

## Armenian President makes 'historic' visit to Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabia - Armenian President Armen Sarkissian is greeted by Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir on his arrival in Riyadh, October 26, 2021.

President Armen Sarkissian attended an international conference in Riyadh and spoke with Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, on October 26 during what he called a historic visit to the kingdom that has no diplomatic relations with Armenia.

"In the absence of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Saudi Arabia since Armenia's independence, when no official from Armenia had ever visited that country, the President of Armenia took a historic step, visiting for the first time a country with a unique role and significance in the Arab and Islamic world," Sarkissian's press office said in a late-night statement.

It emphasized the fact that Sarkissian was greeted at Riyadh airport "at the highest state level" by Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir.

"According to the official protocol, the state flag of the Republic of Armenia was hoisted at the airport," added the statement.

Sarkissian sat next to Crown Prince Mohammed at the opening ceremony of the Future Investment Initiative forum held later in the day and also attended by other foreign leaders. The

presidential press office reported on Wednesday that the two men talked to each other during the event.

"The President of Armenia and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia talked about the need to develop relations between the two countries and their future," it said. "It was noted that the rich historical ties between the two peoples are a good basis for building future interstate relations."

It was not clear whether the president, who has largely ceremonial powers, discussed with Crown Prince Mohammed or other Saudi officials the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations between the two states.

Like Turkey and Pakistan, Saudi Arabia has for decades refused to establish such relations ties due to Christian Armenia's conflict with Muslim Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The unresolved conflict has not prevented Armenia from developing ties with other Gulf Arab monarchies, notably the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Both nations have embassies in Yerevan. Also, successive Armenian governments have maintained close links with Iran, Saudi Arabia's main regional rival.

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The Holy See's Apostolic Nunciature office opened in Armenia on October 27.

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and Substitute for General Affairs of the Secretariat of the Holy See Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra participated in the ceremony.

As the two countries mark the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations, the Holy

## Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See inaugurated in Armenia

See sees it as a further opportunity to look “at building a prosperous relationship for the benefit of all Armenians.”

The relations between the Church of Rome and Armenia go back to ancient times, almost to the very origins of Christianity, when faith in Jesus spread from Jerusalem to the “known world,” where meetings and commercial and cultural exchanges between peoples became an occasion for debates that touched the “meaning” of life and existence.

Over the centuries, this ancient and prolific relationship between Armenia and the

Holy See has grown in strength. Official diplomatic relations in modern times can be traced back to May 23, 1992, after Armenia gained independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Since then, the Holy See has continually maintained diplomatic representations to foster relations, along with other initiatives and channels of various Catholic institutions. The first apostolic nuncio appointed to Armenia was Monsignor Jean-Paul Aimé Gobel (1993-1997). The current Holy See's representative since 2018 is Archbishop José A. Bettencourt.



The Holy See has always stood by Armenia in difficult times for the Armenian people and last year was no exception, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said at a joint press conference with visiting Substitute for General Affairs of the Secretariat of the Holy See Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra.

“The consistent position of the Vatican on the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as well as on maintaining peace and stability in the region is remarkable for

## The Holy See has always stood by Armenia in difficult times – Foreign Minister

us. Particularly, the messages of His Holiness during and after the aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh, as well as the calls for the immediate release of prisoners of war, were of great importance,” Minister Mirzoyan said.

“As you know, Azerbaijan still violates international humanitarian law, as well as the provisions of the November 9 trilateral statement, and continues to hold Armenian prisoners of war and captured civilians. We ask His Holiness the High Priest to always remember the Armenian prisoners of war in his prayers and public messages and to stress the need for their immediate release,” he added.

He noted that after the 44-day war, the Armenian historical-cultural and religious heritage of Artsakh in the territories currently

under the control of Azerbaijan is now in constant danger of destruction. Meanwhile, he said, the atrocities against the places of worship and historical-cultural monuments, which are the cultural and spiritual heritage of the peoples, grossly violate international law and stressed the need to undertake steps to prevent these incidents.

“The Armenian people are grateful to His Holiness the High Priest for the principled and unequivocal message of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Condemnation of this crime against humanity is of utmost importance for preventing recurrence of such atrocities in other parts of the world,” the Foreign Minister stated.

## Armenia mandates masks outdoors



Armenia will mandate wearing of masks outdoors from November 1 to reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus disease. A relevant decision has been signed by Minister of Health Anahit Avanesyan.

Masks will not be mandatory for chil-

dren under 5 and people with chronic respiratory diseases: asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, emphysema or bronchitis, severe respiratory failure, chronic heart failure (stages C and D) provided that the mentioned persons have a document proving the relevant medical condition.

Direct participants and speakers at events hosted by the President of the Republic of Armenia, the Catholicos of All Armenians, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the President of the Constitutional Court and the President of the Supreme Judicial

Council will also be exempt from wearing masks. The rule does not apply to journalists and service staff.

Wearing of masks will not be mandatory during exercising or cycling, as well as in specially designated areas for outdoor recreation and beaches, mountains, forests, but not in city parks, botanical gardens and zoos, historical and cultural sites.

TV hosts can also choose not to wear masks, given they are alone in the studio. People with hearing and speaking disorders, mental and behavioral disorders, cognitive disorders are also exempt from wearing masks.

## If that decision was not made, military actions would start. Pashinyan on withdrawal in Syunik

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan says that the command of withdrawal of troops in Syunik was given by him in order to avoid military actions, with the intention of not losing the strategic road at least for some time, Pashinyan said during the parliament-Cabinet Q&A session referring to the question of MP from "Armenia" faction Anna Grigoryan.

Grigoryan mentioned that Azerbaijani border guards appeared in Syunik, because on December 18 there was a command of withdrawal of troops, which was not envisaged by the November 9 declaration. "Was the command of withdrawal of troops oral or written? What is the first and last name of the person who made such command, was a Security Council meeting held before making such decision?" asked the member of parliament.

