not changed significantly compared to 2022. Last year, 96.3 percent of Armenia's exports to the UAE consisted of four main types of products: unwrought or semi-wrought gold, gold dust, jewelry, diamond stones, cigarettes and cigars. In 2022, they accounted for 98.7 percent of exports. The import structure also remained largely unchanged, with passenger cars, diamond stones, telephone spare parts, modems, and jewelry dominating. Overall, they accounted for 59 percent of goods imported from the UAE to Armenia in 2023 (compared to 60 percent in 2022). In 2023, \$1.6 billion worth of goods were re-exported from Armenia to the UAE, mainly unwrought gold (\$1.3 billion), diamond stones (300 million) and unwrought, semi-unwrought or in powder form (\$32 million).

Last year, the UAE became the country that secured the largest volume of foreign direct investment in Armenia's economy, surpassing Russia for the first time in history. From January to September 2023, the UAE made direct investments totaling 101 billion 814.4 million drams in Armenia. The Ministry emphasizes that this indicator should not be conditioned by

a separate factor, but should be considered in the general logic of the dynamics of the development of the Armenian-Emirati trade and economic relations in the recent period.

According to the Economy Ministry, the ongoing environmental improvements, the current increase in bilateral trade relations and the rising influx of tourists to Armenia are considered the main factors contributing to the development of economic cooperation between Armenia and the UAE.

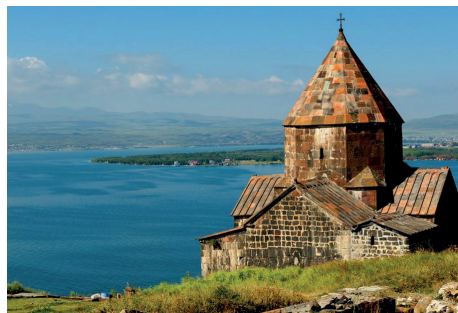
The talks on the signing of an agreement on services, trade, and investment between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the United Arab Emirates, which has begun the previous year, are currently underway. An agreement to sign such a document was reached during the negotiations on the free trade agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and its member states and the UAE.

The agreement, in fact, liberalizes the processes of implementation of services, trade and investments between Armenia and the UAE, envisaging the removal of drawbacks, enhancing economic efficiency and creating favorable conditions in these areas. It is aimed at expanding mutually beneficial economic cooperation.

Sweco provides expertise in EU environmental protection project for Lake Sevan in Armenia

To help preserve Lake Sevan, the largest and most important freshwater source in Armenia, Sweco is participating in a project for assessment of the consequences of raising the lake's water level by over 6 meters. The project is part of the EU4Sevan programme for the environmental protection of the lake.

Lake Sevan is crucial for Armenia due to its roles in irrigation, freshwater supply, biodiversity, tourism, culture, hydro-power, research and the economy. The lake's condition has a direct bearing on the region's environmental status and on Armenia's economic potential. Over the years, climate change has caused the lake to suffer from massive algal blooms,



which are affecting water quality.

Sweco is part of The EU4Sevan programme that aims to rehabilitate Lake Sevan's ecosystem by enhancing governance, strengthening policy frameworks and building capacity for sustainable development planning. Experts from Sweco Czech Republic are assessing the

prospective state of the lake, if it was to be artificially raised by about 6.5 meters, back to the water levels of the year 1903.

In doing so, Sweco is using detailed mathematical modelling and long-term observed data for future climate change scenarios, which is crucial for decision-making. Additionally, Sweco provides consultancy support for impact assessment and roadmap development.

The EU4Sevan programme, jointly funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), is a collaborative effort led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's interview with France 24 TV



France 24, Marc Perelman - We are on the platform of France 24. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan is our guest. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, you participated in the reburial ceremony of Missak Manouchian and his wife Mélinée. They were communists, resisters, they were also Armenians. What did you feel, what were your feelings?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - It was a very exciting event, and I must say that it got a very wide response in Armenia as well, the Public Television of Armenia broadcast it live and received a great response from our public. Of course, the feeling of pride and the feeling that the Armenian people made a very significant and serious contribution to the fight against fascism not only on the eastern front, but also on the western front. It is very important.

