

# Pashinyan participates in 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War I Armistice ceremony in Paris



PRESS OFFICE OF THE  
GOVERNMENT OF ARMENIA  
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**Armenia’s acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan participated on November 11 in the 100th anniversary of World War I Armistice commemoration event in Paris, France.**

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## Nikol Pashinyan participates in CSTO Collective Security Council session

Acting Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan participated in CSTO Collective Security Council session in Astana, attended also by the heads of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. A narrow format session with the participation of Heads of State took place first, followed by an expanded format session, ARMENPRESS was informed from the official website of the Prime Minister of Armenia.

The members of the Collective Security Council discussed issues referring to international and regional security,



as well as partnership between the CSTO member states in the sidelines of the organization and the international arena.

Given that the Republic of Kirgizstan has assumed the presidency over the CSTO for the period of 2018-2019, Pres-

ident of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov presented the priorities of his country during the presidency over the CSTO.

A number of documents were signed during the summit.

The issue of the appointment of a new Secretary-General of the CSTO was also touched upon at the meeting. The sides agreed to continue discussions on December 6 in St. Petersburg. At the same time, works will be done to elaborate relevant norms regulating the issues related to the early termination of the powers of the Secretary-General.

## Artsakh's security and status are priority, Foreign Minister tells CSTO

Armenia's acting Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan participated November 8 in the joint session of the foreign ministerial council, defense ministerial council and security council secretary committee of the Collective Security Treaty Organization in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The agenda of the session included cooperation within the framework of the CSTO, and issues relating to foreign policy combination of member states in international arenas, as well as regional and international security issues.

The latest developments in Afghanistan, Syria and Middle East were addressed.

In his remarks, Armenia's acting foreign minister thanked his Kazakh counterpart for the successful chairmanship in the CSTO and expressed Armenia's support to Kyrgyzstan's upcoming chairmanship priorities on increasing effectiveness of the organization and deepening cooperation.

Speaking about the agenda issues, Mnatsakanyan reiterated Ar-



menia's determination to continue steps on strengthening efforts in enhancing defense potential of CSTO member states and combating modern challenges and threats.

Mnatsakanyan said that Armenia attaches great importance to the significance of joint and comprehensive efforts in countering extremism and international terrorism. He highlighted the threats associated with the return of militants who have taken part in armed conflicts as part of terror organization to their countries of origin. It was noted that this issue

is a serious challenge for international security.

Mnatsakanyan expressed concern over the ongoing situation in the Middle East and namely in Syria, as well as the challenges facing ethnic and religious minorities in the region as a result of terrorist activities.

He attached importance to the steps on increasing the CSTO peacekeeping potential and strengthening cooperation with the UN.

Speaking about the NK conflict, Mnatsakanyan noted that the new government of Armenia has nu-

merously reiterated its commitment to the exclusively peaceful solution of the conflict under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship.

He highlighted the Pashinyan-Aliyev meeting in Tajikistan and noted that during the meeting agreements were able to be reached which will contribute to the formation of an appropriate environment for a peaceful process, if implemented.

He stressed that the issues of security and status of Artsakh remain among Armenia's priorities, and stressed the significance of Artsakh's involvement in the negotiations process.

Mnatsakanyan attached importance to the refusal of belligerent rhetoric, noting that it leads to increased hostility and atmosphere of distrust in the region. He noted that the arms race is topical and very concerning, and it doesn't contribute to settlement.

Several decisions were signed at the session, and the documents of the upcoming Collective Security Council session were approved.

## Khachaturov returns to Armenia where he faces criminal charges

Former Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Secretary-General Yuri Khachaturov, who was recalled from the senior post by Armenia after being accused of overthrowing the country's constitutional order in 2008 post-election events, returned home on November 4, Khachaturov's lawyer Mihran Poghosyan told.

"He returned on November 4 after the official decision on his dismissal was published," he said, adding that before that the former Moscow-based official went to his native town in Georgia to visit his mother's grave.

Khachaturov was formally charged in late July as part of the ongoing investigation into the March 1-2, 2008 post-election crackdown on the opposition. The 66-year-old colonel-general who was deputy



defense minister at that time is accused of using the army to quell protests that followed a disputed presidential election. Ten people, including two security personnel, were killed in the events.

Investigations into those deadly events were reopened after the change of government in May. Armenia's new Prime

Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who came to power on the wave of anti-government protests, said that revealing the circumstances of the crime was one of the priorities of his administration.

Also, in July, former President Robert Kocharyan was also charged with overthrowing Armenia's constitutional order by ordering the use of the

army for the violent repression of the protests.

Unlike Kocharyan, who was briefly arrested, Khachaturov, who served as CSTO secretary-general since May 2017, was granted bail and went back to Moscow to continue his duties. Armenia, however, initiated a formal process of his recalling, which was completed on November 2.

The issue of the appointment of the next CSTO secretary-general was due to be discussed at the Russian-led security grouping's summit held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on November 8.

Prior to the summit several senior Armenian officials spoke in favor of Armenia's retaining the rotating post until 2020. Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs neither confirmed, nor denied that other options may also be considered.

## Pashinyan participates in 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War I Armistice ceremony in Paris



Armenia's acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan participated on November 11 in the 100th anniversary of World War I Armistice commemoration event in Paris, France.

Pashinyan and his spouse Anna Hakobyan arrived to the Élysée Palace where they were greeted by French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron, the PM's

office said.

Afterwards the Armenian acting PM, together with world leaders, visited the Place Charles de Gaulle, where the commemoration ceremony took place at the Arc de Triomphe.

President of France Emmanuel Macron inspected the guard of honor at the beginning of the event.

After a tribute for the fallen and a moment of silence, the French national anthem was played, followed by a cultural program of the event. Students recited testimonies written by soldiers on Armistice Day. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma delivered a dramatic performance of

Bach's Sarabande from Cello Suite No. 5 in C Minor during the event. Beninese singer Angélique Kidjo also performed after Macron's speech.

The European Union's Youth Orchestra performed French composer Maurice Ravel's Bolero. The event was concluded by a symbolic ceremony at the Eternal Flame – students encircled the French president by placing their arms on each other's shoulders – as a sign of collective revival.