"With regards to Syunik, have I ever refused that I am the responsible person for that decision? Whether the command was oral or written, they are made according to procedures. Was there a discussion? Yes, there was, session of the Security Council was not held, but all members of the Security Council, Governor of Syunik par-



icipated. The Minister of Foreign Affairs said they were not aware, but the deputy minister also participated in the discussion, the discussion took place at the Government. And the decision was made in order to avoid war", Pashinyan said.

According to him "If the decision was not made, military operations would start there. And in Syunik we would really have problems. We were standing dozens of kilometers ahead, unfortunately we reached here", the Prime Minister said.

He mentioned that the decision was made with the logic that during the negotiations there was a perception that 7 regions are to be handed over. "Those territories were handed over because of being part of the 7 regions. Why are they part of the 7 regions? Even if you don't like it, it is reg-

istered by the Law on Administrative Territorial Division, it is not something new", Pashinyan said and assured they have no secrets.

According to the Prime Minister, the decision was made with the intention of not losing the strategic road at least for some time. He said that the command of withdrawal of troops was given by him, implemented by former minister of defense Vagharshak Harutyunyan.

According to Pashinyan, he is the sole responsible for Syunik. But there were discussions before making that decision, with members of the Security Council, thought a formal session of the Security Council was not held but a consultation was held. Discussions were held 5-6 times, there were negotiations, visits, written agreement was reached.

He noted that the opposition carried out a political fight for 8 months and never said that they will remove Armenia's signature from the November 9 declaration. He called on the opposition to state that they, in case of coming to power, will remove Armenia's signature from November 9 declaration.



## Chinese Ambassador satisfied with level of development of Armenian-Chinese relations

dor to Armenia said.

Recalling that the relations between Armenia and China have a history of several thousand years, dating back to the time of the ancient Silk Road, Ambassador Fan Yong added that in the modern times the relations between the two countries are developing steadily.

"We are very happy to see that many young people in Armenia today are interested in China, Chinese culture and language. I came to Armenia last year, I can say that since then I see that the number of students and pupils studying Chinese is increasing, their level of language skills is improving. Every year, our embassy organizes an event that financially encour-

ages students, pupils, and lecturers. And I have already found that there are students among them who are very good", Fan Yong said, reminding that the Chinese Embassy also cooperates with ARMENPRESS news agency.

According to the Ambassador, they have come up with a very good plan, thanks to which more Chinese tourists will visit Armenia to see the nature here and the beautiful places.

"I hope that as a result of our further cooperation, the flow of Chinese tourists to Armenia will increase even more, we will be able to see an increase in the number of tourists," said the Chinese Ambassador.

Ambassador of China to Armenia Fan Yong is very much satisfied with the development pace of the Armenian-Chinese relations, the Chinese Ambassador told ARMENPRESS at the solemn opening ceremony of Confucius classroom at the Armenian-Russian University.

"I can say that at the moment it's not enough to say that I am satisfied with the level of development of those relations, but I am very satisfied," the Chinese Ambassa-

## Top Russian General again visits Armenia

A top Russian army general met with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on October 28 as he visited Armenia for the third time in nine months.

An Armenian government statement said Pashinyan and Colonel-General Sergei Istrakov, the deputy chief of the Russian military's General Staff, discussed Russian-Armenian "military-technical cooperation," an official term that often relates to arms supplies.

They also "exchanged thoughts on the current military-political situation in the region," it added without elaborating.

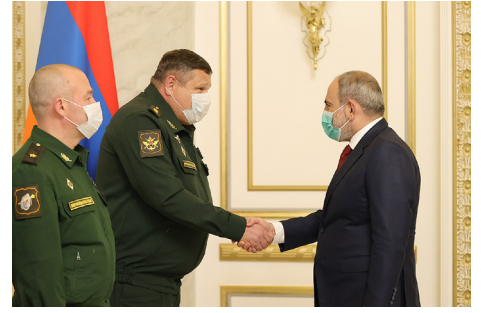
Photographs released by the government's press office showed that Defense Minister Arshak Karapetyan was also present at the meeting. The Armenian Defense Ministry did not report on Thursday sepa-

rate talks between Istrakov and Karapetyan or other Armenian military officials.

Istrakov already visited Yerevan in January and July this year at the head of Russian military delegations that held "staff negotiations" with the Armenian army's top brass.

Armenia moved to further deepen its close military ties with Russia shortly after the six-week war in Nagorno-Karabakh stopped by a Russian-brokered ceasefire last November. Moscow has since deployed troops in Armenia's Syunik province bordering districts southwest of Karabakh retaken by Azerbaijan during and after the hostilities.

Meeting with Karapetyan in Moscow in August, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Moscow will continue to help



Yerevan reform, rearm and modernize the Armenian armed forces.

"We can consider that the process of arms supplies to Armenia has started," the Russian defense minister said as he gifted his Armenian counterpart a dagger.

According to the Armenian Defense Ministry, the two ministers reached "a number of important agreements regarding forthcoming cooperation programs."

## Artsakh will never be part of Azerbaijan – Security Council Secretary



Artsakh will never be part of Azerbaijan, Secretary of the Armenian Security

Council Armen Grigoryan said at a briefing with journalists on October 28.

Speaking about the delimitation and demarcation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, the Secretary said "we are ready to start the process."

"We are also ready to start discussing concrete issues considered within the framework of the trilateral working group co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Ministers of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan," he stated.

"One of the approaches is that the

armed forces of both Armenia and Azerbaijan withdraw from the line of contact and allow brother troops of the two countries to be deployed in the area before we can start the delimitation and demarcation process," the Secretary said.

He said no concrete actions are planned until November 10.

Grigoryan noted that for the Armenian side there are no obstacles to launching the process and added that "we are waiting for positive impulses from the Azerbaijani side."

## Extra-parliamentary forces to be represented in the commission studying circumstances of 44-day war

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan held a meeting with representatives of extra-parliamentary forces.

Attending the meeting were leader of the Republic Party Aram Sargsyan, leader of the Liberal Party Samvel Babayan, representative of the Alliance Progressive Centrist Party Tigran Arzakantsyan, leader of the Fair Armenia Party Norayr Norikyan, leader of the Sovereign Armenia Party David Sanasaryan, leader of the European Party of Armenia Tigran Khzmalyan, leader of the Christian-Democratic Party of Armenia Levon Shirinyan, leader of the United Homeland Party Mher Terteryan, leader of the Conservative Party Mikael Hayrapetyan, Chairman of the Board of the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party Sedrak



Achemyan.

