

France to remain committed to strong ties with Armenia – French FM



French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs Stéphane Séjourné said on September 16 in Yerevan that his visit proves Paris will always maintain the continuity of the strong and historic relationship with Yerevan regardless of the changes of politicians and government officials.

Speaking at a joint press conference with Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, Séjourné stressed that naturally his visit was confirmed by President Macron and the new PM Michel Barnier and that it is the continuity of the policy and commitment of France.

Séjourné said French commitment to the strong ties with Armenia will remain the same regardless of changes of politicians. “There will be no change in the values we defend. The continuity of our

support and strong ties will be maintained, the values of democracy, friendship and peace, the historic relationship will be maintained,” he said.

Speaking at a press conference, he said he discussed with his Armenian counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan the Armenia-Azerbaijan relations, among others.

“France supports the signing of an agreement that would establish fair and sustainable peace, and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both countries. This is the whole essence of the document signed in Alma Ata in 1991. The same idea was presented to the political community in Prague in 2022,” the French FM said, highlighting the establishment of peace.

Speaking about the Armenia

-Azerbaijan delimitation process, the French FM said the agreement reached on August 30 is going in the right direction. France supports this process, based on principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, he said.

“The South Caucasus should become a region of peace and cooperation that would enable to develop trade and Armenia will prosper,” the French FM said.

France, just like Armenia, and the international community, wants peace, Séjourné said.

“Since Azerbaijan is soon going to host COP29, it is its obligation to show ahead of COP29 that it sincerely wants to achieve peace. I think we must be able to swiftly advance in the direction of this topic,” he said.

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U.S. Secretary of State reaffirms importance of durable and dignified peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan



The U.S. State Department has issued

a readout of the latest phone call between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The State Department said Blinken “reaffirmed the importance of a durable and dignified peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan.”

“Secretary Blinken welcomed recent progress between the parties, including an agreement on a border delimitation regulation. Secretary Blinken and Prime

Minister Pashinyan discussed the expanding U.S.-Armenia relationship, including cooperation on energy, trade and investment, and education. The Secretary reaffirmed the United States’ commitment to ongoing efforts to support a prosperous, democratic, and independent Armenia that benefits the people of Armenia and the broader Caucasus region,” it added.

Yerevan Dialogue 2024: Armenian FM meets with India’s Minister of State for External Affairs

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan has held a meeting with India’s Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh within the framework of the Yerevan Dialogue forum.

FM Mirzoyan and Kirti Vardhan Singh were pleased to note that bilateral cooperation between Armenia and India has been developing in several areas of mutual interest. They expressed readiness to continue joint efforts to further enhance the bilateral agenda, the foreign ministry said in readout.

Possibilities for partnership in various

platforms and formats, as well as regional issues were also discussed. FM Mirzoyan stressed that Armenia has a clear vision



regarding achieving peace and stability

in South Caucasus which is based on unconditional respect for fundamental principles of international law and unwavering commitment to ensure economic development and effective cooperation. In this context Foreign Minister Mirzoyan presented the latest discussions in the direction of signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan, and the steps for unblocking of regional connections. Both sides underscored the importance of effective opening of economic and transport connections for stakeholders, and in general for ensuring regional stability.

Armenian Prime Minister meets with French FM in Yerevan

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has received French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Stéphane Séjourné.

The Prime Minister “welcomed the visit of the delegation led by Stéphane Séjourné to the Republic of Armenia and attached importance to the further development of ties with France, including in security and the economy”, Pashinyan’s office said in a readout.

“Our strategy is as follows, we want to strengthen our sovereignty, independence, our statehood, and on this path of course we highly value France’s support,” PM Pashinyan said. He underscored the French readiness to support the development of Armenia-EU ties.

Stéphane Séjourné thanked for the



warm reception and likewise stressed the importance of consistent development of Armenia-France cooperation in the sectors of security and economy.

“France stands by Armenia and will continue its support to the Armenian

people, we’ve also made every effort in order for the relationship between our two peoples to get stronger,” the French FM said.

Various topics on the agenda of the Armenia-France relationship were discussed. Views were exchanged around Armenia-EU partnership. The sides attached importance to the launch of the visa liberalization dialogue, as well as the decision to provide support to Armenia through the European Peace Facility.

The Armenian Prime Minister and the French Foreign Minister also touched upon the discussions around the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace treaty and the processes taking place in the region.

PM Pashinyan presents Crossroads of Peace project at inaugural Yerevan Dialogue

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has presented his administration's [Crossroads of Peace](#) project at the Yerevan Dialogue forum.

“Crossroads of Peace project envisages the opening of regional connections, that is, railway, roads, possible cables and gas pipelines, power transmission lines and other connections not only between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but it is assumed that such developments should take place also between Armenia and Turkiye,” Pashinyan said at the forum.

“Of course the Crossroads of Peace project is important for us because, among others, in case of implementation we gain the possibility to have railway connection with Iran, with whom our relations are very important for us, we will have the possibility to have railway connection with Turkiye and Iran, and of course, the establishment of automobile and railway connection between Nakhchivan and Azerbaijan proper through Armenia's territory is also important. We are ready to provide such connection, but we must record that today Nakhchivan



is not deprived of transport connections because it has the chance to establish connection with the outside world through Iranian and Turkish territories.”

Armenia is ready to implement the project, including providing connection for Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan, at any moment, Pashinyan reiterated.

“What's hindering this process? What's hindering is that seemingly not all of our partners are inclined to make use of the possibilities offered by us. There's been a lot of debate to what extent Crossroads of Peace project is in line with the logic of the 2020 November 9 trilateral statement. Such debates have intensified lately, in an attempt to misrepresent that the trilateral statement implies third party security control over these connections

in Armenian territory. This perception has nothing to do with reality,” Pashinyan said.

