

## Armenia celebrates 29th anniversary of Independence



The Third Republic of Armenia is celebrating its 29th anniversary of Independence. 29 years ago, the Armenian people said its decisive “yes” through a referendum to declare independence. 99,5% of voters voted in favor of Armenia being a democratic independent state outside the USSR. Two days later, on September 23rd, the Supreme Council declared Armenia an independent, sovereign republic. The declaration of the newly independent Armenia gave the start of the Third Republic of Armenia’s history. September 21st is a day of national pride. The centuries-old dream of the Armenian people of having an independent country is reality for already 29 years. On the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Armenia, the RA Air Force made a festive flight in the skies of Yerevan. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan watched the flight from the hill of Victory Park. The Premier laid flowers at the Eternal Flame in the park.

<b>Donald Trump congratulates Armenia’s PM on Independence Day</b>	<b>Armenia toughens financial disclosure requirements for officials</b>	<b>Warsaw stock exchange intends to take over the Armenia securities exchange</b>	<b>Armenian Embassy in Israel Inaugurated</b>
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## Donald Trump congratulates Armenia's PM on Independence Day



of Republic of Armenia's independence, the PM's Office told Noyan Tapan.

"Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on September 21 - the Independence Day of your country.

Over the past 29 years of Armenia's independence, the United States has been standing by the Armenian people and supported your efforts to build a modern democracy and

ensure economic development. We are prepared to continue cooperating in the areas of mutual interest, including the expan-

sion of bilateral trade and investment exchanges, the furtherance of the rule of law, regional stability, and the strengthening of your country's sovereignty.

Today's challenges reaffirm the importance of our partnership. The Armenian and American peoples boast strong and enduring ties, be it in the face of a new global pandemic or in the side-by-side international peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan or Kosovo.

On this special day, we wish you all the best and look forward to strengthening our friendship over the coming year," the U.S. President said in his congratulatory message.

U.S. President Donald Trump has sent a congratulatory message to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on the 29th anniversary

## Russia's Putin congratulates Armenia's Pashinyan and Sarkissian on Independence Day

On the 29th anniversary of Armenia's independence, President of Russia Vladimir Putin offered congratulations to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, the Armenian PM's Office told Noyan Tapan.

The message reads, in part:

"Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Please accept my sincere congratulations on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Armenia.

Russian values its friendly, allied relations with Armenia. I am confident that the constructive dialogue, the multifaceted bilateral cooperation, and the ongoing interaction in the frame of integration processes within the Eurasian space will continue to develop successfully. It is indeed in the best



interest of our two nations as it goes in tune with our efforts to ensure regional security and stability.

Dear Nikol Vovayevich, I wish you good health and every success, as well as peace and prosperity - to all citizens of Armenia."

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The Russian leader also congratulated Armenian President Armen Sarkissian on the Independence Day.

"The relations of our countries are based on the traditions of friendship and mutual respect. The further development of the allied relations and the multilateral cooperation undoubtedly is within the long-term interests of our brotherly peoples and will contribute to the strengthening of peace, stability and security in the region.

I sincerely wish you good health and success, and to the good people of Armenia - welfare and prosperity", reads Putin's congratulatory letter.

## PM Pashinyan, Eduardo Eurnekian discuss investment programs

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on September 14 hosted National Hero of Armenia, Argentinean entrepreneur of Armenian origin, philanthropist Eduardo Eurnekian.

Greeting Mr. Eurnekian, the Prime Minister noted, "Dear Mr. Eurnekian, it is a pleasure to see you in Armenia. We had a telephone conversation, during which we discussed our ongoing cooperation and the possibility of implementing new investment programs in Armenia. I am happy that you are enthusiastic about the possibility of investing in Armenia amid the coronavirus pandemic. Your previous projects were successfully implemented, which is encouraging indeed. I am confident that our cooperation will bring more visible results to the



Republic of Armenia."

Firmly determined to continue implementing investment programs in the homeland, Mr. Eurnekian attached importance to close cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

Nikol Pashinyan and Eduardo Eurnekian focused on the programs implemented by Armenia International Airports CJSC. In this context, they discussed issues related to the development and improvement of infrastructure at Zvartnots (Yerevan) and Shirak (Gyumri) airports, which have been transferred to the company for concession management. Taking the opportunity, the interlocutors exchanged views on other business projects due to be implemented by Eduardo Eurnekian's Armenia-based companies.

Pleased with the dynamics of bilateral cooperation, the parties voiced readiness to develop and expand it ahead.



## Armenia's population should be at least 5 million by 2050 – PM

Armenia's population should grow to at least 5 million and 1,5 million new jobs should be created in the country by 2050, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the Matenadaran on September 21, unveiling the strategy of Armenia's transformation in the next 30 years.

The premier attached importance to good education and work as a tool to stamp out poverty in the country.

In Pashinyan's words, the strategy eyes a seven-fold increase of the average salary and a 20-fold GDP growth.

He announced that by 2050 Armenia plans to have the most powerful army in the world per capita and one of the 10 most efficient intelligence services in the world.

Noting that one of the main goals will be to make leaning a national way of life, the prime minister said at least 3 Armenian universities should make it to the list of



top 200 universities in the world. Also, he stressed the importance of turning Armenia into an industrial country.

In this regard, it is planned to have at least 5 technological companies worth \$10 billion and more and at least 10,000 working startups, he said.

Achieving 25 Olympic gold medals, making the Armenian football team a world or European medalist, getting an individual world chess champion and attracting 15

million tourists to the country are also among Armenia's strategic goals by 2050.

Pashinyan highlighted the national security strategy which lists the national values.

According to the premier, the first value is the Armenian statehood, which allows Armenians to make decisions about their own destiny, the second is the education, the next key value is the individual, as the individual is the only entity that forms a family, a society, people and a state.

The fourth value, according to Pashinyan, is work.

“Our national goals are based on these national ideas. The first of these goals is the eternity of the Armenian statehood. The next is the evaluation of an Armenian citizen. After all, what is statehood for? It is to ensure the welfare, security, freedom and happiness of Armenian citizens,” the prime minister said.

