

Armenia celebrates Constitution Day



Armenia celebrates Constitution Day on July 5, which is also marked as the Day of State Symbols – the flag, the coat of arms and the anthem.

The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia was adopted by a national referendum on July 5, 1995 when the citizens of the republic voted for the adoption of the Constitution of independent Armenia, thus expressing the wish to live in a free and democratic state.

Constitution Day is a public holiday for Armenia and its citizens, which marks the creation of a new governmental framework and the beginning of another era for the country, which for over seven decades had been a Soviet satellite.

The Armenian Constitution was amended with a referendum held in December 2015, in which the overwhelming majority of citizens cast their ballot in favor of shifting to a parliamentary form of government.

Another referendum was scheduled on April 5, but was subsequently canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

On June 20 the National Assembly voted unanimously to pass bill on Constitutional amendments with 89 votes in favor. The two opposition factions – Prosperous Armenia and Bright Armenia – did not participate in the voting.

Under the changes, the judges who have not yet completed a term of office of 12 years will stay in office until completion of this term, while the tenure of the judges who have already served a term of 12 years will be terminated.

The amendments came into force on June 26.

The coat-of-arms of the Republic of Armenia was confirmed on August 23rd 1990 by the Armenian Supreme Counsel. The new modern design is based on the coat-of-arms of the first Republic of Armenia (1918-1920), which originally was designed by architect Aleksandr Tamanyan and painter Hagop Kodjoyan.

In the centre of the shield is Mount Ararat – the symbol of the Armenian nation. On its peak rests Noah's Ark, which, according to the Bible, came to rest here after the great flood. Surrounding Mount Ararat are symbols of old Armenian dynasties.

➡ page 3

Congrats Viva-MTS! The Company celebrates its 15 years jubilee: the results and milestones...

VIVA MTS

Armenia's leading telecommunications operator Viva-MTS, sums up the results of its activities led over the last 15 years. The main stages and achievements, as well as underlying values, are presented in the Facebook video message of the Founding General Manager of the Company, **a role model citizen, businessmen, manager and patriot Mr Ralph C. Yirikian** (<https://m.facebook.com/MTSArmenia>) and also on its official YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95z2Y4CSXSo&feature=youtu.be>).



Viva-MTS has gone through a challenging path, making its powerful mobile network available to 99.8% of the population.

➡ page 9

Nikol Pashinyan congratulates Donald Trump on Independence Day

p. 2

Armenian, Azeri FMs trade accusations in fresh talks

p. 4

US helps Armenia combat corruption with \$1 million in assistance

p.7

French Armenian Jeanne Barseghian officially becomes the Mayor of Strasbourg

p. 5

Nikol Pashinyan congratulates Donald Trump on Independence Day

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan sent a congratulatory message to U.S. President Donald Trump on the occasion of U.S. Independence Day. The message reads:

“Honorable Mr. President,

I extend my warmest congratulations to you and to the friendly people of the United States on Independence Day.

The meaning of July 4 reverberates far beyond the borders of the United States and has become a symbol of victorious struggle for independence. The founding fathers' noble ideas of state-building have ever since been a source of inspiration for many nations in pursuit of democracy.

For two years now, the Armenian authorities have embarked on a comprehensive institutional reform agenda, supposed to lead to the final establishment and irreversibility of democracy and the rule of law in our country. The fight against corruption and



judicial reform stands high on our agenda.

We are grateful for the United States' financial and technical assistance for democratic reforms in Armenia. We highly appreciate the support provided by your administration in the fight against the pandemic that has been plaguing the globe for a while now.

Armenia highly values the furtherance of friendly relations with the United States as part of the strategic dialogue established a

year ago. We are committed to continued participation in the U.S.-led initiatives aimed at fighting cross-border terrorism and enhancing international security to the best of our ability. We appreciate the United States' constructive involvement and balanced policy in the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the First Republic of Armenia and the United States. This landmark historical fact gives our partnership a truly emotional touch. Resonating with our shared democratic values, it creates a solid groundwork for continued development and progress of friendship between our two nations.

Reiterating my congratulations, I wish the friendly people of America peace, prosperity and a swift victory in the fight against the coronavirus-driven pandemic.”

Pashinyan congratulates Putin on successful completion of Constitutional referendum



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has congratulated Russian President Vladimir

Putin on “successful completion of the vote on Constitutional amendments.”

“This event, of course, was of fundamental importance for the further strengthening of Russia's statehood. I am convinced that the changes in the country's Constitution, which have been approved by the vast majority of the Russian society, create conditions for further progress in the country and its socio-economic development,” the Prime Minister said.

PM Pashinyan wished Vladimir Putin and

the brotherly people of the Russian Federation peace, prosperity and prosperity.

Russian voters have overwhelmingly backed a referendum on constitutional changes that includes a provision allowing President Vladimir Putin to remain in power until 2036.

The tally for the voting that has taken place over a full week showed a 78% “yes” vote, according to Russia's Central Election Commission. The commission estimated the turnout was 65% of eligible voters.

Armenian President holds meeting with US Ambassador

President Armen Sarkissian hosted on July 3 US Ambassador to Armenia Lynne Tracy ahead of the US Independence Day, the Armenian President's Office informs.

The Armenian President congratulated the US Ambassador on the state holiday, wishing success to her and the good people of the United States.

President Sarkissian expressed gratitude for the constant assistance provided by the US government to Armenia, in particular in fighting the novel coronavirus pandemic, stating that the real friendship is demonstrated in difficult times.

The Ambassador said the United States continues supporting Armenia in the development of democracy, fight against corruption, reforms in different areas and creation of an attractive business climate for investors.

At the request of the Ambassador, the

Armenian President introduced the Constitutional amendments and the process relating to the constitutional reforms. In this context, the President highlighted the public debates over the drafting process of the Main law and talked about the Commission on constitutional reforms.

The sides also discussed investments. They agreed that each investment should be protected not only by law, but also with the presence of a favorable and attractive environment.

The US Ambassador touched upon the American programs and investment opportunities aimed at developing Armenia's economy.

President Sarkissian said the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy require quick response and flexible mechanisms for boosting investments. In this respect he considered the creation of in-



vestor's rapid response working group as a key tool.

Highlighting the important role of the latest technologies for Armenia's future, the President introduced the presidential initiative ATOM (Advanced Tomorrow) on science and technology development in the country and talked about the possible partnership within the frames of this initiative.

