

Armenia, Turkey agree to allow third-country citizens to cross the land border



Austria – Armenian and Turkish envoys hold a fourth round of normalization talks in Vienna, July 1, 2022.

Turkey and Armenia on July 1 agreed in principle to allow citizens of third countries to cross their border which Ankara has for decades kept closed.

Special envoys of the two neighboring states reported the agreement after holding a fourth round of Turkish-Armenian normalization talks in Vienna.

“They agreed to enable the crossing of the land border between Armenia and Turkey by third-country citizens visiting Armenia and Turkey respectively at the earliest date possible and decided to initiate the necessary process to that end,” the Turkish and Armenian foreign ministries said in identical statements.

“They also agreed on commencing direct air cargo trade between Armenia and Turkey at the earliest possible date and decided to initiate the necessary process to that effect. Furthermore, they discussed other possible concrete steps that can be undertaken towards achieving the ultimate goal of full normalization between their respective countries,” added the statement.

It did not specify just when the two sides could take the first step towards opening the Turkish-Armenian border.

Ankara has long made the normalization of relations with Yerevan conditional on a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict acceptable to Azerbaijan. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has repeatedly said that his government coordinates the Turkish-Armenian dialogue with Baku.

Armenian leaders have said, for their part, that they want an unconditional normalization of Turkish-Armenian ties.

Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan complained in late May that Ankara is “synchronizing” the Turkish-Armenian normalization process with Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks.

“This is certainly not making the atmosphere more constructive,” he said. “Discussions are going on. Unfortunately, there are no tangible results at this point.”

Ruben Rubinyan, the Armenian negotiator, likewise said on Thursday that the onus is on the Turks to bring the process to fruition.

“The success of the process depends on Turkey’s constructiveness and political will,” Rubinyan told reporters before flying to Vienna to meet the Turkish envoy, Serdar Kilic.

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Germany reaffirms willingness to develop mutually beneficial partnership with Armenia

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received the Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany Svenja Schulze and the delegation headed by her.

The Prime Minister emphasized the high level of political dialogue between Armenia and Germany, attaching importance to the visit of the German governmental delegation to our country.

“Germany is Armenia’s largest trade and economic partner among the EU countries, and we also highly appreciate Germany’s support for Armenia’s democratic agenda, exchange of experience. We are interested in the continuation and expansion of our effective cooperation,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

The Federal Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany thanked for the reception and emphasized that close relations have been established between the two countries, including within the framework

of the EU Eastern Partnership initiative. Svenja Schulze expressed the readiness of the German government to continue and develop the mutually beneficial partnership and joint projects with Armenia.

The Prime Minister emphasized that Armenia is committed to continuing the democratic path and attached importance to the Eastern Partnership initiative, within the framework of which Armenia has made progress in a number of criteria. Nikol Pashinyan presented the Government’s reforms in education, justice, police and a number of other areas.

The interlocutors noted that Armenia and Germany have the potential to develop relations in different directions and the will to advance this agenda. Issues of deepening cooperation in agriculture, food security, renewable energy, education, tourism, environmental protection and other areas of mutual interest were discussed. The sides emphasized the initiatives promoting



women’s economic and social involvement.

The Prime Minister informed that since January, 2022 Armenia has recorded a high index of economic activity, and the investment environment of our country, continuously improving conditions can be interesting for German business, to which the Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany gave a positive response. The Prime Minister also expressed satisfaction with the cooperation of Armenia with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Reconstruction Credit Institute (KfW).

Armenia’s Pashinyan congratulates Trudeau on Canada Day

Armenia appreciates the development of relations with Canada and is determined to deepen them as much as possible, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in a congratulatory message to the Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau on the occasion of Canada Day.

“The efforts of the Government of Canada and personally your efforts to support the accomplishment of democracy in the Republic of Armenia, one of the brightest

manifestations of which was the visit of Special Envoy to Europe Stéphane Dion to Yerevan, are greatly appreciated. The recommendations in the comprehensive report published based on the results of that visit can serve as a roadmap for the effective development of relations between our countries,” PM Pashinyan said.

“Once again congratulating you and the friendly people of Canada on this holiday, I express my readiness to continue the close



cooperation for the sake of peace, prosperity and friendship of the peoples of the two countries,” the Prime Minister added.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received the newly appointed Ambassador of the State of Israel to the Republic of Armenia Joel Lion (residence in Jerusalem).

PM Pashinyan discusses perspectives of Armenian-Israeli cooperation with new Ambassador

The Prime Minister congratulated the Ambassador on assuming the post and wished him fruitful work for the benefit of the development of the Armenian-Israeli relations.

Ambassador Lion said the diplomatic service in Armenia is an honor and assured that he would make every effort to deepen

bilateral ties.

The interlocutors stressed the existence of great potential in the field of Armenian-Israeli cooperation, highlighting the programs aimed at concrete results. The sides exchanged views on the actions aimed at the development of the bilateral agenda.

In the difficult period, the State Protection Service fulfilled its task, deserving appreciation. Nikol Pashinyan

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan attended the ceremonial session dedicated to the establishment day of the State Protection Service of the National Security Service. Noyan Tapan was informed from the Office of the Prime Minister.

Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister Arayik Harutyunyan, Director of the National Security Service Armen Abazyan, Head of the State Protection Service Sargis Hovhannisyanyan and other officials were also present at the event.

The Prime Minister congratulated the representatives of the State Protection Service on the occasion of the holiday and noted that the State Protection Service performs special functions that are extremely important for the normal functioning of the state.

“I must emphasize that we have survived and are still surviving a rather difficult period, and during this period the State Protection Service properly fulfilled its task and performed its function. This deserves appreciation. However, like any public administration body, starting from ministries, departments, we should never be satisfied with the quality of our work and should try to improve it every day, especially since work is a phenomenon that always has room for improvement”, the



Prime Minister said.

According to Nikol Pashinyan, the State Protection Service is entering a new stage of institutional development. The Prime Minister reminded that according to the Government’s Action Plan and the adopted political decision, the State Protection Service will function as a body under the Prime Minister in the near future, following the legislative changes. In this regard, Nikol Pashinyan emphasized the development of the institutional capacities of the State Protection Service.