## France determined to support Armenia in reforms process: Macron sends congratulatory message

President of France Emmanuel Macron sent a congratulatory letter to Armenia's President Armen Sarkissian on the occasion of the Independence Day, the Presidential Office told Noyan Tapan.

The message runs as follows:

“Dear Mr. President,

Dear friend,

On behalf of myself and the French people I address you my warmest congratulations on the occasion of Armenia's Independence Day.

France and Armenia can be proud of the mutual relations which are based on historic ties, joint memory and common vision. These unique ties are a wealth more than ever which we are ought to develop. They make us stronger to resist the chal-



lenges facing our countries.

I want to assure you that France is determined to support Armenia in this courageous process of reforms launched by the government of Armenia since 2018. France stands by you to contribute to the new progress of your economy, as well as to support

Armenia to invest in concrete long-term healthcare projects and the fight against climate change. More than ever the role players of our bilateral relations are ready to assist the reforms and participate in the economic progress. Despite the COVID-19 situation, I praise the latest achievements of our cooperation in university, educational and cultural spheres.

By using this chance, I want to state that France, as a Minsk Group Co-Chair, will spare no effort to achieve the quick resumption of negotiations between the sides, with the hope of peaceful and lasting settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Please, Mr. President, accept the assurances of my highest respect”.

## Armenia criminalizes “direct and public incitement of genocide”

The Armenian National Assembly voted unanimously on September 17 to criminalize the “direct and public incitement of genocide.”

The Parliament passed relevant amendments to the Criminal Code with 121 votes in favor.

Direct and public incitement to genocide will be punished by imprisonment for a term of eight to ten years.

The same act committed through mass media or through a computer system or by a group of persons with prior consent will be punished by imprisonment for a term of

ten to fourteen years.

The act provided for in the first or second part of the above article, committed by an organized group or through abuse of official position, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of fourteen to twenty years, or by life imprisonment.

## Armenia toughens financial disclosure requirements for officials

The Armenian parliament approved on September 18 a government proposal to require high-ranking state officials to provide an anti-corruption body with detailed information about not only their assets but also major private expenditures.

Under a relevant bill passed by the National Assembly, any single expenditure exceeding 2 million drams (\$4,100) must be declared to the Commission on Prevention of Corruption. That includes money spent on leisure, debt repayment or the purchase of real estate, cars or other expensive items.

The state commission has until now scrutinized only income and asset declarations filed by senior government officials, parliamentarians, judges as well as their family members. It can ask law-enforcement bodies to prosecute individuals suspected of making false disclosures. It can also conduct its own inquiries into possible conflicts of interest.

The bill will extend the asset declaration requirement to local government officials

and members of the municipal councils of Yerevan and most other urban communities. In addition, it requires the officials in question to also disclose properties and cars which they use but do not formally own.

Presenting the bill to lawmakers on Thursday, Justice Minister Rustam Badasyan described the tougher financial disclosure rules as an additional safeguard against corruption in Armenia.

The bill was approved by 101 votes to 17. Voting against it were deputies from the opposition Bright Armenia Party (LHK).

The Armenpress news agency quoted one of them, Taron Simonyan, as saying that the LHK supports the measure in principle and will back its passage in the second reading if the government accepts amendments drafted by his party.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has repeatedly claimed to have eliminated “systemic corruption” after coming to power in the 2018 “Velvet Revolution.” The number of corruption cases brought by Arme-

nian law-enforcement authorities has risen sharply since the dramatic change of government. The most high-profile cases have involved former top government officials and individuals linked to them.

Nevertheless, Pashinyan said in February that he is not satisfied with the results of the corruption investigations. He said law-enforcement bodies must do more to recover “funds stolen from the state.”

In April, Pashinyan’s government pushed through the parliament a controversial bill that allows prosecutors to investigate individuals suspected of having assets the market value of which exceeds their “legal incomes” by at least 50 million drams (\$103,000). The prosecutors can ask courts to nationalize those assets if they find such discrepancies.

Earlier this month, the Office of the Prosecutor-General set up a special division tasked with handling possible asset seizures.

## Armenia announces 45-day pre-military training for women aged 18-27

Armenia has announced 45-day pre-military training for women aged 18-27. Applications will be accepted from October 1.

Within the framework of the program, the participants will be trained in barracks for 45 days, acquiring the skills of a soldier. The daily life of the camp participants will be organized according to the standard adopted in the Armed Forces, according to the daily schedule of the military unit. The wake-up is at 6:30 am, followed by gymnastics, breakfast, classes and field exercises, etc.



Visits, dismissals from the location of the military unit, vacations, as well as the use of mobile phones with video recording features in the military unit will be prohibited.

Before being included in the program, the candidates will be interviewed, undergo a comprehensive medical examination and psychological testing, after which they will have to pass physical training standards.

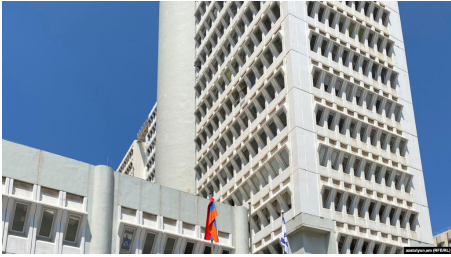
At the end of the training, the participants will take a final test. Those who register the best results will have the opportunity to join the Armenian Armed Forces as a contract soldier, if they wish so.

The training has been initiated by Prime Minister’s wife Mrs. Anna Hakobyan.



## Armenian Embassy in Israel Inaugurated

**Armenia has reportedly inaugurated its embassy in Israel one year after deciding to upgrade diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.**



The opening of the Armenian Embassy in Tel Aviv, initially slated for the beginning of this year, was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic.

A Russian-language news website, Vesti Izrail, reported that a senior Israeli Foreign Ministry official attended the opening ceremony held on September 17. It quoted the official, Itzhak Carmel-Kagan, as saying that the embassy will facilitate a “constructive dialogue” between the two countries.