He quoted article 9 of the trilateral statement, which clearly stipulates that Armenia will ensure security of the connection. “The Republic of Armenia shall guarantee the security of transport connections between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order

to arrange unobstructed movement of persons, vehicles and cargo in both directions,” reads an excerpt of the article.

“This is an open and public text, and it couldn't have been in any other way, because it would be illogical for some other country to ensure security in the territory of a sovereign country,” Pashinyan added.

“There's no provision or article that would mean that Armenia would somehow limit its jurisdiction in its sovereign territory, in terms of customs control, phytosanitary or any other control. There are no such terms,” Pashinyan added.

Pashinyan has repeatedly stated that providing the Azerbaijan proper-Nakhchivan connection does not imply any extraterritoriality: Armenia must maintain sovereignty over the connection.

Three political parties in Armenia start referendum petition for EU membership

The Central Electoral Commission of Armenia has approved an application presented by 51 citizens on forming a steering group for proposing by civic initiative procedure a bill on launching a Process of Armenia's Accession to the European Union.

The Central Electoral Commission President Vahagn Hovakimyan said that

the initiative group, represented by Artak Zeinyan, has submitted all necessary documents required by the Law on Referendum.

The petition, collection of signatures for submitting the bill for a referendum, will be implemented within 60 days of registration of the initiative group. The timeframe for the signature collection

has been set from September 16 to November 14.

Three political parties have endorsed the proposal calling for a referendum on starting a process of Armenia's membership to the EU: the European Party of Armenia, the Republic Party and the For the Republic Party.

Armenia commends Iran's strong stance on respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty

On September 10, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia received the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran Mohammad Hassan Sheikholeslami.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, interlocutors touched upon the issues of the bilateral agenda and regional developments.

Minister Mirzoyan welcomed the participation of the Iranian side in the "Yerevan Dialogue" international forum and the exchange of views.

According to the statement, both sides emphasized the importance of cooperation in directions of mutual interest, in



line with the high-level political dialogue between the two neighboring and friendly countries.

According to the source, interlocutors touched upon the regional issues. Views

were exchanged on the efforts made in the direction of establishing lasting stability and peace in the South Caucasus, and in this context, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia touched upon the peace process with Azerbaijan.

In the context of unblocking regional transport and economic communications, the imperative of unconditional respect for the principles underlying the concept of the "Crossroads of Peace" project, particularly territorial integrity and sovereignty, was emphasized, and Ararat Mirzoyan highly appreciated the firm position of the Iranian side in that regard.

Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians have the right to return, but a clear plan is needed: Ex-ICC Prosecutor

Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo, has affirmed that international law supports the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh. According to Ocampo, the right to return to one's homeland definitely exists but requires a clear and developed plan for implementation.

"International law is important. Azerbaijan is obliged to understand and respect it, because it will lead to consequences for Azerbaijan as well," said Ocampo.

He emphasized that the people of

Nagorno-Karabakh have rights that must be recognized. Ocampo revealed that he has held discussions with former officials of Nagorno-Karabakh, offering assistance in this matter.

"We need to discuss how to plan the return of Armenians, how Azerbaijan will recognize the rights of the Nagorno-Karabakh population, and how these rights will be implemented. A detailed work program, developed by the people of Artsakh, is essential," Ocampo said.

He stressed that while the right to



return exists, its implementation requires favorable conditions.

Ocampo concluded that, in this context, international law supports the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenian, French FMs visit Vedi reservoir

Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Stéphane Sejourne, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Ararat Mirzoyan, visited the Vedi reservoir, which is being built with the loan funds of the French Development Agency and the co-financing of the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

The Ministers reviewed the progress of the construction of the reservoir. The strategic importance of the project in the context of strengthening Armenia's



resilience was emphasized.

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan noted: "The partnership between

Armenia and France is actively developing in all directions. Here we are witnessing one of its very specific, tangible results."

During the visit, the significant positive impact of the project on economic development in the community, engagement of additional water resources and increasing the efficiency of water management, improvement of water supply to irrigated lands, as well as on the environment and tourism were touched upon.

November 9 document does not imply that Russia's FSB must be present on the ground: Pashinyan on Clause 9

In Clause 9 of the document signed on November 9, 2020, between Armenia, Russia, and Azerbaijan, it is clearly stated that all economic and transport links in the region shall be unblocked. The Republic of Armenia shall guarantee the safety of transport communication between the western regions of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic to ensure the unimpeded movement of citizens, vehicles, and cargo in both directions. However, it does not specify that the Federal Security Service of Russia must be present on the ground.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan made this statement during a question-and-answer session with the government in the National Assembly.

The Prime Minister quoted the first sentence of Clause 9 from the tripartite statement of November 9: "All economic and transport links in the region shall be unblocked."

This means that Clause 9 is not solely about establishing contact between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan; it is primarily about the broader issue of unblocking all regional transport links.

"It concerns the opening of all transportation links in the region—such as the Armenia-Russia railway through Meghri and the Ijevan-Kazakh route, as well as road transport routes from Armenia to Iran via Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan to Russia, Kazakhstan, and so on. Clause 9 is about this. Has Armenia blocked the railway to Iran, preventing it



from operating? If it is open, let us know, and we will transport our cargo there," Pashinyan said.

"The guarantor of security is the Republic of Armenia," the Prime Minister emphasized. "And anyone who claims that security is guaranteed by a third country must show where this is written. Moreover, the Republic of Armenia is responsible for organizing road traffic. How can the Republic of Armenia guarantee security if it is not responsible for it? How is that possible? If this were the case, then the Republic of Armenia would guarantee the security of all countries and peace throughout the world," he stressed.

He reiterated: "Armenia guarantees and organizes. There is nothing written that requires someone else to come and guarantee, provide security, or organize. Everything is handled by the Republic of Armenia. This reflects our views on jurisdiction and sovereignty, as expressed in the 'Crossroads of Peace' project," he added.