Nikol Pashinyan is also expected to participate at the Paris Peace Forum within the framework of the 100th anniversary of World War I Armistice.



## Former ruling party set to take part in snap elections

(Yerevan- RFE/RL) - Leading members of Armenia's former ruling party have given more indications on November 7 about their party's intention to participate in snap parliamentary elections due next month.

Ara Babloyan, the speaker of the interim parliament that was dissolved last week, believes that the Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) must take part in the coming elections.

Speaking to journalists on Wednesday, the senior HHK member avoided evaluating the party's chances in the elections, but added: "The HHK has a serious human and professional potential, and I think that this potential should be used for our further development."

Snap general elections in Armenia were appointed for December 9 after popular Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan forced the parliament's dissolution with his tactical resignations and two straight tactical votes in parliament that failed to elect a new prime minister.

Political parties and alliances will have until November 14 to submit their documents for registration in the elections.

The HHK is due to hold a meeting later this week to decide on its plans for the December polls in which political analysts predict a landslide victory for Pashinyan, a reformist politician who ousted HHK leader Serzh Sarkisian and his government from power with sustained peaceful street protests in April-May.

Pashinyan's alliance polled over 80 percent of the vote in September municipal elections



in capital Yerevan, which is home to more than a third of Armenia's population.

The HHK did not participate in those local elections and for analysts it remains unclear whether the party that stayed in power for over a decade and has been accused of rigging elections and monopolizing the country's political landscape will even manage to clear the five-percent hurdle to enter the next parliament.

Earlier on Wednesday, former Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan, whom some media tip as the HHK's possible number one candidate in the December 9 elections, said in a Facebook post that the former ruling party must take part in the upcoming polls by all means.

"This way, instead of just taking offense at its people, the full-fledged political party will make a bid to serve the people in a new sta-

tus," Sargsyan wrote.

"Being an opposition is not a privilege, an administrative lever, or a high public position. It is an honorable opportunity to repent for your mistakes with action rather than words. A political party that was for many years a ruling party has no right to just take its experience, knowledge and professional team and retire from public life, 'washing its hands'."

In an interview with RFE/RL's Armenian Service on Monday HHK spokesman Eduard Sharmazanov ruled out that the former ruling party will fail to enter the next parliament if it decides to take part in the elections.

According to Sharmazanov, the HHK will not seek to win a majority and have a political 'revanche', but will strive to become a "real opposition" to the pro-Pashinyan majority in parliament.

## Armenia 'closely follows' developments around Iran

Official Yerevan is closely following the developments around neighboring Iran connected with U.S. sanctions enforced against the Islamic Republic, according to a representative of the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

"We closely follow developments in this direction and are in constant contact with all the parties involved in this process," MFA spokesperson Anna Naghdalyan said in a statement released on November 6.

"We clearly present the issues and concerns that we have. Traditional good-neighborly relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran are of vital importance for the Republic of Armenia," she added.

Naghdalyan said that "a comprehensive expert examination of the impact of sanctions against Iran on Armenia is being carried out."

On Monday, the United States enforced new sanctions against Iran targeting key sectors of the Islamic Republic's economy following



President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw Washington from the 2015 nuclear agreement between Tehran and world powers.

U.S. national-security adviser John Bolton visited the South Caucasus nations of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan late last month in part to push for compliance with the sanctions that the United States is re-imposing on Iran's oil and financial sectors.

In an interview with RFE/RL's Armenian

Service on October 25, Bolton said he told Armenia's acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan that the Trump administration will enforce sanctions against Iran "very vigorously." For that reason, he said, the Armenian-Iranian border is "going to be a significant issue."

"Obviously, we don't want to cause damage to our friends in the process," Bolton added.

Speaking before Armenian lawmakers on November 1, Pashinyan reaffirmed his government's position that Armenia's "special relations" with Iran, as one of the two countries, along with Georgia, that serves as a gateway for the landlocked nation to the outside world, should be "as free from geopolitical influences as possible."

"This position was very clearly formulated also during my meeting with Mr. Bolton, and I think that the position of Armenia was clear, comprehensible, and even acceptable to representatives of the U.S. delegation," the Armenian leader stressed.



## The US says "no military solution to Karabakh conflict"

The United States has reiterated its strong support for the work of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and appreciated their steadfast engagement with the sides to advance a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

"The United States is encouraged by recent constructive contacts by the sides at the levels of heads of state and foreign ministers. These contacts appear to be paying direct and positive dividends. All three Co-Chairs and the CiO's Personal Representative reported today a decrease in violence along the Line of Contact and in conflict-affected areas over the past two months," Acting Deputy Chief of US Mission to the OSCE Gregory Macris told the Permanent Council. "The sides should seize the opportunity this opening presents and find ways to move the settlement process forward. The Co-Chairs suggested a number of actions the sides can take to further reduce tensions and

improve communication. The United States supports these recommendations. Likewise, the United States supports measures to reduce tensions along the Line of Contact such as expanding the monitoring capacity of the CiO's Personal Representative and establishing an investigative mechanism. The United States believes that a meeting between the Foreign Ministers can bring renewed impetus to the discussions on the implementation of these measures," he said.

Gregory Macris stated that "the conflict has gone on far too long. It is time for the sides to refrain from mutual accusations and recriminations and prepare their populations for peace. The United States supports confidence-building measures and increased dialogue between Armenians and Azerbaijanis that can stabilize the security situation and create a more constructive atmosphere for negotiations. Those participating in dialogue must be able to do so

freely, without fear of harassment or recrimination when they return home."

"We attach great importance to resolving conflicts in the OSCE area, including the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the strong engagement of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. That is why the United States has sent high-level envoys such as National Security Advisor John Bolton and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent to Armenia and Azerbaijan in recent weeks," the official added.

"The United States shares the view that there can be no military solution to this conflict. The status quo is unacceptable. The United States is committed to working with the sides to find a lasting and peaceful resolution, one based on the principles shared by participating States of non-use of force, territorial integrity, and equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as embraced in the Helsinki Final Act," Gregory Macris stated.