Armenian Ambassador to Israel Armen Smbatyan emphasized in his remarks that the inauguration of the building is taking place ahead of a meaningful day - Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

In his speech, Ambassador Smbatyan congratulated all citizens of Israel on Rosh

Hashanah, wishing peace and prosperity to the State of Israel, and health and successes to the residents of the country.

The Armenian mission located inside a Tel Aviv office building began providing consular services last month. Also, Ambassador Armen Smbatyan met with leaders of the Armenian community in the Holy Land, including Jerusalem-based Patriarch Nourhan Manougian.

The Armenian government decided to open the embassy in September 2019, saying that it will not only “give new impetus” to its relations with Israel but also help to secure the Armenian Apostolic Church’s continued presence in the Holy Land.

The decision was hailed by Israeli leaders but criticized by some officials in Iran, a key foreign partner of Armenia. The Armenian ambassador to Iran, Artashes Tumanyan, assured a senior Iranian Foreign Ministry official in June that Yerevan remains committed to its “friendly” relationship with the Islamic Republic despite its desire to improve Armenian-Israeli ties.

Armenia and Israel established diplomatic relations in 1992 but have had no embassies in each other’s capitals until now. The former Armenian ambassadors to the Jewish state were based in Paris, Cairo and Yerevan.

Armenian-Israeli relations have long been frosty, reflecting differing geopolitical priorities of the two states. Yerevan has repeatedly expressed concern over billions of dollars’ worth of advanced weapons which Israeli defense companies have sold, with the Israeli government’s blessing, to Azer-



baijan over the past decade.

“Israel should stop this deadly business with Azerbaijan,” Armenian Foreign Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said following deadly fighting that broke out on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in July.

The Azerbaijani army attacked Armenian military and civilian targets with Israeli-manufactured drones during the week-long hostilities. The Armenian military claimed to have shot down or intercepted 13 of them.

## Turkish man stands trial for inciting violence against Armenians in France, verdict due on November 5

Ahmet Cetin, a 23-year-old French-Turkish resident of Bourg-en-Bresse commune, stood trial on September 17 for “inciting violence and hatred,” *Le Parisien* reports.

“May the Turkish government give me 2000 euros and a weapon and I will do what needs to be done, anywhere in France!” he said in an Instagram video this summer.

At the bar of the court, this young married man, father of a family, who works as a maintenance agent, had great difficulty in explaining his intentions. He refutes any membership in the organization of the Gray Wolves, a Turkish ultranationalist anti-Kurdish and anti-Armenian movement.

He denies ever calling for a crackdown on the Armenian community gatherings.



*Armenian Genocide Memorial in Decines/AFP*

However, on July 24, it was he was identified and arrested at the head of a group of a hundred Turkish extremists brandishing iron bars and national flags, making with his fingers the sign of the Gray Wolves, firing mortars and ransacking shops near a gathering of the Armenian community of

Decines, in the suburbs of Lyon.

Ahmet Cetin says he has only one aspiration now, “to put his life back in a normal setting, to lead a family and professional life without political or militant activity.” As proof of his good faith, he claims to have deleted all his accounts on social networks.

For the public prosecutor, however, “Ahmet Cetin denies the obvious, his messages aimed at the Armenian community” and, “inviting everyone to take part in the confrontation and the fight.”

He requests a six-month suspended prison sentence and a 2,000-euro fine.

The court ruling will be released on November 5.

## Armenia introduces new regulation covering physical location of bookmakers



In an effort to protect people from being allured by bookmakers and subsequent

potential losses, the Armenian government passed a decision on September 17 that allows bookmakers to operate solely at locations which are a certain distance away from heavily populated areas, as well as educational or cultural institutions, governmental offices or hospitals.

Finance Minister Atom Janjughazyan said at the Cabinet meeting that currently bookmakers have offices mostly in heavily populated areas. “This is negatively impacting the

society by creating the dangers of easily being allured with gambling,” he said.

In Yerevan, bookmakers will have to relocate their offices at least 150 meters away (direct line) from any educational, historic-cultural institution, state and local self-governing offices and hospitals. The distance is 100 meters elsewhere, with the exception of administrative centers of Syunik, Meghri and Tavush where the limit is set at 50 meters.

Authorities said they’ve studied international practice in developing the law.

## Wine business in Armenia on track to recover after suffering 60% domestic consumption drop

Wine consumption and exports suffered a 60% and 20% drop respectively amid the coronavirus pandemic from March until July, the Armenian Vine and Wine Foundation Director Zaruhi Muradyan said.

“Wine isn’t an essential product so people aren’t in a hurry to buy extra wine in crisis conditions,” she said. “Wine drinking is a type of leisure, but all restaurants, bars, entertainment venues were shut down, the domestic market consumption and export volumes dropped abruptly,” she said, referring to the springtime lockdown measures



when eateries and cafes were closed as a precaution.

However, Muradyan says wine sales are somewhat rising since July, and she hopes

that consumption will increase by yearend.

“12 million 670 thousand liters of wine was produced in 2019, usually 30% was being exported and 60% was being sold domestically, and around 10% was being kept as reserve wine in cellars. Since cellars are full of wine, winemakers will organize their [grape procurement] according to consumption levels,” she said, adding that the wine businesses will nevertheless try to buy more in order to support farmers.

Muradyan said their fund will spare no effort to support the wine business get back on track.

## Iranian company to construct new landfill in Hrazdan

The government of Armenia allowed the Iranian company Tunnel Sadd Ariana to construct a new landfill and waste management system in Hrazdan as part of the “Kotayk and Gegharkunik Municipal Solid Waste Management” program.

The company was earlier awarded the project in an international tender.

The project is worth 11 million euro.

“Kotayk and Gegharkunik Municipal Solid Waste Management” in-



tends using the proceeds of a loan from the

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and a grant from EU Neighborhood Investment Facility and the Eastern European Energy Efficiency and Environmental Partnership, as well as technical cooperation grants from EBRD and other donors, for a project to improve the solid waste collection and management services in the Kotayk and Gegharkunik regions of Armenia, including the construction of a new landfill in Hrazdan.



## Warsaw stock exchange intends to take over the Armenia securities exchange

The Warsaw Stock Exchange (GPW) has signed a term sheet with the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) on negotiations concerning the acquisition of 65% of the Armenia Securities Exchange (AMX) from CBA.