France 24, Mark Perelman - I want to refer to the situation in Armenia. After Azerbaijan's seizure of Nagorno-Karabakh last September, as well as a few days ago, there were incidents again. You met Mr. Aliyev in Munich, and he described that meeting as constructive and useful. Can you tell that there is hope and progress in your relationship? What do you think about this?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - Unfortunately, during this period there were instances when a lot of things were constructive and useful in the negotiation room, but in the future we don't always see their implementation. I hope it will not be so this time. We are talking about the

three basic principles that were agreed in Prague, that were also agreed in Brussels, that Armenia and Azerbaijan recognize each other's territorial integrity on the basis of the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration, which means that Soviet Armenia and Soviet Azerbaijan are precisely the modern Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Alma-Ata Declaration should become the political basis for the delimitation between the two countries, which means that there is no need to create a new border between our countries, it is just necessary to reflect on the ground the borders that existed at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union. And thirdly, regional communications should be opened on the basis of the principle of sovereignty and jurisdiction of countries, within the framework of equality and reciprocity. We have concentrated and expressed these principles in the "Crossroads of Peace" project. If Azerbaijan reaffirms its commitments in all these directions in practice, we will not have many obstacles on the way to peace.

France 24, Mark Perelman - Do you think, Mr. Prime Minister, peace agreement is possible soon? I recently read your statements regarding the events of February 14. Do you think Ilham Aliyev is preparing a new full-scale war against Armenia?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - The main problem is that the three principles that were announced and, in fact, published within the framework of the agreements reached on international platforms,

we have the task to reflect these principles in the peace treaty. In other words, our problem is on this road.

As for the possible escalation, analyzing these problems and also analyzing the statements coming from Azerbaijan, official Baku, we come to the conclusion that, yes, an attack on Armenia is very likely. Why? Because, for example, statements about "Western Azerbaijan" are very often heard from official Baku, and statements about "Western Azerbaijan" mean, in short, that the Republic of Armenia, in fact, its entire territory, is "Western Azerbaijan", meaning that most of the territories of the Republic of Armenia are Azerbaijani.

When they practically do not recognize our territorial integrity and the inviolability of our borders, that is where these analyzes come from. I mean, at the diplomatic level, Azerbaijan assures that it has no intention of attack, but where do these predictions about the possible attack come from? For two things, the first is that while expressing the already publicly agreed principles in the text of the peace treaty, we see that Azerbaijan is initiating certain difficulties, the second is the public narrative, the rhetoric that sounds at the highest level, which, if I briefly present it, is expressed in calling the Republic of Armenia "Western Azerbaijan", as well as borderline aggressiveness.

The last incident, when we had 4 victims, that incident is not justified in any way. They announced that one of their soldiers was wounded, and we announced that we will conduct an investigation, because there is an order not to carry out any action in an unjustified manner, and if it turns out that there is a violation of that order, there will be consequences provided by law. Despite these statements, Azerbaijan took advantage of the situation to carry out aggression. It is the combination of these facts that brings many Armenian and international experts to the opinion that Azerbaijan is preparing a new attack against Armenia.

France 24, Mark Perelman - Therefore, when you meet Ilham Aliyev, the conclusion is that you cannot trust him?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - I think that the history of our relations is itself the basis of deep mistrust. I think it makes no sense to ask the leader of Azerbaijan or me whether we trust each other or not. Obviously not. But the issue is not about that, the issue is about the following: are we going to build

A Russian-Azerbaijani special operation in Armenia? The response of the military police should also be investigated

In a thought-provoking discussion hosted by Noyan Tapan, renowned analyst Hovsep Khurshudyan serves as the distinguished guest. The backdrop for this interview is the recently concluded Munich Security Conference (MSC), where key figures such as Nikol Pashinyan, Aliyev, and our foreign minister, and the foreign minister of Azerbaijan in attendance. Against the backdrop of this forum, it's crucial to examine recent events, specifically the tragic incident a few days prior – the killing of Armenian servicemen by Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan alleges provocation by Armenia, framing their actions as preventing a major escalation attempt. Recalling the Security Council meeting on the Karabakh issue, scheduled for September 21 and 19, the focus shifted to Azerbaijan's labeled "anti-terrorist activity." The claim made in the Security Council insinuates negative actions by Armenians in Artsakh.