French President Macron sends a letter of solidarity to PM Pashinyan, Offers emergency loan to Armenia



French President Emmanuel Macron has sent a letter to Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, voicing solidarity with the Armenian governments efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Today, France, like Armenia, is facing serious problems in the areas of health, economy and social security. The crisis must not force us to retreat. On the contrary, the epidemic should be used as a unique opportunity to work together to deal with the epidemic and its consequences," Macron said in his letter.

Macron expressed readiness to lend Armenia up to 80 million euros (\$90 million) in emergency funding designed to help it tackle the virus crisis and its severe economic fallout and stated that a third team

of French medics will fly to Yerevan later this week to help their Armenian colleagues struggling to cope with the deadly pandemic.

"In the coming days, France will again send a new team of volunteer doctors to Armenia, who will replace those who are already helping their Armenian counterparts in the fight against Covid-19," he said.

"This crisis is also a problem for the economies of our two countries. Thanks to the French Development Agency (AFD), which is already working in Armenia, France is ready to consider providing a loan of 80 million euros, which will partially satisfy the need for additional budget financing that your country is facing this year," Macron stated in the letter.

The Armenian government announced in late April plans to borrow more than \$500 million to cushion the impact of an unfolding recession resulting from the pandemic. The government subsequently amended its 2020 budget to take account of 150 billion drams (\$310 million) in coronavirus-related relief measures financed by it and a shortfall in tax revenues which is projected to total 170 billion drams this year.

In May, the International Monetary Fund disbursed a \$280 million emergency loan

page 1

At the bottom of the shield are five objects: a broken chain representing our freedom and independence; a sword, which stands for the power and strength of our nation; a bundle of wheat flower, representing the industrious nature of the Armenian people; a feather pen symbolizing the intellectual and cultural heritage of the Armenian people, and a tricolor ribbon – the flag of the Republic of Armenia.

The Armenian flag has three equal sized horizontal bands: the top stripe is red; the middle one blue and the bottom stripe is orange. The colors on the Armenia flag represent its people.

The official version of color definition is stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. It says, that red represents the Armenian Highland and people's struggle for survival, blue symbolizes the will of Armenian people to live under peaceful sky and orange stands for creative talent and hard-working nature of Armenians.

to the authorities in Yerevan. The authorities announced afterwards that they will receive a separate \$30 million IMF loan later this year.

The Armenian economy expanded robustly from 2017 through the first quarter of this year. It is now on course to contract by at least 2 percent in 2020.

FMs of Armenia, Artsakh discuss current stage of NK conflict settlement

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh Masis Mayilian met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan who is on a working visit to Stepanakert on July 4, the press service of the Foreign Ministry of Artsakh informs.

During the meeting, the sides touched upon a range of issues related to the current stage of the process of peaceful settlement of the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict. In particular, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan presented the results of the recent video conferences with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen and the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan.

In this context, the sides noted the importance of taking practical steps to reduce the risks and to maintain stability in the conflict zone, aimed at ensuring the irrevers-



ibility of the peaceful settlement process. The Foreign Ministers stressed the inadmissibility of the bellicose and provocative statements recently voiced by the Azerbaijani authorities at various levels, noting that such rhetoric jeopardizes the peace process and hinders the formation of an atmosphere of confidence.

At the same time, the need for the full-fledged participation of official Stepanakert

in the negotiations to increase the efficiency of the peace process was reiterated.

Then, the meeting was continued in an expanded format, with the participation of the senior staff members of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Artsakh and the delegation of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Armenia. The sides touched upon the process of implementation of the plan of consultations between the two Ministries.

They noted with satisfaction the high level and practical nature of cooperation between the Ministries. They also exchanged views on the prospects of expanding the international relations of Artsakh and its involvement in international processes, as well as on the coordinated steps in this direction.

Armenian, Azeri FM's trade accusations in fresh talks

(RFE/RL) - Armenia and Azerbaijan accused each other of hampering a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh during a fresh video conference of their foreign ministers and international mediators held on June 30.

Foreign Ministers Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Elmar Mammadyarov spoke with each other and the U.S., Russian and French mediators co-heading the OSCE Minsk Group for the second time in two months.

Mnatsakanyan was quoted by his press office as condemning Azerbaijani leaders' latest "bellicose and unconstructive" statements. He said that they "damage" international efforts to end the conflict.

Mnatsakanyan apparently referred to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's June 25 remarks made at a meeting with Azerbaijani army officers. Aliyev described Armenia's post-Soviet history as "shameful," saying that his country's arch-foe was for decades ruled by "criminals and thieves." He also said that the 2018 popular protests that brought Nikol Pashinyan to power were not a democratic revolution.

An Armenian Foreign Ministry spokes-



woman hit back at Aliyev, saying that he leads one of the world's most corrupt and repressive regimes which feels threatened by "democratic changes taking place in Armenia."

Mammadyarov was reported to say during the video conference that the recent "aggressive rhetoric" deplored by the mediators is the result of Armenia's provocative actions taken in the "occupied territories of Azerbaijan." Those include illegal "infrastructure changes" carried out there, he said in an apparent reference to the planned reconstruction of another road connecting Karabakh to Armenia.

According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, Mnatsakanyan stressed the importance of ensuring Karabakh residents' "free

and safe movements." This is an important element of Karabakh's "comprehensive security," he said.

In a joint statement on the talks, the Minsk Group co-chairs said they "noted with concern that recent provocative statements, inflammatory rhetoric, and possible steps intended to change the situation on the ground in tangible ways could undermine the settlement process."

"The Co-Chairs stressed that there is no military solution to the conflict," read the statement. "They urged the sides to take additional steps to strengthen the ceasefire and to prepare the populations for peace."

"The Co-Chairs and Foreign Ministers" agreed to hold another joint video conference in July and to meet in person as soon as possible," concluded the mediators.

Prime Minister Pashinyan criticized Aliyev in unusually strong terms as he chaired a meeting of Armenia's and Karabakh's top security officials on June 19. He said that Aliyev is sticking to "maximalist" demands instead of reciprocating his repeated calls for an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace deal that would satisfy all parties to the conflict.

Japan donates medical equipment to Armenia

Armenia has received a \$3.7 million grant from Japan to buy sophisticated medical equipment that could be used in its fight against the coronavirus.

An agreement on the release of the Japanese government grant was signed on June 30 by Armenian Finance Minister Atom Janjughazian and Japan's Ambassador to Armenia Jun Yamada.

The Armenian Finance Ministry said the money will be spent on the purchase of Japanese-made magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines and other medical equipment. It said some of that equipment will be installed in four



ambulance vehicles catering for residents of the country's remote communities.

"This project aims to assist Armenia in its fight against the COVID-19 epidemic by strengthening its mid- to long-term health-

care and medical system," read a statement released by the Japanese Embassy in Yerevan.