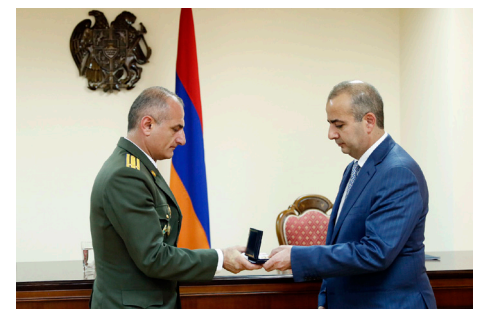
“I am talking about increasing the quality of the personnel’s work and technical equipment. In this direction, of course, we must be consistent and solve the tasks set before us.

Once again I want to thank all of you for the work done, the service and wish all of us success in solving the tasks set before

us, because indeed our Motherland is going through very difficult times, and the overcoming of these difficult times must be carried out at a proper level, so that as a result of all this we have a safe, developing, developed country, where every citizen of the Republic of Armenia will feel confident and will look to the future with more confident eyes and feelings”, the Prime Minister said.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan awarded a group of employees of the State Protection Service of the National Security Service of Armenia with the Medal for Combat Service, the Prime Minister’s Commemorative Medal and the Prime Minister’s Letter of Appreciation for their dedication and bravery while performing their duties.

NSS director Armen Abazyan also presented awards to the head of the State Protection Service Sargis Hovhannisyanyan and a group of representatives of the Service.



Armenia rules out any road within “corridor logic”

Any road within the corridor logic is excluded, Secretary of the Armenian Security Council Armen Grigoryan told a briefing on June 30.

“Our policy remains unchanged. When we declare that our positions are now closer, we have progressed only with the logic that any road within the corridor logic is ruled out,” the Secretary said.

He said the issue of unblocking of communications has been discussed in both

Brussels and Moscow.

“Azerbaijan had long been declaring that a corridor is being discussed. If I am not mistaken, on November 6, when Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk was in Yerevan, he announced that no issue with corridor logic is being discussed. The same happened after the Brussels talks. The spokesperson to EU Council President Charles Michel publicly stated that no corridor has ever been discussed.



This shows that our approach in the negotiations has been this and continues to be this,” he added.

Armenia's Top Judicial Officer Resigns Amid Scandal

(RFE/RL) - Gagik Jahangiryan, the controversial acting head of Armenia's judicial watchdog, resigned on July 1 amid a continuing scandal sparked by leaked audio of his conversation with his ousted predecessor.

Ruben Vartazaryan, the former chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), publicized on June 20 a 14-minute audio clip which he secretly recorded during a February 2021 meeting with Jahangiryan. The meeting took place two months before Vartazaryan was controversially suspended as SJC chairman amid rising tensions with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The recording suggests Jahangiryan warned Vartazaryan that he will face criminal charges unless he resigns as head of the powerful body that nominates judges and can also fire them.

Opposition leaders and civil society members seized upon the recording to demand Jahangiryan's sacking and even prosecution. Jahangiryan dismissed those demands on June 23.



"I have never been forced by any political force, alliance to tender resignation," the former prosecutor told state television. He claimed that he did not blackmail Vartazaryan and simply used "psychological ploys" to engineer the latter's resignation.

The SJC officially refused to censure Jahangiryan as recently as on Thursday. It said the "edited recording" is not sufficient grounds for launching disciplinary proceedings against him. It also cited a statute of limitations applying to misconduct by judges or other judicial officers.

SJC spokeswoman Lilit Shaboyan said that Jahangiryan decided to resign because

of "health problems." She did not elaborate.

The 67-year-old reportedly underwent non-urgent surgery in a Yerevan clinic earlier this week.

Pashinyan admitted on Monday that the scandal has undermined the credibility of judicial reforms declared by his administration. But he did not say whether he believes Jahangiryan should step down.

The stated goal of those reforms is to strengthen the rule of law and judicial independence. Pashinyan's political opponents say that they are on the contrary aimed at increasing government influence on courts.

Ever since Jahangiryan took over the SJC in April 2021, Armenian courts have rarely rejected arrest warrants sought by law-enforcement authorities for opposition figures prosecuted on various charges rejected by them as politically motivated.

Independent and pro-opposition media outlets have regularly accused Jahangiryan of pressuring judges to make such decisions. He has denied that.

Armenian Opposition Leaders Stripped of Parliament Posts

Armenia's parliament controlled by the ruling Civil Contract party voted on July 1 to dismiss one of its deputy speakers and the chairman of its economic committee affiliated with the main opposition Hayastan bloc.

The bloc condemned the decision and said it will give up other leadership positions in the National Assembly in protest.

Speaking before the vote, Civil Contract lawmakers again said that deputy speaker Ishkhan Saghatelyan and the committee chairman, Vahe Hakobyan, must be dismissed because of boycotting sessions of the parliament and its standing committees.

Civil Contract's Arusyak Julhakyan also accused Saghatelyan of "provoking clashes" and "using hate speech" during antigovernment rallies launched by the Armenian opposition on May 1.

Saghatelyan, Hakobyan and the 33 other deputies representing Hayastan and the other parliamentary opposition force, Pativ Unem, began the boycott ahead of the daily rallies aimed toppling Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. They have said that they have no plans yet to return to the parliament.

In a joint statement, Hayastan and Pativ Unem condemned Saghatelyan's and Hakobyan's dismissal and portrayed it as another sign of a "deepening political crisis" in Armenia.

"With this behavior the current authorities once again demonstrated that they are concerned solely with posts, engaged in persecutions, devoid of any ability to confront challenges facing the country, lack legitimacy and do not represent Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh)," said the statement. "In these circumstances, their exit is inevitable."

Parliament speaker Alen Simonian said ahead of the vote that the pro-government majority in the National Assembly is open to considering other opposition candidates for the two posts.