Clause 9 also states that control over transport communication shall be exercised by the Border Guard Service of the

Federal Security Service of Russia.

"Where is it written that FSB bodies must be present on the ground? There is no such requirement. Even if the presence of Russian border guards in Armenia is considered, their presence is a matter of contract and Armenia's decision. Today, Armenia has decided that they are present; tomorrow, it can decide otherwise," Pashinyan said.

He continued, stating that, according to the agreement between the parties, the construction of new transport links connecting the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic with the western regions of Azerbaijan will be ensured.

"We agree: come, pass, who's stopping you?" Pashinyan said. "Azerbaijan disagrees because it claims that Armenia should not provide security. But how can I not provide security when I have signed and you also signed that Armenia should provide it?"

Pashinyan emphasized that the document does not limit the sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia over any of its territory, nor does it delegate any functions. He added that, given the crisis situation, Armenia had previously expressed its willingness to consider outsourcing on a mirror basis, but this was an act of goodwill.

According to Pashinyan, the statements made by officials from some countries give the impression that they either have not read the document at all or have not read it recently.

Armenia, China keen to advance defense cooperation



On a visit to the People's Republic of China, Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan met with Admiral Dong Jun, China's Minister of National Defense.

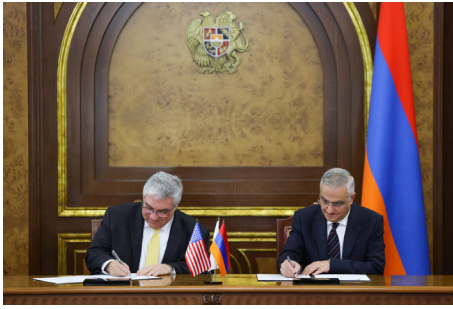
The interlocutors commended the high level of relations between the two countries across various domains, including defense. The parties noted the substantial progress in military cooperation in recent years, including the exploration

of new areas.

The Ministers expressed their commitment to further advancing of Armenia-China cooperation, including enhancing high-level interactions between the Armed Forces of both countries.

A range of issues related to international and regional security was also discussed.

U.S. doubles its funding ceiling for Armenia



The U.S. government has doubled its funding ceiling for Armenia to promote the development of democracy and the economy in the country!

The United States and the Republic of Armenia marked an important step in their partnership by amending their joint Development Objectives Grant Agreement (DOAG) to increase USAID's estimated contribution from \$120 million to \$250 million, and expand their areas of cooperation

and assistance.

The expanded agreement will include key areas such as disaster readiness, cyber security, food and energy security, regional cooperation and trade, democratic transitions, and inclusive economic development. This reflects our strong commitment to helping Armenia become a more inclusive, democratic, and economically resilient country.

USAID/Armenia Mission Director John Allelo said, "This amendment shows how committed we are to our partnership with Armenia. By increasing our support and expanding our programs, we are helping Armenia grow and succeed. Our work with the Armenian government and its ministries is crucial for achieving our shared goals."

Today's signing builds on a long history of cooperation. Since 1992, the U.S. has

provided about \$3 billion to support Armenia's development. This new agreement builds on the success of previous DOAGs, which focused on creating a competitive private sector, improving governance, and enhancing health services.

USAID has adapted its support to meet Armenia's changing needs, including recent challenges and geopolitical shifts.

Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan said, "For Armenia, it's crucial not only to receive financial support but also to promote democratic values, innovative ideas, and a robust business culture through our joint programs. Integrating these elements into the country will help drive fundamental reforms and improve the quality of life for our citizens."

USAID is excited to continue working with Armenia to tackle important issues and explore new opportunities for growth.

Armenia interested in buying more ATAGS artillery systems from India

Armenia is interested in buying additional ATAGS 155mm artillery systems from India, Sputnik Armenia news agency reported citing Indian Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses Director Sujan Chinoy.

"ATAGS is highly maneuverable," Chinoy told Sputnik Armenia. "They are made in India and have been highly successful. The Armenian side bought six of these systems and was satisfied."

Chinoy mentioned Armenia's previous acquisition of the Swathi Weapon Locating Radar systems and Pinaka MRLS.



He said that Armenia has potential to develop its defense industry, which is now focused on startups. "Armenia has three such companies, which isn't few given the country's size and population. India has

120 such companies. Therefore Yerevan and Delhi can establish active cooperation in the area of military technologies, especially in issues concerning startups," Chinoy said.

Earlier media reports said that Armenia ordered the ATAGS systems back in 2022 and received the first batch in August 2023.

According to the Indian Defense Ministry, Armenia bought \$600,000,000 worth of armaments from India in 2024-2025 fiscal years.

EU Ambassador assures visa liberalization achievable with joint efforts

The Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Armenia, Ambassador Vassilis Maragos stated that it is still too early to discuss the specifics of the Armenia-EU visa liberalization process. However, he expressed confidence that, through joint efforts, this significant goal could be achieved.

In response to an "Armenpress inquiry about the ongoing dialogue on Armenia-EU visa liberalization, the EU

Ambassador to Armenia highlighted that a strong partnership has already been established between the Republic of Armenia and the European Union in areas such as judicial reforms, human rights, border management, and the deployment of the EU monitoring mission.

"These are the areas in which we want to continue our work, and the technical teams from both sides will collaborate on them.

In particular, document security is very important to ensure that travelers have secure passports and can be properly identified. Other sectors that ensure safe travel and destinations are also important. However, with joint efforts, I believe we can achieve this significant goal for the benefit of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia," said Maragos.

Garant International Group showcases Garant Logistics and Tower International Consultants at Armenia EXPO 2024



The Garant International Group of companies with its Garant Logistics and Tower International Consultants brands participated in the Armenia EXPO 2024 trade and industrial exhibition forum.

Organizing and managing the transportation and servicing of medium and large businesses with stable supply volumes and freight needs, thanks to the most up-to-date and effective schemes, they make it possible to reduce time and financial costs.