## Democracy irreversible in Armenia - Nikol Pashinyan

The Armenian government looks to create a map of world-spread Armenians to see the existing potential, Armenia's acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at a meeting with Armenian community representatives in Astana.

Speaking about domestic developments, Pashinyan said "democracy is irreversible."

"There can be no dictatorship in Armenia, the democracy in our country is irreversible. Press has never been this free in Armenia," the acting PM said. He added that what's more important is the change in people's perception of their role. He said foreigners get the impression that whole Armenia is one family, that "Armenia is our family."

"We are a democratic country and things cannot be otherwise. People have carried out the revolution against authoritarianism and oligarchic system, and will no longer allow the creation of such a system. Creation of false opposition has been the most destructive thing in our political system since 1998. We are not going to go that way," Pashinyan said.

"For a long time, Armenia has not had authorities and opposition enjoying people's mandate. We are not going to create artificial opposition, because opposition should create itself. It's up to people to decide through parliamentary election who comes to power and who becomes opposition," the acting Prime Minister stated.

## The new generation of Armenian doctors gives hope that the country is able to solve not only its tasks but also help others

Despite the many problems in the Healthcare System of Armenia, a new generation of highly qualified doctors demonstrates devotion to main mission of doctor and readiness to live and work in their homeland.

It is hard to imagine, but in Armenia there is already a new generation of doctors of middle and young age, who work at a highly professional level, could find a very good job in the best clinics of developed European countries or America, but prefer to live in Armenia and serve the people of Armenia.

More and more such examples appear in the information space of Armenia, some of which can be found in the BESTOFARMENIA.COM portal, where in a separate section most of the best Armenian doctors are presented. Along with other areas, healthcare is also represented in this portal, including the majority of the best medical doctors of Armenia. By the way, almost all these doctors have many patients from abroad, as well as from the expat community of Armenia. One of them is Dr. Aram Badalyan - Head & Neck (and Maxillo-Facial) Surgeon, MD, PhD, who successfully accomplished a special English language course in the USA, also the Medical Residency in the Cancer Research Center of Russia and many other prestigious institutions.

Such examples give confidence that Armenia is able to solve not only its own tasks, but also to help people from other countries - to find all the necessary help here.





## Acting deputy PM receives World Bank delegation

Acting deputy prime minister of Armenia Mher Grigoryan received the World Bank mission. The meeting was also attended by World Bank Country Manager for Armenia Sylvie Bossoutrot.

The meeting participants discussed the process of development of the World Bank's Development Policy Financing project. The project goals are based on the Armenian government's priorities to improve government, boost economic competition, strengthen inclusion and reduce the environmental risks.

The WB delegation members expressed readiness to assist



fiscal stabilization, strengthening of the financial sectors and household resistance in Armenia within the frame-

work of the program. It was also reported that the French Development Agency also expressed readiness to assist and

support the program implementation.

In his turn the acting deputy PM introduced the guests on the main principles of tax reforms developed by the government. In addition to other reforms, he attached importance to the development of human capital and raising the efficiency of the public administration sector. Mher Grigoryan said the government will be consistent in the process of improving the state functions and conducting modernization.

The meeting participants also exchanged views on the mechanisms for effective implementation of digitization.

## Nikol Pashinyan discusses measures for improving business environment with major entrepreneurs



Acting Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan had a working luncheon with major entrepreneurs and tax payers of Armenia.

As Noyan Tapan was informed from the official website of the Prime Minister of Armenia, various issues related to the improvement of the investment environment in the country, legislative regulations, reforms in the tax sphere, fight against corruption, increase of export volumes of Armenian products, protection of interests of local producers were discussed. The entrepreneurs welcomed the economic policy of the Government, particularly the amendments to take place in the Tax Code. They emphasized that by simplifying the taxation process a number of im-

portant problems are solved.

The acting PM noted that the Government is interested in the success of the entrepreneurs and highlighted active dialogue and partnership with the business community. Pashinyan added that the steps of the Government are aimed at encouraging labor. Nikol Pashinyan hoped that as a result of the Government's measures the revenues of the tax payers will add, they will record new achievements and will pay more taxes to the state.

The sides highlighted the measures taken in the direction of fight against corruption for improving business environment and expressed confidence that it will foster economic activities in the country.

## Armenia-Kazakhstan energy cooperation prospects discussed

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had working breakfast in Astana with Atameken Chamber of Commerce member, Chairman of Oil and Gas Industry Committee Abulfazin Daniyar Rustemovich and Mosstone Engineering Company Director David Galstyan.

The interlocutors discussed issues related to cooperation prospects in the energy sector. They touched upon the opportunities available on the Armenian market, and the Government's steps aimed at improving the business environment.

The Kazakh side expressed interest in making investments in our country. Welcoming the initiative, Nikol Pashinyan suggested discussing the matter with Armenia's relevant government agencies in order to identify and outline the steps to take ahead.

The meeting looked at ways of exporting Armenian products to Kazakhstan.





## Nikol Pashinyan: "I am convinced that through joint work we will shape completely new police-citizen relations"



Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan held a consultation on November 7 to discuss traffic safety-related structural and institutional changes. Addressing the meeting, Nikol Pashinyan stated, in part, "In general, the recent political changes in Armenia have quite reasonably set new tasks before the Armenian Police. Of course, this transitional period should have been very difficult for the police. Nevertheless, based on the results of our six-month work, we can say that the police, in general, have solved the problems facing it quite well. This does not mean that there were no shortcomings at all.

The most important issue we proposed from the very outset was the change of citizens' attitude toward the police, and vice versa. In this regard, we have obviously made serious progress. I do not mean at all that we have achieved perfection, but it is very important that we are pushing ahead with steadfast steps.

We could indeed witness criticism related to the work of police and traffic police, but our analysis seems to indicate that even the most relevant critical opinions stem from the peculiarities of this transitional period. I am convinced that through joint work we will shape completely new police-citizen relations. This is a crucial objective that we must achieve."