"I sincerely hope that the new equipment from Japan will contribute to significantly upgrading the capacity of healthcare and medical institutions in the country," it quoted Yamada as saying.

Health Minister Arsen Torosyan thanked the Japanese government for the donation, according to the statement.

Since the start of the coronavirus epidemic, Armenia has also received medical equipment and other supplies from the United States, the European Union, Russia and China.

French Armenian Jeanne Barseghian officially becomes the Mayor of Strasbourg



French Armenian Jeanne Barseghian officially became the first ecological mayor of Strasbourg on Saturday, declaring “the state of climatic emergency” for the city which she wants to make “the European capital of ecological, social and democratic transition,” AFP reports.

Jeanne Barseghian received the tricolor

scarf formalizing her tenure as the head of the City Hall of Strasbourg.

“It is with great emotion that I receive this scarf, the symbol of our Republic,” she reacted. “It is a great honor to represent all Strasbourg residents. It is the noblest and most beautiful of missions.”

In her first speech as Mayor of Stras-

bourg, Baghdasaryan pledged to address three major challenges: the ecological challenge, the social challenge and the democratic challenge.

“Our environment is sending us increasingly stronger and more frequent signals and there is no longer any question of looking away. It’s time to look at the world as it is and take strong, ambitious and collective actions,” said the 39-year-old lawyer after having obtained 53 votes in favor. Eleven councilors abstained from voting.

During the first sitting of the municipal council, Jeanne Barseghian presented a declaration of “climate emergency” for Strasbourg, as some cities like Paris or Barcelona have already done.

Moved to tears at the end of the speech while addressing her family present in the hemicycle of the municipal council, the new mayor of Strasbourg received a standing ovation from all the municipal councilors, including from the opposition.

All-party parliamentary group for Armenia relaunched in the United Kingdom



All-Party Parliamentary Group for Armenia
Annual General Meeting
1 July 2020



Tim Loughton
Chair



Andrew Rosindell
Vice Chair



James Gray
Vice Chair



Mark Pritchard
Vice Chair



Baroness Cox
Co Chair



Feryal Clark
Vice Chair



James Murray
Officer

Armenia’s Minister of Health Arsen Torosyan calls for conscious, voluntary lockdown, instead of imposed one. In a Facebook message, the Minister said:

“We all need to restrict our non-essential contacts, movements, visits, events, meetings.

We must stay at home as much as possible.

On weekends we should also stay at home, not go to parties, picnics with.

Group or even individual visits to various attractions should be stopped, now is not the time.

We should stop celebrating various occasions, such as the birth of a child, birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc., including in your own homes.

Participation in funeral events should be limited as much as possible, practically stopped. Condolences offered over phone in this epidemic situation should be considered more valuable.

In the evening we should also stay at home, avoid going out and communicating with neighbors. It’s simply necessary not to meet, not to communicate, stay away from each other, avoid drinking coffee together, etc.

Children, no matter how difficult it may be, need to be kept at home as long as possible. It’s necessary to think of other activities for the children so that they don’t go to play in the yard.

Do not visit your relatives, if there is no vital need, contact them remotely. That sacrifice is needed to save their lives.

Stop visiting cafes and restaurants, it is the only place where it is possible to be without a mask and infect each other. If you want to get food from that restaurant, order it and eat alone.

Don’t go out for walk in the evening. We must be able to withstand that temptation and comply with this important demand until the situation improves.

In all other cases, it’s necessary to wear a mask correctly, keep a distance of 1.5-2 m, and often disinfect the hands.

There is simply no other way out of this situation.”

Armenia-Kazakhstan agreement to promote competition in fuel market: government approves new decision



The Armenian Government approved on July 2 an agreement on trade and economic cooperation with Kazakhstan in the field of supply of oil products.

The signing of the agreement will promote mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries, create favorable conditions for the development of trade and economic relations, and encourage business activity. "The signing and ratification of this agreement will allow to import fuel from Kazakhstan on better terms, which means there will be some competition in our fuel market," Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan said. According to him, this will, in turn, affect the petroleum market in

Armenia.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan also attached importance to the signing of the agreement. "Although we say that after 2018 monopolies, particularly in the oil market, have reduced, they have not been fully eliminated, and we have much to do to protect the rights of consumers and encourage competition. Our political commitment is not to allow any artificial monopoly in Armenia, because it primarily affects the citizens and consumers.

"People should have the opportunity to buy quality goods at the best possible price," he said.

EU, Sweden, Lithuania and Armenia partner for Enhancing Civil Protection in Armenia

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the EU Delegation to Armenia, the Armenian Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Embassy of Sweden to Armenia and the Embassy of Lithuania to Armenia within the framework of the Twinning project "Enhancing Civil Protection in Armenia" with €1 million budget. The objectives of the project are strengthening of the disaster risk management on institutional level including through supporting clear distribution and coordination of the roles of relevant structures and organisations; as well as institutional and administrative capacity for carrying out the roles;



ongoing expansion of international cooperation, supporting the revision and design of national laws, regulations and quality standards to those of international best

practice in line with EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), as well as improving Disaster Risk Reduction awareness system and its application.

During the signing ceremony with participation of EU Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, Minister of Emergency Situations Feliks Tso-lakyan, Ambassador of Lithuania Inga Stanytė-Toločkienė, Charge d' affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Sweden Birger Karlsson, the EU Ambassador emphasized the momentum of this project, as health security, disaster risk management, civil protection areas are highly interlinked.

Armenia's Central Bank Sees Economy Contracting 4% In 2020

(Reuters) - Armenia's economy will contract by 4 percent in 2020 due to the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic, but is expected to recover and grow 5.5 percent next year, Martin Galstyan, the country's Central Bank head, said on June 30. The Central Bank had previously forecast a contraction of 0.7 percent this year after growth of 7.6 percent in 2019. The worst-affected sectors of the economy are services

and construction as well as international tourism, Galstyan said while presenting the bank's quarterly inflation report.

Inflation is expected to be around 1.9 percent in 2020. Armenia's consumer price index declined 0.1 percent in May month-on-month, but rose 1.2 percent year-on-year. In the report, the bank said the amount of private remittances would decline by 22-25 percent this year due to the drop in oil prices

in Russia, Armenia's main trade partner, and Moscow's ban on migrant workers during the pandemic.

However, it said that would not have a significant impact on GDP.

The Central Bank cut its key refinancing rate to 4.5 percent from 5 percent last month, citing weakening external and internal demand as well as a slow pace of recovery.