"This is our fourth meeting of this scale; I think at the moment we can say that we are using it as a platform for conversation. And the fact that we are here today is a proof of that, our next task should be to make this platform more effective, to crown its activities with concrete results.

How successful it will be, depends on us. Of course, there are no guarantees, but that is our goal," PM Pashinyan said in his opening remarks.

"At the moment, we have a very specific decision that three representatives of this format should be involved in the commission investigating the circumstances of the 44-day war," said Prime Minister Pashinyan, emphasizing that solutions are currently being sought to organize the issue de jure. Nikol Pashinyan added that the work of the commission will start only after the preparatory work.

Then the participants of the sitting proceeded to the discussion of the issues on the agenda.



Nothing has changed in Turkey's strategy, because the war in the South Caucasus was not the only problem connected with Turkey, Armenian President Armen Sarkissian said in an interview with Russian RBC.

"It's part of a regional and global policy. Let's remember why Turkey entered Libya, why it is so active in Iraq, why it is present in Lebanon and Syria, why it clashes with Cy-

## Artsakh War was the continuation of Turkey's policy, Armenian President says

prus and Greece in the Mediterranean, why it keeps hundreds of thousands of refugees on the EU border. In some sense Europe is a hostage of Turkey, because if those hundreds of thousands of refugees enter Europe, it will be hard to speak about its stability," the President said.

He noted that last year's Artsakh War was the continuation of Turkey's policy, its wish to increase the influence in the region.

"Whether we want it or not, Turkey has become more influential in the South Caucasus. It is very influential in Georgia in the economic sense. Today, Turkey is largely present in Azerbaijan. The influence of the

Turkish armed forces on Azerbaijani armed forces after the war is obvious, and it has a huge influence on Azerbaijan's sovereignty, its economy, and respectively, logistics, transport routes, including the oil pipelines stretching from Baku to Tbilisi and Ceyhan," President Sarkissian noted.

"Turkey has become more influential politically and militarily. On the other hand, the Turkish economy is not one of the best ones in the world. As you know, many investment companies leave Turkey. The economic downturn gets compensated by high activity," the President added.

## PACE co-rapporteurs to make monitoring visit to Armenia

Kimmo Kiljunen (Finland, SOC) and Boriana Åberg (Sweden, EPP/CD), co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) for the monitoring of obligations and commitments by Armenia, will make a fact-finding visit to the country from 3 to 5 November 2021.

Discussions will mainly focus on the

electoral reform, the relationships between constitutional institutions, the independence of the judiciary, the media situation, as well as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its consequences on the functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia.

In Yerevan, Mr Kiljunen and Ms Åberg will have high-level meetings with rep-

resentatives of the Armenian authorities, parliamentary committees, the Armenian delegation to PACE and the leaders of political groups in the National Assembly.

The co-rapporteurs are also due to meet representatives of the judicial authorities, independent administrative institutions, the diplomatic community and civil society.

## Norway donates over 600,000 doses of Moderna vaccines to Armenia under Team Europe Initiative

On 30 October 2021, 620 000 doses of Moderna vaccines were delivered to Armenia. The donation is made by Norway for the Armenian people, under the Team Europe Initiative using the support of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. EU Ambassador to Armenia Andrea Wiktorin and Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Armenia Helene Sand Andresen handed over the donation to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia at Zvartnots Airport.

"As part of Team Europe, Norway is very happy to provide a donation of Moderna vaccine to Armenia. We hope this will help the Armenian government accelerate the vaccination campaign. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself and to show solidarity with your loved ones and with society at large in the time of pandemic," said Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Armenia Helene Sand Andresen.

EU Ambassador Wiktorin highlighted: "Considering the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Armenia, and the need to increase the vaccination rates, we see the vaccine delivery as very timely. We hope, that the large variety of vaccines available for Armenian people will ensure higher rates of vaccination. Vaccines are the tool to fight against, mitigate and stop COVID-19 in Armenia. We believe this will continue to increase people's access to safe and effective vaccines to end the pandemic and protect the health and lives of Armenian citizens."

"We are grateful to Norway and the European Union for their generous donation of COVID-19 vaccines, especially at this critical time for Armenia. Despite the pressing pandemic challenges in our country, we continue to move forward with our vaccination campaign. This large donation will allow us to vaccinate a larger percentage of our population and ensure more



coverage throughout Armenia. We will overcome this pandemic through solidarity and unity," mentioned the Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia Anahit Avanesyan.

Norway is a Participating State in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and hence acts under the Team Europe Initiative, joining the efforts with EU institutions and EU Member States. Team Europe continues to support Armenia in these challenging times, remaining committed to a strong partnership.

## Unblocking of rail communication on the agenda, no talk of roads to be used – Armenian Deputy PM

While there is general understanding on rail communication, there is no agreement on roads to be used, Armenian Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan said during the Q&A session at the National Assembly.

Speaking about the unblocking of regional communications, Mher Grigoryan said the meeting of the trilateral working group co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Ministers of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan are being organized on the basis of the statement of January 11, 2021, and do not exceed that framework.

He said the issue of restoring railroad communication is on the agenda, but added that no discussions are taking place on the unblocking of road communication.

“There is nothing to restore. There have never been roads,” Grigoryan said.

“We are talking about unblocking in the classical sense, i.e., making it possible for all countries of the region to use the existing infrastructure,” the Deputy PM noted.

He stressed there is so far no consensus on roads.

“There are many proposals, but there is no roadmap on roads,” Grigoryan said,



adding that there is no agreement or understanding on which roads are going to be used.

## PM Pashinyan holds separate meetings with the heads of Sada and Service Titan companies



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had separate meetings with Ara Mahdessian, President of Sada Company and Hovig Safoian, one of the founders of Service Titan Company, which operate in the field of high technologies, Noyan Tapan was informed from the Office of the Prime Minister.

