

European Parliament Reiterates Support to Armenia, Calls for Sanctions against Azerbaijan



European Parliament adopts two resolutions calling for sanctions against Azerbaijan

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution condemning Azerbaijan's aggressive policies, particularly its pre-planned military attack on Artsakh. The resolution highlights concerns over the blockade of the Berdzor/Lachin corridor, organized starvation of Armenians in Artsakh, and the lack of action by Russian peacekeepers to prevent the assault. It also condemns military support provided to Azerbaijan by non-EU countries and expresses serious concern about the consequences for the civilian population, likening them to ethnic cleansing.

Furthermore, the resolution calls for consequences for Azerbaijan's actions, urging the EU to impose sanctions on Azerbaijani authorities responsible for ceasefire violations and to suspend the Memorandum of Understanding on Energy. It also recommends suspending negotiations for a new partnership agreement with Azerbaijan due to recent events and the country's human rights situation.

The resolution welcomes the establishment of the European

Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA) to enhance security in conflict-affected areas and normalize relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It calls for an increase in the number of experts deployed as part of EUMA and extends its deployment timeframe and geographical scope.

Additionally, the resolution urges the European External Action Service (EEAS) to provide technical assistance to Armenia to reconsider its military alliances, enhancing Armenia's security and sovereignty. It requests that EUMA reports on the ground situation be provided to Parliament's Committees on Foreign Affairs and Subcommittee on Security and Defense.

The resolution also calls on the Council to be prepared to impose targeted sanctions against perpetrators of aggression and suspend imports of oil and gas from Azerbaijan in the event of any further military aggression against Armenian territorial integrity.

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Ethnic cleansing of Nagorno Karabakh a continuation of Azerbaijan's policy of terror: Armenian MFA on anniversary of Sumgait massacre

Azerbaijan continues its policy of eradicating any Armenian traces under its control, desecrating, vandalizing and destroying Armenian religious and historical-cultural monuments, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on

On February 27, 1988, at the initiative of the leadership of Soviet Azerbaijan and under the conditions of absolute negligence, the massacres of the Armenian population of Sumgait began, accompanied by cases of violence, brutality, forced disappearances, dispossession, and massive violations of human rights. Hundreds of Armenians were killed, including women, children and the elderly, and thousands of Armenians were forcibly displaced.

"The Sumgait tragedy was followed by massacres of Armenians in Kirovabad, Baku and other Armenian-populated settlements of Azerbaijan. These chain events, like the earlier complete depopulation of Nakhichevan, showed

that the mentioned crimes were not separate episodes of violence based on nationalism, but regular manifestations of state-planned and implemented policy of Armenophobia. As a result of that policy, around 500,000 ethnic Armenians were forcibly deported from Soviet Azerbaijan," the Foreign Ministry said.

The Ministry noted that these events targeted not only the Armenian population. They were also accompanied by deliberate actions to eliminate the Armenian heritage and the Armenian trace in general.

"Already in the 21st century, under the conditions of complete impunity, Azerbaijan continued the same policy of terrorizing the native Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, starving them to death and finally depopulating Nagorno-Karabakh through the use of force, ethnic cleansing, which was completed notwithstanding the three

binding decisions of the UN International Court of Justice," it stated.

"Even today, Azerbaijan continues its policy of eradicating any Armenian traces under its control, desecrating, vandalizing and destroying Armenian religious and historical-cultural monuments. Even today, the ongoing xenophobic and hostile policy against the Republic of Armenia is accompanied by high-level hate speech, threats and aggressive rhetoric, which is an obstacle to overcoming enmity between peoples and establishing peace and stability in the region," the Ministry continued.

"The international community should give an adequate assessment of the mass crimes that have taken place and launch all available mechanisms to prevent the recurrence of such crimes and contribute to Armenia's sincere efforts to achieve a dignified and lasting peace in the South Caucasus," it concluded.

Alen Simonyan receives Regional Director for Eurasia at National Democratic Institute Eva Busza

The Armenian National Assembly President Alen Simonyan on February 28 received the delegation led by the Regional Director for Eurasia at the National Democratic Institute (NDI) Eva Busza.

The Speaker of Parliament, welcoming the guests, highly appreciated the role of the USA in the political and economic life of Armenia and emphasized the importance of the US's assistance to the democratic systemic reforms implemented in Armenia, the National Assembly said in a readout.

"Armenia is committed to promoting

democracy, strengthening the rule of law, and fighting corruption. The reforms carried out by the Armenian authorities are aimed at increasing the transparency and accountability of the activities of the state bodies," Alen Simonyan noted.

Touching upon the activity of the National Democracy Institute, the National Assembly President highlighted the reopening of the NDI office in Armenia and mentioned with satisfaction the effectiveness of the joint programs implemented within the framework of cooperation established for years.

Eva Busza thanked the National Assembly President for his warm reception and for supporting the activities of the National Democratic Institute.

"Your role is very important in the implementation of our programs. We thank you for the effective work and the democratic environment that we see in Armenia today," Eva Busza pointed out.

During the meeting, the possibilities of expanding cooperation within the framework of the democratic reforms in Armenia were discussed.

Azerbaijani serviceman arrested for diversion attempt, Armenia's Investigative Committee provides details

The Azerbaijani Armed Forces soldier, who was neutralized by the Armenia's Armed Forces servicemen at the border line of Tegh community, Syunik region, on February 28th, has been arrested. The investigation is currently underway, the Armenia's Investigative Committee has said.

"Criminal proceedings have been initiated against Azerbaijani Armed Forces serviceman Ruslan Eldanis-Oghlu Penakhov in the General Department of Investigation of Crimes against the State, Fundamentals of the Constitutional Order, and Public Security. The proceedings are based on

the provisions outlined in Points 7 and 15 of Part 2 of Article 44-155, Part 1 of Article 335, Part 1 of Article 340, Part 1 of Article 44-425, and Part 1 of Article 469 of the Armenian Criminal Code regarding the cases of diversion attempt, attempted acts dangerous to the lives of others, attempted murder driven by national, religious hatred, intolerance, and enmity, illegal possession and transportation of firearms and ammunition, smuggling of firearms and ammunition, and illegal border crossing on February 28, 2024," reports the Investigative Committee.

Ruslan Penakhov was arrested under

the investigator's decision.

Circumstances are being revealed by examination.

Notice: Individuals accused of a crime are presumed innocent until proven guilty in accordance with the procedures outlined by the Armenian Criminal Procedure Code and by a legally binding court verdict.

Earlier, the Armenian National Security Service reported that an Azerbaijani Armed Forces serviceman armed with an AKM-type assault rifle and one magazine crossed the Armenian-Azerbaijani contact line near the Tegh community, Syunik region, around 05:15 a.m. on February 28th.

Pashinyan warns of potential de jure freeze of Armenia's activities in CSTO if the current process continues



Armenia has de facto frozen its activities in the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

If Armenia does not receive an answer to the question regarding the area of responsibility of the CSTO in the Republic of Armenia, it will de jure freeze its involvement as well. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan stated this Wednesday during a question-and-answer session with members of the government in the National Assembly.

