

## Leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan reaffirm the agreement on reopening of rail communication



*Armenia - European Council President Charles Michel, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev meet in Brussels, December 14, 2021.*

The trilateral meeting of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, the President of the European Council Charles Michel and the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev took place in Brussels.

The process of fulfilling the trilateral statements of November 9, 2020, January 11, 2021, and November 26 were discussed.

Prime Minister Pashinyan stressed the need for the full implementation of the above-mentioned statements, in particular, emphasizing the need for an immediate solution to humanitarian issues, ensuring the return of prisoners of war, hostages and other civilians. Reference was made to the work aimed at opening regional communications.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of Azerbaijan reaffirmed the agreement on the reopening of the rail communication. Accordingly, the railway will operate in accordance with internationally accepted customs and border rules, on a reciprocal basis, under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the countries. Armenia will have access by rail to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation.

Concrete steps were taken to reduce tensions in the region.

Reference was made to possible steps aimed at demarcation, delimitation, and mutual trust between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The parties agreed to continue contacts.

**Read on page 8**

Armenian PM, European Council President hold a private conversation in Brussels

p. 2

Armenian opposition demands parliament speaker's ouster

p. 4

Armenia to raise basic pensions, allowances from January 2022

p.7

Armenia plays big role in expansion of EAEU's ties with third countries – Russian Ambassador

p. 5

## Armenian PM, European Council President hold a private conversation in Brussels

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who is in Brussels on a working visit, had a private conversation with the President of the European Council Charles Michel.

The Prime Minister of Armenia thanked Charles Michel for the consistent efforts aimed at solving the problems caused by the 44-day war.

The interlocutors referred to the upcoming trilateral meeting between the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, the President of the European Council Charles Michel and the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev scheduled for today, attaching importance to the continuity and strengthening of the dialogue. The parties expressed hope for effective negotiations, which will contribute to stability and a comprehensive settlement of the issues.



Nikol Pashinyan and Charles Michel also touched upon the agenda and issues for discussion at the sixth summit of the Eastern Partnership to be held in Brussels on December 15. The parties highlighted the development of Armenia-EU cooperation and the effective implementation of programs within the framework of the

Eastern Partnership for the benefit of the implementation of institutional reforms and the strengthening of democracy in our country.

The sides stressed the importance of the reforms launched in Armenia during the last three years and the steps taken by the Armenian Government in that direction. In this context, the President of the European Council stressed the readiness of the EU to

further deepen and expand the partnership for the implementation of the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and Charles Michel also referred to the developments taking place in the South Caucasus.

## Putin presents to Macron main results of the meeting with Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders

The Presidents of Russia and France, Vladimir Putin and Emmanuel Macron, discussed the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict during a telephone conversation, the press service of the Kremlin informs.

In particular, it is noted that Putin informed Macron about the main results of the trilateral meeting between the leaders of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan on No-

vember 26 in Sochi. “Putin presented the measures aimed at the maintenance of the ceasefire, the return of refugees, the resumption of trade, economic and transport ties”, reads the statement.

The presidents expressed hope that the Brussels meeting of European Council President Charles Michel with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev will be



fruitful.

“The sides expressed support for the intensification of the activities of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs (Russia, the United States and France),” the statement said.

## Armenia, Moldova keen to develop trade and economic ties



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with Moldovan President Maia Sandu within the framework of the Eastern Partnership summit in Brussels.

The Prime Minister praised the development of relations between the two

countries and hailed the political dialogue with Moldova. Nikol Pashinyan stressed the need to develop economic cooperation, adding that there are good preconditions and necessary potential for that. According to the Prime Minister, the governments of the two countries should continue to work closely together to expand trade and economic ties and promote tourism.

The President of Moldova stressed that her country is interested in deepening and strengthening relations with Armenia. Maia Sandu noted the need to give a new impetus to economic and investment cooperation. In this regard, she considered it

necessary to hold a business forum, which will contribute to the establishment of new contacts between businessmen and the implementation of joint investment programs. The President of Moldova also attached importance to the development of cooperation and exchange of experience in the process of institutional reforms, including the fields of justice, anti-corruption and human rights.

Nikol Pashinyan and Maia Sandu also touched upon the cooperation within the framework of the Eastern Partnership, the agenda of the summit to be held today, as well as other issues of mutual interest.

## Armenia's Security Council Secretary, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan meet at the White House



US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan met with National Security Council Secretary Armen Grigoryan of Armenia at the White House.