GPW's potential acquisition of AMX requires among others a due diligence and necessary corporate approvals, the Armenian Central Bank said in a statement.

The preliminary estimated valuation of 100% of AMX is approx. PLN 6 million (USD 1.6 million) On 18 September 2020, the Warsaw Stock Exchange (GPW) Management Board and the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) signed a term sheet concerning negotiations to purchase 65% majority interest in the Armenia Securities Exchange (AMX) by GPW.

The agreement is not binding. The final terms of the acquisition will depend among others on results of due diligence and necessary corporate approvals. "The relations established between GPW and the Central Bank of Armenia spell good news for both parties of the agreement. Many sectors of Armenia's economy are looking for quality investments so the country has a huge growth potential. Investments are a driver of economic growth, especially in the emerging markets. In my opinion, GPW's acquisition of AMX would put the Armenian capital market on fast track to growth while the Warsaw Stock Exchange could make satisfying returns on the investment. It is relevant, as well, that Poland is promoting emerging markets. This is a good direction," said Jacek Sasin, Poland's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State Assets.

The term sheet signed by GPW and CBA defines the framework conditions of further negotiations aiming at a potential investment agreement. In the next step, GPW will carry out a due diligence, draft a five-year development plan for the Armenia Securities Exchange in partnership with CBA and



AMX, and define the final terms of the investment agreement, which may be different from the framework conditions. "GPW is a stable and steadily growing company at the heart of Poland's capital market and the leader of the CEE stock exchange industry. I am certain that the extensive experience and competences gained by the Warsaw Stock Exchange in the last 30 years will ensure a close and fruitful relationship with Armenia's financial market," said Dominik Kaczmarek, Head of Analysis and Reporting Department at Poland's Ministry of State Assets, President of the Warsaw Stock Exchange Supervisory Board.

As a part of its analyses preceding the execution of the term sheet, GPW has defined a list of more than a dozen potential strategic projects geared at long-term development of the Armenia Securities Exchange. The key areas of development include the implementation of innovative solutions based on state-of-the-art technology, the organization of trade in commodities, support for dual listing of GPW and AMX issuers, and the provision of a modern trading platform. "We can see many areas where we could advance the development of Armenia's capital market. The primary areas include digitization and process automation, which are now the key pillars of stock exchanges in developed economies. Potential acquisition of AMX would help us expand our services and step up the implementation of the strategy #GPW2022. On the other hand, it would open the GPW Group's know-how to the Armenia Securities Exchange,"

pointed out Marek Dietl, President of the GPW Management Board. The AMX Group's consolidated revenue stood at PLN 6.4 million (USD 1.71 million), EBITDA at PLN 2.0 million (USD 0.53 million), and net profit at PLN 1.3 million (USD 0.35 million) in 2019. The AMX Group's total assets stood at PLN 6.5 million (USD 1.73 million) as at 31 December 2019. The preliminary non-binding estimated valuation of 100% of AMX equity is equal to the company's book value as at 30 June 2020, i.e., approx. PLN 6 million (USD 1.6 million).

The potential purchase price of interest in AMX to be paid by GPW will be confirmed after the completion of the due diligence. "We are glad to have reached an agreement on the base framework of our future cooperation with WSE. This mutually beneficial deal is of a long-term strategic importance to both sides and we are also glad to state that we see WSE as the partner sharing our vision for future development of capital markets. WSE leadership in this venture provides an opportunity for bringing their experience and know-how and transform AMX into a robust, innovative and convenient platform, serving as gateway for investors to new markets.

This will also lead to fulfilling our joint aspirations for regional expansion" – said Martin Galstyan, the Governor of the Central Bank of Armenia. The core business of the AMX Group is to organize trade in financial instruments and to operate a clearing house and a settlement institution for transactions in financial instruments in Armenia. The company has its seat in the Armenian capital city Yerevan. The Central Bank of Armenia holds 90.1% of AMX. The remaining 9.9% are AMX's treasury shares. After the deal, CBA will hold 25% of AMX and the remaining 10% will be acquired by a third party to be named by GPW.

## Armenia established strong tradition of humanitarian cooperation in Middle East – Foreign Minister

Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan gave an interview to the Al-Akhbar newspaper, touching upon the relations between Armenia and Egypt, Armenia's support to Egypt on signing a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union, the Karabakh conflict and Armenia's priorities in the Middle East.

Armenpress presents the FM's interview:

Question: What is your evaluation of the progress of bilateral relations between Egypt and Armenia?

Answer: Armenian-Egyptian evolving bilateral relations have always been based on mutual respect and sincere friendship. You know Egypt was the first Arabic country to recognize the independence of Armenia and the first Arabic state to host the Armenian Embassy. Since the independence of Armenia, we have managed to achieve a broad range of relations with our Egyptian colleagues. The mere mention of the fact that Armenia and Egypt signed more than 50 agreements in different fields of cooperation. Joint Armenian-Egyptian inter-governmental commission is an effective platform to discuss issues related to our multidimensional cooperation and outline the perspectives of its further expansion and enhancement.

We are encouraged by the recently gained positive dynamics of our political dialogue. Meantime we have been able to outline perspectives of development for our economic and trade affairs: IT, pharmaceuticals, creative education, agriculture, etc. The discussion and combining of the positions on regional processes and challenges hold a special place on our agenda.

Our interstate cooperation has been successful and together we achieved important results. However, we feel that our cooperation needs a fresh start to adjust to new global and regional realities, particularly in the situation when we are facing similar if not same challenges in regional security. Today as never before we see that the security between seemingly different regions of Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, North Africa and even South Caucasus are inter-related.

Question: How can Armenia support Egypt in signing a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Union?

Answer: Armenia expressed its full support to the intention of Egypt to join the free trade zone with the Eurasian Union. And yesterday during the joint press con-



ference with my good friend, Foreign Minister of Egypt Sameh Shoukry I reiterated that support.