The pivotal question arises: Does the West align with Azerbaijan's stance, accepting their narrative? Unquestionably, the West does not endorse Azerbaijan's perspective. No Western entity, apart from Russia, acknowledges the deportation of ethnic Armenians and civilian murders as an anti-terrorist operation. Russia consistently advocates for Azerbaijan, echoing the sentiments of Aliyev and his team.

Notably, Pashinyan's significant meeting with the Prime Minister of Kosovo at the Munich Security Conference stands out. This strategic engagement, given the strained relations between Kosovo and Armenia, emphasizes the complexity of regional dynamics. Understanding Albania's affinity with Azerbaijan-Turkey and Kosovo's chilly relations with Armenia adds depth to the geopolitical landscape. A poignant message emerges from Armenia and the West – the organized ethnic cleansing by Azerbaijan in Artsakh doesn't close the issue, drawing parallels with the Serbs' actions in Kosovo. This joint message signals a united front in addressing the ongoing challenges surrounding the Artsakh conflict.

Adding to the discussion, analyst Hovsep Khurshudyan points out the convergence of messages on the same day. The statement from the United States

representative to the EAEU/ODIHR supports the view that elections in Azerbaijan were not free and fair, with various violations. Interestingly, despite the protocol dictating congratulations only after the official entry into force, the United States has refrained from congratulating Aliyev, underscoring the nuanced diplomatic landscape where strength often prevails over correctness and Western humanitarian values. During the Munich conference, negotiations between an Italian military-industrial enterprise and Bayramov regarding weapon production for Azerbaijan come into focus. Khurshudyan suggests leveraging ties with France and Germany to pressure Italy against supplying weapons, echoing the U.S. approach of applying sanctions on military supplies. While Resolution 907 is acknowledged, Khurshudyan proposes additional technological sanctions on Azerbaijan for dual-use technologies or military technology supplied to Israel. Commenting on Borel's statement about Azerbaijan's inadequate response, Khurshudyan raises a critical point. The swift acceptance of blame by the Armenian military police, without a thorough investigation, prompts speculation. It is posited that this could be part of a Russian-Azerbaijani operation, where Russians might have influenced Armenians to shoot, exploiting the absence of European observers and potentially encouraging, leading to an unintended escalation. This underscores the complexity and potential manipulation of events in the region.

Khurshudyan continues to emphasize the need for a thorough investigation into the statements made by the Armenian military police. The lack of clarity surrounding the sequence of events, the party responsible for initiating the incident, and potential instigators necessitates careful examination. Khurshudyan raises the possibility of Russian involvement, suggesting that Russians, possibly acting under an agreement with Azerbaijan, may have influenced the situation.

Expressing concern over Azerbaijan's demands for explanations, Khurshudyan underscores the unsettling issue of mercenaries in Armenian border positions, particularly Yerkrpah volunteers among the casualties. He rejects the classification

of Armenian units working in cooperation with the state as mercenaries, asserting that Yerkrpah is a legitimate military structure within the Ministry of Defense. Internal affairs, he argues, should not be subject to Azerbaijani interference, emphasizing the inappropriateness of external officials or experts intervening. In summary, Khurshudyan contends that Azerbaijan's demands and the characterization of the situation as a Russian-Azerbaijani special operation lack merit, urging a nuanced understanding and cautious approach to unraveling the complexities surrounding the recent events.

In reference to Azerbaijan, Khurshudyan draws parallels with Ukraine's Territorial Defense model. He points out that Azerbaijan's utilization of local individuals in their territory, providing them with payment, weapons, instructions, and orders for defense, does not categorize them as mercenaries or terrorists. This comparison serves to challenge any attempts by Azerbaijan to label Armenian units working within their state's cooperation as such.

Khurshudyan delves into the broader context, questioning the origin of the current situation and probing into Russia's role in the narrative. He suggests that Russia's influence over Armenia is diminishing, with economic sanctions losing their potency. While acknowledging the mutual impact of trade, he contends that stopping trade with Armenia would cause equal harm to both Russia and Armenia. However, he highlights a political component, asserting that Armenia might exit the EAEU after terminating trade, signaling the intricate balance between economic and political considerations in the region.