During both meetings, the Prime Minister highlighted the activities of the above-mentioned companies in the field of high technology, emphasizing that this area is one of the Government priorities. Nikol Pashinyan added that the Government is interested in the development of IT companies, the expansion of the latter as a result of new investments, and the creation of jobs. The Prime Minister noted that during such meetings he is ready to discuss issues of concern to those companies, opportunities to provide appropriate assistance to the

companies within the framework of Government tools.

Hovig Safoian, referring to the activities of Sada company, noted that the branch of the company operating in Armenia now has 30 employees, but they plan to increase that number to 350 as a result of new investment programs in the near future. He added that the company cooperates with a number of leading companies in the world,



including Google, develops various software solutions, including in the field of education. Mr. Safoian noted that in particular, the platform designed for the sphere of education, which was developed in cooperation with Google, was introduced in the education systems of different countries, and is ready to be introduced in Armenia in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

Prime Minister Pashinyan highlighted

the initiative, noting that he will instruct the responsible Government departments to discuss with Mr. Safoian the opportunities of cooperation in that direction.

Ara Mahdessian, one of the founders of Service Titan, provided details about the company's activities and upcoming programs. He noted that the company's Armenian office, which was established in 2018, already has 200 employees, the amount of investments in Armenia has reached \$40 million. Mr. Mahdessian emphasized that the Armenian team is constantly expanding, new departments with new specializations are being opened, and investment projects will continue to develop. The programs are aimed at the continuous growth of the company, product improvement, training and involvement of the best specialists.

Prime Minister Pashinyan welcomed the successful operation of Service Titan, adding that both this company and other successful organizations in the field contribute to the continuous development of the high technology sector in Armenia. In this regard, the Prime Minister highlighted the preparation of highly qualified specialists and the steps taken to ensure their long-term activities in Armenia.

## The Coca-Cola System goes on increasing investment in the socio-economic development of Armenia



Investment of 18.3 billion AMD in Armenia's GDP, payments of 5.3 billion AMD to the state budget, investment of 75.5 million AMD to community development, about 2000 jobs only in 2020.

Coca-Cola Hellenic Armenia has presented the results of an independent Socio-Economic Impact Study summarizing and evaluating the company's activities in 2020. The study conducted by Baker Tilly presents the economic, social and environmental impact of the Coca-Cola System in Armenia, including the main spheres and areas of the company's investments, as well as the impact of those investments.

As mentioned by the Minister of Economy of RA, Mr. Kerobyan: "The Coca-Cola Company has been in Armenia for 25 years. During these 25 years, it has not only carried out business activities, but also played a major role in shaping the business environment of Armenia, introducing leading standards in trade, distribution, product standards, and overall business thinking.

We support such large-scale socio-economic impact research by the private sector. They can be useful for the government in developing more targeted socio-economic concepts. This is a welcome initiative; it might provide a basis for other large companies operating in Armenia to conduct similar research analyzes."

The study notes that local products of Coca-Cola Hellenic Armenia add value at every point in the company's large value

chain. For every 1 AMD of direct gross value created by the company, an additional 1.6 AMD of indirect and derivative GDP was created in the Armenian economy. As a result, the total investment of Coca-Cola Hellenic Armenia in the gross domestic product

(GDP) of Armenia in 2020 was 18.3 billion AMD, which was 0.3% of the total gross domestic product generated in the country during that period. During the same period, payments to the state budget amounted to 5.3 billion AMD.

"In Armenia, we have been producing the world's most popular soft drink for 25 years, providing consumers with much more than just freshness. Every time they choose our drinks, our value chain generates revenue all over the World and supports thousands of employees. Despite the challenges facing the country, the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to contribute to the development of the local market, introduce new products, apply international best practices and innovative technologies, as well as contribute to the development of the Armenian economy through its extensive supply chain of suppliers and partners. "We are very proud, that we go on contributing to the socio-economic development of Armenia through our community welfare programs," said Arthur Sahakyan, General Manager of Coca-Cola Hellenic Armenia, commenting on the results of the study.

According to the research, Coca-Cola Hellenic Armenia also has a great contribution in terms of job creation. Due to each

direct job created in the Company in 2020, 4 additional jobs were created indirectly. According to Baker Tilly, Coca-Cola Hellenic Armenia created 1954 full-time jobs in 2020, which amounted to 0.2% of the country's total employment that year.

"Our company, as an independent consultant, conducted an assessment of the social, economic and environmental impact for Coca-Cola Hellenic Armenia. We have conducted a comprehensive analysis to determine the impact of the company's activities in Armenia in terms of the following key areas, in particular, gross value added, job creation, investment, fiscal impact, community and social development, as well as environmental impact. The results of the study are included in the "Sustainable Development Report" published by



"Baker Tilly" and Coca-Cola Hellenic Armenia, - said Lusine Hovhannisyan, Manager of Corporate Finance and Business Consulting Department in "Baker Tilly".

Thanks to successful business activity, besides investing in the economy of Armenia, Coca-Cola Hellenic Armenia is also known for its large-scale corporate social responsibility activities. The company spends 2% of its annual revenue on community development programs. According to the study, only in 2020, the company's charitable donations amounted to 75.5 million AMD in initiatives aimed at environmental protection, youth empowerment and COVID-19 pandemic.

## PM Pashinyan chairs session of the Anti-Corruption Policy Council

A regular session of the Anti-Corruption Policy Council took place chaired by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The Council first approved the agenda of the session, after which the Deputy Minister of Justice Suren Grigoryan presented the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy and the execution of its action plan for the period of 2019-2022.

It was reported that within the framework of the accomplishment of the anti-corruption institutional system, a legislative package aimed at the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Committee was adopted by the National Assembly during the reporting period. For ensuring the launch of its formation, a competition for the chairman of the committee was held, as a result of which he a chairman of the committee was appointed by the Government decision No. 1479-A of September 16, 2021. At the same time, 30 investigators from the Special Investigation Service have been appointed to autonomous positions in the Anti-Corruption Committee, until the positions are occupied through competitive procedures. Works are underway to define the legal basis for the formation of the Anti-Corruption Committee's operative-investigative department. In parallel, work is being done to create office conditions for the Anti-Corruption Committee.