Fourth-class logistics (4PL) outsourcing services from logistics strategy development, cost optimization to full chain of business processes, auto, maritime, rail, air, and multimodal cargo transportation, warehousing logistics, and customs brokerage services available in Armenia, Georgia, Europe, the EAEU, Asia, and other countries. Garant Logistics has been operating in over 100 countries worldwide for nearly a decade.

“As a logistics outsourcing company, we act as the organizer of the entire logistics chain for businesses. We are involved not only in providing transportation logistics services but also in designing and planning the supply chain, as well as managing

logistics-related business processes within the company.

The main customers are medium and large businesses in the production, export, import, and trade sectors that require supply chain and logistics services management,” said Aram Nikoghosyan, founder of Garant International Group.

“Garant Logistics, with its comprehensive range of services, is also available outside of Armenia. Garant International Group is already operational in Georgia, and Garant Sepdition is present in Bulgaria. The potential and capabilities of the company’s team allow it to cover 80% or more of the global cargo transportation services.

In modern business, logistics outsourcing is the most effective cooperation model from the point of view of optimization of companies’ resources, because it allows avoiding unnecessary possible costs for the development of own transport and storage infrastructures or ordering the organization of separate stages of the logistics process to different contractors.

The field is dynamically developing; therefore, the Garant Logistics team is

regularly being trained, studies demand in the international market, and tracks development trends. This allows them to create new and exclusive offers, ensuring that partners are supported at any stage of the international trade cycle.

“Tower International Consultants, a member of the Garant International Group, specializes in providing accounting and tax outsourcing (including payroll calculation and Employer of Record services), legal consulting (particularly in corporate law), and business consulting services to both Armenian and international companies.

Founded in 2007, Tower International Consultants has been part of the Garant International Group of companies since 2023. The comprehensive consulting services offered by Tower International Consultants are designed for business owners who already have an established business and wish to develop it in Armenia, invest in Armenia, open representative offices, or relocate their business to Armenia from any other country.

Tower International Consultants assists in relocating any business to Armenia smoothly and efficiently, providing support from organization registration and bank account setup to comprehensive tax, legal, and accounting advice. In other words, our mission is to integrate companies into the Armenian business environment, streamline the integration process, and ensure their efficient operation,” noted Aram Nikoghosyan.

“The Garant International Group of Companies regularly develops and introduces effective products. Soon, the Garant Logistics brand within the group will unveil a new offering that will expand opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation between the markets of Armenia and China in the realm of logistics outsourcing. “

EU-Armenia partnership is at its best moment, says European Commission Vice-President

Vice-President of the European Commission Margaritis Schinas has described the launch of the visa liberalization dialogue with Armenia as an 'important landmark' in the Armenia-EU relationship.

Vice-President Schinas visited Armenia on September 9 to launch the visa liberalization dialogue between Armenia and the EU.

In an interview with Armenpress, the European Commission Vice-President said that the process is not an isolated initiative but a part of a broader set of initiatives that the EU is developing to support Armenia.

Vice-President Schinas said that the EU-Armenia partnership is 'at its best moment' and lauded the relationship for its 'quality and depth'.

The interview was conducted on September 9, 2024.

Mr. Schinas, how would you summarize the outcomes of your meetings in Armenia?

I was delighted to be able to meet the political leadership of Armenia, the President, Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and most importantly, to launch together with Deputy Prime Minister Grigorian the visa liberalization process at the political level. This is an important landmark in the relationship between the EU and Armenia, but it's not an isolated initiative, it's part of a broader set of initiatives that we are developing to support Armenia in terms of investment in the economy with a new growth and resilience plan together with the United States in the order of 270 million euros on the EU side, but also support this country for peace and security. We have an important EU mission to Armenia to support on border

management. We also have support of the Armenian Armed Forces through the European Peace Facility. But of course, the cherry on the top of the cake is the visa liberalization process which we're starting today. I think this is a day that will be remembered as the first day of a process that would, I hope soon, lead to all Armenians being able to travel freely to Europe for short stay visits without the need for a visa.

Were those meetings fruitful in your opinion?

Yes, I think they were very fruitful because the political timing of this visit is very appropriate. We had a Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers on the 22nd of July that triggered all these new success stories, and I think I'm always of the view that in politics you have to strike the iron when it's still hot. So I'm coming here to mark the importance of these successes. Again, visa liberalization and of course the new support for the Armenian Armed Forces through the European Peace Facility. These are important landmarks that also underpin an important dimension that Armenia is now emerging as a source of stability and reason in a very turbulent geopolitically region. And we will be standing shoulder to shoulder with Armenia to help them continue to deliver.

As you mentioned, the main purpose of your visit to Armenia was the launching or starting the visa liberalization dialogue. Could you please explain what this means in general and what will it give to the Armenian citizens?

Yes, I think you are very right in asking this question because we are now at

the first stage of a process that ultimately, again I hope soon, will lead to visa-free travel to the European Union for all Armenians. Why are we having this moment? Because last July our Member States authorized the Commission to start this process. This was not given, it was not evident, but it happened. So the green light is now on. So we are now entering a phase of implementation of this process that will need to address some specific issues like the security of travel documents, issues of corruption, fight against organized crime, rule of law. So we need to make sure that everything around visa-free travel is safe and secure. We will engage now at a technical level to sort out these issues and at the end of this process we will go back to our Member States for the final agreement. So it's not the end of the road, but there will never be an end of the road unless we have the beginning, which was today.

What other initiatives is the EU preparing to support Armenia's security and other fields to develop the country's resilience?