In January 2019, when the first round of negotiations kicked off, Mr. Mher Grigoryan, Deputy Prime-Minister of Armenia, expressed our determination to assist and support friendly Egypt to join free trade agreement. We believe that all sides will benefit from deeper partnership within the framework of the above-mentioned agreement. That's why we strive for the soonest conclusion of all the procedures for signing the agreement.

Question: What role do Armenian Egyptians play in promoting relations between Egypt and Armenia?

Answer: Settling in Egypt in different historical periods, Armenians have made their significant contribution to the development and prosperity of the country.

In the very difficult part of our history when the survival of the Armenian people was at stake, Egypt along with other Arab countries received thousands of Armenians fleeing from the horrors of the Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. We will never forget the hospitality that the survivors of Genocide found in Egypt.

Today, the generations of those Armenians continue to live and create in Egypt, they made a significant contribution to the establishment and development of the state institutions of Egypt and we take great pride in that. Being devoted citizens of Egypt, they are at the same time endowed with all the necessary means to preserve their identity, language and traditions. Of course, we are deeply grateful to the Government and the people of Egypt for these efforts and the protection of our people.

The Armenian-Egyptian community, which has about ten thousand members, is an important bridge between the two friendly countries. The existence of the Armenian-Egyptian community became a fertile ground for the development of inter-state relations between the two coun-

tries.

Question: What are the reasons for the recent clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan?

Answer: There are many reasons, but the underlying reason is that this is a renewed attempt by Azerbaijan to impose unilateral concessions on Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh through use of force and threat of force. But what is more important in this regard, is that it was a miscalculation by Azerbaijani side which showed that their current capacities do not match with their well known intentions.

It was an attempt by Azerbaijani side to show a military advantage over Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, which indeed was a failed one. The July battles demonstrated Armenia's capacities to defend itself, its population and its borders. Moreover, the July battles vividly demonstrated that there can be no military solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Question: What is the Turkish role in fueling the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan?

Answer: We have been witnessing Turkey's destabilizing role not only in our region but in all other neighboring regions. The projection of power, intrusion and interference in the South Caucasian region do not contribute in any way to the peaceful resolution of the conflict and to regional peace, security and stability.

During the battles in July, Turkey has been the only country that was taking a one-sided supporting and fueling the maximalist approaches of Azerbaijan. That support was accompanied by a very aggressive approach toward Armenia and the Armenian people:

First, Turkey publically encourages Azerbaijan to take a harder stance against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh by openly communicating its support, including in military matters.

Second, Turkey came up with military posturing against Armenia by initiating large scale military exercises in the vicinity of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh with very provocative moves.

Third, there is ongoing Turkish military build-up in Azerbaijan, which is strengthening and expanding their presence thereon.

Fourth, there are reports of recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters in Syria with aim to be transferred to



## Artsakh will keep supporting Lebanese-Armenians: Stepanakert responds to Baku's complaint

Artsakh will keep providing necessary support to compatriots who are in trouble and who will choose to settle in the Republic, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

“The authorities of the Republic of Artsakh are interested in preserving the Armenian community of Lebanon, but at the same time, within the framework of their sovereign right, they will provide the necessary support to those of our compatriots who are in trouble and who will choose to come and settle in our Republic,” the Ministry said.

The comments come in the wake of a recent complaint of the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry submitted to the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen, in which an attempt was made to present the decision of several Lebanese Armenian families to settle in the Republic of Artsakh as a violation of the norms of international humanitarian law.

“The authorities of the Republic of Artsakh consider it their duty to render assistance to the compatriots who have found themselves in a critical situation caused by various disasters and crises. Moreover, responding to humanitarian disasters is the collective responsibility of the entire inter-



national community, which is the Republic of Artsakh is part of, regardless of its temporarily unrecognized political status,” the Foreign Ministry stated.

It added that by sending humanitarian assistance to Lebanon and providing shelter to those who have lost their homes as a result of the devastating explosion in Beirut, official Stepanakert brings its feasible contribution to the common efforts of the international community to implement humanitarian ideals.

“The repeated attempts of the Azerbaijani side to present the provision of shelter by the authorities of Artsakh to the people caught in a humanitarian catastrophe as a violation of the norms of international humanitarian law testify not only to a tendentious interpretation of international

documents, but also to a perverted comprehension of humanism in general,” the statement reads.

“Throughout the entire conflict and the process of its settlement, the Azerbaijani authorities have demonstrated an open disregard for humanitarian issues, using them only for their own sake, as a screen to cover up their true indecent goals. This is evidenced by the cynical neglect for over three decades of the rights of about half a million Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, whose expulsion was accompanied by massacres and brutal pogroms, but official Baku still stubbornly refuses to recognize the responsibility for their tragic fate,” the Foreign Ministry said.

“We consider it unacceptable that the victims of the humanitarian catastrophe in Beirut become a target of attacks and a subject of political speculations for the Azerbaijani authorities. We reaffirm that the authorities of the Republic of Artsakh will continue to render the necessary assistance to all our compatriots who have found themselves in a difficult situation in their places of residence,” the Ministry concluded.

## EU chief warns Turkey against ‘intimidating’ its neighbors

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday warned Turkey against attempts to intimidate Greece and Cyprus as tensions grow in the eastern Mediterranean.

In her annual State of the EU speech, von der Leyen said Ankara was a key partner doing important work hosting refugees, but warned “none of this is justification for attempts to intimidate its neighbors.”

“Yes, Turkey is in a troubled neighbor-



hood. And yes, it is hosting millions of refugees, for which we support them with considerable funding. But none of this is justification for attempts to intimidate its neighbors,” she said.

She said EU member states, Cyprus and Greece, can always count on Europe's full solidarity on protecting their legitimate sovereignty rights.

“De-escalation in the Eastern Mediterranean is in our mutual interest. The return of exploratory vessels to Turkish ports in the past few days is a positive step in this direction. This is necessary to create the much-needed space for dialogue. Refraining from unilateral actions and resuming talks in genuine good faith is the only path forward. The only path to stability and lasting solutions,” the President of the European Commission said.

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Azerbaijan.