Then the responsible officials presented the draft law On Amending the RA Code on Administrative Offenses, which was developed based on international experience. The amendments seek to rule out the aim of pursuing and penalizing citizens in the law on administrative responsibility, re-evaluating and revising the fine rates applicable to road traffic-related administrative offenses. According to Deputy Chief of Police Hovhannes Kocharyan, the size of fines exceeding AMD 30,000 is problematic because this sum is just the minimum threshold for the crimes envisaged in the Criminal Code.

"If we proceed from the concept that administrative offenses are less harmful than common crimes, then according to our approach, these fines should be reduced to a relative extent. The bill provides for significant reduction in fine rates, though it does not seek to relieve the social burden: it is the secondary result. Our task is to raise the level of traffic safety by combining fines with penalty points. That is, on the one hand, we have the opportunity to relieve the social burden as a secondary effect,

on the other hand, to keep the security at a proper level," Mr. Kocharyan said.

He pointed out that the penalty points are not meant for all violations. He noted that only 16 out of 100 violations in the measures of administrative liability had initially been scrutinized, and as a result of public discussions this figure reached 20. More detailed studies have revealed that major causes to traffic accidents are overpass, poor driving, pedestrian violations, and other offenses that are relatively fewer as compared to these three.

It was reported that each person with a driving license will have 9 points per year. Offenses shall be assessed by 0.5, 1, 2, 3, 4 points. In case, the ballots are reset, the citizen's driving license will be suspended for a period of six months, but after half that period has expired they will have the right to take a theoretical exam and automatically resume the driver's license. If in a second consecutive year drivers reset their 9 points, they will automatically be deprived of the driving license for one year and will not only take a theoretical but also practical examination.

It was also reported that, as a result of the reform, Traffic Police will be re-organized into a patrol service, which will deal with accidents and reports quickly. The system will operate through the Operational Management Center, which will be established with the World Bank's support.

Highlighting the activities of the Patrol Service, Nikol Pashinyan noted that ensuring road safety will be its key objective.

"Indeed, it is an important service that is to become a cornerstone from the perspective of public security. In essence, a patrol is the face of the police, the face of the state, and the face of the nation. What matters most is the way a patrol behaves or communicates with people, which determines the citizen's perception of his country, the state, the government, and the police. It is a key service, indeed," the Prime Minister emphasized.

It was also reported that all patrol service officers will be trained as part of the proposed reform. Prioritizing the implementation of the reform, Nikol Pashinyan instructed those responsible to finalize the bill within the shortest possible timeframes.





# Nikol Pashinyan hails contribution made by volunteers during 17th Francophone Summit

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan attended a ceremony of awarding appreciation letters to volunteers who participated in the organization of the 17th Summit of the International Organization of La Francophonie, which was held in October, 2018 in Yerevan. More than 800 volunteers were presented with letters of appreciation for dedicated work and valuable contribution to the preparations and holding of the 17th Summit of La La Francophonie.

Appreciating the work done during the Summit, Nikol Pashinyan said: "What is the most important result of your work? As we shared our impressions with the heads of participating countries, they all said to be pleased with the organization of the Summit, for which I would also like to thank the representatives of the government and the members of the organizing committee. Our guests stressed that they had been especially impressed by our people.

You have made the biggest contribution to this assessment, because you were the first to



meet and attend them during the Summit's proceedings. In your face, they saw bright, strong, positive people; in your eyes they could see a

country with a strong, bright, positive and great future. This is the most important outcome of the OIF Summit and your work.

Therefore, I can say that owing to your efforts, the Republic of Armenia is now perceived as a country of kind people. We have a lot of wealth in our country: many are aware of our history, cultural values, historical monuments, literature and music. But it is very important that now we have stated that the Republic of Armenia is a country of people, a country of free, creative, struggling, winning and hospitable people who can successfully host such a major international event - the largest ever international event held in our country.

I want to thank you all for your dedicated work. This is an invaluable service that you rendered to our homeland, the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people. I love you all, I am proud of each of you, and today I am happy for your high spirits and good mood. Thank you very much. Go ahead with the same spirit."





## Trump's National Security Adviser Tries to Distance Armenia from Russia and Iran



**By  
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John Bolton, the National Security Adviser of President Trump, visited Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in October, conveying the White House position on regional and international issues. Bolton is known as a hawk on foreign policy and is often described as a warmonger for his extremist positions!

In his meetings with Armenian officials, Bolton spoke about U.S. sanctions on Iran which may affect third countries, including Armenia. He also made a surprise offer to sell American weapons to Armenia and discussed Armenian-Turkish relations, and the resolution of the Artsakh conflict.

It became clear that Bolton tried to distance Armenia from its strategic ally Russia and key trading partner Iran, since the border with Armenia is blockaded by neighboring Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Even though serious concerns were expressed by many Armenian commentators and particularly Russian officials regarding the policies advanced by Bolton, Acting Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, was surprisingly upbeat and told the Armenian Parliament: "I've met with Bolton. There wasn't even the slightest nuance during this meeting which can cause disturbance in Armenia and among the Armenian people. I consider this meeting to be a major diplomatic achievement for us, I will say in the future as to what is the reason that I am saying so."

The Acting Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan added: "The dialogue [with Bolton] was very successful, and the US understood the logic of our relations with the Russian Federation, Iran, our position on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, relations with Turkey, etc."

Putting a positive spin on his meetings in Armenia, Bolton tweeted: "Yesterday I had a nice visit to Armenia, an important friend in the region. I enjoyed productive conversations with the [Acting] Prime Minister and his national

security team."

Despite the heated relations between the United States and Russia, Armenia has to maintain a delicate balance between the two superpowers. On the one hand, Armenia relies on Russia for its critical needs: weapons, energy, and trade, and therefore, cannot afford to antagonize its strategic ally. On the other hand, Armenia has maintained friendly relations with many other countries, particularly Western Europe and the United States.

### Proposed Sale of Weapons to Armenia

Bolton surprised his Armenian hosts by offering them to purchase American weapons by stating that they are superior to those of Russia. However, he did not mention how impoverished Armenia would be able to pay for these weapons. As we know, Russia supplies the bulk of Armenia's weapons either by providing loans or at discount prices. Pashinyan responded by stating that Armenia will consider the American offer, while Acting Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan told NEWS.am that there was no need to purchase U.S. weapons at this time.