US helps Armenia combat corruption with \$1 million in assistance



On June 23, an online event launched the \$1 million, three-year “Technical Assistance to the Audit Chamber of the Republic of Armenia” collaborative activity. The United States Government, through USAID, signed an inter-agency agreement with the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Center for Audit Excellence to provide capacity building, training, and consultancy services to the Audit Chamber, the Supreme Audit Institution of Armenia.

Through this activity, the GAO will also help implement the requirements of the 2018 Republic of Armenia law related to the Audit Chamber, directing them to adhere and adopt international audit standards. The Comptroller General of the United States and Head of the GAO Gene Dodaro and USAID Chief Financial Officer Reginald Mitchell who had planned to travel to Armenia for the launch prior to the COVID-19 crisis, instead vir-

tually joined the Chair of Armenia’s Audit Chamber Levon Yolyan, U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Lynne Tracy and USAID/Armenia Mission Director Deborah Grieser to celebrate the launch.

“Today marks another significant milestone for the Audit Chamber. We now look forward to the successful partnership to help the Audit Chamber address some of the key issues identified and make improvements to strengthen its institutional policies and other procedures.” said Mr. Dodaro.

This is USAID/Armenia’s second agreement with the GAO Center for Audit Ex-

cellence. Under the previous agreement, the GAO conducted a needs assessment at the Audit Chamber to evaluate its strengths, weaknesses and needs. This activity builds

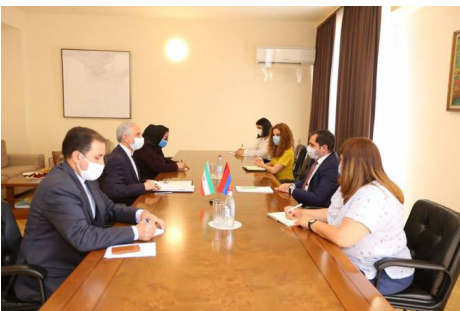
on the recommendations from the needs assessment and is in line with the Armenian government’s public financial management reform strategy. “The role of the Audit Chamber is crucial in terms of strengthening the accountability, transparency and integrity of government institutions. This new activity is part of overall U.S. government support for the reforms initiated by the Armenian Government and its efforts to combat corruption. This activity will be implemented by the GAO, which is considered to be the “golden standard” for audit institutions around the world,” said Ambassador Tracy.



The Audit Chamber plays an important oversight role in strengthening the accountability, transparency and integrity of government and public entities in the country, as well as influencing citizens’ confidence in public institutions and ensuring that public resources are used in ways that reduce corruption risks, maximize value for money, and deliver results.

“As the head of the Audit Chamber, I would like to thank our partners for their valuable support in developing the Audit Chamber, especially in the midst of the pandemic,” said Mr. Yolyan. “This event is the result of the joint effort. We will try to get the most out of this partnership to be a more impactful institution.”

Armenian minister, new Ambassador of Iran discuss prospects of joint projects



Minister of territorial administration and infrastructures Suren Papikyan received on July 2 new Ambassador of Iran to Armenia Abbas Badakhshan Zohouri, the ministry

told Armenpress.

Congratulating the Ambassador on appointment, the Armenian minister expressed confidence that Mr. Zohouri’s activity will contribute to the expansion and deepening of the Armenian-Iranian relations. The minister said the existing high level of mutual partnership is demonstrated especially in the joint infrastructure development programs between the two countries.

The Iranian Ambassador thanked the Armenian minister for the welcome and in

turn reaffirmed the readiness of the Iranian side to give a new quality to the bilateral multi-sectoral cooperation and fully use the existing potential in the economic relations.

At the meeting the sides discussed the implementation prospects of joint programs in the regional partnership, transportation and energy infrastructure sectors. They also exchanged views on the actions to be taken to respond to the challenges of the novel coronavirus pandemic and overcome the economic crisis.

Ten thousand COVID-19 tests reach Armenia thanks to EU and WHO

A shipment of 10 000 COVID-19 tests, procured by WHO with the financial support of the European Union (EU), arrived in Yerevan, helping boost Armenia's response to the pandemic.

The tests, obtained at the behest of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, will allow wider testing for COVID-19 across the country free of charge, reflecting WHO recommendations to test all suspected COVID-19 cases to detect the disease in a timely manner and control its spread.

The tests are of a type included in WHO's list of quality-assured supplies and are capable of producing accurate results in just 75 minutes. This short processing time saves healthcare workers' time and energy, helps decrease the probability of human error and allows a larger number of tests to be carried out per day.

Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Armenia, Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, WHO Representative in Arme-



nia, Egor Zaitsev, RA Deputy Minister of Health, Lena Nanushyan, and RA Deputy Foreign Minister, Avet Adonts, were at the MoH National Centre of Disease Control to receive the shipment of tests.

The EU Ambassador and WHO Representative handed over the tests to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia as part of a larger assistance package to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the country. The tests will be provided to the national laboratory, which covers most COVID-19 tests in Yerevan and regions of Armenia.

The EU and the WHO Regional Office for Europe have been actively supporting Armenia in its battle against the virus since the start of the COVID-19 crisis. On 20 June, a group of experts co-funded by WHO and the EU arrived in Armenia to help scale up the response in the country.

The donation of the tests is part of the EU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which currently affects more than 188 countries and territories. On 27 March 2020,

the EU announced an assistance package of €30 million to help prevent, detect and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in six countries of eastern Europe and the Caucasus, including Armenia.

The funds initially will be used to meet immediate emergency needs, such as procuring critical supplies for health-care workers, frontline responders and patients. In the longer term, the assistance will go towards strengthening the country's capacity to respond to public health emergencies.

UN Security Council adopts resolution calling for global ceasefire

The UN Security Council on July 1 unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a halt to conflicts to facilitate the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, after more than three months of painstaking negotiations.

The resolution, drafted by France and Tunisia, calls for "an immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations" on the Security Council's agenda.

It is the Security Council's first statement on the pandemic and its first real action since the outbreak started.

The 15-member peace and security body voiced its support for efforts by Secretary-General António Guterres – who first appealed for a global ceasefire on 23



March – towards that goal.

The two-page resolution was adopted 111 days after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic.

Through the resolution, the Council called upon all parties to armed conflicts to im-

mediately engage in a "durable humanitarian pause" of at least 90 days, to enable the safe, unhindered and sustained delivery of lifesaving aid.

It affirmed, however, that no ceasefire would apply for ongoing military operations against the extremist group ISIL, otherwise known as Da'esh, Al Qaeda, the Al Nusra Front and other Council-designated terrorist groups.