We saw the outcome of similar behavior of Turkey in other regions which inflicted immense suffering on the people living in those regions. Thus, we have to be very vigilant in maintaining and strengthening regional peace and security.

Question: Do you consider Turkey's statements in response to recognition of the Armenian Genocide from several countries, including the US Congress, the French Senate and others?

Answer: What we consider and what should be considered is the fact that Turkey's policy of denial of the Armenian Genocide has failed particularly in recent times. The new wave of recognition of the Armenian Genocide has been marked by both continuity and change on the perception of this issue.

This struggle for truth, historic justice and human rights has been ongoing for several

decades in all continents. However, there is new emerging important dimension in recognition of the Armenian Genocide and that is the security threats posed by Turkey to its neighboring regions and peoples. Nobody wants history to repeat itself again and again and we need to acknowledge not merely the past but to prevent recurrences of new atrocities today and in future. A state and its leadership who justifies Genocide and supports terrorist groups engaged in identity-based atrocities is threat which needs to be clearly defined as such.

Question: Azerbaijan accused Russia of arming Armenia. What is your comment?

Answer: Armenia and Russia are allies and our relations are developing based on the logic of allied relationship. Russia is a main supplier of military equipment and armaments to Azerbaijan as well and thus these accusations neither justified nor sincere.

Question: This is your first official visit to

the Middle East. What are your main priorities in the region?

Answer: Throughout the years Armenia has developed excellent relations with many countries in the region to which it is connected culturally and historically including via presence of the Armenian communities.

Economic, educational and cultural cooperation remain an important area which brings our people together in sharing values, generating knowledge and wealth.

Throughout these years, Armenia has established a strong tradition of humanitarian cooperation in the region. We expressed our readiness to build a secure environment by carrying out peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in the region.

Last but not least, security between the Middle East and the South Caucasus is interrelated. Therefore, we need stronger cooperation in this field including in countering transnational threats.

## US European Command provides medical supplies to Armenia's rescue service, ambulance

US Ambassador to Armenia Lynne Tracy joined representatives from Armenia's regional ambulatory services and the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) on September 18 to donate medical supplies – provided by the US European Command (EUCOM) – to assist in Armenia's ongoing fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, the US Embassy in Armenia informs.



Major General Vrezh Gabrielyan, the Head of the MES Rescue Service, accepted a donation of personal protective gear on behalf of the MES.

Representatives from all of Armenia's provinces were on hand to receive donations of personal protective gear and pulse oximeters on behalf of the regional ambulatory services.

## EU to introduce crypto-assets regime by 2024

The European Union will introduce new rules within four years to make cross-border payments quicker and cheaper through the use of blockchain and crypto assets like stablecoins, two EU documents showed, Reuters reports.

The European Commission is due to set out its strategy for encouraging greater use of digital finance at a time when 78% of payments in the euro zone are in cash. It also wants a rapid shift to "instant" payments generally as pandemic lockdowns showed the growing role of cashless payments.

The EU executive will present a draft law to clarify how existing rules apply to crypto assets and set out new rules where there are



gaps, the documents said.

"By 2024, the EU should put in place a comprehensive framework enabling the uptake of distributed ledger technology (DLT) and crypto-assets in the financial sector," the documents said. "It should also address the risks associated with these technologies.

Stablecoins, a type of cryptocurrency often backed by traditional assets, leapt onto policymakers' agendas last year when Facebook revealed plans for its Libra token. Central banks are now studying whether to launch their own.

Brussels also wants to make it easier to share data within the financial sector to encourage competition and a wider range of services, while upholding the principle of "same risk, same rules, same regulation", the documents say.

The bloc should also have rules in place within four years to allow new customers to start using financial services quickly once anti-money laundering and identity checks have been completed, it said.



## News from the Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator...

### Another village in Syunik has been illuminated - a post-Soviet times problem has been solved

No stumbling anymore in the darkness of the night in Vaghatin village: Viva-MTS and the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) here too, have tackled the problem persevering the post-Soviet period.



A street lighting system comprised of 37 LED lamps has been installed in Vaghatin. The main streets of the



village, about 1,400 m long area, are equipped with modern, energy-saving and environment-friendly LED lamps. For the village, located on 118 km distance from the regional center, this is an important achievement in terms of

saving the community budget and morally assisting the people.

The modern lighting system is in exploitation now. Viva-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian joined the opening ceremony via video call.

*“During the project implementation, we found out that in many villages there is no proper infrastructure, and in some settlements they are so old, thus unsuitable for operation. Together with our partners, we strive to be helpful and gradually create conditions ensuring positive development in the villages. This system works using new technologies. Now you see the result of the program - the lighting. Years later, you will feel the more important long-*



*term effect of the system implementation. First, the costs will be reduced, the saved budget funds will be used for another useful initiative, and the environmental efficiency will be registered in years to come. Any positive change will contribute to new achievements,”* Viva-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** said.

The Founder of FPWC Ruben Khachatryan, Head of Vaghatin community administration Shahen



Grigoryan, and community residents discussed the solved issues and the changes brought by the newly introduced system.

Environment-friendly and energy-ef-




ficient LED lamps, unlike incandescent lamps, consume 80% less electricity and serve with double efficiency. LED lamps are more durable and have a much longer service life than conventional lamps.

In the summer months, the streets



will be illuminated in Vaghatin from 21:00 to 01:00, and in winter from 18:00 to 00:00. Holiday lighting will be provided through-



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out the night.