"We asked the CSTO a question and we have not received an answer yet. The

absence of clarity on this issue, in our opinion, poses threats to the national security and territorial integrity of Armenia. The question is very simple: what is the CSTO's area of responsibility in the Republic of Armenia?"

The question arose in 2021, after the events of May, the events of November 2021 and after the events of September 2022.

"The question arose in the following context: the CSTO sent a mission here, and as a result of the mission's actions and studies, it was expected to assess the

situation. And our CSTO partners refused to assess the situation, which has led to this situation," said the Prime Minister.

Referring to his statement that Armenia has practically frozen its activities in the CSTO, Pashinyan said that this means, for example, that Armenia has not had a permanent representative in the CSTO for a year, and has not participated in CSTO events at both high and highest levels for a long time now.

The principle of consensus applies to decision-making in the Collective Security Treaty. Pashinyan assured that Armenia is not blocking anything, but it is also not participating. The Prime Minister reiterated that Armenia's non-participation is due to a simple reason: it does not have an answer to the question of why it should participate.

Armenia knows what the CSTO's area of responsibility is in the Republic of Armenia.

"All we are suggesting is to sign under that legitimate answer and confirm it. This must be done by consensus," the PM said.

He added that the CSTO, instead of fulfilling its security obligations to Armenia, on the contrary, creates security problems for the Republic of Armenia. And it poses a threat to the national security of the Republic of Armenia.

Armenian, Azerbaijani foreign ministers mutually agreed to continue negotiations on the open issues

On 28-29 February 2024 negotiations were held between Ararat Mirzoyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in Villa Borsig in Berlin, Germany.

The Ministers and their delegations discussed perspectives on the provisions of the draft bilateral Agreement on Establishment of Peace and Interstate Relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Mutual



agreement was expressed to continue

negotiations on the open issues, the Armenian foreign ministry said.

During the course of the visit, the ministers met with Annalena Baerbock, the German Foreign Minister, both separately and in the trilateral format.

Minister Mirzoyan expressed his appreciation to Germany for hosting the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Armenia-EU relations have never been stronger - EU Commissioner for International Partnerships



The EU Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen has addressed the need for closer ties between the EU and Armenia, as well as the necessity for a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia. During her speech in the European Parliament, she emphasized that Armenia-EU relations are currently undergoing historic moments.

“Armenia-EU relations have never been stronger than today. This was confirmed two weeks ago at the Armenia-EU Partnership Council. Back in October last year, in this plenary session, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan signaled Armenia’s readiness to get closer to the European Union,” said Urpilainen, emphasizing that the EU is working to move forward in that direction.

According to her, Armenia’s previous decisions, which led to political, economic and security dependence, cannot be overcome overnight.

“However, the clear political will of both sides will allow us to move forward

in deepening and expanding our partnership. We already have a good foundation, solid frameworks, which is the European Union-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement,” said the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships.

She noted that together with Armenia, they had undertaken the preparation of a new ambitious partnership program. “We have proposed this new partnership program to be based on our shared values consisting of three pillars. First, we will work to strengthen Armenia’s resilience and diversify its economy by expanding cooperation in trade, energy, communications, and aviation security.

In order to expand contacts between people, we are discussing options for initiating a dialogue on visa liberalization. Armenia has expressed its strong interest in this issue, and we call on its leadership to intensify work in the direction of relevant reforms. The start of the dialogue on the liberalization of the visa regime will be an important political impulse for the citizens of Armenia and will provide leverage for further reforms.

Secondly, the issue of security is becoming an increasingly important element of our relationship. We are pleased to celebrate the first anniversary of the EU mission in Armenia and look forward

to its strengthening through the European Peace Facility. We are expanding our dialogue on foreign and security policy issues, including participation in EU unit missions and operations.

Thirdly, increased investment will be of great importance for closer economic cooperation. We are committed to supporting Armenia’s participation in the construction of an electric cable in the Black Sea, as well as joining other projects aimed at creating closer ties between the countries of the region. Creating closer ties between the countries of the region has great potential to contribute to peace,” said the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen.

According to the commissioner, the EU continues to support the Armenians of Karabakh by providing financial resources to address their socio-economic problems.

“Our firm commitment to the process of normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan remains unchanged. We are ready to support stable and lasting peace, based on the principles of recognition of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both countries. We reject any use of force or threat of force and continue to support the peaceful settlement of conflicts,” concluded the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen.

Macron announces new coalition to send Ukraine medium- and long-range missiles

French President Emmanuel Macron announced on Feb. 26 that a new coalition will work to supply Ukraine with medium- and long-range missiles and bombs, *Le Monde* reports.

After a summit on Ukraine held in Paris, President Macron said at a press conference that France and other allies of Ukraine will “create a coalition for deep strikes and therefore medium- and long-range missiles and bombs.”

Ukraine has long appealed to allies



for long-range weapons, but fears of

escalation with Moscow have prevented Western partners from readily transferring the weapons, according to *Kyiv Independent*.

France has already supplied Ukraine with long-range SCALP missiles that can travel up to 250 kilometers.

President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine said on Feb. 24, two years after Russia launched military operations in Ukraine, that Kyiv will not use long-range missile systems to strike targets in Russia.

Armenia and Greece aim to uphold international law: Speaker of Greek Parliament



The speaker of the Hellenic Parliament Konstantinos Tasoulas welcomed Prime

Minister Nikol Pashinyan's visit to Greece and emphasized the centuries-old friendly relations between the two countries.

During the meeting with Nikol Pashinyan, the Greek parliamentary speaker assured that as a result of the visit, Armenian-Greek relations would be further enhanced and strengthened.

"Mr. Prime Minister, our two countries have consistently supported the international law, despite facing numerous

challenges to our rights. We collaborate on both bilateral and international platforms with the aim of safeguarding the international law, which serves as the cornerstone of civilized cooperation," Tasoulas stated.

The Greek parliamentary speaker noted that only with cooperation and a commitment to the principles and norms of international law it is possible to move forward and have such friendly and allied relations as Greece has with Armenia.

Mitsotakis to Pashinyan: Greece will stand by Armenia in its peace efforts

Greece will stand by Armenia in every diplomatic effort for a lasting peace treaty with Azerbaijan, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a statement for the press alongside Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

He said the visit is an important step in consolidating the already excellent relations between the two countries, Greece and Armenia.

"These relationships go back centuries, but can become even more productive in the face of the common challenges we face. Especially now that Armenia, with the assistance of the European Union, is acquiring stable and transparent structures, which will allow attracting investments," the Greek PM noted.

"We also do business in the defense sector, having concluded a special agreement since last December. We are also discussing with the Prime Minister how we can strengthen our trade relations,"

he added.

"We also discussed the developments in our wider region, finding that here too our positions are common: both countries stand firmly against any threat of force or use of force," Mitsotakis said.

"We are always on the side of International Law, we remain fully committed to respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of each state, we believe in dialogue and the peaceful resolution of disputes. After all, after the 2023 war, Armenia understands better than anyone the value of peace," the Prime Minister noted. He emphasized that Greece will always stand by Armenia in every diplomatic effort for a permanent peace treaty with Azerbaijan.