Yes, I think that there is no doubt now that the EU-Armenia partnership is at its best moment. I think there is quality and depth in this partnership, which is becoming evident both here and in Brussels. There are three pillars that underpin this partnership. Investments, peace and security and people-to-people contact. These three need to go together. There will never be economy and investment without security and peace, and there is no need to have people-to-people contacts when you don't have an economy and security guaranteed. So our ambition is to develop all

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these three pillars together. That's why all our specific initiatives and these success stories I was describing earlier address all three of them. So it's like a symbiotic relationship that would also testify that we are doing all this for Armenia because Armenia won the right to be supported with a responsible stance and an unwavering commitment to reform and stability.

Are there any plans for another high-level visit from Brussels to Yerevan?

I think a few months ago my colleague, Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis, was here. I am here now in the beginning of

September. You don't get two European Commission Vice Presidents to a third country in such a short term, so that shows something. I think it would be reasonable to expect that at the end of the year, when we have the new political cycle that will open in Brussels certainly the people who will succeed us will come to take forward this positive agenda.

Mr. Vice-President, do you have anything to add?

Yes, I told the country's leaders that although this is my first visit to Armenia, I feel very comfortable here. I grew up in Thessaloniki, Greece, which is the center



of a thriving Greek-Armenian community. I had Greek-Armenians at school, in basketball. I went to their family lunches and dinners, I followed their ceremonies, I listened to their language. I know of the richness of your nation's culture. In a way, my presence here brings them all with me. I feel very emotional on a personal level and very comfortable here.

Armenian, Hungarian FMs discuss bilateral cooperation, regional issues



On the sidelines of the "Yerevan Dialogue" international forum, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan had a meeting with Péter Szijjártó, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

The interlocutors discussed issues of bilateral agenda, expressing readiness to continue developing cooperation in

sectoral directions along with the active political dialogue. The Ministers stressed the importance of additional joint efforts in order to expand the scope of cooperation, especially in the field of economy and trade. The Ministers also touched upon the steps being taken to implement the mutual agreement on the opening of resident diplomatic missions in the capitals

of the two countries.

Ararat Mirzoyan and Péter Szijjártó discussed the process aimed at deepening the Armenia-EU partnership. The Foreign Minister of Armenia emphasized that the decision on the Visa Liberalization Dialogue with Armenia was actually made in the EU Council during the current presidency of Hungary and expressed hope that during the next months of the presidency the negotiations on expanding the new agenda of the Armenia-EU partnership and approving the corresponding document will be successful.

The Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Hungary exchanged views on regional issues. Ararat Mirzoyan reaffirmed Armenia's approach to the peace process with Azerbaijan, which was reflected in the latest proposal on the signing of the peace treaty as well as in the "Crossroads of Peace" concept of unblocking regional communications.

We cherish unique role of Armenian presence in enriching Indian society, says Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh



India and Armenia stand for peace, prosperity, and good for all, India's Minister of State for External Affairs, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh said at the *India in Armenia, and Armenia in India* conference in Yerevan.

The event was held at the Cafesjian Center for the Arts in Cascade.

Below is the text of remarks delivered by Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh.

"As a well-wisher and a strong proponent of India-Armenia ties, I am honored to join all of you at this special event being held at a very special venue, dedicated to the preservation of the rich heritage of Armenian art and culture.

"The theme of this exhibition, *India in Armenia, and Armenia in India*, highlights the bonds that have transcended geographical boundaries and kept the two countries close despite the physical distance between them.

"India is not only familiar with Armenian presence but also cherishes the unique role played by it in enriching Indian society. The first Armenian people to settle in India were merchants and traders who built vibrant communities in coastal parts of the country. Over the years this interaction witnessed manifold growth and development to reach its current robust

state.

"One prime example of the enduring Armenian presence in India is the Armenian Church in Kolkata which was first built in 1688. Even today, the Armenian presence in Kolkata and various other places continues to flourish and develop.

"It is really heartening to see that an entire panel in the exhibition is dedicated to these glorious chapters of our shared heritage.

"This exhibition demonstrates the strong historical foundation on which our current partnership rests and the potential that exists for the future. I believe that the similarity between India and Armenia regarding openness to ideas, cultures and influences from abroad is natural and driven by the way we have interacted with the world.

"We have both been practitioners of globalization and amity between cultures and nations through much of recorded history. This shared world-view continues to guide us even today.

"Indians and Armenians have taken their identities across the world, across geographies, political, and cultural divides, and looked to create opportunities, growth, cohesiveness, and oneness. Our diasporas are a testament to this.

"India and Armenia stand for peace, prosperity, and good for all. Our vision of 'tech for good' is reflective of the same.

The successes of our collaborative efforts reflect these principles including in the domain of IT and technology. Indian and Armenian minds have played a critical role in building digital highways that have made the world a 'global village' and a better place than ever before.

"We do not pursue wars. We espouse peace. We incubate talent. We promote education. The Indian ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (Sanskrit for 'the world is one family') aligns with the popular Armenian saying of Tsaut Tanem (roughly translated in English to 'let me take away your pain').

"These values and outlooks assume greater significance in a world that is witnessing greater challenges to peace and stability. It is in the interest of both our countries to harness our bilateral partnership for enhancing global stability. We have some unique strengths to do so. During my current visit to Yerevan, I had the pleasure of attending the inaugural Yerevan Dialogue yesterday, where I was able to witness robust discussions on a wide variety of topics including the most pressing challenges that we face today. I was encouraged by the closeness of our view and perspectives on most matters of salience. Standing here, at the Cafesjian Centre for the Arts, reinforces my view that India's efforts towards a stronger partnership will be closely matched by Armenia.

"This exhibition today is a bridge to remind us once again that both our countries see culture as a pillar of development, a force multiplier for friendly relations, and for greater global good.

"Armenia in India, and India in Armenia, can do a lot to take our bilateral engagements forward, but also, with it, move global discourse towards a better, more positive, and constructive path."

Garo Paylan weighs in on Aliyev's 'biggest fear' and Erdogan's deliberations regarding Armenian border opening



Residents of Turkish towns near the border with Armenia want the border to be opened because they realize it would be beneficial for them, according to former Turkish Member of Parliament Garo Paylan.