"We will not nominate any candidates," Saghatelyan told RFE/RL's Armenian Service shortly after his ouster. "Moreover, our colleagues will likely give up the other administrative posts occupied by the opposition [in the parliament.]"

Armen Gevorgyan, a Hayastan lawmaker heading the parliament committee on "regional and Eurasian integration,"

was quick to tender his resignation. He said he cannot go against "clear rules of political, public and human ethics."

Pativ Unem's Hayk Mamijanyan similarly resigned as deputy chairman of the parliament committee on foreign relations.

Civil Contract has not yet carried out its threats to strip all opposition lawmakers of their parliament seats for absenteeism. Senior representatives of the ruling party led by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan say it has not yet made a final decision on that.

Saghatelyan again scoffed at those threats. He said the opposition deputies themselves may decide to leave the parliament.

Hayastan and Pativ Unem decided to scale back the protests earlier this month after failing to unseat Pashinyan. But they pledged to continue to fight for his removal from power.

The two opposition forces accuse Pashinyan of planning to make sweeping concessions to Azerbaijan that would place Nagorno-Karabakh under Azerbaijani control and jeopardize the very existence of Armenia.

US reaffirms support for democratic development in Armenia: 246th anniversary of US independence marked in Yerevan

On June 30, 2022, the U.S. Embassy celebrated the 246th anniversary of the independence of the United States of America with an evening music, American food, and fireworks. At the event, U.S. Ambassador Lynne Tracy reaffirmed U.S. support for democratic development in Armenia.

“The stories of our partnership encompass support for democratic institutions, civil society, free and fair journalism, economic growth, energy diversification, inclusive education, improved healthcare, access to water, security cooperation, preservation of cultural heritage, exchange programs, and humanitarian needs,” Ambassador Tracy said in her remarks.

“We have partnered with Armenians in and out of government, like-minded diplomats and international organizations, and American citizens, including proud Armenian-Americans. The tie that has animated this cooperation has been a shared sense



of values. And, it is the power of these partnerships that has helped drive the significant progress we have seen in Armenia over the past thirty years,” she added.

Independence Day, which Americans celebrate as the birthday of the United States of America, takes place on July 4 each year, in honor of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

Five members of the renowned Hover



State Chamber Choir performed the Armenian and U.S. National Anthems in honor of the occasion. The theme of the event is the 30th anniversary of the U.S. – Armenia relationship.

Rep. Judy Chu reiterates calls to stop US military assistance to Azerbaijan

Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA) reiterated her calls to stop U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan, in a statement issued today expressing her disappointment in President Biden’s decision to waive Section 907 restrictions on U.S. aid to the racist Aliyev regime.

“Azerbaijan’s 2020 war of aggression against the peaceful people of Artsakh took thousands of lives and displaced entire

communities. There is no reason for the United States to support the military of a regime that continues to pursue this violence and aggression. That is why I have called for an end to U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan, and why I strongly disagree with the Administration’s decision to waive Section 907,” stated Rep. Chu.

Rep. Chu, along with Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA), visited Artsakh in 2019,



here they saw, first-hand, the heavy tolls of Azerbaijani aggression, the life-saving demining work of The HALO Trust, and the Artsakh people’s commitment to democracy and freedom.

Over 40 Armenian and Azerbaijani practitioners meet for a roundtable discussion in Tbilisi, supported by EU



Over 40 Armenian and Azerbaijani practitioners met for a roundtable discussion, supported by the European Union (EU), in Kachreti, Georgia, on 29-30 June 2022. Together with counterparts from the EU, the United Nations and the Organiza-

tion for Security and Co-operation in Europe, they discussed possible scenarios of a future peaceful South Caucasus.

Discussions encompassed scenarios in the fields of economy and connectivity, security, governance and cultural policies, and assessed the possible steps that can be taken by national governments, civil societies and external actors to enhance prospects of viable solutions to the many challenges confronting long-lasting peace between Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

The EU Special Representative for the

South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, Toivo Klaar, affirmed the EU’s continuing commitment to sustainable peace. He acknowledged the many challenges and high emotions accompanying debates on the future of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. He welcomed the determination of practitioners to continue their efforts to engage in dialogue, build trust and counter embedded narratives precluding not only improved Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, but a peaceful and prosperous future of the South Caucasus region as a whole.

Armenia and US sign \$120 million grant agreement



Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia Mher Grigoryan and USAID Mission Director for Armenia John Allelo signed a 5-year Development Objectives Grant Agreement between the Republic of Armenia and the United States of America, under which a \$120 million grant assistance will be provided to Armenia.

The agreement is aimed at strengthening democratic values and ensuring economic stability.

Representatives of both USAID and Armenian state institutions were present at the signing ceremony.

“On behalf of the Government and on my personal behalf I would like to thank you for the assistance provided to Armenia, emphasizing that the directions set by the agreement are of great importance for overcoming the economic challenges Armenia faces in this difficult period, as well as for sustainable development and strengthening democracy in the country,” Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan said.

“I would like to especially thank all our government counterparts who have been instrumental in reviewing this agreement. Your time, feedback, and investment in crafting this document, and making this day a reality, highlights our commitment to

shared values and initiatives. The United States remains committed to supporting Armenia on its democratic and economic reforms” Mission Director John Allelo said.

The agreement aims at promoting transparency and accountability in the public administration, strengthening local governance capacity, as well as participatory and inclusive electoral and political processes and the rule of law. The programs to be implemented under the agreement will promote inclusive participation of citizens in governance, facilitate access to independent and diversified sources of information. In order to strengthen economic stability, the programs will aim at increasing the competitiveness of the private sector, strengthening the workforce, and sustainable management of natural resources.

Pensioners in Armenia to get 10% cashback for non-cash transactions

The program of 10% cashback for non-cash transactions for pensioners and pension who receive benefits, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs informs.

From now on, citizens who receive their pension or benefits in a non-cash way and make non-cash purchases will receive a 10% refund next month, but not more than 5,000 drams.

The refund also applies to utility payments. The mechanism applies not only to ATMs, but also to utility payments made through mobile banking applications.