"And I insist that only a viable agreement between Yerevan and Baku can pave the way for a better tomorrow in the South Caucasus. That is why Greece supports the "Crossroads of Peace" initiative, which

the Prime Minister announced last December, so that the wider region can be transformed from a theater of conflict into a commercial hub that will connect the Black Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean Sea. Because in the end only the common prosperity makes the guns fall silent and only the progress of the people repels the plans of authoritarian leaders," Kyriakos Mitsotakis stated.

He noted that Greece will help protect the Armenian cultural heritage in areas such as Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Finally, all the conditions are in place to reach a bilateral agreement regarding the immigration and employment of Armenians in Greece. The friendly country has a vibrant workforce with distinct skills in all fields of work. While, on the other hand, the many things that connect our peoples will make their integration into the Greek reality easier," the Greek PM added.

EU Ambassador Maragos expresses condolences on the occasion of the 36th anniversary of the Sumgait massacre

Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Armenia Ambassador Vassilis Maragos has expressed his condolences to those who lost their relatives and friends as a result of Azerbaijani atrocities in Sumgait 36 years ago.

"I express my deep condolences to all those who lost relatives and friends

36 years ago in Sumgait. We all need to continue with strongest efforts to achieve reconciliation and a sustainable, lasting peace in order to make sure that such tragedies never happen again," Ambassador Maragos said in a post on X.

Today marks the 36th anniversary of the Sumgait pogroms, which have become one of the most tragic and hideous pages in

the recent history of the Armenian people. From February 27 to 29, 1988, in the city of Sumgait, located just 40 kilometers from Baku, with the criminal connivance and even at the direction of the Azerbaijani authorities, mass pogroms against the Armenian population took place, accompanied by murders, torture and other atrocities.

EU-Armenia Investment Coordination Platform discusses key infrastructure projects and investments cooperation

The second meeting of the EU-Armenia Investment Coordination Platform co-chaired by Mher Grigoryan, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, and Adrienn Kiraly, Director for Neighbourhood East & Institution Building at the European Commission, took place today at the Government House, Grigoryan's office said in a readout.

The platform brings together the Government of the Republic of Armenia, the European Union (EU), and international financial institutions (IFIs) to facilitate investments in Armenia, promoting

sustainable development and economic growth, in the context of the EU's Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) and its flagships for Armenia,

According to the source, the meeting discussed important infrastructure investments that will improve Armenia's connectivity, energy diversification and housing schemes for refugees. The participants took stock of the progress of the various infrastructure projects such as the Caucasus Transmission Network and the Sisian-Kajaran road section linking it to the Crossroads of Peace initiative and

collectively identified technical and financial barriers that need to be addressed in order to facilitate the timely and efficient implementation of these projects. Follow-up actions and concrete timeline on next steps were also agreed among stakeholders in order to ensure swift implementation of the EIP investments. It is noted that the meeting concluded with a commitment to continued cooperation in the context of the platform and the exploration of further investment opportunities in Armenia.

Kinds of permissible activity on Free Economic Zones working in Armenia to be established by legislative initiative

As a result of the package of draft laws, it will become possible to solve the issues of the privileges established for the Free Economic Zones (FEZ) operators working in the Republic of Armenia within the framework of the localization works of the 5th measure Harmful Tax Practices of the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Program connected with the 'harmful' tax regimes, the Acting Deputy Minister of Economy Narek Teryan said.

At February 27 Armenian National Assembly sitting, the package of draft laws on Amending the RA Tax Code and

on Amending the Law on Free Economic Zones authored by the Government, was debated in the first reading, he press service of the Armenian National Assembly said.

According to the key rapporteur Narek Teryan, it is designed to set the kinds of permissible activity on the FEZ territory, which were chosen, taking as a basis the priorities of the Armenian Government economic policy, promoting the development of a number of spheres: processing industry, agriculture, sector of information technologies, tourism.

It is proposed by the draft that besides the kinds of the activity of processing industry and software elaboration activity, the spheres as the priorities of the economic policy of the Government will be included. In particular, from the service sphere the kinds of the activity aimed at the development of tourism were included, for example, the organization of hotel services, accommodation and catering. A guidebook will be established for the assessment of the FEZ operators' business programs.

Russian GeoProMining is not a shareholder of Zangezur Copper Molybdenum Combine CJSC: the company issues a statement

Zangezur Copper Molybdenum Combine CJSC has released a statement according to which the Russian company GeoProMining LLC is not currently a shareholder of the Company and does not have any stake in the Company's ownership structure.

"Zangezur Copper Molybdenum Combine Closed Joint Stock Company (hereinafter referred to as the "Company"), established and existing under the laws of the Republic of Armenia, declares that the Russian company GeoProMining LLC has never been and is not currently a shareholder of the Company, nor does it have

any stake in the Company's ownership structure.

"As of the date of this statement, neither the Company, its shareholders, nor its ultimate beneficial owners are included in any sanction lists issued by the relevant sanctions authorities, and no international sanctions are applicable to the Company," the statement reads.

The current information regarding the ultimate beneficial owners of the Company is published on the official website of the State Register of Legal Entities of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia at the following [link](#).

The statement by Zangezur Copper Molybdenum Combine CJSC follows the publication of the periodical Hetq about the introduction by the U.S. of a new package of anti-Russian sanctions on February 23, 2024. The Russian mining company GeoProMining LLC is also included in the sanctions package. The periodical claimed that the Armenian assets of the Russian GeoProMining group of companies are the Zangezur Copper Molybdenum Combine, the company GeoProMining Gold, which operates the Sotk gold mine and the Ararat gold recovery plant, as well as the Agarak copper-molybdenum combine.

Japan providing \$3 million to address the needs of Armenians displaced from Nagorno Karabakh

Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Armenia signed an agreement to launch a new USD 2.9 million initiative “Project for Supporting Basic Infrastructure and Social Integration for Displaced Persons from Nagorno-Karabakh and Host Communities”.

The signing ceremony was chaired by His Excellency Mr. Tigran Khachatryan, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. In his opening statement Mr. Khachatryan who oversees Refugee Crisis Response highlighted the Government of Armenia’s robust initiatives to support refugees. “We will continue the work aimed at ensuring long-term sustainable living conditions for our compatriots to ensure their dignified life in the Republic of Armenia. For this purpose, since October, the Government has already implemented practical measures to ensure access to educational and health services for refugees. Besides, the implementation

of works aimed at providing affordable housing, as well as increasing employment opportunities and resilience, is one of our priority tasks,” he noted.

His Excellency Mr. Yutaka Aoki, Ambassador of Japan to Armenia stressed Japan’s unwavering support to Armenia saying that “the Japanese Government would like to stand by Armenia in this difficult moment of history and provides this assistance to Armenia to overcome the challenges.”

Ms. Natia Natsvlishvili, UNDP Resident Representative in Armenia, thanked the Government of Japan for the generous funding and praised the successful partnership with the Government of Armenia at all levels. “Enhancing resilience of refugees and host communities, providing durable solutions, creating new jobs and livelihood opportunities, as well as supporting conditions for social cohesion is a priority for UNDP,” said Ms. Natsvlishvili.

During the ceremony, H.E. Mr. Yutaka Aoki, Ambassador of Japan to Armenia, and Ms. Natia Natsvlishvili, UNDP Resident Representative in Armenia, in the witness of Tigran Khachatryan, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, signed exchange of notes, marking launching of the new initiative.