"The Turkish cities and settlements near the border of Turkey and Armenia are very poor," Paylan told Armenpress at Yerevan Dialogue forum when asked about the possible opening of the land border. "Therefore, these cities are waiting for the Armenian-Turkish border to open, because it would be beneficial for them. Elsewhere in Turkey people also understand that the opening of borders would be beneficial, and from this perspective there is certain pressure on [President] Erdogan."

Paylan claimed that Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan is weighing up the pros and cons to make a decision in this regard: If the benefits are greater than the losses he will open the border, but it will remain closed if Erdogan deems losses would exceed the benefits in case

of opening.

Paylan said Erdogan was in favor of opening the Armenian-Turkish land border after the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, but not anymore. "Western countries are trying to convince Erdogan to open the borders, and the future roads and connection routes to be used by regional countries," he said.

Speaking about the Armenian-Turkish normalization process, Paylan said, "Unfortunately the Turkey-Armenia relations aren't normal now. Both sides have issues, Turkey has problems with Greece too, but their borders are open, they have trade, flow of tourists, they have diplomatic relations. The problems between Armenia and Turkey won't end, but first of all it is necessary to open the borders and then for the parties to start resolving these issues."

Paylan described Erdogan as an "opportunist" who advances his own interests above all. He said Erdogan doesn't care what's happening elsewhere around the world, he only cares about where to gain

bigger benefits from. The former Turkish MP attached importance to Crossroads of Peace project developed by the Armenian government in terms of achieving regional peace. Paylan said Armenia's geographic location is the key in terms of unblocking of regional connections.

"The United States and the European Union should talk to Erdogan, so that he convinces Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to sign the peace treaty with Armenia," Paylan said, stressing that now is the time to do so.

Speaking about the likelihood of Armenia and Azerbaijan eventually signing a peace treaty, Paylan said, "Unfortunately Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev is maximalist, because as a leader of an authoritarian country he thinks he would lose his enemy in person of Armenia if he were to establish peace with Armenia. This is Aliyev's biggest fear, because after establishing peace and the start of contacts between the peoples, the Azerbaijanis will ask him why Armenians are prospering while they are living in poverty."

Turkey and other countries must pressure Azerbaijan to establish peace with Armenia, according to Paylan. At the same time, Paylan said that Erdogan and Aliyev are alike in terms of having the need for artificial or made-up enemies.

Paylan highlighted the Yerevan Dialogue forum for bringing together renowned individuals from around the world to discuss the future.

"Armenia needs to strengthen its economy, diplomacy, its universities, to build a more powerful country," Paylan said.

Slovenia ready to support strengthening Armenia-EU ties, says State Secretary Marko Štucin



Slovenia will definitely help Armenia on its path of strengthening ties with the EU, Marko Štucin, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia told Armenpress.

Štucin spoke about the Armenian democratic reforms and the Armenia-EU ties with Armenpress during the Yerevan Dialogue forum.

“Armenia in the last couple of years did some very important steps,” State Secretary Marko Štucin said. “And from the perspective of European Union member states, for example from Slovenia, I think that it’s very visible that Armenia took the right path when it comes to the reform process, when it comes to the democratization process, when it comes to the rule of law. Even if you’re walking around the city of Yerevan, as I did this, I think one can see that the city and the society changed in the last couple of years. And today Yerevan resembles many EU capitals. And one can see that Armenian society is a vibrant society, a young society, a society that goes into the right direction.”

He said that Armenia is on the right path and the reforms should be continuous.

“The reforms are, of course, still needed, so the process didn’t finish yet. But that’s not only true for Armenia. Also, when I’m speaking about my country, Slovenia, that is a member of European Union for the last 20 years, I would say the same, that also in our case the process of democratization and rule of law-based society is still continuous. This process

doesn’t bring you to an end. Democracy is something that you have to work on all the time, so you cannot stop. So even when you achieve a very high level of democracy, you still have to work to, first of all, to preserve it, and also to make the society better. There is one example. In European Union we have so-called rule of law report. The European Commission every year, in summer usually, publishes a rule of law report for every member state. Also for older member states like Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany and so on. And also in their cases European Commission would find shortcomings and would encourage them to work towards, you know, to remove those shortcomings. The same is valid for Slovenia and the same is valid for Armenia. So Armenia is on the right path, but the reform process is long and continuous all the time.”

Asked whether democracy and the steps towards democracy can be basis for ensuring the security of the country, the Slovenian official said, “Look, nowadays, especially now when we are facing the war in Ukraine, also things that happened here in Armenia, we hear time to time that it’s better for safety and security if we transform our societies in more autocratic way. But the question is from whom we hear these arguments. Usually we hear these arguments from autocrats themselves or the politicians that want to become autocrats in their own society. The practice would show very clear argument that democracy works. And I’m speaking again about European Union. European Union is still a peace process. So after the Second World War, Germany, France and other countries came together, established a coal and steel community after the Second World War that develops then later in what is today European Union. In its core, this process is a process of democratization of Europe. And what is the result today? Almost 70 years since the Second World War started and since this European integration began, there was

no single armed conflict between any of the member states. This proves you that if you implement democracy, if you are working on democratization all the time, if you are building a rule-based society, this example proves you that it brings peace and security.”

He said that whatever steps Armenia will do to make the ties stronger with European Union, it will be for the benefit of its citizens. Štucin said Slovenia will support the strengthening of the Armenia-EU ties.