Khurshudyan underscores Russia's weakened leverage over Armenia, highlighting three key pitfalls. Firstly, he recalls a recent incident in December when Russia applied sanctions by closing Lars for a week and threatening to increase gas prices. In response, Armenia, viewing these actions as hindering rather than assisting, threatened to leave the EAEU. The sanctions were lifted, emphasizing Armenia's determination to navigate obstacles independently.

Secondly, Khurshudyan mentions the use of the Aliyev regime against Armenia as a leverage point, which has proven less

effective, especially following the presence of European observers at the Armenian border.

The third lever involves Russia's influence on public opinion, executed through the so-called soft power. Khurshudyan points out the production of a controversial film, "The Boys Word", which, according to some researches, has become highly popular among the youth. He raises concerns

about the film instigating wrong morals and contributing to bullying in schools.

In conclusion, Chairman of "Free Citizen" NGO and analyst Hovsep Khurshudyan provides a comprehensive analysis of the current geopolitical dynamics involving Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia. Khurshudyan dismisses the idea that the West supports Azerbaijan's perspective, asserting that only Russia aligns with

Azerbaijan's narrative.

In essence, Khurshudyan presents a nuanced perspective on the multifaceted challenges Armenia faces, emphasizing the importance of careful examination, diplomatic finesse, and a nuanced understanding of regional dynamics in navigating the intricate geopolitical landscape.

Translated by Liana Sargsyan

Civil Contract Party approves candidacy of MP Gevorg Papoyan as Minister of Economy

The Civil Contract Party's Board has approved the candidacy of Member of Parliament Gevorg Papoyan for the position of Minister of Economy, which has been vacant since the dismissal of Vahan Kerobyan on February 14.

Papoyan is the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Financial-Credit and Budgetary Affairs.

The confirmation of Papoyan's candidacy for the post was made during a board meeting of the party chaired by Prime



Minister Nikol Pashinyan, the Chairman of the Board, the party said in a press release.

"The Board discussed and approved the candidacy of Gevorg Papoyan for the position of Minister of Economy," the party said, adding that a number of other party matters were discussed.

Kerobyan has been under house arrest since February 16, one day after he was indicted in an ongoing corruption investigation. The ex-minister denies the accusations of abuse of power allegedly committed in a procurement tender last year.

Sargis Khandanyan emphasizes importance of the principles for Armenia-Azerbaijan relations settlement

The Armenian National Assembly delegation is taking part in the work of the Winter Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA).

According to the readout issued by National Assembly press service, the Head of the Armenian National Assembly delegation, the Chair of the NA Standing Committee on Foreign Relations Sargis Khandanyan delivered a speech in the Assembly.

"Mr. Chair,

You presented your vision for the draft report of this committee. Of course, we will have time and opportunity before our annual session in Bucharest to contribute to this report and draft resolution, but I would like to emphasize the importance of inclusion in the text of the principles for the settlement of the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Those principles

are the following:

1.Armenia and Azerbaijan have agreed to recognize each other's territorial integrity based on the 1991 Almaty Declaration.

2.Two countries have agreed to conduct the delimitation process between the two countries on the political basis of the 1991 Almaty Declaration.

3.Two countries have agreed to unblock transport and economic links based on respect for the sovereignty and jurisdiction of either country, on the basis of reciprocity and equality.

The above-mentioned principles have been agreed and reconfirmed between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Prague in 2022, in Brussels last year, and in Munich a few days ago. After those meetings Armenia in the highest level reconfirmed its commitments to those fundamental points for the normalization of relations as soon as possible. It is very important, dear colleagues, to continue to

call Azerbaijan to strongly adhere to these principles and to engage in the peace process based on these understandings without further delays and demands including territorial claims towards Armenia.

The adherence to the principles of Almaty declaration has a paramount importance for this process. 12 Soviet republics by joining this declaration and becoming sovereign states, recognized each other's territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and sovereignty. And thus, with the Almaty declaration, the existing administrative borders between the Soviet republics became state borders.

This principle is not only actual for the context of the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but it also fundamental for the respect of the other post-Soviet republics' territorial integrity including Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova," Sargis Khandanyan said.