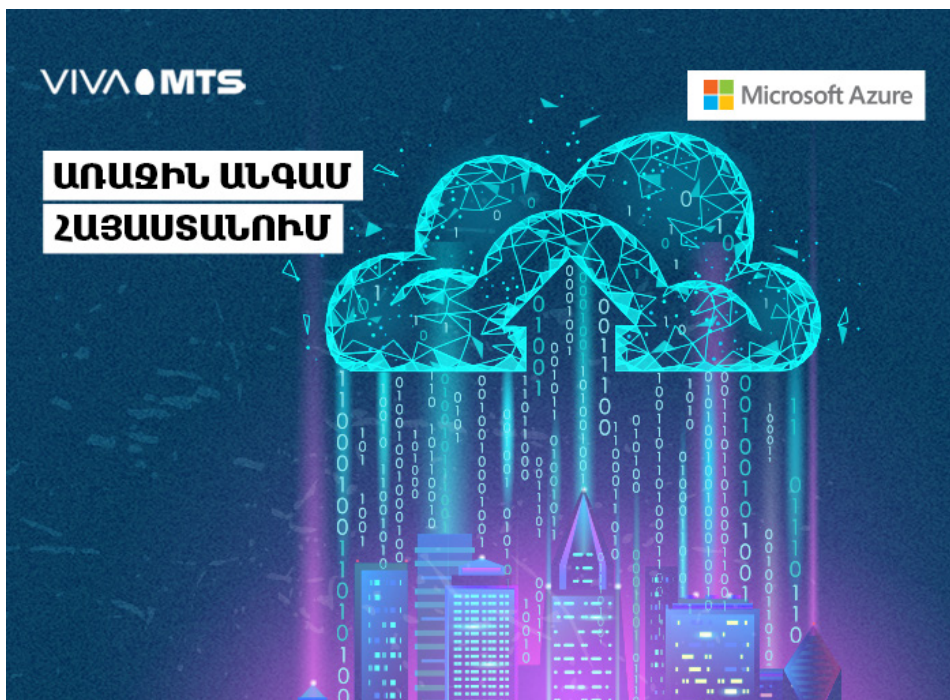
FPWC and Viva-MTS, the General Partner of the Foundation, give great importance to the use of state-of-the-art technologies for the protection of the environment, energy saving and community development.

### For the first time in Armenia and South Caucasus region: Viva-MTS partners with Microsoft

Viva-MTS, the leading telecommunications operator in Armenia pre-launches the Azure Stack cloud platform. This is not only the first introduction of the cloud platform in Armenia but also the first in the South Caucasus region. Viva-MTS is the first company in Armenia to partner with Microsoft to offer Azure Stack cloud services for business customers from its own data centers.

Azure Stack cloud platform offer from Viva-MTS will enable its business customers to reduce costs of developing their own solutions as well as accelerate the launch of their products in the international markets. Business customers will be able to create modern hybrid applications whilst simultaneously using the capacities of Viva-MTS' local data centers and Microsoft's global infrastructure. Customers will be able to choose where to store data and launch virtual machines, between their own or a partner's data center, either in Armenia or among many different datacenter regions worldwide in which Microsoft Azure has a presence. Microsoft Azure integrates a comprehensive set of business solutions that can be accessible via the internet from anywhere anytime.

By having access to Azure Stack platform-based services hosted in Armenia,



business customers can process data locally within the country. Using these services will help reducing the costs of adapting technology solutions and customer's personnel to new working conditions. Seamless integration between the local environment and the public cloud in hybrid scenarios helps to secure smooth operation of the IT infrastructure, accelerate the launch of customer's new business systems and provide opportunity for their flexible scaling. Azure Stack hosted at Viva-MTS cloud will also contribute to cost-optimization in the IT infrastructure maintenance, by eliminating capital expenditures and optimizing operational expenditures, which will enhance the success of IT processes and help with making room for growth: customers will pay for the services on the pay-as-you-use basis.

*"Partnership with Microsoft and offering Azure cloud services from our own data centers will allow us to expand our portfolio of cloud services to corporate customers by providing them with access to the leading mod-*

*ern platform-based cloud services from the global leader in digital solutions. Armenian companies will be able to accelerate their access to global markets, including IT markets, while international corporations can do better in getting closer to Armenian consumers. Viva-MTS embarks on the next stage in the transformation into a digital services provider company, and gives this opportunity to its customers as well,"* Viva-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** commented.

Microsoft Azure is a Cloud IaaS (Infrastructure as a Service) and PaaS (Platform as a Service) leader, supporting over 200 pre-configured services. It will give opportunity to Viva-MTS to outsource its mainframe and to develop applications and solutions, tailored for specific business needs.

Azure's provides efficiency, availability, elasticity, cybersecurity, mobility and productivity to businesses of all sizes. Worldwide businesses acknowledged Azure as the most affordable and trusted hybrid infrastructure and cloud solution for the corporate environment.



## Somali mother-and-daughter human rights activists named 2020 Aurora Prize laureates



The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative awarded the fifth annual Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity to Fartuun Adan and Ilwad Elman, the mother and daughter team who lead the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre in Somalia.

As Aurora Prize Laureates, they will receive a US \$1,000,000 award and a unique opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by supporting the organizations that have inspired their humanitarian action. Fartuun Adan and Ilwad Elman have selected three organizations – Love Does, Panzi Foundation, and Prajwala – that fight for freedom and human rights, provide healthcare to marginalized populations, and save victims of sex-trafficking to be the beneficiaries of their million dollar prize.

Fartuun Adan and Ilwad Elman were chosen among the 2020 Aurora Humanitarians, or finalists, announced on April 24, 2020. Besides the Somali human rights defenders, these outstanding heroes include Congolese activist Angélique Namaika, refugee rescuers Sophie Beau and Klaus Vogel, and educator Sakena Yacoobi from Afghanistan.

To date, Aurora has launched or supported

numerous projects in nearly 30 countries, benefitting almost a million people suffering from the atrocities of war, famine, lack of healthcare, genocide or human rights violations. Granted on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, the Aurora Prize seeks to expand the global humanitarian movement by enabling humanitarians worldwide to continue the cycle of giving.

Fartuun Adan and Ilwad Elman have been protecting women's rights, promoting peacebuilding, and rehabilitating child soldiers for many years. Their courage, resilience, and unwavering commitment to the people of Somalia has brought this mother and daughter team global recognition.

“Fartuun Adan and Ilwad Elman embody the spirit of the Aurora Prize and our philosophy of Gratitude in Action, and we are delighted with this opportunity to express our deepest admiration and appreciation to them for the amazing work they are doing in Somalia. They give people a second chance, hope for the future, and inspiration to lead a meaningful life. Their courage, self-sacrifice, altruism, idealism, as well as

actions on the ground reflect the values of the global Aurora movement,” noted Vartan Gregorian, President of Carnegie Corporation of New York, Co-Founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, and Member of the Selection Committee.