By acquiring American weapons, Armenia would risk antagonizing Russia, its main source of arms. Secondly, the United States may be using its offer to Armenia as a cover to sell multi-billion dollars of advanced weapons to Azerbaijan, something it can afford to purchase, while Armenia cannot.

Bolton's other illogical statement was that the Russian sale of weapons to Armenia and Azerbaijan has hampered the settlement of the Artsakh conflict. Ironically, this is exactly what Bolton is proposing by offering to sell U.S. weapons to both countries. In my opinion, the United States and all other countries should refrain from selling weapons to both Armenia and Azerbaijan! Pouring more weapons into a conflict zone can only lead to increased violence and deaths on both sides.

### Armenian-Iranian Relations

In response to Bolton's statement that the United States will enforce sanctions against Iran "very vigorously" and for that reason the Armenian-Iranian border is "going to be a significant issue," Pashinyan stated that Armenia as a landlocked nation does not have diplomatic relations with either neighboring Turkey or Azerbaijan, so it must retain "special relations" with its other two neighbors — Iran and Georgia — which are Armenia's only "gateways"

to the outside world. Pashinyan optimistically told the Armenian Parliament: "I think that the position of Armenia was clear, comprehensible and even acceptable to representatives of the U.S. delegation."

Rather than pressuring Armenia to disrupt its critical trade relations with Iran, the United States should be urged to pressure Turkey and Azerbaijan to open their borders so Armenia can trade more easily with and through all four of its neighbors. Pashinyan correctly pointed out that the Republic of Armenia has its own national interests which do not always coincide with the interests of other countries. In my view, the United States has no right to demand that third countries comply with its misguided sanctions on Iran. Furthermore, since the United States is exempting Turkey from implementing U.S. sanctions on Iran, why shouldn't Armenia be also exempt from these sanctions? Besides, Bolton acknowledged that the United States does not "want to cause damage to our friends in the process."

### Relations with Turkey

Bolton declared that the resolution of the Artsakh conflict would help open Turkey's border with Armenia. Pashinyan responded by stating that Armenia is ready to establish relations and have open borders with Turkey, however, without any preconditions which Turkey tried to impose by linking the opening of the border with the Artsakh conflict. To counter Turkey's precondition, I suggest that Armenia impose its own precondition by linking the opening of the border with Turkish recognition of the Armenian Genocide!

### Resolution of Karabakh Conflict

Bolton suggested that the December 9 Parliamentary elections, during which Pashinyan's political party is expected to win the majority of seats, will give him a strong mandate to take decisive steps in the resolution of the Artsakh conflict. Bolton did not seem to be aware of Pashinyan's repeated statements that "the ones who determine whether to resolve or not resolve the Karabakh conflict are the Armenian people, and specifically the people of Armenia, the people of Artsakh and in this case also the Diaspora, because this is a Pan-Armenian issue."

As Armenia is facing both internal and external uncertainties, it is mandatory that Armenians worldwide support their homeland and join forces against their common adversaries!



## Cipollino Ballet in Yerevan: a Children's Treat Thirty-five Years After... And Fantastic Carmen



By  
**Gourgen  
James  
Khazhakian**  
Chief  
Correspondent

...Middle aged and senior citizens would remember the legendary Soviet cartoon *Cipollino*, based on a story by Italian author **Gianni Rodari**, on the never-ending struggle between good and evil. However, few are aware that the cartoon's wonderful music is by **Karen Khachatourian**, the nephew of great **Aram Khachatourian**....

Can you recall the last performance for children at our Opera and Ballet Theatre? Probably it was in the mid 80s, when **Tigran Mansourian**'s Snow Queen ballet was staged by the incumbent Chief Choreographer **Vilen Galstyan**.

Enter the "kindly grandpa", General Manager and Artistic Director of the Alexandre Spendiarian National Academic Opera and Ballet Theater, **Constantine Orbelian Junior**: he went to the Bolshoi Theatre of Russia and obtained the rights to *Cipollino*, a

longed for at this venue for quite a while. The children, their parents, their parents' parents put their hands together, sang and even danced on the spot... A few seconds after the final curtain everyone, young and old, rushed on stage to thank Orbelian, Mayorov, his assistant and daughter Anna, the dancers, musicians, you name it...



Besides, just before the opening, Maestro Orbelian had another surprise for the children. The beneficiary children of *Orran* NGO were also invited... Holding hands with little **Diana**, Orbelian cut the *Cipollino* cake.

**Armineh Hovhannisian**, the Founding President of the organization, told your correspondent that they attach great importance to children's aesthetic education, and thanked Constantine Orbelian for such a wonderful generous gesture.

Here are a few brief comments:

**Marineh Petrossian**, a popular Theatre and cinema actress, came with her two daughters:

- I felt a very fresh breath and saw new dancers on stage, and, of course, the colorful backdrops and costumes were magnificent... As an actress, I would only recommend a little more emphasis on comic gesture...

Her younger daughter (sorry, I overheard her name), in response to my question "what did you like most, my child?" said: "everything!"



ballet that has been playing there since 1974, nicknamed Children's Spartacus, to the music by Karen Khachatourian. He struck a deal with his longtime friend, the piece's first choreographer, USSR State Prize laureate **Genrikh Mayorov**, to play it in Yerevan. (Orbelian, as always, covered the costs himself – **The Highlights**).

...To say that it was a feast, the evening of 4 November at the Opera and Ballet Theater, would be a gross understatement... Sold-out?..

It would not be an exaggeration to claim that such a revel has been



**Armen Grigoryan**, Head of the ballet troupe:

- The boys and girls did well and, of course, they could do better. Worth mentioning that through the last year, since I'm with the company, an improvement in their performance has been undeniable.

**Rouben Asatryan**, conductor:

- The performance of the orchestra has improved dramatically, and today I got reassured that everything was in perfect harmony. What matters is that the moral-psychological climate in the Theatre has become more con-



ductive to artistic expression, thanks to Maestro Orbelian's disposition and organizational skills. I am really enjoying my work here.

**Shombi Sharp**, UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia:

- It was all beautiful, colorful dresses, scenography, tremendous positive energy winding between the stage and the audience.