On April 14, 2021, the National Assembly adopted the Law on Making Amendments to the Constitutional Law "Judicial Code of the Republic of Armenia" and the related laws aimed at establishing a specialized Anti-Corruption Court. At the moment it is planned to ensure the implementation of the legislative acts.

In particular, within one week after the entry into force of the legislative acts, the Supreme Judicial Council will apply to the Government for approval to increase the number of judges: 1) in the Anti-Corruption Court by fifteen judges; 2) in the Criminal Court of Appeal by six judges; 3) in the Civil Court of Appeal by six judges; 4) in the Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation by two judges. The Supreme Judicial Council will increase the number of judges within one week after receiving the consent of the government within five days.

The legislative package on the estab-



lishment of the Anti-Corruption Court includes the law "On Making Amendments to the Legislation on the Prosecutor's Office, approved by the National Assembly, according to which a separate division of the Prosecutor General's Office will exercise control over the legality of pre-trial criminal proceedings of corruption-related cases, which will be created as a result of the reorganization of the Corruption Crimes Oversight Department within the Prosecutor General's Office, which has been functioning since 2019. An ethics structure is envisaged for the prosecutors of the mentioned subdivision. In addition, the law provides for structures to verify the ethical standards of candidates of prosecutors, including the for Prosecutor General and his deputies.

The following main works were carried out in the direction of prevention of corruption during the reporting period: as a result of the legislative changes aimed at improving the personal property declaration system, the circle of declarants has been expanded, the requirement to declare the property actually owned by a person and his expenses has been introduced. A requirement is also made for the declaration of property acquired in the name, for the benefit or at the expense of the declarant, but belonging to a third party with the right of ownership, as well as the property from which the declarant actually benefits or manages. The monetary threshold of expensive property subject to declaration has been reduced from 4 million drams to 4 million drams. The monetary threshold of expensive property subject to declaration has been reduced from 8 million drams to 4 million drams.

In order to identify the real beneficiaries of legal entities, a legislative package was adopted, within the framework of which an open and public register was

created, a mandatory step-by-step requirement for identifying real beneficiaries for all legal entities operating in Armenia was introduced.

In order to reveal corruption crimes, a new Criminal Code was adopted, within the framework of which the corruption crimes were reviewed, the institute of criminal responsibility of legal entities was introduced.

Within the framework of the monitoring of the anti-corruption strategy, the Ministry of Justice compiled and published the report on the performance of anti-corruption strategy measures during the first half of 2021, in the framework of which the process of implementation of measures, public participation in those works, the circumstances hindering the implementation of the work were presented.

The Ministry of Justice has developed and submitted for public debates a draft amendment to the Anti-Corruption Strategy, which has also improved the current monitoring regulations.

In particular, a new monitoring procedure and evaluation structures have been established. With the support of international partner organizations, a new electronic monitoring platform is currently being developed, the launch of which will digitize the process of monitoring and evaluation, the process of preparation of reports by the Justice Ministry and the civil society organizations, the process of uploading and presenting information by the implementing bodies.

The next issue on the agenda was related to the issues recorded in the reports on the second compliance of the 4th phase of GRECO, and the fifth pilot phase of the OECD Eastern Europe and Istanbul Anti-Corruption Network in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. A report was presented on "A number of issues in the sidelines of transformations of law enforcement and investigation bodies under the anti-corruption reforms".

An exchange of views took place on the above-mentioned issues. Prime Minister Pashinyan instructed to form a corresponding working group, which will present to the Anti-Corruption Policy Council solutions to the issues raised during the reports in a brief period.



## ICRC ready to support the return of Armenian POWs – ICRC Vice President gives interview to ARMENPRESS

The international Committee of the Red Cross takes every opportunity to remind States about their obligations stemming from the Geneva Conventions, and is ready to support in the issue of returning war prisoners of the 44-day war in Nagorno Karabakh in 2020, ICRC Vice President Gilles Carbonnier told ARMENPRESS, speaking about the opportunities of returning the Armenian POWs held in Azerbaijan.

The ICRC Vice President informed that the representatives of the ICRC nearly every month visit the prisoners, assessing the treatment towards them, conditions of detention and make sure if they keep in touch with their families.

Question - Mr. Carbonnier, what has been the main goal of your visit to the region and what results have been achieved in your meetings with ministers of foreign relations, defense and other authorities in Armenia?

Answer - After three decades of neutral presence and humanitarian work in the region, we know that the work doesn't stop when the fighting does. People are still in need of support, security, safety and assistance. Therefore, the ICRC has no alternative but to insist on preserving the humanitarian space and unimpeded access to vulnerable communities.

Tens of thousands of people need support rebuilding livelihoods and homes. Tens of thousands are displaced. Thousands of families are still waiting for news of their missing loved ones. Infrastructure has been damaged, including dozens of schools.

During my visit I have met the ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense, and we discussed the humanitarian needs of persons affected by the recent escalation of the conflict. A key issue we focused on was the ICRC's commitment to facilitate the regional efforts aiming at clarifying the fate of people missing in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.



Question - Has any progress been achieved in the issue of the persons missing since the first and second Artsakh wars? (ref., 90s and the recent NK conflict escalation)

Answer - To achieve a progress in this kind of issues it usually takes time. In most cases, it takes decades to overcome the humanitarian consequences of conflict, including clarification of the fate of those who went missing. That said, we will not stop working to help bring answers to families living in agony hoping for news of missing loved ones.

Notably, we are calling on the sides to do all possible to clarify the fate of missing persons both since the 90s and the recent escalation.

Question - As a follow-up to your visit, can we expect any progress in the issue of return of the Armenian POWs and civilians kept in Azerbaijan?

Answer - Over thirty years of our humanitarian work in the region, the ICRC has been visiting people captured on the sides in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. When requested by the conflict sides, we facilitated the release of the detainees or transfer of human remains on the sides.