Building a Fence or Encouraging Aggression? Ghukasyan's Insights on National Security



In a recent discussion on Noyan Tapan, analyst Andrias Ghukasyan, the chairman of the Armenian Constructive Party, highlighted critical issues surrounding Armenia's defense. Ghukasyan emphasizes that recent casualties are not isolated incidents but stem from the inadequacy of our frontline positions and the overall defense system. He consistently advocates for the Republic of Armenia to construct defense regions along the line of contact with Azerbaijan, comprising robust iron-concrete structures. Despite his repeated emphasis on this need, the existing problem persists, prompting him to call upon citizens to actively promote this demand. This extends to disseminating materials and even writing letters to military leadership, urging them to prioritize the establishment of these defense zones.

Presently, there is a social outcry for the creation of effective defense zones along the Azerbaijani border. However, the current strategic focus, labeled as the "peace agenda" by the general authorities, neglects the crucial preparations needed for these defense regions. This oversight becomes a pressing issue as our soldiers face harm due to the absence of these essential defense zones. Recognizing the difficulty some may have in comprehending this concept, he deems it necessary to elaborate on the importance of defense zones. Fundamentally, a trench serves as a protective pit where a soldier can seek refuge from debris and shock waves in the event of an explosion on the trench's side—an essential but minimal defense measure in contemporary military operations.

Closing trenches with concrete slabs is imperative due to the threat posed by enemy missiles, especially those from volley systems, which can shower fragments into

open trenches, causing harm to soldiers. Considering the increased use of drones in modern warfare, it becomes apparent, especially post the 2020 war, that leaving trenches exposed to the open sky is not a viable option. Protecting soldiers from potential sniper attacks while in combat positions within the trench necessitates the coverage of trenches with concrete slabs.

Each regiment, comprising approximately 30 primary positions, involves trenches accommodating 7-8 squads with a length of 100 meters, serving as firing positions. This is an extensive industrial undertaking, requiring state planning to calculate the number of positions, determine the necessary meters, design slabs, and place orders. Despite the presence of cement and concrete factories in Armenia and considerable interest from potential workers, the realization of this essential defense project faces stagnation.

Drawing examples from global military practices, such as Hamas going underground or how Russia and Ukraine have organized their positions, underscores the feasibility and importance of implementing such defense programs. However, the current leadership in Armenia pursues a divergent policy, evident in actions like removing Mount Ararat from national symbols and altering historical narratives. This shift in focus hampers motivation within the military sector to protect the country, as the emphasis on alternative agendas undermines the critical need for fortified defense regions.

The predicament of protecting Artsakh, acknowledged by Armenia as part of Azerbaijan, raises concerns about the government's stance aligning with perceived enemy demands outlined in the constitution. This situation, akin to a hybrid war, employs psychological tactics to diminish public and army resistance. Despite clear questions posed by the representative of the Collective West to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, his evasive responses regarding potential attacks from Azerbaijan, lack of Russian Federation support, and refusal of Western military aid contribute to the

uncertainty surrounding Armenia's preparedness for conflict.


The public, influenced by this psychological warfare, faces a notable drop in resistance, fostering a perception of individual powerlessness. Recognizing the gravity of this situation, there is a call for people to disseminate and support a proposed plan, urging a collective effort to address the challenges.

Pashinyan's ambiguous answers to crucial questions leave room for assumptions, creating an air of uncertainty regarding the government's readiness for potential conflict. The refusal of Western military aid, while understandable from a geopolitical perspective, raises questions about Armenia's strategy and potential consequences.

The geopolitical implications are clear: the West opposes Azerbaijan attacking Armenia, understanding that such an event could lead to Russian intervention, potentially compromising Armenia's independence. The prospect of joining a union state underscores the high-stakes nature of the situation and the need for a transparent and strategic approach to safeguard Armenia's future as an independent nation.

The imminent threat of war, dependent on Ilham Aliyev's decisions, underscores the fragility of the current situation, necessitating logical and collective actions by the public. Supporting the distribution of materials that address crucial issues becomes a vital step in shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions, particularly in the context of potential conflict.

In the narrative, the army emerges as a vulnerable entity, with middle-level military leadership facing grim possibilities in the event of an Azerbaijani attack—either being casualties or becoming subjects of subsequent judgment, depending on governmental determinations. Drawing parallels to the aftermath of the 2020 war, where numerous individuals, including officers and leaders, were accused, highlights the pivotal role of society.