**Vincenzo del Monaco**, Italian Ambassador to Armenia:

- It was a beautiful performance, quite refreshing in our daily routine... There are social messages in this presentation, with both Italian and Russian roots, meaningful for audiences of any age.

**Genrikh Mayorov**, staging choreographer:

- Months ago I watched *Giselle* and *Gayaneh* here, and I immediately realized that Armenian dancers are very good... You know, *Giselle* is a unique quality test for dancers, and *Gayaneh* reveals a dancer's national

harder than drama, so there's no room for deceiving the audience, especially when one observes, in the eyes of an Armenian child, the genes of millennia-old culture ... I have not seen such a spectator for a long time, earnestly ...

**Constantine Orbelian:**

- I think it was a great performance. Colorful sets by the legendary Chief Scenographer of the Bolshoi **Valery Leventhal** of the blessed memory. Costumes, splendid performance, replete with humor ... You cannot deceive the children, look how delighted they were... Our dancers got to learn their roles just seven weeks ago, every day under the guidance of Genrikh Mayorov, and they turned to be real achievers. Alongside a six-hour daily rehearsal regimen, our guys and girls performed in the regular repertoire.

...Can you recall when was the last time a full-length ballet was staged in Yerevan: twenty, thirty years ago?

A performance for kids has not been staged at our Theatre for



character. Tonight, that very character allowed soloists to lighten up, they did not dance to their last breath, but with the power reserved. In a word, the soloists (23-year-old **Vahagn Margaryan** as Cipollino, who, unfortunately, just a few days later has met a car accident – let the God give him good health!) were wonderful, there's a benign pedagogical situation here. You know, dancing comedy is by far

several decades ... It was **Vardan Ajemyan's** opera *Death of Kikos*, which we are now rebuilding in on eve of great poet **Hovhannes Toumanian's** jubilee.

... Genrikh Mayorov first staged this wonderful piece in 1974 at the Kiev Opera and Ballet Theater, to Karen Khachatourian's music, and during all these years he staged it more than 40 times in twenty cities of the former Soviet Union: St.-Petersburg,



Kiev, Kharkov, Vilnius, Rostov, Khabarovsk, Novosibirsk...

Why did I decide to stage this performance in our theater?

First of all, because its music is by an Armenian, secondly, I love the cartoon, and then again, it is very colorful and eye-catching.

At first I wanted to hire a performance but they did not agree and so I bought it...

**- What are your upcoming projects?**

- Tomorrow (November 6), talented pianist **Andrey Bulatov** will play with our Orchestra at the closing of a festival dedicated to the 85th anniversary of renowned pianist and educator **Yuri Hayrapetyan**. Beethoven's Fantasy for a choir, piano and orchestra will be performed, and some Tchaikovsky. Andrey is Professor Hayrapetian's student, whose course at the **Komitas State Conservatory** I took over in the distant 1971-72.

*continued on page 12*



## Cipollino Ballet in Yerevan: a Children's Treat Thirty-five Years After... And Fantastic Carmen

from page 11

The other soloist is cellist **Narek Hakhnazarian** who, by the way, is Yuri Hayrapetian's nephew. There will be more soloists from Armenia, as well as from abroad.

And, on 10 November, we have another premiere, a new staging of Carmen. The soloists are **Karineh Babajanian**, **Liparit Avetissian** and wonderful Russian singer **Dmitry Lavrov**, who recently shone in Karine.

P.S. Hereafter, *Cipollino* will always be in the

could ask...

Well, this author puts aside his spectacles, doing "Uuuff" and...

Our ARMENIAN DIAMONDS – a very beautiful lyric tenor **LIPARIT AVETISSYAN**, A WONDERFUL, BEAUTIFUL, GENIUS **KARINEH BABAJANYAN**, **ALINA PAHLEVANYAN**, **HAYK TIGRANYAN**, **ARTSVIK DEMURCHYAN**, CHORUS, DANCERS, OTHERS (plus a very good Russian friend **DMITRY LAVROV**, originally from the St.-Petersburg, a

own... And our young but already bringing fame to the MOTHERLAND ARMENIA at the world leading stages singer especially emphasized his deep acknowledgement to Maestro Orbelian for his creation of the aforementioned FAMILY and the *Constantine Orbelian* Fund indeed.

... Yours truly who has been knowing Maestro Orbelian for several years and so was a witness of all his successes, for the very first time has seen him so excited (a reporter's eye caught even tears in his eyes – sor-



Theatre's playlist and will have daytime runs during school breaks.

And... Everyone regretted the fact that, despite invitations sent well in advance, no official from the Ministry of Culture could enjoy the amazing performance, probably due to overworking...

*We cordially appreciate invaluable help from Mr Artashes Emin, LL.M., AIIC*

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This issue was sent for print when the Armenian premiere of Carmen took place on Saturday 10 November.

How it was ? – The Highlights readers

cradle of the Russian Greatness) were really SHINING CRAZILY...

And what about THE AUDIENCE?

...Sea of flowers, non-stop standing ovation, endless "Bravo"-s...

As **Nina Hovnanian**, a prominent couture and art lover from New York who watched Carmen at the Metropolitan Opera legendary stage said, "...Our was deeper... And, after all, it was OUR !"

Liparit Avetisyan (for who it was already the fourth staging of Carmen) stressed that it was highly pleasant and comfortable to him to work with Naire' Stepanyan as she gave him the full freedom and her vision of Don Jose image fully coincided with Liparit's

ry!): when praising Staging Director **Naire' Stepanyan**, this gifted petite belle, a very professional Conductor **Chris Ocacek**, the abovementioned "diamonds", absolutely all who spared no effort to make this MIRACLE come true, Constantine Garrievich Orbelian said: "...I am happy as never before... 'Cause we are THE TEAM, no, we are THE FAMILY, and for you I'm ready to get the very peak of Holy Ararat to bring down the stars for you, my dears, really!"

*Photographs by Tigran Araquelyan and the author*

*To be followed soon...*



# Will AI Take Away Our Jobs?

By Vahe Andonians\*



Discussions about Artificial Intelligence eliminating our jobs through automation are omnipresent.