During the two-year project implementation, UNDP will facilitate dialogue and trust-building between refugees and local populations, dedicating special attention to women and youth; improve accessibility and quality of basic services and living conditions for refugees in host communities; provide needs-based support to primary healthcare facilities; ensure access to clean energy in emergency situations; and establish water storages and distribution infrastructures in host communities for the efficient use of scarce water resources and increased income for agriculture-dependent households.

EU allocating €15 million in budget support to Armenia for refugees

The EU is allocating 15 million euros in budget support to Armenia to address the needs of those displaced from Nagorno Karabakh. Adrienn Kiraly, Neighbourhood East & Institution Building Director at European Commission, handed over the

financing agreement to Armenian Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan on February 27.

“Good discussions with Deputy Prime Ministers Grigoryan and Khachatryan in Yerevan on our joint efforts to strengthen

EU-Armenia relations,” Adrienn Kiraly said in a post on X after the meeting.

“During the meeting, I handed over the financing agreement allocating €15 million in budget support for refugees,” she said.

Armenia introduces electronic prescription system for 470 medications, effective March 1st

Starting on March 1st, 470 medications will be accessible for purchase in Armenia via electronic prescriptions, a decision approved by the Armenian government during its February 29 session, as reported by Armenpress.

Deputy Minister of Health, Artak Jumayan, introduced the draft decision proposing amendments and additions to the decision of the RA Government issued on August 15, 2019. It has been highlighted that the project suggests implementing electronic prescribing for a range of medications, including anti-infective, antibiotic, antifungal, antimicrobial, antiviral

drugs, immune serums, immunoglobulin, vaccines, and misoprostol drugs. According to the project authors, this initiative aims to reduce self-medication, improve the delivery of high-quality, effective, and targeted medical care, and foster greater public awareness and oversight.

The implementation of electronic prescriptions presents an opportunity to monitor and regulate the delivery process of medication to patients, with the project having been developed following extensive discussions involving all stakeholders.

The pilot project has been underway since July 2022. Initially, it included 75

names of centrally procured drugs for 12 diseases. Currently, 470 drugs are available for purchase with an electronic prescription, including 395 free or on preferential terms, along with 75 drugs mentioned earlier. This accounts for roughly 20 percent of the 3,370 registered drugs in Armenia. Additionally, prescriptions will now be based on the active substance rather than the brand name.

Starting from January 1, 2025, an additional 2,566 drugs will be offered in this manner. The deputy minister noted that the remaining drugs may not necessarily be prescribed.

Baku continues to make territorial claims: Mirzoyan at the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament



The security environment in the South Caucasus remains volatile as Azerbaijan hasn't denounced its aggressive policy against the Republic of Armenia. It continues to present new territorial claims against the Republic of Armenia along with backtracking from previously agreed principles of the establishment of peace and security in our region. Particularly the principle of respecting each other's territorial integrity based on the Almaty Declaration of 1991 and conduct of the delimitation process aiming to recover the borderline of 1991 have been consistently rejected by Azerbaijan.

According to the readout issued by the foreign ministry, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan made a statement during the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament.

The statement reads as follows:

"It is a pleasure to address the Conference on Disarmament in our capacity as an observer state. We believe that the Conference on Disarmament serves as a crucial platform for dialogue and collaboration among nations, aiming to build trust and understanding in pursuit of common goals. Armenia, as an observer state, is eager to actively engage in the deliberations, discussions, and initiatives aimed at advancing disarmament efforts on a global scale.

We reaffirm our strong commitment to the universal implementation of the international obligations in the areas of arms control and non-proliferation and reiterate our steadfast support to the institutions that underpin it.

Armenia reiterates its firm support for the full, complete, and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation (NPT). As a strong supporter of the non-proliferation policies, we reiterate

our full compliance with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreements and additional protocol.

Furthermore, we consider the Comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) to be an indispensable pillar and tool for the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and disarmament.

New international regulatory instruments or mechanisms for addressing 21st-century threats and challenges are crucial for preventing potential conflicts and saving lives in line with the International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law. In this regard, it is our strong conviction that our joint efforts should be directed not just at protecting and advancing what we have already achieved but at matching the rapid technological progress, especially in artificial intelligence, lethal autonomous weapons systems or drone technologies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Armenia is well familiar with the devastating impact of conflict, having experienced the tragic consequences of wars in our recent history. This painful past motivates us to persistently advocate for peaceful resolution of conflicts, prevention of the use or threat of force, uncontrolled and mass acquisition of weaponry and disarmament.

The erosion of the arms control regimes does not happen in a vacuum. It is usually a consequence of years-long noncompliance to the main treaties and documents, as well as the negligence of such crucial principles of the UN Charter as the non-use of force or threat of use of force and the maintenance of international peace and security and good-neighborly relations. The international failures of identifying early warning signs of such violations usually evolve into bloody conflicts and hostilities.

It is in such an environment that Azerbaijan launched a violent war against Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, infiltrated into Armenia's sovereign territory and on 19 September last year conducted an ethnic cleansing of over 108,000 indigenous Armenian population from its ancestral

homeland.

Overall, the security environment in the South Caucasus remains volatile as Azerbaijan hasn't denounced its aggressive policy against the Republic of Armenia. It continues to present new territorial claims against the Republic of Armenia along with backtracking from previously agreed principles of the establishment of peace and security in our region. Particularly the principle of respecting each other's territorial integrity based on the Almaty Declaration of 1991 and conduct of the delimitation process aiming to recover the borderline of 1991 have been consistently rejected by Azerbaijan.

Nevertheless, the Government of Armenia continues its genuine efforts to build peace and stability in our region as well as confidence and trust between Armenia and Azerbaijan. To that end we have proposed simultaneous withdrawal of troops from the Armenia-Azerbaijan interstate border, with further demilitarization of the bordering areas. Armenia also proposes to sign a bilateral arms control mechanism and non-aggression pact ahead of the peace treaty in case the signing of the latter requires additional time to reach a consensus. Despite the fact that all these proposals have so far been ignored or rejected by Azerbaijan, we are determined to continue our efforts.

Dear Colleagues,

The arms control and non-proliferation architecture were established with the objective of ensuring safer and more secure life for all. It cannot be accomplished without joint efforts, compromise and political will.

We firmly believe that dialogue and cooperation based on mutual respect are the cornerstones of effective disarmament efforts. Armenia stands ready to work collaboratively with member states, sharing experiences, expertise, and resources to address the complex challenges that are ahead of us. Through open communication and a commitment to finding common ground, we can pave a way for a more secure and safe world.

I thank you."

“Armenia’s Geopolitical Realities: A Conversation with Political Expert Davit Stepanyan”

Davit Stepanyan, a political scientist and expert at the Armenian Institute of International and Security Affairs, recently shared insights during an interview with Noyan Tapan. The discussion primarily delves into the foreign minister meetings between Armenia and Azerbaijan that took place on February 28 in Berlin, exploring the expectations following recent statements by Azerbaijani President Aliyev.