It requested the Secretary-General to instruct the United Nations' 13 peacekeeping missions to support host country efforts to contain the coronavirus, and to provide updates on UN efforts to address the pandemic in conflict zones and humanitarian crisis areas.

...The Company celebrates its 15 years jubilee:

➔ page 1

The achievements of the years are especially tangible in the field of innovative technologies. Viva-MTS was the first in Armenia to launch both the third generation (3G) nationwide network and the fourth generation (4G) network in 2010, including Armenia in the top ten countries with 4G network. This was a significant step for positioning the country on the worldwide technological map, thus, strengthening and enhancing the country's image internationally. As a leader in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT), Viva-MTS also implements programs aimed at the development of the ICT sector, including the development of startup companies in Armenia.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a special place in Viva-MTS mission.

Over the past 15 years, the Company has invested about 29 billion drams in various areas of public life. Within the framework of the CSR programs, the Company also uses innovative solutions, particularly, installing modern and cost-effective lighting and heating systems that are powered by alternative energy in regions, including borderland communities.

Viva-MTS is unique in that it is a **modern technology** company integrating national mentality. In the Facebook video message (<https://m.facebook.com/MTSArmenia>), Ralph Yirikian presented the key values that allowed the Company to set a solid foundation and ensure its further development.

"The Viva-MTS network has been built from scratch, and that's why our team is so strong and friendly. We understand each other, and our collective willpower is very strong. A strong team is the whole of strong individuals, professionals who have created and developed value from scratch – and it is our greatest value. We are a family. We care for each other; we rejoice together; we grieve together; we forgive each other and ask for forgiveness, as it happens in any strong family. We got stronger together; we have learned from each other; we are people who have come a long path together by supporting each other and getting to know each other. And we are strong together with our dearest customers," Mr. Yirikian said.

Entering the market in 2005, Viva-MTS radically changed the situation that had existed for years: **monopoly in the field**

of mobile communications in Armenia disappeared and the network became fully available. A healthy competitive environment was ensured and the subscriber was given freedom of choice. Postpaid and prepaid cards were issued, as well as corporate solutions were provided for large, medium and small enterprises. People got the opportunity to communicate freely at affordable prices. Base transceiver stations have been set up in the most remote and sparsely populated villages, in areas with difficult terrain, with this, the Company often ignored the business principle of return on investment.

"We have been VivaCell, we have become Viva-MTS. The core is Viva, the value created by Armenians, which has an Ar-

menian identity, an Armenian mentality 15-year-old youngster we call Viva-MTS," Ralph Yirikian said.

The achievements of Viva-MTS are numerous in the areas of technology, innovations, as well as in terms of a number of ISO international standards utilized in various fields. The main achievements of the Company in various fields, as per the last years, are presented in the YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95z2Y4CSX-So&feature=youtu.be>).

"Having well-established brands is extremely important in the 21st century. Along with the achievements of culture and art, the civilized world today appreciates the economic value created by nations, and Viva-MTS is truly one of those values," Mr Ralph C. Yirikian concluded.

Viva-MTS has also reached new heights in the field of business management.

By breaking traditional management stereotypes and relying on rich global experience, the Company is creating a new, unique Armenian model of productivity culture.

Viva-MTS, which maintains about 59% of the mobile communication market in the face of fierce competition, has a unique model of strategic development. The Company is currently in the process of a digital transformation from a telecommunications operator to a company offering digital services, the scope of which is much more than just telecommunications services. It is in line with global trends, as well as the growing needs and expectations of

customers.

Accordingly, today Viva-MTS offers a number of entertainment and educational mobile applications, e-wallet, mobile TV, cloud services, useful solutions for effective business and finance management, etc.

Dedicated to the anniversary, the Company was livestream an exclusive gala concert on its Facebook page by popular Armenian performers - "NEMRA", Anushik Alaverdyan, Sofi Mkheyanyan, Aram MP3, "Project LA", "Reincarnation", Garik and Sona. The event was streamed on July 1, at 19:00 on Viva-MTS official Facebook page at <fb.com/MTSArmenia/>.



menian identity, an Armenian mentality and an Armenian spirit. Viva-MTS is an established structure, an embodiment of the feelings, of willpower, energy and creative thinking of a hard-working Armenian," said the Founding General Manager of the Company.

Today Viva-MTS has more than 2 million subscribers.

According to Mr Yirikian, the Company is still very young and very promising. The General Manager noted the great contribution of the subscribers to the Company's success. *"Dear subscribers, we are thankful to you for our Company's success. Your attitude - loyalty and trust, sympathy and criticism, appreciation and insistence - have helped us become what we are today. The Armenian spirit has contributed to the establishment and development of this*

Artsakh FM sends thank-you letters to a group of members of the U.S. Congress

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh Masis Mayilian sent thank-you letters to a group of members of the U.S. Congress. The Foreign Minister noted with gratitude that in continuation of the meetings held in Washington in October 2019 and the assurances, the members of Congress exert consistent efforts to ensure a continued humanitarian assistance by the United States to the post-war rehabilitation of the Republic of Artsakh. “Throughout the past decades, the assistance helped address various urgent humanitarian needs, and consequences of the devastating aggression by Azerbaijan. In particular, the American support of the



HALO Trust’s effective and efficient activities in war-affected areas allowed the international humanitarian mine-clearance organization to neutralize tens of thousands of landmines and other deadly remnants of the aggression”, Masis Mayilian noted. The Foreign Minister expressed hope that

the ongoing and enhanced humanitarian assistance from the United States to the Republic of Artsakh would help both countries to continue enforcing regional stability and security, as well as to provide basic humanitarian needs to the citizens of the Republic of Artsakh. Masis Mayilian also congratulated the members of Congress on the USA Independence Day, noting that throughout its independent history, the United States has been at the forefront of defending the values of freedom and democracy, which inspired many nations across the globe, including the Republic of Artsakh, to rise and struggle for their inalienable rights and liberties.

Armenian Anouch Toranian elected Deputy Mayor of Paris

Armenian Anouch Toranian has been elected Deputy Mayor of Paris. She will be in charge of community life, citizen participation and public debate

Anouch Toranian thus becomes the first elected representative of Armenian descent to a post of this level of responsibility in the French capital.

Born in Paris in 1991, Anouch Toranian holds Master’s degree in Public Law and International Relations from the Panthéon-Assas University and a Master’s in Public Administration from the Paris Institute of Political Studies. She began her professional career in various public administrations and at the Ministry



of Foreign Affairs.

In 2018 she was appointed director of the French branch of the Armenian general Benevolent Union (AGBU).

The election comes in the wake of the campaign for the recent municipal election, where she was head of Anne Hidalgo’s list

in the 15th arrondissement.