Automation, however, is nothing new, and neither are the warnings on employment impact. Secretary of Labor James Davis in the 1920's or Nobel Prize laureate Wassily Leontief in the 1980's are just two prominent historical figures to warn against mass unemployment due to automation.

While many inventions in automation were successfully designed to replace inconsistent human labor work with perfect machines, the data does not support an increased unemployment rate.

If machines are successfully replacing human jobs, then why is unemployment rate not rising? Two factors explain this paradox: O-ring Theory and human greed.

## O-Ring Theory

Production processes typically consist of a series of connected tasks. Perfecting a subset of these tasks does not make the other functions in the production chain unnecessary. On the contrary, it makes them more critical.

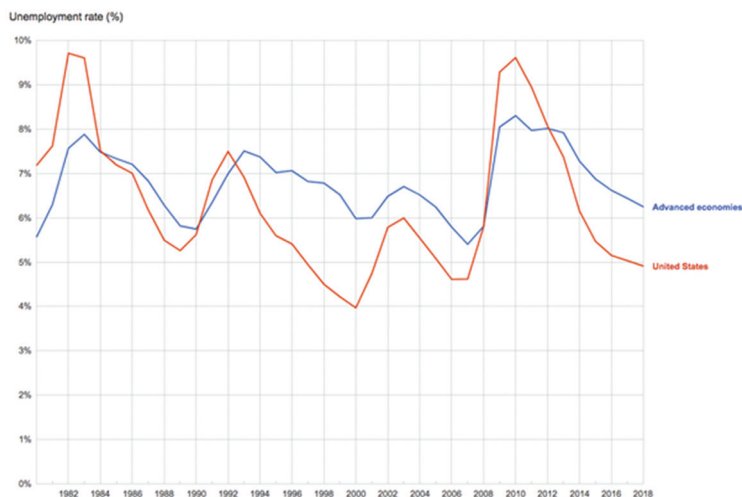
In 1986, the space shuttle Challenger exploded soon after lift-off, ending the mission in a catastrophe. It turns out that in this multibillion-dollar project, an eroded O-ring caused a malfunction in the booster rocket and caused the explosion.

Michael Kremer used this unfortunate example as a metaphor for the importance of every single task in productions with the following attributes:

1. production depends on a series of tasks
2. Failure of any task reduces the value of the entire product, often to zero
3. One cannot substitute quantity for quality

This dependence on each task working perfectly, has the positive implication that improvements in one task, increase the economic value of improvements in remaining tasks.

For example, let's look at baking bread. There are about ten tasks in bread making - ingredient selection, mixing, primary fermentation, divide and shape, rest, final shape, final fermentation, scoring, baking and finally, cooling. A failure in single one of these steps probably will destroy the whole product. Imagine baking the bread for too long, or using the wrong ingredients. Commercial bread baking machines already automate all but the first task with perfection. Consequently, improvements in the first task - the ingredient selection, and subsequently it's quality, have the highest economic



Data from IMF, October 2014 WEO. Last updated: Jun 19, 2018  
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value. Which is probably in line with where the highest focus of research is right now.

As technology improves and takes over more tasks with machine perfection, it increases the importance of our expertise, our judgment, and our creativity for the improvement of the remaining tasks, which get more difficult with every iteration.

## Human Greed

The second factor - Human Greed - has a useful manifestation of the restless invention of new products and services. Tamagotchi and cat yoga are just two examples of such products. Without arguing the necessity of these products, they surely created jobs.

Historically, the combination of the O-Ring Theory and Human Greed has not only led to more employment but consequently also to more overall wealth through higher output.

At least for now, it seems that both factors are still valid with this wave of automation and hence there is no obvious reason to believe AI will destroy jobs. Yet, there are two factors that should be mentioned in this context.

## Macro- vs Micro-view



On a macroeconomic level, jobs have not been destroyed by automation. Nevertheless, on a microeconomic level, automation has destroyed whole industries.

An interesting example are human computers. Human computers were people who did mathematical calculations. This whole industry was destroyed by the calculator.

There are many more examples of such industries that either needed to go through a dramatic change or were destroyed.

AI will, through its versatility, most likely have such an effect on many more industries, than the calculator did.

## Wealth increase vs wealth distribution

Just because we increase overall wealth through higher production, it does not mean that we automatically distribute that wealth meaningfully.

Looking at Saudi Arabia vs Norway, we can see two very rich countries. However, they have a huge disparity in their wealth distribution. Saudi Arabia is a kingdom with a small group of people profiting from their wealth. Norway is a democracy that has established a successful method to distribute wealth at a much broader level.

With AI many more tasks will be handed over from humans to machines. Machines, however, are taxed differently than humans, namely taxed once, versus being taxed continuously. As a consequence, established methods of wealth transfer through taxes might not work anymore.

In conclusion, there is no reason to believe that AI will lead to an overall job loss. It will most likely create more jobs, increase output and consequently add to total wealth. Nevertheless, the transition will be difficult as many industries will be affected negatively. Additionally, wealth distribution must be addressed as traditional methods of wealth transfer might not apply anymore.

\* Vahe Andonians is a serial entrepreneur and senior lecturer at the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management.

Recently, Vahe founded a new startup - cognaiZe - which is specializing in the AI-based processing of financial documents. In 2017 Vahe sold his latest startup - SCDM, an AI-based analytics company specialized in the fixed income market, to Deloitte. Having started as a data provider for investors in structured credit in 2003, SCDM had broadened its services from data management to bespoke IT solutions into reporting, business intelligence, and cash flow simulations for investors in structured credit. Early 2017 SCDM had sold its structured credit business to Moody's Analytics and was focusing on its valuation business, putting a value on over 40,000 financial instruments on a daily basis.



# “The Way A Company Does Things Is As Important As What It Does And What Material Resources It Uses To Do That,” Ralph Yirikian Says

## First time in Armenia: VivaCell-MTS gets certificate on compliance to ISO 37001 and ISO 19600 standards

### VivaCell-MTS releases CSR report in line with GRI international standards

In the course of years of its activities VivaCell-MTS has had two major achievements, which are important for it both as a company, and as a successful effort to comply the company management with international standards.