We have regular access to those detained in connection with the recent escalation, whose detention was confirmed by the relevant authorities. We strive to ensure that the detainees are able to maintain contact with their relatives through different means of communication. The detainees are met in private and are given a possibility to exchange family news through Red

Cross messages, pre-recorded video messages and phone calls.

We are committed to continue working with the sides and the Russian counterparts on the search and retrieval operations.

Question - What, in your opinion, prevents from repatriating the Armenian detainees despite the state obligations under Geneva Conventions and the trilateral agreement between Putin-Pashinyan-Aliyev from 9 November 2020? What measures can the ICRC apply to influence the process?

Answer - I'd like to stress that the ICRC is not mandated to negotiate release of individuals deprived of liberty. At the same time, as a neutral humanitarian intermediary organization, it remains available to facilitate the return of released detainees should the sides agree upon it. We are also using every opportunity to remind the states on their obligations stemming from the Geneva conventions.

Question - According to the report recently published by the Armenian human rights advocates, Armenians detained in Azerbaijan are subjected to coordinated state-sanctioned physical and psychological ill-treatment. Does the ICRC, including its office in Azerbaijan, take into consideration these allegations and take any steps towards protecting the rights of the Armenian detainees?

Answer - As you may know, on a regular basis, roughly every month, our representatives visit all those detained in relation to the 2020 autumn conflict escalation whose detention had been notified by the relevant authorities. During such visits, the ICRC assesses the treatment of the detainees and conditions of detention and helps to ensure that they can maintain contact with family. At the same time, as per procedures of our organization, we do not comment on any of our observations publicly. Observations and recommendations related to these visits are only shared with the detaining authorities.

## “EU4Business: Ready to Trade” project drives new achievements in Armenia’s dried fruits sector



The first half of 2021 saw a 77% increase in the customs value of dried vegetables and fruits export from Armenia against the same period in 2020. Some companies have also reported increase in export volume. Specifically, the export volume of dried fruits at Lukashin agricultural association have grown by 20-30% this year, in particular, over an increase in demand for Armenian dried apricots. In 2020 Armenia exported 500kg of dried apricots to the UK, while in 2021 the company will be filling an order for 2 tons. The surge in demand is due in no small part to “Yerevani” apricot variety’s competitive edge in the European markets. Studies have shown “Yerevani” to contain less sugar, thus making it a more healthy option.

BIOFACH 2019 leading organic trade fair, where Lukashin Association first networked with its current UK partner, became the starting point for exports of “Yerevan” apricot variety to the UK. The association’s participation in the trade show was made possible through the EU-

4Business: Ready to Trade project. The project is being implemented by the International Trade Centre and supported by the European Union as part of the EU4Business initiative.

The project helped a number of dried fruits producers to improve their production quality through access to international standards and technologies. For instance, several companies implemented a peeling system thus reducing the production cost of some dried fruits. Additionally, several production units significantly improved their fruit- and vegetable-drying methods to ensure a preferred level of moisture for different target markets. Moreover, besides standard dried fruits, Armenian companies are currently producing a wide range of dried fruit products: from dried fruit presses with nuts to fruit lavash made with a new technology. The participation of Armenian companies in international trade shows, a study tour to the dried fruits production leader, South Africa, as well as continuous consultations with international

experts have greatly contributed to the introduction of best international practices.

“The main achievement that I noticed during my visit to Armenia is the introduction of the automated peeling system by some of the producers,” notes Anton Erwee, a leading dried fruits production expert from the South African Republic. For 3 years now, Mr. Erwee has been providing consultancy to the beneficiaries of the project.

“In Armenia, fruits are usually peeled manually, which ends up costing much more than it should in view of higher product loss. The automated system significantly reduces the production cost of some types of dried fruits,” adds Mr. Erwee.

According to the expert, Armenian dried fruits are competitive for exports to the European Union member states as well as any other country in the world. The expert further cited adherence to the international market standards, in particular, in terms of ensuring the required moisture level, as a pathway to success.

“Global dried fruit consumption has increased since the onset of the pandemic, which leads me to believe that this trend will continue. Therefore, finding buyers in a target market, making arrangements and building relationships is essential for international market positioning. You can’t sell a product unless you establish presence in a particular market,” says Anton Erwee.

As part of the Ready to Trade project a number of Armenian companies participated in the largest trade fair for food and beverages – Anuga 2021 in October 2021. Such leading trade shows are an excellent platform for exploring best international practices and finding new partners.

## A Year Later, What is the Hope ?

The sacrifice of our soldiers will not be in vain as of our Lord Jesus Christ who sacrificed his life on the Cross for our salvation...

*By Rev. Dr René Léonian*

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to return to Armenia and Artsakh several times. In reality, I don't know if Armenia and Artsakh need me, but I need them. I need to walk on the soil of our Homeland, need to meditate there, need to listen, feel, understand. All this is done in a spirit of sharing but also in silence.

I remember my first tourist trip to Armenia in 1981. It was like a dream. I was amazed by the landscapes, monasteries, museums, inscriptions in Armenian...

I was also a little surprised by the regime of the time. Of course, it was not Cilicia where my grandparents came from, but it was still a part of a three thousand year-old Armenia. In 1987 and 1992, I was able to visit Cilicia and Western Armenia. I probably had more emotion, but also a lot of sadness and anger when I saw the lamentable state of our ancestral heritage.

In 1994, I had the privilege of being appointed representative of the Armenian Evangelical World Council in Armenia and Artsakh. I didn't know then that I was going to stay in Armenia with my wife Sylvie for 17 years. I can state that those years were among the most interesting and fruitful of my life. In addition to my pastoral responsibility for the churches, I led the humanitarian actions of two organisations, the « Armenian Missionary Association of America » and « Hope for Armenia » of France.

Today, a year later, how can we reconcile with the crushing defeat of the October 2020 war? How can we look



in the eyes the families of fallen soldiers, soldiers wounded for life?

How will we explain to the new generations the fiasco in which Armenia and the global diaspora find themselves today?

I would have liked to have a magic wand to prevent this last war and its disastrous consequences. I would have liked our leaders to have acted with greater foresight, discernment and wisdom for 30 years. I would so much liked civil society to totally fulfil its responsibilities so as to be a real counterweight. I would have liked the diaspora to be more and more involved...