Anne Hidalgo won re-election in the French capital on June 28.

Hidalgo, Mayor since 2014, beat conservative candidate Rachida Dati in France’s municipal elections, winning 50.2% of the ballot compared to Dati’s 32%. Agnes Buzyn trailed in with just 16%.

She was backed by the Europe Ecology – The Greens party (EELV), which gained strong influence nationwide in Sunday’s voting.

French Armenian Jeanne Barseghian was elected Mayor of Strasbourg. (read on page 13)

Plan for Launching Diaspora Armenian Parliament Through HyeID Structure



Glendale, CA – Several years ago a small group of committed Armenians worldwide, began planning the establishment of a democratically-elected Diaspora Armenian Parliament (DAP). The launch of this groundbreaking initiative shall serve to integrate all Diaspora Armenians in a unified structure. Once this goal is accomplished, the leadership of the Diaspora Armenian Parliament, and the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh, elected by their respective constituencies, can claim for the first time that they represent all Armenians worldwide and make collective decisions on behalf of the entire nation.

This has been the elusive dream of all Armenians for several decades, if not centuries. Yet, given the dispersed nature of the Diaspora, it has been difficult to bring this cherished dream to reality.

The initiating group has planned a two-step process for the establishment of the Diaspora Armenian Parliament:

First Step – HyeID

The HyeID non-profit organization, already formed in California, will expand to Armenian communities throughout the world, including Armenians living in the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh.

The HyeID organization has three objectives:

a) Offer an identification HyeID card to all Armenians around the globe, including Armenia and Artsakh, so they could benefit from discounts provided to them through their purchases of products and services, such as airlines, hotels, restaurants, shops and many more. The discount benefits three parties: the HyeID cardholder, the HyeID non-profit organization (to finance the Diaspora Armenian Parliament and its Pan Armenian humanitarian projects), and the cardholder's affiliated or preferred organization.

b) The information about the cardholders will form a worldwide Armenian database which shall enable unprecedented collaboration among those involved in science, technology, business, culture and national security.

c) Diaspora HyeID cardholders are considered registered voters for the eventual formation of the Diaspora Armenian Parliament. HyeID cardholders will vote for their local representatives to form a democratically-elected Diaspora Armenian Parliament which will represent all Armenians living outside of Armenia and Artsakh.

In summary the benefits of HyeID are:

- 1) Registration to vote for the future DAP;
- 2) Networking among cardholders;
- 3) Elections of DAP's Diaspora representatives;
- 4) Creation of HyeID discount network;
- 5) Self-funding of DAP through the discount network;
- 6) Collective economic bargaining power.

Second Step – Diaspora Armenian Parliament (DAP)

DAP is formed through local elections held in each geographic region. The regions are created by having an equal number of Diaspora HyeID cardholders eligible for voting, based on the democratic principle of one person one vote. All HyeID cardholders, in the Diaspora, who are 18 or older can elect or be elected to DAP.

The benefits of DAP are:

- 1) Awaken the Diaspora's silent majority;
- 2) Create a synergy with all existing Armenian organizations;
- 3) Provide the Diaspora with a representative and collective voice and the ability to participate in Pan Armenian issues;
- 4) Resolve local Armenian community needs;
- 5) Form an effective political clout;
- 6) Preserve and advance Armenian national identity;
- 7) Coordinate and advance the national objectives of the Diaspora, Armenia and Artsakh;
- 8) Organize repatriation to the homeland.

"The Diaspora Armenian Parliament will not compete with any of the existing Armenian organizations, but will complement their efforts, giving Armenians a greater strength to resolve their litany of challenges," stated the HyeID board members.

The HyeID board members are: Harut Sassounian of Glendale, California (Chairman), Hagop Nazarian of Rancho Palos Verdes, California (Vice Chairman), Levon Thorose of Westchester, California (Vice Chairmen), Razmig D. Garakhanian of Glendale, California (Secretary), Thomas Alexanian of Glendale, California (Treasurer), Hovel Chenorhokian of Paris, France (Board Member), Tigran Harutunyan of Yerevan, Armenia (Board Member), John E. Shirajian of Glendale, California (Board Member), Aram Ter-Martirosyan of Glendale, California (Board Member), Mike Baronian of Tofen, Switzerland (Board Member), and Levon Beklaryan of Moscow, Russia (Board Member).

The HyeID Board of Directors "call on all Armenians worldwide to become part of this ground breaking initiative and fulfill the much awaited realization of a dream of Diaspora Armenians to have a democratically-elected unified and self-sufficient structure."

Website: <https://www.HyeID.org>

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“Tashir” Charitable Foundation of Karapetyan Family Helps Native Armenia in Fighting Covid19

Compiled by Gourgen James Khazhakian,

Chief Correspondent,
Holder of the title “Honored Journalist of the Republic of Armenia”

The Highlights has published in its 17 May 2017 issue a story entitled *“Some Thoughts on the REAL Charity Spoken Aloud...”*, - on a touching action done by *Tatevik Samvelovna Karapetyan*, daughter to the prominent Russian Armenian businessman and philanthropist *Samvel Sarkisovich Karapetyan*, the Founding President of the “Tashir” Group of Companies and of the same name Charitable Foundation who (Mrs Karapetyan) on 24 April of 2017 that is her birthday gifted residential apartments to eight families in the City of Gyumri (fmr Leninakan, the native city for the ancestors of this author) who have been living in temporary, unsafe and absolutely uncomfortable wagon-houses (“domiks”) after disastrous Spitak quake’1988.

And now, *The Highlights* considers its professional as well as moral obligation to publish the following, - to refute some of recent the so-called publications of a private nature regarding the assistance of the “Tashir” Charity to Homeland Armenia in its fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

“Tashir” Foundation provided more than 300 thousand USD - worth assistance to the ambulance staff of Armenia

On 21 June, the “Tashir” Charitable Foundation congratulated the doctors on the Day of the Medical Worker and announced transfer of cash rewards to doctors, paramedics and drivers of the state ambulance services of Armenia. In total, 1346 ambulance employees received financial support for a total of 150 million drams (more than 300 thousand US dollars), according to the official website of the Foundation.

This initiative, like the previous ones aimed at supporting the fight with the coronavirus pandemic in Armenia, is a personal initiative of *Samvel Sarkisovich Karapetyan*, the Founding President of the “Tashir” Group of Companies and the same name Foundation.

“Helping people in difficult periods is our priority. We will always do everything as much as we can to support physicians and protect people’s health and life in such difficult situations,” stressed a well-known in Russia and around the world entrepreneur and philanthropist.