On February 28-29, 2024, negotiations between the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov, and the Foreign Minister of Armenia, Ararat Mirzoyan, took place at Villa Borsig in the capital of Germany, Berlin.

Aliyev’s prior statements urging mediators to step back and demanding Armenia’s compliance with their agreements, uncertainties arise regarding the meeting’s expectations and potential outcomes.

To comprehend the situation, Aliyev’s objective goes beyond the annexation of Artsakh; he aims to dismantle the statehood of Armenia. Collaborating with Turkey and Russia, Aliyev seeks a resolution through regional powers, including Turkey, Russia, and to some extent, Iran. This approach threatens Armenia’s statehood with destruction and division. Despite resistance, Armenia finds a situational ally in the West, and to some extent, Iran,

which plays a dual role in the unfolding scenario.

Following an invitation to Munich, Aliyev faced challenges attending, but discussions persisted, emphasizing the need to resolve the matter without Russian involvement. Although Aliyev offered vague responses, he acknowledged a readiness to proceed, a sentiment constrained by the necessity to consult with both Russians and Turks. Seeking assistance, Aliyev promptly turned to Ankara, yet the scope of support remains largely declarative, evident in official statements.

The political analyst anticipates limited headway in the Berlin  page 12

Human Rights Watch World Report details concerns in Armenia

In January, Human Rights Watch released its annual [World Report](#) on human rights trends and practices around the globe, including in Armenia. The report highlighted Armenia’s pursuit of judicial, police, disability, and educational reforms in 2023. However, it noted key areas of concern raised by human rights groups, particularly the efficacy of comprehensive judicial and police reforms to hold responsible those who commit violations, including corruption.

One example provided was the police’s disproportionate use of force during a [drug raid in a prominent Yerevan nightclub in April 2023](#), which resulted in an abuse of power case that has yet to result in charges against the officers. Some of those involved believed they were targeted by the police based on their perceived or real sexual orientation or gender identity. According to the report, broader human rights concerns in Armenia include “ill-treatment of detainees by law enforcement, domestic violence, discrimination against people with disabilities, and violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.”

In the first six months of 2023, 1,051

domestic violence complaints were investigated by authorities, up significantly from the 391 complaints investigated during the same period in 2022. HRW noted that the two women’s shelters in Armenia are overcrowded and insufficient to cover existing needs, with only 24 spaces available at a time for domestic violence survivors. CivilNet recently [covered a development](#) in which the Armenian parliament voted on legislation to prevent domestic violence and better protect victims, including by banning virginity testing. The law also proposes that victims of domestic violence receive free healthcare. If adopted, the legislation would be a step in the right direction for protecting women throughout the country.

Additionally, LGBT rights groups reported that “fear of discrimination and humiliation due to public disclosure of their sexual orientation or gender identity continues to prevent many LGBT people from reporting hate crimes.” In addition, Armenia’s Criminal Code does not “explicitly recognize animus due to sexual orientation or gender identity as an aggravating circumstance in hate crimes cases.” Even when cases are investigated, they

are often inconclusive, with the charges not reflecting the motives of the perpetrator, according to local rights groups. Recommendations for addressing these issues include criminalizing all forms of gender-based violence, ensuring effective investigations into all cases of domestic violence, and taking steps to eliminate discrimination against and improve human rights protections for all minority groups in Armenia.

HRW’s report mentioned the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the forced displacement of approximately 100,000 ethnic Armenians from the region in September 2023 in both the Armenian and Azerbaijani country sections. HRW noted governmental and NGO concerns with the humanitarian situation created by Azerbaijan and highlighted calls for “the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return” of the ethnic Armenian population to the region. In January, the [Committee for the Defense of the Fundamental Rights of the People of Artsakh](#) was officially established to advocate for the return of Karabakh-Armenians to their homeland.

“Erdogan’s Double Blow to Putin: A Bold Stance against Putin’s Plans”

In a recent discussion on Noyan Tapan, analyst Armen Hovhannisyan shared insights on the geopolitical developments following the Munich Security Conference, particularly the meeting between Azerbaijani President Aliyev and Turkish President Erdogan. The analyst delves into Erdogan’s public statements urging Aliyev against succumbing to Russian pressure on military actions against Armenia. These observations, provided by Armen Hovhannisyan, shed light on the intricate dynamics shaping the South Caucasus region.

The evident provocation by Russia had been acknowledged even before Erdogan’s statements. Statements by Mikhail Yevdokimov, the Russian ambassador in Baku, and the head of the CSTO military unit, serve not only as retrospective justifications but also as provocations for future engagements.

Aliyev’s presence in Munich signifies more than a personal move. While Aliyev is diplomatically involved, the core issue is not his individual stance. The analyst posits that Aliyev, characterized as a strategic player, would not desire Armenia’s downfall. On the other hand, Russia through the conflict, achieves two objectives: stationing military units as peacekeepers along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in Syunik and destabilizing both Armenia and Azerbaijan’s international standing.

Furthermore, the analyst suggests that both Azerbaijan and Armenia face the risk of losing their international standing. Armenia will be portrayed as a dysfunctional, crushed nation that is forced to submit to Russia. In addition, Azerbaijan could be relegated to a North Korea-like status – a marginal pariah with limited international engagements, including the absence of gas and oil contracts, and restricted entry for its leaders.

This predicament leaves Azerbaijan with limited choices, seemingly pushing it towards a closer alliance with Russia. However, this geopolitical maneuver is not only unwelcome in the West but also

poses challenges for Erdogan and Aliyev. Erdogan, in pursuit of diverse financial investments, explores multiple sources, including potential ties with Saudi Arabia and other oil-producing nations. Yet, such associations could jeopardize his aspirations for restoring the caliphate, given the dependency it would entail.

Simultaneously, Erdogan looks to the West for economic partnerships, evident in his engagements with Greece and the confirmation of Sweden’s membership. His swift efforts to enhance relations with Egypt also play a role. Notably, Erdogan’s agenda includes fostering improved relations between the West and Armenian-Turkish ties, as well as contributing to the enhancement of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations – a stance emphasized by O’Brien during Congress hearings.

According to the analyst, the meeting with Aliyev, can be seen as a strategic move for Turkey. The assertion is that Turkey influenced and persuaded Aliyev to attend the Munich gathering, delivering a double blow to Russia. Firstly, Aliyev’s presence in Munich itself was a symbolic challenge to Russian influence, and secondly, his meeting with Zelensky demonstrated a clear message: “Russia, I am not your soldier.”

The subsequent visit to Turkey is portrayed as a predictable response to Russia’s likely displeasure. The analyst suggests that Aliyev’s purpose in meeting Erdogan is to seek protection from potential Russian repercussions. Erdogan’s inclination to support Azerbaijan is underscored, emphasizing the fraternal ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan. In Erdogan’s perspective, Azerbaijan’s actions should align with Turkey’s interests rather than Russia’s.

Erdogan’s statement, attributing Azerbaijan’s military operations to Russia’s instigation, highlights the complex dynamics at play. The analyst contends that Azerbaijan faces a choice between being perceived as an aggressor, resulting in sanctions, or positioning itself as a victim. Despite the victim narrative, Russia

remains unresponsive to Azerbaijan’s predicament in this context.