“We take a general position that every country, every European country that has European ambitions, that wants to become a member of European Union one day, should be given a chance. Of course, it’s up to the country itself to try and to really then fulfill all the criteria. It’s a long process, a very long process. So, if you ask me for a general position, I would say everybody that wants to come to the European Union is welcome here if the country fulfills the criteria. Now, Slovenia is, of course, in a different geographical position as Armenia. We are very similar countries. But geography is different. And this plays a role. I would put it like this. Armenia should definitely continue to look towards European Union and to make ties with European Union stronger. Slovenia, as a similar country, will definitely help Armenia in this way. We can send experts. We can help with people that were active in our case or were active also in Western Balkans, with the countries that are using our experiences. We are ready to offer this help. And I’m also meeting with my Armenian counterparts these days to offer this help, very concrete help from Slovenia. But at the end of the day, it’s a long process. And it’s difficult to say at this point what the end result will be. But whatever steps Armenia will do to make the ties stronger with European Union, it will be for the benefit of its citizens,” he added.

US Congress Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission to hold hearing on ethnic cleansing by Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh



The Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the U.S. Congress will hold a hearing on the ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh, the commission said in a press release.

“Since the government conducted a military operation to gain full control over Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023, the situation for ethnic Armenians in the enclave has changed dramatically. By the

end of 2023 virtually all of them fled to Armenia. The hearing will examine this apparent ethnic cleansing and a number of related issues, including the situation of prisoners of war and political prisoners, the status of Armenian cultural sites in Nagorno-Karabakh, and the right of return of ethnic Armenians to Nagorno-Karabakh,” the commission said in its press release.

It cited the report by Freedom House which shows Azerbaijan’s notoriously poor human rights record.

According to Freedom House, “Power in Azerbaijan’s authoritarian regime remains heavily concentrated in the hands of Ilham Aliyev, who has served as president since 2003, and his extended family. Corruption is rampant, and the formal political opposition has been weakened by years of persecution. The authorities

have carried out an extensive crackdown on civil liberties in recent years...”

The hearing will also examine the Azeri government’s treatment of members of the ethnic Azerbaijani majority who have been victims of domestic and transnational repression due to their opposition to the government and its policies, and the relation between corruption and human rights abuses. Witnesses will offer recommendations for Congress.

The hearing will be held in person and is open to Members of Congress, congressional staff, the interested public, and the media.

The hearing will be hosted by Members of Congress, Co-Chairs of the commission Chris Smith and James McGovern.

Deputy Speaker Hakob Arshakyan meets with Member of Senate of Mexico Cynthia Lopez Castro

On September 13, the National Assembly Deputy Speaker Hakob Arshakyan met with the Senator of Mexico, the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Cynthia Lopez Castro.

According to a statement from the Parliament, welcoming the guest, Hakob Arshakyan highlighted the deepening of cooperation between the legislative bodies of the two countries.

According to the source, Arshakyan expressed gratitude to the members of the Senate for recognizing the Armenian Genocide and condemning it in the

previous year. “The Armenian Genocide was a crime not only against Armenian people, but also against the whole humankind. Adopting this document, the Senate of Mexico had its contribution in prevention of future crimes against humankind, as well as in consolidation of the civilized world around this universal goal,” Hakob Arshakyan underscored.

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament presented to the guest the recent developments of the process of settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations, the efforts being made by our country in signing the peace treaty.

Cynthia Lopez Castro highly valued the 10th Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians of Inter-Parliamentary Union being held in Yerevan. According to the member of the Senate of Mexico, similar events promote the exchange of experience and deepening of cooperation between the young people.

According to the Parliament’s press service, Hakob Arshakyan will participate in the inauguration of the First Female President of Mexico Claudia Sheinbaum in the history of Mexico on October 1 on behalf of Armenia.

Former ICC President stresses Diaspora’s role in releasing Armenian captives

Former ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo says it’s important to unify the efforts of global Armenian community in the process of securing the release of Armenian prisoners held in Baku.

Ocampo highlighted the success of the [online campaign](#) he launched months

ago for the release of Armenian prisoners.

“I have been involved in various processes related to genocides around the world, and this is the first time I have witnessed such global cooperation, which is a fantastic achievement. Armenians are creating an unprecedented experience

of active collaboration,” Ocampo said at a press conference in Yerevan on September 13.

He said Armenians are not alone in this matter, because many universities and academic communities have joined the initiative.

Former ICC President Dr. Chile Eboe-Osuji joins Zoryan Institute's Academic Board of Directors

The Zoryan Institute is pleased to welcome Dr. Chile Eboe-Osuji, the distinguished international jurist and former President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), to the Institute's Academic Board of Directors effective October 1, 2024!

Dr. Eboe-Osuji was the 4th President of the ICC from 2018 to 2021; he served as an ICC judge from 2012 to 2018. He also served as the Legal Advisor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2010 – 2012) with earlier work at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Before joining the international public service, he practiced law in courts in Canada and Nigeria.

Currently, Dr. Eboe-Osuji is the Distinguished International Jurist at the Lincoln

Alexander School of Law at the Toronto Metropolitan University, where he is also the Special Advisor to the President of the University. Dr. Eboe-Osuji has several affiliations with universities as a sessional lecturer and visiting professor including the University of Windsor, Stanford Law School, University of Toronto Law Faculty, Santa Clara University, the Carr Centre at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and the Faculty of Law of the University of Ottawa.

He received his PhD from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and his LLM from McGill University, where he also received his Canadian law accreditation after completing his LLB degree from the University of Calabar, Nigeria. Dr. Eboe-Osuji also has an extensive record of legal scholarship and publications,

including the books *International Law and Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts* and *Protecting Humanity* (ed).

Dr. William Schabas, OC, Zoryan Board Member said: "Judge Eboe-Osuji has had a long and distinguished career in international justice, rising to the most senior position of President of the International Criminal Court. He brings huge experience as well as great wisdom to Zoryan's Academic Board."

K. M. Greg Sarkissian, OC, President of the Institute, welcoming Dr. Eboe-Osuji to the Academic board had this to say "The stakeholders of Zoryan Institute take pride in having internationally renowned scholars on its Academic Board. No doubt, a scholar of Dr. Eboe-Osuji's stature joining the board will help take the Institute's work to new heights."