Reflecting on historical instances, such as  page 12

page 11 ➔ the lifting of the ban on the term “genocide” in Armenia in 1965, emphasizes the significance of public activism. The people’s rebellion against prohibitions ultimately led to denazification in Soviet Armenia, showcasing the undeniable impact of collective action on government policies.

In the present context, denazification involves recognizing Artsakh as part of Azerbaijan, renouncing the term “genocide,” preserving it in the collective memory while removing it from the political agenda. This nuanced approach aligns with the notion that societal involvement is pivotal in shaping the trajectory of the nation and influencing governmental decisions during challenging times.

The interconnection between actions such as revising history, diminishing the role of the church, severing ties with the Diaspora, and questioning Mount Ararat’s significance is perceived as a deliberate effort to influence the identity of Armenians. Stripping away national common

problems and symbols aims to create a society devoid of national pride and dignity, essentially demoralizing the people through psychological tactics, orchestrated by external forces. This manipulation of identity is seen as a means to coerce Armenians into accepting illegal demands, eroding their resistance to perceived enemy pressures.

Andrias Ghukasyan raises a critical question regarding the defense of the country, emphasizing it as a collective responsibility. He draws an analogy, likening it to owning a house without a fence. In this scenario, if advised to construct a fence for security, refusing to do so risks potential harm. Ghukasyan points out the concerning perception within a significant portion of the public, suggesting that the mere act of building a defensive barrier might provoke aggression. The prevailing sentiment seems to hinge on the hope that abstaining from fortifying defenses will deter potential attacks. This analogy underscores the delicate balance

between proactive defense and the fear of escalating tensions.

The geopolitical strategy of Russia, seemingly encouraging Nikol Pashinyan’s engagements with Europe, becomes a subject of scrutiny. While Russia may not explicitly prevent these interactions, allowing Pashinyan to speak in Brussels is seen as a tactic to later blame him for seeking Western support, possibly in the form of armored vehicles from France. This strategic move by Russia is speculated to create a narrative where external alliances are used as scapegoats for challenges, akin to the situation with Artsakh.

In conclusion, Andrias Ghukasyan, the analyst and chairman of the Armenian Constructive Party, paints a dire picture of Armenia’s current defense vulnerabilities and the potential repercussions of geopolitical decisions. The urgent need to fortify the nation’s defense zones with concrete slabs is underscored, reflecting not just a military concern but a broader societal issue.

page 8 ➔ trust in small steps? It is in the process of building trust that we face difficulties.

France 24, Marc Perelman - And you think he’s not ready for it? When he says he is ready for peace, is he preparing for war in reality? Is this what you mean?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan – This is what I want to say, yes, there is such an impression, but also to be objective, I assume that if you ask them, they will also say that they do not trust us, but it is not about that. It is about something else: are we mutually preparing step by step, with small steps, if it is possible with bigger steps, to build trust, so that we could believe each other? I say again, during the diplomatic contacts, the leader of Azerbaijan says that they have no intention of attack. And the problem, I reiterate, is the public narrative, the practical work that followed it, and the events happening on the ground are what give many analysts the basis to draw such conclusions. Sometimes it is very difficult to counter and give a counter-argument as to why things will not develop in that direction.

France 24, Mark Perelman - You already have military aid from France in the form of radars. For example, Mr. Macron has also promised other weapons, particularly defensive ones. Baku is taking advantage of this, saying it will launch a

new attack. Does this mean that Armenia should arm itself more because Azerbaijan is actually stronger on the ground militarily?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - Yesterday, during the joint statement with President Macron, I also touched on this issue, because every time Azerbaijan makes noise about any of our new contract and cooperation in any of military-technical fields, but Azerbaijan does not say that it has been buying weapons worth billions for years. This is an important fact to note.

On the other hand, why is Azerbaijan worried about the reforms of the Armenian army in the conditions when it keeps the sovereign territories of Armenia under occupation, and in the conditions when we say: very well, let’s reflect the border on the ground based on the Alma-Ata declaration and mutually and simultaneously withdraw troops from the border line. And that will be one of the very concrete steps for building trust.

The reform of our army should not worry anyone. Why? Because we say that we recognize the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all our neighbors. Therefore, why should anyone be worried about reforming our army? If we recognize the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our neighbors and reform our army and say that our army does not and will not solve

any tasks outside our sovereign territory, but Azerbaijan expresses concern and makes noise against this background. This can happen only under the circumstances when Azerbaijan itself has a task to solve a problem in our sovereign territory through military means. There is no other logic. Was I able to explain the idea?