Putin’s assertion that Turkey is Russia’s most reliable partner is seen as a deliberate reminder to Erdogan. The narrative suggests that Russia harbors jealousy towards Turkey’s gradual normalization of relations with the West, a process Erdogan is navigating in a more measured manner compared to potential Kemalist governance.

The defeat of the Kemalists and the subsequent influence of the West on the opposition aimed at preventing post-election developments paved the way for Erdogan’s approach. This approach, while somewhat aligned with the Kemalists, leans towards improving relations with the West. Russia’s jealousy is underscored, prompting Putin’s hasty desire to visit Turkey.

The Eurasian line and Russia’s plans, integral to their aggression against Ukraine, become crucial in this context. The analyst highlights Russia’s success in the South Caucasus, gaining allies in Azerbaijan and Turkey, not Armenia. The alliance’s stability is uncertain, but common interests and the shared mentality of the regimes, albeit led by what is described as three criminal leaders, could be potential binding factors.

The current crisis prompts Putin to remind the Turks of their shared history, but the Turkish response signals a desire to avoid association with Russia, emphasizing that such ties are not beneficial and should not disturb Turkey’s current trajectory.

During the Munich Security Conference, Aliyev openly stated that Russia occupied territories in Ukraine, whereas Pashinyan’s stance was more restrained, emphasizing Armenia’s non-alignment in the Ukrainian matter without explicitly terming it as occupation. This nuanced difference resulted in Armenia facing criticism, while Azerbaijan was seemingly forgiven.

The analyst posits that Azerbaijan’s perceived forgiveness stems from being

considered an ally, whereas Armenia is viewed merely as a possession that could be traded or handed over to Turkey if opportune in the Western context. This perspective sheds light on the challenge of understanding how Russians perceive Armenia, as opposed to our evaluations.

Many individuals, both in prominent positions and the public, may not comprehend the Russian perspective. While it is often assumed that being anti-Russian or pro-Russian defines one's stance, the reality is more complex. The analyst suggests that Russians view Armenia not as a partner but as a possession lying at their feet, akin to their property. The entry of the West into these relations is perceived as a stressor, disrupting Russian plans and exerting pressure on Azerbaijan and Turkey, identified as Russia's partners.

The realization that improving relations with Russia might be challenging at this stage due to this perceived status prompts a reconsideration of illusions. People are encouraged to grasp the essence and prospects of Armenian-Russian relations in light of this complex dynamic.

There is no guarantee that Russia will ever consider us even as a junior partner. The historical behavior of Imperial Russia towards Armenia reveals alternating periods, including times of involvement, temptation, and coercion. Leaders like Stalin, Putin, and Nicholas II have, at times, exhibited actions that metaphorically "hit us on the head," leaving us with little chance to resist while seemingly entrenched in challenging circumstances.

The historical reference to the 10th century Treaty of Turkmencha highlights a past when Russia initially supported Armenia. However, this support was short-lived, and dynamics shifted dramatically, redirecting assistance towards the Muslim population and Georgians in the Caucasus. This historical narrative underscores the volatile and unpredictable nature of Armenia's relationship with Russia, marked by changing alliances and geopolitical realities.

The discussion delves into Russia's attitude towards Armenia during the times of Serzh Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan. Serzh Sargsyan assumed the presidency in

2008, and by 2010-2011, a Russian-Turkish-Azerbaijani trio began to form, three years into his tenure. The analyst suggests that this period allows for conclusions about how Russia treated Armenia under Sargsyan's leadership.

The reference to "absorption stages" during Kocharyan's reign implies a historical perspective, indicating that certain regions or assets may have been exchanged for property and debt. The mention of Gazprom and regions to seize raises questions about the dynamics of Russia's involvement and Armenia's concessions during that time.

Furthermore, the narrative describes Russia and Turkey as partners in the division and joint control of the South Caucasus. The analysis posits that both nations acknowledge a changing dynamic where Russia's role objectively diminishes, and Turkey's role rises. This restructuring, outlined in Turkish discussions, is presented as a less painful scenario for Russia compared to potential Western examples. Azerbaijan is portrayed as a common interest, closely tied to Russia and Turkey, and seen as a strategic asset against the remaining countries in the region: Georgia, Armenia, and Iran. This perspective suggests a collaborative effort to arm and prepare Azerbaijan within the geopolitical landscape of the South Caucasus.

The situation is portrayed as highly critical, with Erdogan stating that Russia is provoking a war on Armenia. This statement is deemed truthful, aligning with the views of many observers. Erdogan's vocal stance is seen as a demonstration to the West that he is prepared for more significant actions than they may request. The economic challenges, exacerbated by events like earthquakes, are pressing for Turkey, yet Russia appears less concerned about these issues.

Erdogan's accusatory finger towards Russia suggests frustration with Russian priorities that diverge from addressing Turkey's economic woes. The narrative concludes with the assertion that Azerbaijan will not allow Russia to have unchecked influence in the region, indicating a proactive stance from Azerbaijan in

shaping its relationship with Russia.

New French and European visits to Armenia are in the plans. According to the analyst, the meeting between Pashinyan and Macron in France was initiated by France and decided by Macron himself, expressing confidence in strong public support. There is a nationwide consensus on relations with Armenia, both politically and civically.

Macron's speech emphasized the importance of today and tomorrow, with an emphasis on building a common future for two neighboring, allied countries. However, the analyst suggests that these words need institutionalization through treaties, and France is reportedly ready for such commitments. Concerns arise as some in the Armenian elite perceive France's involvement as provocative, pushing for a peace treaty with Turkey.

The analogy of a coming wave symbolizes a pivotal moment for Armenia, where the population must grasp the potential impact – whether it uplifts or submerges them. This policy of perception in the South Caucasus is led by the European Union, primarily France and Germany, with backing from the United States and India.

The narrative extends to Azerbaijan, predicting two potential paths: either having normal relations with the West, benefiting from selling gas and oil, or becoming a "monster" marked by hatred and aggression. The analyst contends that any attempts to obstruct the West's entry into the South Caucasus are considered crimes, with potential consequences for the entire Armenian population. Regionalism is deemed perilous, implying a relinquishment of development opportunities.

In summary, the analyst explores the intricate geopolitics of the South Caucasus, particularly Armenia's relations with Russia, Turkey, and the West. It underscores the evolving dynamics, diplomatic efforts, and potential challenges, urging careful consideration for Armenia's future amidst shifting alliances and regional complexities.

Translated by Liana Sargsyan

page 9 ➔ negotiations. While the talks persist, Aliyev is likely to intensify pressure on Armenia, compelling concessions from its own interests and steering discussions toward the so-called long-term or regional agenda.

Resistance alone won't suffice; fostering relations with the West, Iran, India, and China is imperative for sustained resilience. Armenia faces the need to establish a new geopolitical equilibrium in the region, a sentiment echoed by Pashinyan in Paris. This equilibrium extends beyond military considerations, encompassing both military and geopolitical balances. Somalia's plight serves as a cautionary tale, underlining the repercussions of a broken balance leading to the absence of state institutions. Rebuilding this balance from the ground up is crucial, given the current void in regional stability, compounded by the absence of a formal state agreement with Iran.