We have all tried to analyse what happened to us, without necessarily finding the right answers to our questions.

Like each of you, I have my opinions on our leaders and their skills and incompetence. Far be it from me to scrutinise the actions of those who have governed Armenia and Artsakh since the early 1990s. Sooner or later, everyone will be held accountable for what they have done or should have done.

Naively, I tell myself that if the ruling power is able to answer the essential questions of Armenia and Artsakh, let it continue its action. Otherwise, let him think about giving way to others.

My point is not to point at anyone. It is, on the contrary, to consider avenues where we can all come forth with

our heads held high.

In the coming days, I will be in Armenia and Artsakh again. I would like to convey a word of encouragement and comfort to our compatriots and their families. Especially to families devastated by the loss of a loved one, of their homes, villages, property or jobs. A very special thought for our wounded and prisoners of war.

I know that, despite your extreme pain, you are strong and that you will come through this atrocious ordeal. I know that, despite the sluggish support of the state and the diaspora, you are determined to move forward, persevere and get by.

More than ever, with you, we will work for more unity among our people, more solidarity, more determination to find the right solutions to problems, both big or small. Together, we will prove that nothing is insurmountable, and that our strength can even move mountains.

We cannot forget the blood that was shed during this last war. That's why we will succeed in our joint projects.

We are convinced that Armenia will strengthen its sovereignty and that Artsakh will return to its historical borders in a free and independent state.

Let us not forget either that we are a people who have accepted the Christian faith for a very long time. In the image of our Lord Jesus Christ who sacrificed his life on the Cross for our salvation, let us believe that the sacrifice of our soldiers will not be in vain. And, as Christ rose on the 3rd day, let us believe in the resurrection of our people, our nation, our state, our Armenia, our Artsakh.

People of Armenia, people of Artsakh, we love you, we are by your side, we will get by and we will triumph !

# Gagik Ginosyan: “The Government of Georgia, for Several Decades Already, Has Been Conducting Open, Turk-Slaved Anti-Armenian Policy”

## Part Two

From The Highlights previous issue

...Such a treatment to me, a man of culture who visited more than thirty countries and never had such an incident, prohibiting to lay flowers to my parents tombs, I would call not only anti-Christian but even fascist...

Interestingly, they thirty who declared persona non-grata by the Georgian Govt. are exclusively Armenians. And I call it “turk-slaved anti-Armenian” policy.

...I have nothing against Georgian people; I have many friends among them, friends from childhood. The same I could say about my father of the blessed memory – we had no national problem with our Georgian neighbours, friends, nothing.

The matter is only anti-Armenian policy of the Government of Georgia, and, especially, their secret services.

Some people could blame me in “endangering relations between two friendly countries”, however, due to the above mentioned policy by the Govt. of Georgia and its numerous anti-Armenian actions only crumbs of that friendship remained.

Yes, there is friendship at the personal level, and me myself has also friends in Akhalkalaki, Tbilisi, but in Georgia today there are lot of anti-Armenian problems starting from “medieval inquisition” – anything in Armenian language is prohibited, even Bible is prohibited to bring Javakhk. Besides schoolbooks approved by the Govt. of Georgia bringing of any other books in Armenian language to Javakhk is strictly prohibited.

And this is clear policy to deprive Javakhk of, let’s say, “national oxygen”...

Now the previous list of thirty Armenians whose enter to Javakhk prohibited I can rise up to 140, - from academician, art worker to high-ranking militaries who NEVER had a criminal record!!

Thus, the Georgian Govt., in fact, continues armenofobian policy similar to what turks did it in 1915... The difference is that it is “white genocide”.

...In 1918 more than 90 % Armenians were living in Javakhk, about 70% in 1980s when I left it to Yerevan to continue my study, and now – mere 30%.

After “sovietization” of Javakhk, even when Armenians were majority there, its leader was never an ethnic Armenian.

Most of personas non grata are those who were born in the towns of Akhalkalaki or Akhalkalak, and there are some excep-



tions like archeologist, historian and armenologist Samvel Karapetyan of blessed memory whose enter to Georgia was prohibited as well because he was trying to tear off mask of the anti-Armenian policy of the Georgian Govt., mentioning also the fact of assimilation of several Armenian villages.

...Georgians in Akhalkalaki were trying to kill my father (!!!-edit.).

...By the very end of 1990s two drunk Georgian youngsters, coming to my father’s job place, are asking for a Georgian guy, and when my father answered negatively, i.e. there is no such an employee at their enterprise, and maybe it is worth to look for him in nearby factories, they, feeling littlest ascent in Georgian pronunciation of my Dad and guessing he is an Armenian, started to shout out sweawords as if the time has come for Armenians to leave Georgia etc...

My Dad, being a balanced, quiet man, was trying to pursue them to calm down, to go continue their “fiesta” in another place.

However, those two attacked him and tried to beat Mr Ginosyan the Elder.

My Dad who was training his body all the time, succeeded to “neutralize” the two.

However, suddenly one of them beat my father’s head with a spade, and another one tried to strangle my father, and, thank to All-Mighty, a security worker (a native Georgian, BTW) entered and by this saved my father’s life...

...Notably, both the so-called Georgian “criminal authorities” and policemen were pressing heavily me every single day not to suit persons who almost killed my father.

And such a treatment to Armenians living in Georgia, and, in particular, in Javakhk was absolutely permanent, alas !

Probably, you will be surprised to get know that the Armenian Govt., too, has been promoting to all this...

One more episode.

In 2006 when we were trying to restore my Dad’s health (heavily endangered, but in vain, alas, as my beloved father proved not to be able to return lost health and passed away in 2007), we heard about murder of an Armenian in Javakhk...

...-As I can guess, such a cases were taking place NOT just for a few times...

-Yes, you are absolutely right...

Generally speaking, I do NOT remember a single year when an Armenian was not murdered in Georgia, for only being an ethnic Armenian – be it a long distance cargo driver, or it was robbery of house, slaughtering and many and many cases...