The VTB Armenia Bank, Ardshinbank, and Armenian Business Bank have already joined the program. All citizens who wish to change the organization providing their pension or benefit can apply to the regional



center of the Unified Social Service.

Central Bank of Armenia, Warsaw Stock Exchange sign contract on the sale of Armenian Stock Exchange



The Governor of the Central Bank of Armenia Martin Galstyan and President of the Management Board of the Warsaw Stock Exchange (GPW) Marek Dietl signed an agreement on the sale of a majority interest

in the Armenian Stock Exchange (AMX).

“We consider this investment as a long-term partnership. Our aim is to recreate with joint efforts the capital markets of Armenia and thrive to extend our business further into the region.

We also expect to develop the capital markets infrastructure, creating opportunity for businesses to raise sustainable and affordable capital while enabling the investors and savers to manage their savings and investments more professionally within a wider range of investment products and opportunities,” said Marek Dietl, President

of the Management Board of GPW.

“We believe this to be an important milestone in the development of Armenian capital markets. Having found such a partner in the Warsaw Stock Exchange, realizing we have the same vision and similar aspirations, we believe this deal to be a turning point in the chronicles of capital markets in Armenia. Under the leadership of the Warsaw Stock Exchange, with their experience and knowledge, AMX has the full potential to expand and become the robust stock market ready to take up the challenges”

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IMF: Armenia's GDP growth expected to reach 5 percent in 2022

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team, led by Iva Petrova visited Armenia during June 20–24, 2022. The team's discussions with the authorities covered recent developments, the economic outlook, and the authorities' policy priorities that could underlie a future IMF-supported program. At the end of the visit, Ms. Petrova issued the following statement:

“Armenia's economic activity grew by 9.4 percent (YoY) in the first four months of 2022 driven by domestic consumption and investment, supported by the construction, tourism, financial, real-estate, and IT sectors, and boosted by a large inflow of external income and capital. Inflation accelerated to 9 percent in May (YoY) due to buoyant domestic demand, supply constraints, and an increase in global food and fuel prices. The overall budget position was in surplus in the first quarter of 2022 owing to strong revenue collection in line with economic activity and an under-execution of expenditures. The bank-

ing system remained solid, and the dram appreciated against the US dollar.

“IMF staff projects real GDP to grow by about 5 percent in 2022, driven by domestic demand and benefiting from the strong economic momentum in the first four months of the year. Inflation is expected to increase temporarily before moderating by the end of the year, when past monetary policy actions and the passthrough of the recent dram appreciation have their full impact. The Central Bank of Armenia should stand ready to adjust its monetary policy stance as necessary, while allowing the exchange rate to be a shock absorber. Nonetheless, the risk that the recent inflow of external income and capital to Armenia could face an abrupt reversal calls for re-building greater foreign reserve buffers. As the economy is operating near capacity, it does not require additional fiscal stimulus, and the authorities should save the revenue overperformance, else inflationary pressures could persist.

“It is important to maintain macro-fiscal-financial stability amid the war in Ukraine, sanctions on Russia, and increased global financial market volatil-

ity; steer inflation toward the CBA target of 4 percent; and restore fiscal buffers through growth-friendly and inclusive policies. Structural policies should focus on building economic resilience, including against climate change; developing capital markets; pursuing digitalization and public administration reforms; improving governance, transparency, and fiscal risk management; fully operationalizing the PIM/PPP framework, and facilitating an investment-driven, knowledge-based, and export-led growth. The authorities' emphasis on building human capital through health and education reforms is welcome. The pace of these reforms should be fiscally prudent and consistent with the fiscal rules. The increase in minimum and average pensions should be gradually phased in alongside measures that foster labor force participation and preserve the Pillar II component of the system.

“Discussions on a new IMF-supported program are expected to commence in September.

“The IMF team thanks the Armenian authorities, development partners, and diplomatic community for fruitful discussions and cooperation.”

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of the 21st century and lead the region.” said Martin Galstyan, Governor of the Central Bank of Armenia.

The intention of the GPW to acquire the AMX was announced on September 18, 2020, after which the necessary analysis were carried out, a development plan for the next 5 years was purposed, and the necessary corporate approvals were implemented.

Finally, this year at the May 24 Meeting, the Board of the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia approved the transaction. Accordingly, the Warsaw Stock Exchange (GPW) will acquire 65.03% of shares of the Armenia Securities Exchange (AMX) (967 shares in total).

The Central Bank of Armenia will maintain 25.02% of shares, and the remaining 9.95% are the AMX's own shares. The value of the transaction is about AMD 873 million, a part of which (about AMD 499 million) will be paid after signing the Share Purchase Agreement, and the rest, after completion of processes established by the Share Purchase Agreement.

The Warsaw Stock Exchange Group (GPW Group) operates trading platforms for shares, Treasury and corporate bonds, derivatives, electricity and gas, and provides indices and benchmarks including WIBOR and WIBID. The index agent FTSE Russell classifies the Polish capital market as a Developed Market since 2018. The markets operated by the GPW Group are

the biggest in Central and Eastern Europe.

At the end of May 2022, the market capitalization of 376 domestic companies listed on the Main Market was PLN 585.8 billion (EUR 128.0 billion), while the total market capitalization of 421 domestic and foreign companies listed on the Main Market was PLN 1,165.2 billion (EUR 254.6 billion).

Armenia Securities Exchange (AMX) is the only securities regulated market operator in Armenia. As an integrated exchange offering, AMX provides a full suite of services including listing, trading, clearing, information services and alternative market solutions. Currently 28 companies are listed in the AMX.

First industrial demonstrator for green hydrogen production to be constructed in Armenia



In the presence of Mr Vatché Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia, Mrs Anne Louyot, Ambassador of France in Armenia, and Mrs Hasmik Tolmajyan, Ambassador of Armenia in France, Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) and Hy-GreenCo company (subsidiary of the French group Solges-Energy) have consented to sign a partnership agreement aimed at the construction of the first industrial demonstrator of Smart Grid in Armenia, integrating the entire chain production of green hydrogen.