First time in Armenia, a business entity has issued an annual corporate responsibility report, which is based on the standards developed by internationally recognized Global Reporting Initiative. The report embraces issues that go beyond the Company's social and environmental activities. It includes the institutional grounds on which the Company builds its activities in line with ISO 26000 international guidelines for corporate responsibility. Those grounds include requirements for information security and confidentiality; efficient use of non-restorable resources of energy; saving through using solar energy; business ethics, community development, risk management systems, and more.

The most important achievement, VivaCell-MTS underlines, is the compliance of the anti-corruption management and prevention systems for the first time implemented in Armenia in line with ISO 37001 and ISO 19600 international standards. This is documented in the certificates granted to the Company as a result of auditing performed by International Compliance Association.

VivaCell-MTS's readiness to regularly undergo the mentioned auditing is aimed at early de-

tection of risks, and is helpful in preventing problems before they outgrow into crises. In a business perspective the compliance to ISO 37001 and ISO 19600 international standards is also a strategic tool to maintain the Company's competitive position in the telecommunications market, which simply cannot be replicated.



In a video address on VivaCell-MTS **Facebook page**, the Company's Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** said: “Getting ISO 37001 and ISO 19600 international certificates just like the application of GRI criteria for CSR reporting are a matter of willingness and commitment to comply to the highest international expectations in corporate management for VivaCell-MTS rather than legal requirements for companies operating in Armenia.”

“For VivaCell-MTS the criterion of efficiency is not just the

leading position in the Armenian market, but implementation of the strictest international standards in its activities: and I want to emphasize here – voluntary implementation,” added Mr Yirikian.

Ralph Yirikian suggests that the wider public, Armenian and international experts and mass media familiarize themselves to

telecommunications operator, having the widest 2G/3.75G/4G network reach and spreading a wide range of Voice and Data services all across Armenia. Having the best of the Armenian people interest at heart since its launch on 1st July 2005 and in a short period of time VivaCell-MTS has managed to build a nationwide network and a considerable customer base. VivaCell-MTS drives innovation and aims at always being at the forefront of any development serving the Armenian mobile communications market. The company follows the guidance provided by ISO 26000 (International Standard of Social Responsibility) and ISO/IEC 27001:2013 (Information Security Management System). For more information, visit [www.mts.am](http://www.mts.am)

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the **report** prepared in line with the GRI standards and share their observations or bring about ideas on how to increase the efficiency of Company's processes.

“In terms of being socially responsible, **the way** a company does things is as important as **what** it does and what material resources it uses to do that,” concluded Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator Company's Founding GM **Ralph C. Yirikian**.

VivaCell-MTS (MTS Armenia CJSC) is Armenia's leading

Mobile TeleSystems PJSC (“MTS”) is the leading telecommunications group in Russia and the CIS, offering mobile and fixed voice, broadband, pay TV as well as content and entertainment services in one of the world's fastest growing regions. Including its subsidiaries, the Group services over 100 million mobile subscribers in Russia, Ukraine, Turkmenistan, Armenia and Belarus. Since June 2000, MTS' Level 3 ADRs have been listed on the New York Stock Exchange (ticker symbol MBT). Additional information about the MTS Group can be found at [www.mtsgsm.com](http://www.mtsgsm.com)



# ARMENIA

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# Media Cooperation Forum on Belt and Road Held in Hainan

2018 Media Cooperation Forum on Belt and Road kicked off on October 30 in Boao Town in south China's Hainan Province.

Themed "Contribution by All, Benefits for All", the forum featured more than 250 guests from over 200 media outlets and international organizations from 90 countries.

Diverse forums focusing on regional cooperation, artificial intelligence and smart media, cultural development along the Silk Road, and the co-building of a press cooperation alliance

were held on October 30.

Ji Bingxuan, Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, said China's Belt and Road Initiative focuses on the bigger picture, complies with the trend of the times, and conforms to the common aspirations of all countries.

He hoped that media outlets from across the world could work together to spread the ideas behind the initiative including peace, development, opening-up, innovation, and civilization.

Jiang Jianguo, Deputy Head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that media is expected to play an important role in recording, participating and promoting the initiative, and they are encouraged to strengthen cooperation and report stories in countries along the Belt and Road.

The Forum is hosted by the People's Daily, the Hainan Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China, and the provincial government.

(Xinhua News Agency Octo-

ber 30, 2018)

Head of Noyan Tapan Media Holding, Tigran Harutyunyan, and representative from News.am, Constantin Amirkhanyan, also participated at the forum from Armenia.

*In the photo: Meeting with the head of the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China and a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China H. E. Huang Kunming during the 2018 Media Cooperation Forum on Belt and Road, in Beijing on November 2.*



中共中央政治局委员、中央书记处书记、中宣部部长黄坤明会见 2018 一带一路媒体合作论坛外方代表  
Meeting with H. E. Mr. Huang Kunming during the 2018 Media Cooperation Forum on Belt and Road

中国·北京 2018 年 11 月 2 日  
Beijing · China Nov. 2, 2018



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The publisher: NT Holding LTD  
Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող՝  
ՆՏ Հոլդինգ ՍՊԸ

Ծավալը՝ 2.25 մամուլ, տպաքանակը՝ 1500  
Circulation: 1500 print copies and  
15600 copies by e-mail list in PDF format

Weekly Newspaper, Since May 4, 1993

President of the NT Media Holding:  
**TIGRAN HARUTYUNYAN**  
Editor-in-Chief of the Media Holding:  
**GAYANEH ARAKELIAN**  
Director of the weekly:  
**MARINA HARUTYUNYAN**  
Chief Correspondent: **GOURGEN KHAZHAKIAN**  
Proofreader: **SUSANNA MKRTCHIAN**  
Layout: **DIANA GRIGORYAN**  
Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ.Հարությունյան

**ISSN 1829-0604**

Գրանցման վկայականի համարը՝  
03U898368, տրված՝ 11.01.2013թ.  
Registration certificate and the date:  
273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

E-mail: [contact@nt.am](mailto:contact@nt.am)  
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