Can you imagine that Christian Georgians during First (1992-94) Artsakh War (an active participant of which was Mr Ginosyan-edit.) were kidnapping Armenian combattants and selling them furthermore to Azeris for ransom?!!

In 2006 an Armenian young man, Gevorg Gevorgyan was killed in Tsalka, Georgia.

And we should not be wondered by all these crimes, as Zviad Gamsakhurdia, first President of Georgia, at a rally in Akhalkalaki, BTW, in presence of numerous local Armenians as well, was shouting to a crowd: “How much does cost a bus ticket Akhalkalaki-Yerevan??!” Silence among Armenians, and a Georgian answered: six rubles...

“I am ready to pay this amount for any Armenian to go to Armenia!!”

And...”This is not your country, hey the Armenians, this land belongs Georgians!! Get out our country!!” (Smth of history: Ancient Armenian land Javakhk, as well Artsakh (Karabakh) – to Azerbaijan, was voluntarily cut off Armenia and “gifted” to Georgia by Soviet bloody dictator Stalin and renamed Samtskhe-Javakheti – edit.)

...Yours truly was among mass media reps who attended briefing by the-then ousted Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Armenian town of Dilijan where he escaped after turnout in Tbilisi in 1992...

- ...In vain, in vain the Govt. of Armenia received him !

How could the Govt. of Armenia give asylum to a person calling to deport from the country its own citizens of the Armenian origin?!

To be continued



## Office of Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) organization opened in Armenia

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) non-profit organization opened its Armenian office on October 8 at the Marriott Hotel in Yerevan.

The opening ceremony was attended by officials from the President’s Office, the Government, representatives of the Standing Committees of the National Assembly, famous scientists, cultural figures, etc.

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 worldwide The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) 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.

The Armenian office of the organization will organize various events to inform the Armenians of Armenia and Artsakh about this idea and assist everyone who wants to get cards in case they have difficulties filling out the online application.

The Armenian office staff will negotiate with various organizations to obtain discounts for HyeID cardholders in Armenia and Artsakh. The staff will also work with various organizations that unite individuals to provide HyeID cards to all the members of their organization. In this case, the logo of the organization can also be printed on the HyeID cards.

To become a cardholder, visit [armenia.hyeid.org](http://armenia.hyeid.org), register and make a payment (500 AMD for Armenia), after which the card will be delivered by mail to the specified address. The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) will help every Armenian feel like a full-fledged “citizen” of the Armenian World, while guaranteeing the security and confidentiality of the information provided.



## I am home: Hampig Sassounian says he is in Armenia

After almost 40 years, I have the honor to be on Armenia’s soil, drink Armenia’s water, breathe its air and feel in a familial environment.

The support you have shown throughout the years has always encouraged me and has had a positive impact during my most difficult days.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to all those who wrote to me, visited me and have always kept me in their hearts.

Finally, I am home.

With Love,  
Hampig Sassounian

Harry M. Sassounian, also known as Hampig Sassounian, is an Armenian-American who was sentenced to life for the 1982 assassination of Turkish Consul General Kemal Arıkan at a street intersection in Los Angeles, California, United States.

he was granted parole in March, 2021.

## Musk Factor: 12,000 actors apply for participation in Armenian-made comedy series



More than 12,000 actors have applied for participation in the Armenian-made comedy series Musk Factor. The project announced the casting through the world-famous Backstage platform.

Applications have been filed by representatives of different nations. The high demand pushed the project to the top trends

section of the website.

“Backstage is the most popular platform in the world, where powerful companies such as Disney, Netflix, Amazon, NBC, HBO and others are looking for actors.

Armenian actors can also participate in the casting of the film through the platform, says Rafael Tadevosyan, general producer of the film. The shooting will start in April next year.

The 10-part Armenian film Musk Factor tells the story of four boys who achieve incredible success from an idea that seems unreal, using the possibilities of artificial intelligence.

They create human clones – virtual copies of humans in the digital space. Using these technologies, the four friends set up a social network where users can even communicate with virtual people created by artificial intelligence. It is possible to communicate with dead people (Steve Jobs, Michael Jackson, 2pac, etc.).

The events of the film develop from the moment when the father of one of the main characters flies to Mars to become one of the first inhabitants of that planet.

The events unfold in 2028. The team tries to sow what the world will be like in the near future.

## Spanish city of Benalmádena approves twin town agreement with Armenia's Etchmiadzin

During a plenary session on October 29 the City Council of the Spanish city of Benalmádena approved a twin town agreement with Armenia's Etchmiadzin, Guide to Benalmádena reports.

Councilor and deputy mayor Javier Marín said the Benalmádena City Council has the desire to establish synergies with other parts of the world, to establish cooperation in culture, education and science.

“There are important bonds of friendship between the residents of both cities

that have laid the foundations for cooperation between organizations, and will contribute to the realization of joint projects,” said the councilor.

This twinning will be reflected in the implementation of different collaboration projects each year. The local self-government bodies will exchange best practices and experience.

In addition, they will support and develop mutually beneficial business relationships.



The agreement approved in plenary envisages the signing of a collaboration agreement between the parties for the realization of commercial, tourist, economic, sports relations, etc., that generate mutual benefits for Echmiadzin and Benalmádena.

## EU to recognize Armenia's Covid certificates

On October 28, the European Commission adopted two new decisions certifying that COVID-19 certificates issued by Armenia and the United Kingdom are equivalent to the EU Digital COVID Certificate, EU Reporter informs.

As a result, the two countries will be connected to the EU's system and the COVID certificates they issue will be ac-

cepted in the EU under the same conditions as the EU Digital COVID Certificate.

At the same time, the two countries agreed to accept the EU Digital COVID Certificate for travel from the EU to their countries.

Commissioner for Justice, Didier Reynders, said: “Safer travel is a reality thanks to the EU Digital COVID Certificate,

which is now the leading global standard: 45 countries in four continents are connected to the system and more will follow in the coming weeks and months. We are open to other countries to join our system.”

The two decisions will enter into force on 29 October. More information on the EU Digital COVID Certificate can be found on the dedicated website.

# ARMENIA

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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.

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