Tenth Inter-Parliamentary Union Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians opens in Yerevan

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has delivered opening remarks at the Tenth Inter-Parliamentary Union Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Yerevan.

In his speech, Pashinyan attached importance to ensuring youth's engagement in politics.

"Young people entering politics and youth activity is very important and understandable, but frankly speaking I have a conceptual question regarding the term young parliamentarian. In my perception a parliamentarian is a parliamentarian, young, middle aged or old, they have the

same mandate and equal powers," the prime minister said.

PM Pashinyan attached importance to education. He said that one of the hidden reasons behind poverty is the lack of proper education.

"There's no problem that can't be solved through education. And there's no problem that didn't originate due to the lack of education, or low quality education," Pashinyan said.

"Over the course of the history of mankind there've been professions that disappeared and new ones have emerged. One of the biggest problems in the education

sector is to ensure the adaptation of people to these global changes, including in the job market," Pashinyan said.

Speaker of Parliament of Armenia Alen Simonyan also delivered remarks.

"I am proud to say that after the 2018 velvet, non-violent, people's revolution young parliamentarians are the majority in the Armenian parliament today," Simonyan said.

"You have big potential to change the world because you are more flexible and courageous than the previous generations."

Yerevan hosts UN Global Conference on Wine Tourism

Yerevan hosts the eight edition of the UN Tourism Global Conference on Wine Tourism.

This year's conference focuses on the theme "Heritage in Every Bottle: Crafting Authentic Wine Tourism Experiences," highlighting the importance of developing strategies that both preserve cultural traditions and benefit local communities. A key focus will be on reviving traditions in the evolving landscape of wine tourism, balancing modernization with cultural heritage.

UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab

Pololikashvili says: "Wine tourism continues to grow, both in popularity with tourists and as a pillar of rural growth and protector of cultural heritage. The Global Conference on Wine Tourism will once again bring together the most exciting leaders of the sector, and I look forward to welcoming them all to Yerevan, Armenia."

The conference showcases successful initiatives and provides a platform for exchanging expertise and developing innovative projects. Representatives from iconic wine regions, including the Strada

del Barolo (Italy); Bourgogne (France), and Mendoza (Argentina), present examples of best practices.

Participants explore strategies for attracting and engaging visitors, as well as fostering coordinated efforts among stakeholders to effectively promote wine routes and experiences and maximize their positive impact on local economies and communities.

Discussions also focus on developing effective communication strategies to reach a global audience.

British lawmakers and Armenian community leaders urge Formula 1 CEO to stop enabling Azerbaijan “sportswash its crimes”



A group of British lawmakers and Armenian community leaders have appealed to Formula One President and CEO Stefano Domenicali demanding to “stop enabling Azerbaijan to sportswash their crimes” as the country hosts the Formula 1 Grand Prix.

They signatories remind that six Armenian political prisoners – former leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh – who are being unlawfully held hostage by Azerbaijani authorities.

They note that the Armenian prisoners have been refused a proper trial and access to independent international legal advice, or any visitors; and denied proper food or medical treatment. They endure severe mistreatment in violation of both domestic and international law, including the ICCPR and ECHR.

“Formula 1’s presence risks distracting from Azerbaijan’s human rights abuses.

Formula 1 cannot claim to have a positive impact in Azerbaijan while these Armenian hostages remain imprisoned. Profits must not come at the expense of human rights,” the letter reads.

“Formula 1 must stop enabling regimes like Azerbaijan to sportswash their crimes. By speaking out against this injustice and calling for the release of the Armenian political prisoners in Azerbaijan, Formula 1 can demonstrate its commitment to human rights in the countries it visits,” the signatories say.

SIGNATORIES:

- Alex Sobel MP (UK House of Commons)
- Andrew Rosindell MP (UK House of Commons)
- Chris Law MP (UK House of Commons)
- Baroness Cox (UK House of Lords)
- Lord Alton of Liverpool (UK House of Lords)
- Free Armenian Prisoners
- Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust UK

- Bishop Hovakim Manukyan (Primate of the Armenian Church in the UK and Ireland)
- Armenian Community Council of the UK
- Armenian National Committee UK
- Armenian General Benevolent Union London
- Armenian Youth
- Federation London
- Armenian Relief Society of GB
- The Armenian Institute
- Armenian Medical Association GB
- Armenian Relief Society of GB
- Armenian Medical Association GB
- Homenetmen London
- Armenian House
- Armenian Language Saturday School, London
- Hamazkayin UK

Churchill photo stolen in Canada discovered in Italy



An original print of a famous photograph of Winston Churchill has been found in Italy after going missing from an Ottawa hotel and replaced with a fake, the BBC reports.

The 1941 photo – known as “The Roaring Lion” – was taken by Yousuf Karsh shortly after Churchill gave a wartime

speech to Canada’s parliament.

On September 11, Ottawa police said the portrait had been found in the possession of a private buyer in Genoa, Italy, who was unaware that it had been stolen.

Officials also announced the arrest of a man from Powassan, Ontario, in connection with the theft and illicit sale.

The 43-year-old man, whose name is covered by a publication ban, faces several charges in Canada, including forgery, theft, trafficking and damage to property.

He was arrested on 25 April, investigators say, and appeared in court in Ottawa the following day.

The photograph shows Churchill, the

British war-time prime minister, on Parliament Hill moments after Karsh famously took a cigar out of Churchill’s mouth.

“I held out an ashtray, but he would not dispose of it...I waited; he continued to chomp vigorously at his cigar. I waited,” Karsh later recalled.

“Then I stepped toward him and, without premeditation, but ever respectfully, I said ‘forgive me sir’ and plucked the cigar from his mouth.”

By the time Karsh returned to his camera, he wrote, Churchill looked “so belligerent he could have devoured me”.

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