This industrial demonstrator, developed in partnership with French research institutes and laboratories, will originally supply clean electricity to the SMART Center created by COAF in Debet, Armenia, and eventually to the Debet community. A solar farm will produce the electrical energy that will power a French technology electrolyser for the production of green hydrogen. The hydrogen produced will be stored to be used either directly by supplying a hydrogen station with charging terminals, or to be retransformed into electricity using

a hydrogen fuel cell, which is also based on French technology, and thus ensure that the end users are served in an uninterrupted way and free of any CO2 emission.

This innovative process of hybrid renewable energy production solves the problem of intermittency related to solar or wind sources. Carried out in the form of an industrial demonstrator, it will enable further development of this technology and conceive its large-scale expansion in Armenia.

France has ventured into hydrogen as the energy of the future leading to carbon neutrality, and is classed among the best companies and research centers in the world for mastering its production and conversion technology. Armenia, for its part, has committed to a vast plan to reduce its carbon footprint and create an exemplary green economy, through the development of clean and renewable energy solutions in particular.

This partnership between French and Armenian stakeholders will on one hand allow French companies to develop their know-how in clean energy – and particularly hydrogen – on a national scale, and

on the other hand Armenia to be among the leaders in achieving low carbon goals and developing a thriving green economy.

This project is one of the first achievements of the “France-Armenia Ambitions” Roadmap signed between France and Armenia on December 9, 2021, with the specific aim to increase cooperation between the two countries in the fields of sustainable development and new technologies.

Armen Sédéfian, president of the Solges-Energy group, particularly stated that “Armenia represents an extraordinary opportunity to develop the best of French technology in the field of renewable energies and to create a real industrial sector in collaboration with our partner companies and equipment manufacturers in France. We wish to actively contribute to the process undertaken by Armenia to develop its green economy and make it the 1st Smart & Green Nation in the region thanks to French industrial excellence. As a result, Armenia can very soon become a great technological showcase for the neighboring markets of the Eurasian economic area, as well as those of Iran and the Gulf countries.”

Korioun Khatchadourian, for his part, affirmed “We are very happy about the outcome of this partnership with the SOLGES-ENERGY group, as this renewable energy production project empowers us to add the last brick of innovation and sustainable development in the foundation of our SMART Center in Debet.

Since its inception COAF has in fact been entirely dedicated to a sustainable development approach, which has inspired the entirety of the projects we have carried out to this date. It is also yet another way for us to contribute to the image of an Armenia resolutely committed to the global cause of reducing greenhouse gases.”



Canada will open an Embassy in Armenia. Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly announced the plans at a press conference on June 29.

“Following the mission and report of Stéphane Dion, Canada’s Special Envoy to the European Union and Europe and Ambassador to Germany, on ways to increase

Canada to open an Embassy in Armenia

Canadian support for Armenian democracy, Canada will open a full embassy with a resident ambassador in Armenia, allowing for stronger bilateral ties and increased Canadian support for Armenian democracy,” Minister Joly said.

“After decades of tireless and consistent advocacy by the ANCC and its grassroots supporters across Canada, we are extremely gratified to witness this momentous achievement,” the Armenian National Committee of Canada (ANCC) said in a Facebook post.

“This is a milestone for both countries, as much as it is for Armenian-Canadians

who have been staunch advocates for increased Canadian presence in Armenia, and for long-lasting relations between Ottawa and Yerevan,” the Committee continued.

“We thank the Government for its decision to finally establish an embassy in Armenia. We remain committed to continuing our advocacy to ensure that the views and opinions of the Armenian-Canadian community are well-represented as we continue working with the Government of Canada on the next steps of this important initiative,” ANCC said.

Effective cooperation between courtiers needed to resist challenges in OSCE area – Armenian Deputy FM

The use of force or the threat of force, the de facto continuing violations of the arms control regime, the use of foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries in armed conflicts have called into question the OSCE’s ability to ensure comprehensive security in its area of responsibility, Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Vahe Gevorgyan said at the OSCE’s Annual Security Review Conference.

It was noted that the continuous violations of the ceasefire approved by Azerbaijan in the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020, Azerbaijan’s steps to cause a humanitarian crisis in Artsakh in March this year, obstruction of the activity of the OSCE framework created for the settle-

ment of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict show that resisting to the security challenges in the OSCE area requires effective cooperation between the participating countries and reaffirmation of the OSCE’s basic principles and commitments.

Expressing support for the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, the Deputy Foreign Minister attached importance their activities aimed, among others, at ensuring the realization of the rights of the Artsakh people to decide their own future – a key goal of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement. OSCE involvement in humanitarian issues, including the release of Armenian prisoners of war and other detainees, protection of cultural heritage, and



the addressing of cases of missing persons and enforced disappearances and was also emphasized.

Within the framework of the conference, Deputy Minister Vahe Gorgyan met with OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid. A wide range of issues of common interest was discussed.

UK commits a further £500,000 to landmine disposal in Armenia and Azerbaijan

The UK Government is providing a further £500,000 to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support land mine clearance in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

New funding will provide vital training and expert advice to make the area safe, prevent injuries and save lives.

Minister for Europe and North America, James Cleverly, said: “This UK contribution will harness the UN’s expertise, reduce the risks to civilian life in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and allow people to rebuild their lives.”

“In the spirit of protecting all the peo-

ples of the region, the UK urges Armenia and Azerbaijan to sign the UN conventions that seek to eliminate the use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. We encourage the authorities to ensure the UN and other humanitarian agencies are able to contribute fully to supporting peace and development across all parts of the region,” he added.

The latest contribution brings total UK funding for demining to over £1 million since the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2020. It builds on the UK’s £1 million donation to the International Committee of the Red Cross in 2020.

The region is one of the most contaminated with land mines and unexploded ordnance in the world.

Launched in 2015, the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) is a cross government fund which works to build peace and stability in countries at risk of instability and in regions suffering from long running conflicts

The CSSF operates in over 80 countries and territories, delivering more than 90 programmes and combines Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other, non-ODA funding sources.