Yes, we are reforming the army, and by the way, having an army is the sovereign right of every country. No country can accuse any other country of having an army. And we say that we unconditionally recognize the territorial integrity of all our neighbors, that is, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey, Georgia. We do not have and will not have a task to use our army outside our sovereign, internationally recognized territory. And against this background, Azerbaijan expresses concern. Why does he express concern? Does he have a problem to solve in our sovereign territory? It is also this fact, this reaction, that gives many experts a reason to assume that Azerbaijan will continue its aggressive policy.

But we also offer solutions here. We offer several solutions. One of the solutions is to reflect the border of 1991 and withdraw the troops, that is, neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan should have any equipment, firearms and soldiers in each other’s sovereign territory. Secondly, we ➔ page 13

page 12 propose the demilitarization of the border zone. Third, we propose mutual arms control. In other words, if we had any desire to threaten the security of Azerbaijan, why should we make all these proposals? It is Azerbaijan that says it will keep the heights under control, no matter whose territory they are in. But it is a direct violation of our territorial integrity, implementation of an aggressive policy today and, in fact, a declaration of no intention to abandon that policy. And this is a problem.

France 24, Marc Perelman - During the recent conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, you accused Moscow of trying to use that conflict against you personally. Do you still think that Vladimir Putin's goal is to remove you from power?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - You know, during the events of September 2023, the highest-ranking representatives of the Russian Federation directly called on the citizens of Armenia to go to the streets and overthrow the elected legitimate government. Russian TV channels, not for a few days, but for 6 years, in fact, have been carrying out systematic and consistent, purposeful anti-propaganda against the Armenian government, the elected authorities and me personally. Is there anything else that could be concluded from all this?

France 24, Mark Perelman - Does it continue today?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - You know, to be honest, I have lost interest in that topic. I don't even know if it continues or not. No matter if it continues or not, the people of Armenia have shown that they are not going to give up their sovereignty, independence, and democracy and will be consistent in claiming their territorial integrity, establishing normal relations with their neighbors, and in terms of implementation of the peace agenda, as well as the "Crossroads of Peace" project, also in terms of deepening further relations with the European Union.

France 24, Mark Perelman - Do you at least keep contact with Vladimir Putin now?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - Yes, we had contacts and talked in December.

France 24, Marc Perelman - Do you trust him?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - You know, we have interstate relations, and Armenia and Russia have a long history of relations. The history of those relations has certain institutional traditions. We are within those traditions.

France 24, Marc Perelman - A desert-named Dmitry Sedrakov was arrested

in December. The Armenian authorities assure that they are not aware. Can you tell us what the actual situation is and whether the Russian authorities can make arrests in Armenia without Armenia's permit?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - You know, that incident, the alarm about those incidents greatly worried us. And we are also investigating that case, and if it turns out that everything is as you say, it will of course also lead to certain consequences, because, of course, we cannot tolerate illegal actions on the territory of our country.

France 24, Marc Perelman - What consequences are you talking about?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - It will depend on our legal assessment of the particular events.

France 24, Marc Perelman - Two short questions. There is a Russian military base on the territory of Armenia. Do you intend to close it and are you going to withdraw from the military alliance with Russia?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - You know, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, in our estimation, has failed to fulfill its obligations in the field of security towards the Republic of Armenia. In particular, in 2021 and 2022, and this could not go unnoticed by us and without consequences. And the consequence in practice is that we have essentially frozen our participation in the Collective Security Treaty Organization. We will see what will happen tomorrow.

France 24, Mark Perelman - And what about the Russian base?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - The base is located in Armenia not within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty. It is a completely different contractual dimension, and we have not had the occasion to return to that dimension.