We have conceptual agreements with Iran, delineating channels for cooperation and dialogue development specifically through projects high-voltage power lines. However, these engagements lack the broader political agreements that are essential for fostering comprehensive relations. Similar gaps in political accords exist with India, Greece, and France, despite limited procurements of weaponry from the latter. While the global arena signals support for collaborative paths, Armenia must navigate these partnerships more assertively.

According to the political specialist, Aliyev's posturing on Western relations is contingent on our actions. Without proactive measures, Aliyev can prolong this façade. However, by consistently challenging and creating obstacles, we can erode his resilience. The untapped leverage at our disposal wasn't fully utilized in Munich. There, Aliyev's acceptance was partially credited to Pashinyan. Pashinyan should assert that Aliyev's presence is, to a degree, a result of Armenian-Azerbaijani

issues. Additionally, they should push for joint declarations to prevent escalating issues.

Also, the political scientist highlighted a statement by Alen Simonyan, President of the National Assembly, in which he mentioned, "We may give up the claims against Azerbaijan, if Azerbaijan gives up the claims against Armenia." The specialist expressed skepticism, deeming it not a politically weighty statement and emphasizing the need for more substantial political actions. Emphasizing the distinction between such statements and actual political maneuvers, the specialist also critiqued Simonyan's advocacy for removing Russians from Zvartnots airport. Instead, the suggested policy entails acknowledging the challenges faced by our Russian allies and asserting readiness to secure borders independently, allowing Russian soldiers to return home.

The political analyst highlighted that Washington's call for a lasting agreement remains relevant, emphasizing Blinken's belief in ongoing diplomatic possibilities. The USA maintains a commitment to negotiations with Azerbaijan for constructive outcomes, a decision predating Azerbaijani elections. The analyst contends that Armenia has made significant concessions, and the onus is on Azerbaijan to fulfill its commitments, particularly regarding Artsakh. The failure of Azerbaijan to meet Western expectations raises concerns, as Armenia asserts it has nothing further to offer, expecting Azerbaijan to honor its commitments.

The political analyst underlines France's efforts to establish a significant role in the region, extending beyond political engagement. France's willingness to deepen relations with Armenia, seeking a political presence, reflects its commitment to prevent potential threats. The suggestion of a military-political agreement with France, akin to the existing one with Russia, emphasizes France's ally status. Encouraging French capital to invest

in the region, such as constructing factories along the Syunik border, is proposed as a constructive alternative to symbolic gestures like flag displays. Emphasizing a non-military approach, the political analyst advocates for economic development to enhance political balance. This, according to the analyst, encapsulates the essence of effective political maneuvering.

Critiquing Pashinyan's statement on frozen relations with the CSTO, the analyst emphasizes that such discussions are impractical, as the Charter doesn't permit freezing, requiring either active participation or a formal exit process, which lasts at least 6 months. The political scientist questions the relevance of such dialogue when Armenia lacks representation and active involvement. Focusing on substantive issues, the expert underscores concerns such as Syunik's resistance to Russian presence, urging actions to address challenges like their presence on the Armenian-Iranian and Armenian-Azerbaijani borders since 2021, as well as issues at Zvartnots.

The analyst stresses the importance of leveraging Macron's role, proposing that while Macron is the French president, Armenia should capitalize on this opportunity. The expert suggests presenting France with an agenda aligned with its interests and creating conditions that naturally lead to the departure of Russian forces from the region.

In summary, the analyst highlights the complex geopolitical dynamics in the South Caucasus, emphasizing the need for Armenia to strategically engage with various global actors, particularly France. The discussion touches on challenges in Armenian-Russian relations, Azerbaijan's role, and the significance of building a new geopolitical balance. The expert underscores the importance of utilizing diplomatic opportunities, such as the current French interest, to navigate the intricate regional landscape effectively.

Translated by Liana Sargsyan

Dilijan International School of Armenia accredited as Cambridge International school

The Board Dilijan International School of Armenia (DISA) Foundation announces that Preparatory Years Centre Dilijan (PYCD) has been awarded accreditation as a Cambridge International school for primary, middle and high school students. Co-located on the territory of UWC Dilijan, an international school delivering the IB Diploma Programme for the last two years of high school to the body of 220 students from over 80 countries, PYCD was launched as a teaching facility for the children of UWCD staff. Over most of the decade of the UWCD development, the centre has grown into a fully-fledged school ranging from KG to Grade 9, to date. To this end, international accreditation was a natural progression.

Cambridge International school accreditation is recognized by ministries

and departments of education as demonstration of a school's commitment to high quality international education. Quoting Cambridge, "Cambridge schools are part of a global community working to prepare students for success in our changing world." For more information on the benefits of the accreditation please visit the Cambridge [website](#).

Reflecting on the accreditation process, Stephanie Jones, Head, Preparatory Years Centre Dilijan stated, "Receiving accreditation as a Cambridge International school for Primary, Middle and High school students has empowered our staff and validates our commitment to provide high-calibre education for our diverse student base."

Adam Armanski, Head of UWCD and Director of DISA, said, "This accreditation

gives us a reason to celebrate. With over 70 pupils and growing, external evaluation is paramount. Next year we will have several students going into grade 10, thus completing the full spectrum of education, from kindergarten through, with UWCD IB Diploma Programme, grade 12."

"We are delighted that our Preparatory Years Centre, which was spearheaded as a way to provide education for children of UWCD staff, has reached this important milestone. Having started to attract other pupils and having expanded, the importance of receiving an accreditation became a must. At UWCD we value external benchmarks that push us to keep up the educational excellence we pride ourselves on," commented Veronika Zonabend, the UWCD Co-founder, Chair of the UWCD Board of Governors and Chair of DISA Foundation.

EU and UNICEF sign agreement to boost competitiveness of Armenian education system for inclusive quality education

The Delegation of the European Union announced today the EU4Education Reforms programme which, delivered in partnership with UNICEF, will contribute to the effective reform of the education system. Through this three-year programme, UNICEF will support the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports in its efforts to strengthen the efficiency and accountability of the education management system in the country, as well as to provide children and young people with opportunities to grow their potential and contribute to education reforms, with a particular focus in rural areas.

UNICEF will work with the Ministry and other stakeholders to develop relevant policies and programmes in support of the education reform, to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and data systems, and to build the capacity of educators in the design, coordination, implementation and monitoring of the education strategy. This programme will focus on the national education system while also supporting specific initiatives in the Ararat, Kotayk, Gegharkunik and Syunik regions, which have been prioritized in the national education reform.

"Through EU4Education Reforms, the European Union will help Armenia develop a well-managed education system tailored to the needs of youth and the labor market. In the long term, we hope to reduce youth unemployment, particularly

among marginalized social groups and create a vibrant, well-educated, and well-trained labor force capable of contributing to the growth & green and digital transition of Armenia," noted Mr Vassilis Maragos, Ambassador of the European Union to Armenia.

The programme is designed to contribute to the implementation of the State Programme for Development of Education in the Republic of Armenia 2030, while also supporting Armenia in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 10, and 13. By 2027, partners aim to positively influence learning outcomes for students, institute a strengthened institutional framework with quality and financial management, transparency, and monitoring of performance. The intervention will also consider environmental factors in school management, strengthening links between climate change, disaster risk management and education sector actors.