ANCA shares findings from recent fact-finding mission in Artsakh



Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) Government Affairs Director Tereza Yerimyan shared findings from her recent, three-person ANCA fact-finding mission to Artsakh in testimony submitted this week to the U.S. Senate panel drafting the FY23 foreign aid bill, ANCA reports.

Yerimyan underscored the longstanding calls for to end all U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan and the delivery of an urgently needed \$50 million aid package to Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh).

“Having recently returned from a fact-finding mission in Artsakh, I can bear witness to the devastating humanitarian impact of Azerbaijan’s aggression against Artsakh’s civilian population,” stated Yerimyan. “As many as 100,000 Armenians were displaced. Many schools and hospitals, destroyed during the war, remain in ruins. Countless homes remain uninhabitable. The maternity ward of the state hospital has been rendered completely unusable. In addition to losing at least 70%

of their indigenous lands, the Armenians of Artsakh now live upon a landscape littered with landmines and, especially, unexploded ordinance, posing a threat to the daily lives of children and families.”

Yerimyan continued, “Azerbaijan, for its part, continues to illegally hold and abuse Armenian prisoners of war, in contravention of the ceasefire agreement and Baku’s own commitments under international law. During our recent ANCA visit to Artsakh we interviewed a repatriated POW – an 80-year-old female civilian who was captured in her village home, witnessed the beating of her husband, and was tortured herself.”

Yerimyan made the case that Congress should hold the Aliyev regime accountable for the ethnic-cleansing of Artsakh and Baku’s ongoing occupation of sovereign Armenian territory by cutting off all U.S. military aid to its armed forces. She also pressed for a long-term developmental investment in Artsakh, to help its families “rebuild their lives and resettle in safety

upon their indigenous Armenian homeland.”

In May, Yerimyan, ANCA IT Director Nerses Semerjian, and Programs Director Alex Manoukian were joined by ANCA International’s Gevorg Ghukasyan in a week-long fact-finding mission to Artsakh. While there, they worked closely with the ANC of Artsakh, which was launched in September 2021, to focus on protecting the rights of Artsakh’s citizens, securing international recognition of the Artsakh Republic, and restoring Artsakh’s territorial integrity.

The ANCA team discussed Artsakh’s geopolitical challenges with Foreign Minister David Babayan and learned new details about the plight of the 100,000 Armenian refugees forced from their ancestral homes during the 2020 war from Artsakh Republic Minister of Social Development and Migration Armine Petrosyan. Artsakh Human Rights Ombudsman Gegham Stepanyan discussed the effects of Azerbaijan’s ongoing attacks on border villages and the water and gas challenges facing the Artsakh population. During meetings with Vardan Tadevosyan, the founder and director of the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Center, the ANCA team learned more about the life-changing assistance the center provides for soldiers and civilians injured during the 2020 Artsakh war, while working with children and adults with physical and mental disabilities. The ANCA team also met with representatives of The HALO Trust, whose demining efforts have saved countless lives in Artsakh for over two decades, in part through ANCA-supported U.S. assistance.



Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel will be the next president of the jury for the prize, worth 1 million euros, awarded annually by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

This is the first position accepted by Merkel since she ceased her duties as chancellor in December 2021.

Founded by the Armenian oil magnate and art collector Calouste Gulbenkian in Portugal in 1956, the foundation aims to improve people's quality of life through art, charity, science and education.

Angela Merkel succeeds **Jorge Sampaio**, who has been president of the jury since its first edition. The jury also includes **Miguel Bastos Araújo** (Research Professor at the National Museum of Natural Sciences, in Madrid and Professor of Biogeography at the University of Évora, Pessoa Prize 2018), **Hans Joachim Schellnhuber** (Founder and Director Emeritus of the Potsdam Institute for Research on

Angela Merkel to chair the jury of the Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity

the Impact Climate Specialist and Professor Emeritus at Tsinghua University in China), **Johan Rockström** (Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Professor of Earth System Sciences at the University of Potsdam), **Miguel Arias Cañete** (former European Commissioner for Energy and Climate Action), **Rik Leemans** (Director of the Environmental Systems Analysis Group, University of Wageningen and Wageningen and editor-in-chief of the journal international *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*), **Runa Khan** (Founder and Executive Director of the NGO Friendship and President of Global Dignity Bangladesh), **Sandra Díaz** (Biologist, Professor of Ecology at the National University of Córdoba and member of the Royal Society) and **Sunita Narain** (Director of the Center for Science and Environment in Delhi and Editor of Down To Earth Magazine).

The **Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity** was established by the Foundation with the aim of distinguishing people, groups or organizations from all over the world that have been outstanding in the fight against the climate crisis.

Among the potential areas of recognition for the Award are those that can contribute to reducing or removing greenhouse gas emissions; actions to increase the resilience of people and the environment to the impacts of climate change; and also, the mobilization of financial resources, public or private, to accelerate the decarbonization of the economy.

The Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity was awarded for the first time, in 2020, to the young Swedish activist **Greta Thunberg**, who decided to distribute the amount to various environmental and humanitarian projects in the Global South.

Last year, the Prize was awarded to the **Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy** – the largest global alliance for city climate leadership, comprising over 10,600 cities and local governments from 140 countries, including Portugal. The amount of the Gulbenkian Prize was used to support the Energy Transition and climate resilience in Africa, with large projects being financed in five cities in **Senegal** (supply of drinking water) and in one city in **Cameroon** (development of energy efficiency solutions).

Int'l relations will begin to develop in shadow of war: Yerevan hosts discussion attended by experts

Russia and Armenia have created such close, friendly and allied relations at different levels that it is possible to discuss problems and move forward without additional emotions, Timofei Bordachev, Programme Director of the Valdai Discussion Club, said at a roundtable in Yerevan on July 2 on the topic of the resilience of Russia and the West in Ukraine and its impact on the post-Soviet space.