It is noted that the “Tashir” Foundation joined in assistance at all the levels immediately after receiving information on the spread of coronavirus infection in the Armenia. From the very first days, support was received not only by medical institutions and various governmental funds to combat the virus, but also by



doctors themselves as well as the most vulnerable segments of the population and organizations, in particular, the elderly houses, boarding houses and others. Already in early March, 50 million drams (more than 100 thousand USD) was sent to the “Nork” Infectious Diseases Hospital in Yerevan, - to encourage staff and equip the Hospital with necessary medical facility, and 50 million AMD - to a special government account opened to fight coronavirus.

Prior to this, on 16 March, the “Tashir” Foundation, together with the Electric Networks of Armenia Company (owned by “Tashir” Group of Companies) transferred the necessary protective equipment (face masks, gloves, disinfectants, thermometers, etc.) to the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia, the Red Cross Representative Office in Armenia, the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the City Hall of Echmiadzin, boarding houses No. 1 and “Nork” in Yerevan, those of Gyumri and Vardenis as well as the “Vandzor House for the Elderly” Foundation. Later in April, the Foundation sent additional funds: 50 million AMD to the “Hayastan” All-Armenian Fund. Part of the funds was used to fight coronavirus, the rest was to finance the transportation of the Armenian citizens from Russia who, due to borders’ being closed, could not get to their homeland timely.

At the same time, a significant part of the citizens of Armenia were forced to live – in the days as well as nights at Moscow airports, - for several weeks. To solve this problem, “Tashir” organized the necessary number of charter flights to Armenia from March to June of this year. Well, it seems appropriate to recall here, especially to the authors of the recent “opuses” mentioned above that the “Tashir” Foundation has been implementing and supporting socially significant health programs in Armenia for many years.

Over 20 years of activity, the Foundation has realized a big number of projects in this area, - social facilities have been built including medical and educational institutions, maternity hospitals and rehabilitation centers. So, earlier, in 2013, the “Tashir” Group of Companies built a unique medical center in the capital of the Artsakh Republic (fmr NKR) able to provide high-tech medical care to the population at the world level. The Medical Center having area of about 10

thousand sq.meters was built in the shortest time and equipped with advanced medical-diagnostic, surgical and reanimation equipment of new generation. The Clinic has no analogues in the entire South Caucasus region, also received two modern resuscitation vehicles, the first cars in the Republic of a similar level allowing the use of the most advanced standards for emergency treatment. Today, the Clinic remains one of the most upscale in the Region. Earlier, in 2012, the “Tashir” Charitable Foundation provided financial support to the “Ognem” (“I Will Help” in Armenian) Foundation for treatment of children fighting leukemia.

In 2017, “Tashir” supported opening of a modern rehab center for wounded soldiers and military invalids in Yerevan (“The Soldier’ House”). Many other health initiatives in the Republic continue to receive support from “Tashir”.

“Tashir” Foundation purchased medical and other goods for the cultural workers

In May’2020 the “Tashir” Charitable Foundation, jointly with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia and in cooperation with creative unions of composers, artists, theater workers, writers and cinematographers of Armenia initiated a charity event under the motto “Be Healthy, Stay Home! “ As a part of this charity action, honored cultural figures of the older generation were called upon to maintain a regime of self-isolation.

In order to prevent elderly people from endangering themselves and leaving their homes, the “Tashir” Charity allocated funds for the purchase of necessary medical and food products that were delivered by volunteers. As part of this project, 143 artists and cultural workers received both food and essential medical supplies: masks, disinfectants, gloves.

“The restrictions caused by the spread of coronavirus contain not only physical, but also moral and psychological risks and threats. Home quarantine, lack of communication can have serious consequences - especially for the psychology of the elderly, people who are single and have no children. Our cultural and art figures of the older generation need communication,” said *Ara Khzmalyan*, Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports. And, finally, we remind once again that the “Tashir” Charitable Foundation has already provided assistance to the population of Armenia.

So, the funds to fight coronavirus pandemic were allocated to the Government of Armenia, the “Nork” Infectious Disease Hospital and the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund.

Opera News: the Constitution Day Celebrated

By Gourgen James Khazhakian,
Chief Correspondent

In the evening of 5 July an online concert dedicated to the Constitution Day of the Republic of Armenia was streamed at the official FB page of the A.I. Spendi-



aryan Natl Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre of Armenia.

On this occasion General and Artistic Director of the Theatre, Honored Artist of the Russian Federation Maestro **Constantine G. Orbelian** addressed the audience with the following:

"Dear friends,

I warmly congratulate you for the Constitution Day!

Today's mystery and meaning, role and significance are of key importance to our people. The Constitution is a powerful stimulus for the development of a society that shares democratic values and is in permanent progress.

It is symbolic that this unique holiday is also associated with the Day of the State Symbols. The world is going through difficult times today, and our country is no exception, and we hope that we will soon overcome this process full of trials of the epidemic and move on to our normal work.

Let me pass congratulations from the big creative family of our Theater for this day. Dear audience, we really miss you so much and look forward to meeting you with the great impatience. On this holiday, one more time we must wish exclusively peace, success and achievement in our Homeland. Cordially yours, Constantine Orbelian"

The soloists were:

MAGDA MKRTCHYAN /Honored Artist of RA/, soprano
SOFYA SAYADYAN /soprano/
ARTSVIK DEMURCHYAN /soprano/
DIANA HARUTYUNYAN /soprano/
NARINE ANANIKYAN /mezzo-soprano/
HOVHANNES ANDREASYAN /tenor/
GRIGOR ABRAHAMYAN /tenor/
ASHOT GHANTARJYAN /baritone/
HOVHANNES NERSESYAN /bass/
POGHOS BEAZBEKYAN /bass/

Theatre's pianists:
Olga Khachikyan /Honored Artist of RA/
Zaruhi Topchyan
Lyudmila Khorozyan
Yelena Vardazaryan
Vasily Rolich

Musical director of the concert:
Mkrtich Babajanyan



According to the Theater Deputy Artistic Director **Mkrtich Babajanyan**, there are two more projects they are preparing to broadcast until the end of July. This is a big Gala Concert with the participation of the best soloists and ballet. As he said, "Of course we follow what is happening in the opera world in terms of the limitations that theaters are experiencing and try to adopt the best of this experience. Unfortunately, it is not yet possible to include the orchestra and choir in the programs, and most likely this will continue for a long time.