France 24, Mark Perelman - Last question, Mr. Prime Minister. Regarding the war in Ukraine, Armenia was initially quite cautious, naturally, because of your relations with Russia. After two years, do you think it was a fair war from Russia's side?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - I said that the Alma-Ata declaration is very important for us, because what is the Alma-Ata declaration about? The Declaration of Alma-Ata is about two key things. Moreover, that declaration of Alma-Ata was signed by Russia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan. By the way, that declaration of Alma-Ata started with the Belovezha Accords, which was signed by Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. That agreement, which was later joined

by another nine former Soviet republics in Alma-Ata, is about two things: that the Soviet Union ceases to exist and, secondly, that the signatory Soviet republics become independent states, recognize each other's territorial integrity and inviolability of borders. Now, with the spirit of the Alma-Ata Declaration, which is also very important for our security, we see that what is happening in Ukraine is a violation of the Alma-Ata Declaration, and we are, in fact, seriously concerned.

France 24, Mark Perelman - Are Western countries pressing you to join the sanctions against Russia? Are goods from Armenia entering Russia, and are Western countries pressuring you to join the sanctions more broadly?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - We don't have such a regime of relations: to join or not to join, but on the other hand, we take into account the existing sanctions, because it's not so that we are pressured or demanded, but if we do not keep the sanctions, it will affect our relations with those countries who impose these sanctions. And we attach importance to our relations with those countries.

I am very glad that you ask that question, because, in particular, there are accusations from time to time in the European Union that Armenia does not comply with the sanctions, that Armenia violates the sanctions regime, but I can say that during this time, for the last time in 2023, we had several delegations from the European Union and the United States, the purpose of which was to see how the Republic of Armenia adheres to its international relations and obligations, how it relates to these sanctions. And it should be noted that neither the European Union nor the United States of America have made any reservations towards us. On the contrary, they officially recorded that they have no reservations towards the Republic of Armenia in the context of sanctions.

But since this is not talked about much, we don't raise this topic too much, so to speak, because it is a working issue, unfortunately in a number of EU countries and also in the media, statements are sometimes made to blame Armenia on the basis of misinformation, counter-propaganda provided by some circles about Armenia. But I say again, it has been officially recorded by both the European Union and the United States of America that there is no ground to blame Armenia in this matter.

France 24, Mark Perelman - Mr. Pashinyan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, thank you very much for answering my questions.

Armenia launches Step Toward Home Program 2024 for Diaspora youth

The Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs has begun accepting applications for the two-week “Step Toward Home” 2024 program. The program allows Diaspora Armenian youth aged 13-18 to visit Armenia, discover their homeland, and strengthen their national identity. The program includes Armenian language (Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian), Armenian studies, national song and dance courses, visits to historical and cultural sites in Armenia, museums and educational institutions, meetings with state and public officials, artists and



culture figures, as well as sports and cultural events.

This year, the “Step Toward Home” program will welcome 600 Diaspora Armenian youth from June 3rd to August

24th, divided into six stages.

The Government of Armenia covers all costs related to the Armenian part of the program. Diaspora Armenian youth who have not participated in the “Ari Tun” and “Step Toward Home” programs in previous years are eligible to apply for the program. The participants must cover their own travel expenses and purchase a two-week travel insurance.

The applications must be submitted on the official website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of the Republic of Armenia until April 1st.

Armenia, France to cooperate in cinematography

The National Film Center of Armenia and the National Center of Cinematography and Moving Image of the French Republic have signed an Action Plan on cooperation in the fields of film heritage, training, professional education, co-production and partnership with festivals.



The National Film Center of Armenia participates in the European Film Market on the sidelines of the 74th Berlin International Film Festival with a separate Armenian pavilion with the financial support of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia.

Charles Aznavour park to open in Paris this September, Mayor tells Armenian PM

Charles Aznavour park will open in the center of Paris in September, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo said at a meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The bust of the famous chansonnier will also be placed in the park.

Mrs. Hidalgo reiterated her continuous support to Armenia and the Armenian people.

Prime Minister Pashinyan thanked for the warm reception and noted that he fondly remembers the Mayor's visit to Armenia on a mission to support the forcibly displaced people from Nagorno Karabakh. Nikol Pashinyan praised



Anne Hidalgo's efforts in Armenia-related matters.

The interlocutors emphasized the development of cooperation between Yerevan and Paris, particularly in the fields of transport, construction, tourism, and culture. Nikol Pashinyan stressed the need to share the rich experience of Paris City Hall with Yerevan in different directions.

Anne Hidalgo noted that Paris is ready to consistently develop and strengthen cooperation with Yerevan, including within the framework of various international platforms.

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