“Our countries have formed very close relations in different areas - political, military-political, economic and most importantly, humanitarian. Russia's presence in Armenia, and Armenia's presence in Russia are very important. The friendly ties exist in the bilateral relations and the Eurasian platform. We appreciate it, it allows us to calmly discuss the issues without emotions where our views are different. We understand that these issues could also be part of the friendly, close and allied relations. All issues could be discussed and

moved forward”, he said.

Touching upon the global developments and conflicts, Timofei Bordachev said the world is going to live in a period of quite active military conflicts in coming years, if not in coming decades. However, he stated that this doesn't mean that a global disaster will happen. According to him, conflicts will continue, and the countries, that are part of that regions, will feel their effect. The other countries of the world will also feel that. He stated that now the international relations of countries will start developing in the shadow of war.

“One of the main tasks of Russia, Armenia and other countries will be to raise the level of domestic stability. The conflicts will continue, the wars are inevitable, and we should live with them”, he said.

Ivan Safranchuk, Director of the Center of Eurasian Research at Moscow State University of International Relations, said all understand well that they are at a point



where they would not like to be.

“Due to the developments, the situation became more clear, many issues were clarified for us. We should avoid illusions. Through various thesis an attempt is made to cause fear among post-Soviet countries and not only. Our internal feeling is that Russia is ready to give much greater freedom to the post-Soviet countries, but when we are told that no, you are an empire that is trying to capture and isolate everyone from the outside world, this has nothing to do with what we see. Moreover, I would like to note that the Eurasian integration, that is implemented in recent period, has been formed on the basis that we are ready to share our economic growth with the post-Soviet countries”, Safranchuk said.

Yerevan and Marseille keen to expand cooperation



The perspectives of deepening the 30-year cooperation between Yerevan and Marseille were discussed during Yerevan Mayor Hrachya Sargsyan's meeting with the deputy mayors of Marseille.



Mayor of Marseille Benoit Payan was



Armenian Genocide essay by fifth-grader honored by Monmouth County

History in all its forms – from the beauty of houses lovingly preserved to a fifth-grader's essay about the horrors of the Armenian genocide – received recognition recently from the Monmouth County Historical Commission, *Patch* reports.

The Historical Commission announced the winners of the 2022 Fifth-Grade History Essay Contest.

"This year marks the Historical Commission's 29th year of holding the annual essay contest, and each year I am captivated by the student's historical essays," said Commissioner Lillian G. Burry, liaison to the Historical Commission.

James Badishkanian from Oak Hill



Academy in Middletown, a Spring Lake resident, was awarded first place for his essay, "A Boy from Dikranagerd." And it was a riveting essay about his great-grandfather Robert's harrowing survival of a genocide by Turks in the town of Dikranagerd.

unable to receive the delegation as he tested positive for Covid-19.

Greeting the Mayor of Yerevan, Deputy Mayor of Marseille Yanick Ohanissian noted that the collaboration between the two cities has a big potential for development and expansion, which should be used for the benefit of the residents of Yerevan and Marseille.

Expressing gratitude for warm welcome, Yerevan Mayor Hrachya Sargsyan stressed that the visit is a good opportunity to outline priority directions for working out a new three-year program. The parties attached importance to experience exchange between specialists and stressed that the cities encountering similar problems should join their efforts to achieve results.

The attack there killed Robert's family, except for one other brother. They were two of eight siblings. The two eventually made their way to America, where Robert and his wife, Rose, worked in various jobs in the early 1900s and ultimately became owners of a bridal gown business in Orange, still in operation today, the essay said.

As James put it "this is a very heart-breaking part of my family history, but it is very important to keep tragic events from happening again. My appreciation for history has grown."

Other students' essays also were recognized by the commission.

2022 Aurora Prize ceremony to take place in Venice in October

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative has announced that the 2022 Aurora Prize Ceremony and special events will be organized in Venice, Italy, on October 14–16, 2022. Aurora will bring together the world's leading humanitarians to honor modern-day heroes, celebrate the spirit of humanity, and empower the next generation of saviors.

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and its flagship program, the Aurora Prize, seek to address on-the-ground humanitarian challenges around the world with a focus on helping the most destitute. On behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, an Aurora Prize Laureate is honored each year with a US \$1,000,000 award, which gives the Laureate a unique opportunity to continue the cycle of giving and to support the organizations that help others. Dedicated to discovering and supporting the world's unsung humanitarian heroes, Aurora has already made a significant impact on the lives of over 2.7 million people in need.

The weekend of special events in Venice will feature two Aurora Dialogues discussions. The first one will present the courageous work of 2022 Aurora Humanitarians Jamila Afghani, Hadi Jumaan and Mahienour El-Massry, whereas the second is set to highlight the vital role of the young generation in addressing the issues that will define the future of humanity. World famous peace and human rights activists and humanitarians, including the members of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, as well as representatives of the Aurora community and the Initiative's supporters, will join forces to identify ideas capable of delivering tangible positive change.

The weekend will culminate in the 2022 Aurora Prize Ceremony to be held on the San Lazzaro Island, the headquarters of the Mekhitarist Congregation and one of the world's most prominent centers of Armenian culture and Armenian studies. This year, Aurora honors three modern-day heroes for giving access to education to girls and women in Afghanistan, liberating



prisoners of war in Yemen, and defending human rights in Egypt. During the Ceremony, one of the 2022 Aurora Humanitarians will be named the 2022 Aurora Prize Laureate based on their demonstration of courage, commitment, and impact.

Nominations are currently open for the 2023 Aurora Prize. Anyone can put forward modern-day heroes who risk their own lives, health or freedom to save the lives, health or freedom of others suffering as a result of violent conflict, atrocity crimes or other major human rights violations.

The Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity is a global humanitarian award. Its mission is to recognize and support those who risk their own lives, health or freedom to save the lives, health or freedom of others suffering as a result of violent conflict, atrocity crimes or other major human rights violations. The Aurora Prize Laureate is selected based on the nominee's demonstration of courage, commitment and impact.

On behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, an Aurora Prize Laureate is honored with a US \$1,000,000 award, which gives the Laureate a unique opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by supporting

the organizations that help people in need.

The Aurora Prize Selection Committee is comprised of Nobel Laureates Shirin Ebadi and Leymah Gbowee; former president of Ireland Mary Robinson; human rights activist Hina Jilani; former president of Mexico Ernesto Zedillo; Médecins Sans Frontières Co-founder and former foreign minister of France Bernard Kouchner; journalist and Pulitzer Prize winner Dele Olojede, former CEO of Unilever and Co-founder and Co-Chair of IMAGINE Paul Polman; human rights activist and Co-founder of The Sentry John Prendergast and President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Vartan Gregorian (1934-2021). The Committee is chaired by the Co-Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London Lord Ara Darzi.

World famous peace and human rights activist Benjamin Ferencz and Academy Award-winning actor and humanitarian George Clooney are the Committee's Honorary Co-Chairs.

We honor the memory of Elie Wiesel (1928-2016), inaugural Selection Committee Co-Chair; President of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity; Nobel Laureate.

Diaspora-Armenian Tatev Manucharyan says in order to build strong country it's necessary to develop provinces

Tatev Manucharyan, a Diaspora-Armenian who moved to live in the United States of America at the age of 16, got an opportunity in 2021 to return back to Armenia within the framework of iGorts project and work at the Ministry of Environment by investing her experience and knowledge for improving the field and developing policies and programs.

In an interview to ARMENPRESS, Tatev said that she was born in Yerevan and later moved with her family to Los Angeles. After graduating from school there she studied political science in a university. Later Tatev moved to Europe, lived in the Netherlands and studied EU Legislation in her Master's Degree.

“After graduating from the university in the Netherlands, I have worked in the same university as a researcher, as well as taught EU Legislation. I would like to state that I have always wished to return to Armenia, work here, and after the war my desire further intensified. I thought what I have done to prevent such phenomena? In other words, I left the country and didn't bring any contribution to my homeland, except from visiting as a tourist. In fact, I have always dreamed of coming to and living in Armenia, working here, and thus, I decided to come and make my dream true,



by contributing to the development of my country”, she said.

Touching upon the problems she faced in Armenia, Tatev said she almost didn't have any problems, but mentioned some phenomena. “As my work is connected with environment, I would like very much if the residents of Yerevan and the population of Armenia in general show more care to the city and the environment. It's very sad to see garbage everywhere, in cities, in nature, in our beautiful sites, on roads. I am more concerned about the waste management issue and the air pollution in Yerevan, but as for other issues, I got used to them”, she said.

Tatev says different countries have advantages both good sides and bad sides, but you don't feel at home in any country than in your birthplace. “I was born and grew

up in Yerevan, and this feeling is very very important for me. Being here and feeling like home is very nice”, she said.

As for the plans for the future, Tatev Manucharyan said they are not clear yet as she has not completed the iGorts program, it will end in September 2022. “It can be said the idea of staying in Armenia has always been on my mind. I hope there will be more opportunities at this period so that I can work and live in Armenia. In any case after the war, I understood that I cannot help my homeland only with visiting Armenia for a certain time and as a tourist”, she noted.

Talking about her dreams, she said: “Perhaps now my biggest dream is to see Armenia strong, to have a country which we will be proud of. Armenia has many good sides, but I see potential in all areas that is not used much. I would like to see more investments, both public and private, in education sector, so that we could be leaders in this and other areas. My desire is for us to be a leader in the region in all areas. The issue of development of provinces is also very important for me. We could develop our country only by developing our provinces”, she stated.

Interview by Gayane Gaboyan

Armenia's first “Museum of Illusions” to open in Gyumri

Armenia's first “Museum of Illusions” will be the second largest city of Gyumri on July 6.

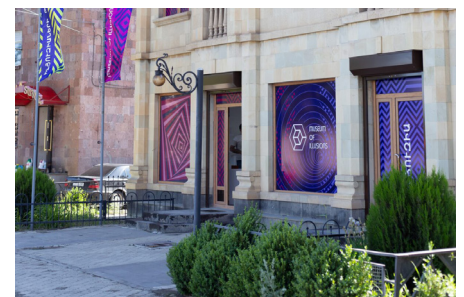
The museum will showcase about 50

exhibits based on physics, mathematics and psychology. Visitors will have the opportunity to see “magical” rooms which could seem ordinary at first sight.

“The idea of creating a museum has existed for a long time; we have studied similar museums in different countries for years. We think it will be interesting for both locals and tourists,” says museum co-founder Grisha Amirkhanyan.

The museum was supported by the EU Business Initiative Innovative

Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia, co-funded by the European Union and the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany and implemented by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).



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Armenian Identity Card

The goal of the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) non-profit organization is to unify Armenians worldwide in a common platform so that through contacts, queries and referenda they can express their views and positions regarding issues of general interest to Armenians around the world and issues of particular interest to Armenian communities in various countries.

Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) also makes it possible to establish business networks, the cardholder can participate in various charitable projects, and can obtain discounts from Armenian and non-Armenian businesses all over the world. Armenians should feel themselves to be full-fledged "citizens" of a reborn Armenia and the Armenian Identity Card is the «passport» for all Armenians.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID)

network is an effective environment where Armenians can implement various projects and pan-Armenian programs. At the heart of HyeID is the creation of an Armenian database which will become the reliable and objective basis to realize the potential of all Armenians around the world. Based on that database, it will be possible to implement various permanent and temporary initiatives through the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) organization.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) worldwide network enables cardholders to elect and get elected to the leadership of The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) network structures.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can benefit from the possibility of discounts intended for HyeID cardholders when shopping for products and services in various countries of the world.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can participate in queries and referenda initiated by the HyeID network and vote on issues of national interest to Armenians.

- Ensure the security and privacy of The Armenian Identification Card (HyeID) cardholders.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders who live in the Diaspora intend to utilize the possibilities made available through HyeID to form a Diaspora representative body — Diaspora Armenian Parliament — through democratic elections.

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