Minister of MoESCS, Zhanna Andreasyan, underscored the importance of productive collaboration with UNICEF and the European Union across diverse areas to strengthen the ongoing educational reforms in Armenia. According to the Minister, these reforms stand as a key priority for RoA Government and remain under continuous scrutiny. "The state budget earmarks resources for educational reforms and their execution, with a

significant increase in allocation. However, the financial backing from the European Union complements these efforts, fostering the successful implementation of our initiatives," stated Zhanna Andreasyan.

"Supporting the well-functioning of the education system in Armenia has been a long-standing priority for the European Union. Access to quality education is at the heart of a resilient and prosperous society, and is especially important in rural areas. Together with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and UNICEF, this programme will be crucial to continue driving forward the new national education strategy by also supporting teachers and students in taking leadership and contributing to the education reforms," highlighted Adrienn Király, Director for Neighborhood East and Institution Building.

"Central to our approach is the prioritization of data-driven decision-making, policy advocacy, and meaningful youth engagement. In collaboration with the EU, our shared objective extends beyond enhancing educational quality; it is about nurturing a generation of empowered change-makers," emphasized UNICEF Representative in Armenia, Christine Weigand. "UNICEF is committed to support Armenia's efforts to modernize its education system to provide all children and youth with inclusive quality education."

France issues stamps dedicated to Charles Aznavour and Missak Manouchian

French Philaposte has published a collection of four stamps dedicated to Resistance Hero Missak Manouchian and legendary singer Charles Aznavour.

The stamps were presented on Tuesday in the presence of Armenian Ambassador to France Hasmik Tolmajian, Senate



Vice-President Pierre Ouzoulias and Brice Roquefeuil, Director for Continental Europe at the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Charles Aznavour's son Micha Aznavour and Missak Manouchian's great-niece Katia Guiragossian.



Destination Management Organization GoToDili, with the support of the Tourism Committee of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia, with the participation of AR-trails, has launched a new inclusive project "Accessible Dilijan". It is created for people with hearing impairments, as well as for completely deaf/deaf-mute people.

"Accessible Dilijan" is an AR-tours around the city recorded by sign language interpreters in Armenian, Russian and English. This is the first project in Armenia that helps people with hearing disabilities to complete an excursion or a small hiking route without assistance.

New inclusive tourism product "Accessible Dilijan" launched in Armenia

You can use the tour by downloading the AR-Trails app. Three products are available in AR-trails: a city tour, a walking tour of the National Park, and a virtual visit to the tourist information center. After selecting a location, the app provides a route, and virtual sign language interpreters tell users about it.

The city tour will introduce users to the history of Dilijan and its famous landmarks. The hiking tour will lead to a hidden waterfall in the National Park, introducing the flora and fauna along the way. The AR-Trails app also allows you to visit a virtual information center, where the overview information about Dilijan is available. In total, virtual tours cover 15 locations in Dilijan.

"Travel must be accessible to everyone," emphasized Sisian Poghosyan, the Head of Armenia's Tourism Committee.

"Every visitor to Armenia, regardless of

physical abilities, should have the opportunity to travel in our country, discover hidden paths, and equally experience all the interesting and unforgettable experiences. In this context, the Tourism Committee welcomes the creation of the 'Accessible Dilijan' tourist product, which is a new opportunity for individuals to discover the wonders of Armenian tourism," she said.

"Inclusive tourism plays an extremely important role for Armenia," said Ani Avanesova, the head of DMO GoToDili.

"Products designed specifically for people with disabilities will not only significantly improve their standard of living and provide new conditions for exploring the tourist locations of the country, but also favorably promote socialization and bring benefits to the country as a whole, making it more attractive to tourists. The GoToDili team is happy to be one of the pioneers on this important path," she said.

Mickey Mouse Funhouse to feature episode on Armenian feast Vardavar

Mickey Mouse Funhouse is set to feature an episode centered entirely on Vardavar, which will feature the Armenian language, the [Armenian Film Society](#) informs.

The episode, "Vardavar!" was written by Kathleen Sarnelli Kapukchyan, whose husband is Armenian. She wrote the episode for her young son, the writer told the Armenian Film Society.

This marks the first-ever representation of Armenian culture at Disney.

The episode centers around Minnie Mouse, who wears the wrong outfit to celebrate Vardavar. The official description of the episode reads: "Minnie faces a fashion faux pas when she realizes she's wearing the wrong outfit to celebrate Vardavar, a traditional Armenian festival involving water games and celebrations. Will Minnie be able to find the perfect attire in time to join in the festivities?"

Mickey Mouse Funhouse is an animated preschool children's television series



and is the successor to Mickey Mouse Clubhouse and Mickey Mouse Mixed up Adventures. The series debuted on Disney Junior on August 20, 2021.

"Vardavar!" will premiere on Disney+ on Friday, March 1, 2024.

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Phone: 011 33 1 43 59 66 72
Yerevan Address: 8, Khorenatsi St.

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<p>Switzerland</p> <p>AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG</p> <p>Durachweg 15 CH-8200 Schaffhausen Phone No: +41 52 632 09 10 Fax: +41 52 632 09 11</p> <p>AZAD Pharma AG</p> <p>Bahnhofstrasse 9 CH-3125 Toffen Phone No: +41 31 810 40 10 Fax: +41 31 810 40 11</p>	<p>Canada</p> <p>AZAD Fine Chemicals Ltd.</p> <p>1895 - 55th Avenue Dorval, Qc H9P 1G9 Phone No: +1 514 636 19 99 Fax: +1 514 636 75 55</p> <p>Atlit Inc.</p> <p>16 Westminster Ave., Suite 306A Montreal, Qc H4X 1Z1 Phone No: +1 514 369 25 91 Fax: +1 514 369 81 67</p>	<p>China</p> <p>Hangzhou Representative Office of AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG</p> <p>Room 801-087, Lixin Plaza, #102 Moganshan Road 310051 -Hangzhou China</p> <p>Phone +86-571-8761 5336 Mobile +86-153-5505-0903 Fax: +86-571- 8895 8963</p>	<p>Germany</p> <p>AZAD Pharma GmbH</p> <p>Fritz-Reichle-Ring 6a DE-78315 Radolfzell Phone No: +49 7732 939101510 Fax: +49 7732 9391016</p> <p>Armenia</p> <p>AZAD Pharmaceuticals LLC</p> <p>Vanahovit 8, Proshian Asharak Ave., Kotayk Maiz Phone No: +374 93 40 40 62 Fax: +374 93 40 34 40</p>
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 URL: www.nt.am

Address in Armenia:
 28 Isahakian Str., Yerevan, 0009, RA
 Tel.: (+374 60) 35-11-22 (+374 60) 35-11-24

Address in France: Masion De L'Armenie,
 Paris 17e-95, Bld. Gouvion, France
 Tel.: (+33) 01 43 59 66 72

Address in USA: 1146 E. Lexington Dr., #112,
 Glendale, CA, USA, 91206
 Tel.: +1 (818) 646 10 72

Հասցե՝ Իսահակյան 28, Երևան, ՀՀ, 0009