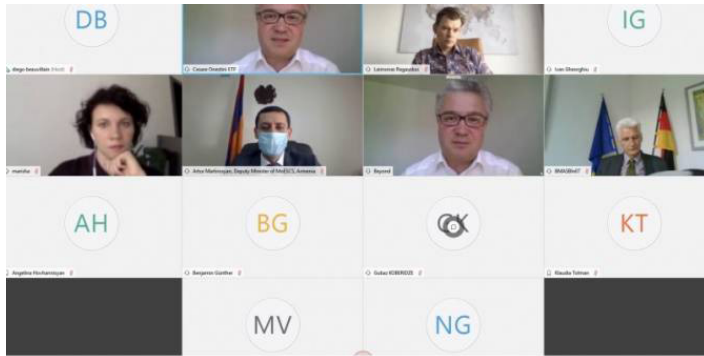
We've decided to prepare performances and opera demos in concert version, in an short version, and we are also preparing a draft of performances on venues outside the opera, online performances, showing the small composition of the orchestra, ballet and soloists. Our Theater is one of the leading troupes optimally working under these conditions..." According to **Levon Javadyan**, Director of the Young Artists Opera Program, the number of views of their performances exceeded 300,000 per month. This indicator, in his opinion, is a leading one among all creative groups in Armenia. "Besides our program FB page, our records are posted on Facebook pages of the largest music communities and opera lovers. And some of our young singers have already received invitations from opera agencies", Javadyan says. And they appealed to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports with two new grant applications yet in May. The first one, - in cooperation with 4 museums, is to conduct online concerts in 3D mode where, in addition to their performance, the viewer will have an opportunity to get acquainted with the exposition of those museums. And the second one is educational, - a cycle of 8 programs about opera in which they will talk about the history of opera, opera professions, and where young and promising beginner artists will be presented. "So we are waiting for the support from the Ministry", Program Director noted. And... "We have been conducting rehearsals since the beginning of June in compliance with all the anti-epidemic requirements and norms. Our youth is actively working and is in great shape hoping for an early meeting with their beloved audience..."

Photos by Tigran Arakelyan

CONDOLENCE

*The Highlights staff expresses its sincere condolences to Mrs **Karineh Kirakosian**, Deputy Director of the Opera and Ballet Theater on the timeless passing away of her beloved uncle, prominent scientist and educator, fmr Rector of the Armenian State University of Economics, Dr of Science, Professor **Grigor Kirakosian**.*

Armenia participates in Eastern Partnership Youth Engagement online summit



Armenia participated in the Eastern Partnership Youth Engagement online summit from July 2 to 3, the ministry of education, science, culture and sport told Noyan Tapan.

Around 400-450 active, critical and responsible youth leaders and youth workers had a unique opportunity to hold a dialogue amongst themselves and with EU and EaP policy makers on achievements

and challenges in the youth field in the European Union and its Eastern Neighbourhood region. Participants shared good practices and experiences in the field of youth work and youth policy in both the EU and Eastern Partnership countries.

Armenia's deputy minister of education, science, culture and sport Artur Martirosyan participated in the summit and delivered remarks, talking about the issue of employment of the youth in Armenia, presenting the ongoing and upcoming programs and actions by the state aimed at promoting professional education, strengthening education-labor market ties, etc. In his speech the deputy minister also thanked the European Union for the assistance provided to Armenia in the fields of education and youth.

MP Tony Zappia joins Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks in calling for Australian recognition of genocides

Federal Member for Makin, Tony Zappia has added his voice of support for the Joint Justice Initiative, which was established to promote Australian recognition of the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Genocides.

The February 2020 launch of the Joint Justice Initiative at Australia's Parliament House featured the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-AU), Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA) and Australian Hellenic Council (AHC), which declares Australia's recognition of the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Genocides as a priority on behalf of their communities.

Zappia, who was born in Italy and has represented his South Australian electorate in Federal Parliament since 2007, is a long-standing supporter of Armenian Genocide recognition and spoke on the matter most recently during a parliamentary debate in December 2018.

"(The) recognition of atrocities will bring a sense of closure and solace to survivors and family descendants. It will also send



a message to the world that such acts of horrific cruelty to others are not acceptable and, if perpetrated, those responsible will ultimately be held to account," Zappia said during the 2018 House of Representatives debate, which honored the 70th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-AU) Executive Director, Haig Kayserian said: "Mr. Tony Zappia has continues his long-standing support on the issue for justice for the 1915 Genocide by signing the Joint Justice Initiative affirmation. We thank him for this support and are fortunate he will continue this journey

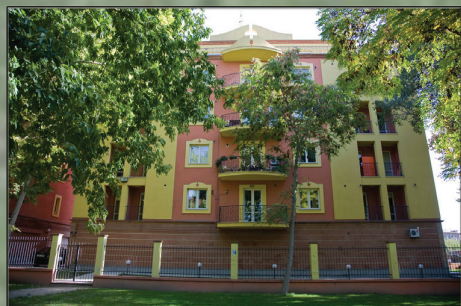
towards national recognition, hand-in-hand with our three communities."

The Joint Justice Initiative has so far announced the support of Zappia, Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, Senator Hollie Hughes, Senator Rex Patrick, Mike Freeland MP, Senator Eric Abetz, Senator Larissa Waters, Senator Pat Dodson, Jason Falinski MP, Josh Burns MP, John Alexander MP, Senator Andrew Bragg and Bob Katter MP, with a promise of more announcements to come.

On 25th February 2020, over 100 Federal Australian parliamentarians, diplomats, departmental officials, political staffers, academics, media and community leaders were treated to cultural performances, food, wine and brandy, as well as the historic signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, which affirmed that the signatory public affairs representatives of the three communities were jointly committed to seeing Australia recognize the Turkish-committed Genocide against the Armenian, Greek and Assyrian citizens of the Ottoman Empire during World War I.

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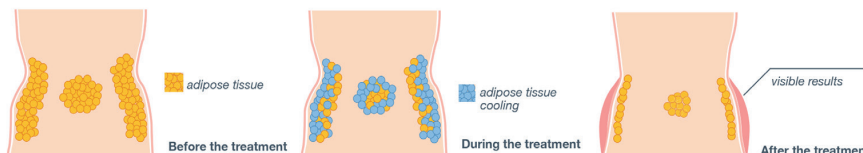
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The publisher: NT Holding LTD
Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող՝
ԼՏ Հոլդինգ ՍՊԸ

Տպված՝ 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 ARAKELYAN

Director of the weekly:

MARINA HARUTYUNYAN

Chief Correspondent: **GOURGEN KHAZHAKIAN**

Computer Design: **Ashot Khalapyan**

Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ.Հարությունյան

ISSN 1829-0604

Գրանցման վկայականի համար՝

03U898368, տրված՝ 11.01.2013թ.

Registration certificate and the date:

273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

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