Lord Ara Darzi, Co-Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London and Chair of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, noted in his video announcement of the Laureates, “2020 has been a tumultuous year, but as with all crises, it has brought us together. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, many new modern-day heroes like Fartuun Adan and Ilwad Elman emerged, reminding us of our common humanity.”

“For the last five years, Aurora has been spreading the message that acts of kindness make a difference when you add them up, and Fartuun’s and Ilwad’s courageous activism is a vivid testament to that,” said Samantha Power, Harvard professor, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and Aurora Prize Selection Committee member.

Previous Aurora Prize Laureates include Burundian activist Marguerite Barankitse (2016), American physician and missionary Dr. Tom Catena (2017), Rohingya human rights campaigner Kyaw Hla Aung (2018) and Yazidi activist Mirza Dinnayi (2019).

On October 19, 2020, a special Gratitude in Action virtual event will be broadcast live from the New York Public Library to celebrate Aurora’s fifth anniversary by honoring the Aurora Prize Laureates and paying tribute to New York City COVID-19 heroes. A live event will also be held in March 2021 in New York City, along with an ecumenical service to commemorate those who fell victim to the coronavirus.

## All-star concert in Vilnius to mark 29th anniversary of Armenia's independence



menian Embassy to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia will also pay tribute to the memory of opera soloist Gegham Grigorian (1951–2016).

The great maestro's children – the best of the best Asmik Grigorian and Vardan Grigorian, his friend, legendary bass Barsegh Tumanyan and one of the best young tenors Hovhannes Ayvazyan will share the stage with the Lithuanian Opera and Ballet or-



chestra.

The concert to be held on September 18 will also mark the opening of the 101st season of the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theater, which makes the event even more special.

An all-star concert at Lithuania's Opera and Ballet Theater will mark the 29th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Armenia and celebrate Armenian-Lithuanian friendship, Armenia's Ambassador to Lithuania Tigran Mkrtchyan informs.

The concert organized jointly with the Ar-



## 911: Lady Gaga's new video inspired by Armenian filmmaker Parajanov's Color of Pomegranates

Lady Gaga has based her new video for Chromatica single "911" largely on Armenian filmmaker Sergei Parajanov's classic 1969 art film *The Color of Pomegranates*.

When Gaga is first introduced she's surrounded by actual pomegranates. The poster of the film briefly appears in the video. The word "caution" in Armenian (զգուշութիւն) can be seen throughout the short film.

The music video was directed by filmmaker Tarsem Singh, who has frequently cited Parajanov as a major influence

The video begins with Gaga in a desert sprawled out next to a broken bicycle and pomegranates spilled on the ground. As the song "911" starts, she enters a mission filled with oddly dressed people, including a nurse, a man banging his head



onto a pillow, and a woman cradling a mummy.

Later in the video, an ambulance spinal board is brought in behind Gaga and she begins crying. After the song ends, she wakes up in the real world to paramedics treating her. She has been hurt in a car accident, and all the images from earlier in the song show up as billboards on the street where the accident occurred and other people involved in the accident. The desert as

it turns out was White Sands National Park in New Mexico.

"This short film is very personal to me, my experience with mental health and the way reality and dreams can interconnect to form heroes within us and all around us," Lady Gaga said on Instagram.

"Something that was once my real life every day is now a film, a true story that

is now the past and not the present. It's the poetry of pain," she added.

The original film is a poetic retelling of the life of 18th-century Armenian poet and musician Sayat-Nova. Parajanov used little actual dialogue in the film, and most of the story is told through narrative, sound, some music, and occasional title cards.

Below are some shot-for-shot comparisons between the film and "911."



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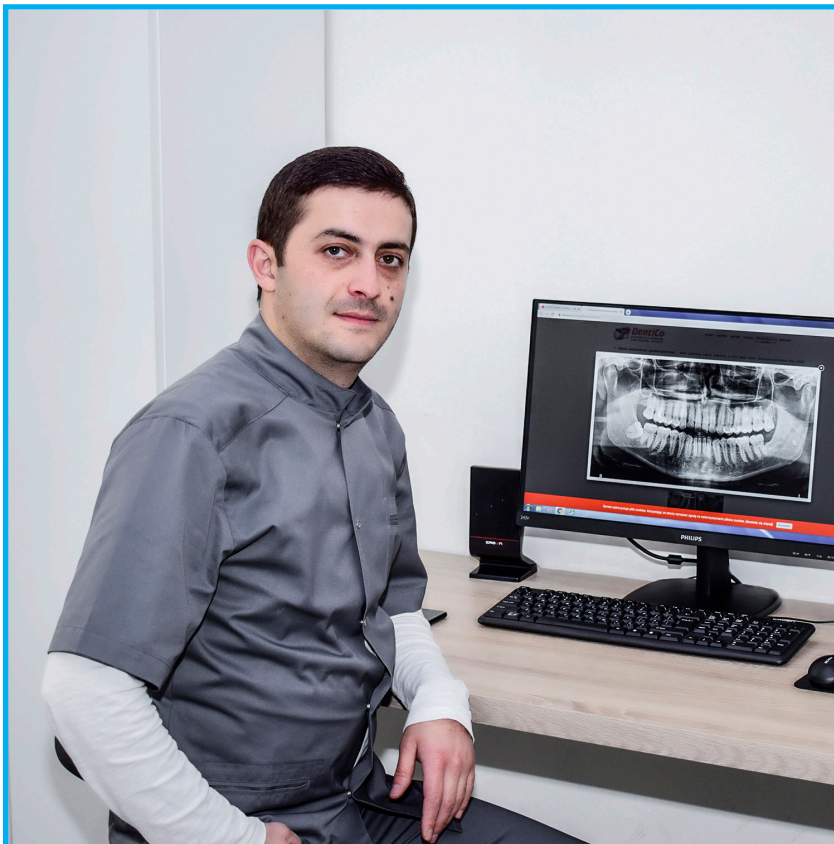
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