Mr. Sullivan conveyed the commit-

ment of the United States to peace, security, and prosperity in Armenia and the South Caucasus region.

He expressed concern over ongoing tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and emphasized that military movements near un-demarcated borders are irresponsible and provocative.

He welcomed the ongoing communication between the two sides and emphasized the U.S. commitment to continue supporting confidence-building measures and re-

gional reconciliation both bilaterally and as a Minsk Group Co-Chair.

Mr. Sullivan welcomed the announcement that Turkey and Armenia will appoint special envoys to discuss the normalization process.

Mr. Sullivan appreciated Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's participation in The Summit for Democracy and underscored the U.S. strong cooperation on reform, democratic institution-building, and economic development in Armenia.

## Aliyev, Pashinyan meet again in Brussels

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met in Brussels on Wednesday night for the second time in two days to discuss ways of easing tensions between their countries.

Aliyev and Pashinyan sat down with French President Emmanuel Macron following the European Union's summit with



five ex-Soviet states covered by its Eastern Partnership program. Neither side reported any details of the trilateral meeting as of Thursday afternoon.

"We will never abandon the Armenians," Macron tweeted after the meeting. "We will always seek solutions for a lasting peace. I call for the holiday season to be one of humanitarian progress, one of appeasement."

## Starting dialogue with Turkey doesn't mean Armenia is abandoning key interests, says legislator Eduard Aghajanyan

By starting dialogue with Turkey, Armenia doesn't abandon its key state interests, and the establishment of relations cannot be accompanied by any preconditions, the head of the parliamentary committee on foreign relations Eduard Aghajanyan told reporters.

"In the context of relations with Turkey, Armenia's stance has always been that we are ready to start the relations without any preconditions both from the Armenian side and the opposite," he said.

Aghajanyan assures that the Armenian side is not abandoning anything, and this process is about the relations between Armenia and Turkey, about starting diplomatic relations. "This doesn't anyhow



mean that Armenia is abandoning its key state interests. On the contrary, we are convinced that establishing diplomatic relations with Turkey stems from Armenian state interests for various reasons," the MP said.

He said that both Armenia and Turkey

will benefit from this.

"Armenia has neighbors whom it can't avoid geographically, and our neighbors can't avoid our presence in this region. Therefore, there simply is no alternative to establishing good-neighborly relations with neighboring states. Indeed, this process isn't easy given the regional processes of the last 30 years, but we are willing to take this path. And we will do everything for this process stemming from the Armenian interests to become reality," he said.

He noted that over the last 30 years, Turkey was the one who was always pulling the plug on the process by bringing forward preconditions associated with the Artsakh conflict.

## Armenian government has political will to resolve Nagorno Karabakh conflict – says Security Council Secretary



The United States is interested in the opportunity for stable cooperation and general unblocking in the region, the Armenian Security Council Secretary Armen Grigoryan told the Voice of America addressing his December 15 meeting with the U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in Washington D.C.

Grigoryan described the meeting as “productive.”

The Armenia-United States bilateral agenda was discussed, he said.

“Armenia’s democratization process is an important security factor. Armenia’s

continuous democratization process has a very important role and significance in this agenda. We’ve discussed how we can continue our cooperation in this process. We’ve also discussed issues relating to the security environment in the region, as well as development of cooperation and the economy in the region,” Grigoryan said.

Addressing the Azerbaijani demands for a so-called “corridor”, Grigoryan dismissed these statements as “fake”.

“Armenia has never discussed any issue on a “corridor”. This is a fake subject, which doesn’t exist on the negotiations table, but exists outside of it, which impacts the negotiations process,” he said.

Speaking about the future status of Nagorno Karabakh, Grigoryan said that the Armenian government attaches importance to launching discussions over finding ways

for a long-term solution to the conflict within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship. Asked whether or not a solution is possible under the current OSCE MG principles – which include territorial integrity and the right to self-determination and which in turn contradicted each other for more than two decades – the Armenian Security Council Secretary said a solution is possible if “political will exists”.

“We have this political will and we expect that Azerbaijan will have such political will so that a long-term solution is found. There’s been a lot of talk after the war as if the issue is resolved, but like I said, it’s recorded both by us and the international community that the conflict isn’t resolved. We must work in the direction of solving the issue,” Grigoryan said

## Armenian opposition demands parliament speaker’s ouster

The main opposition Hayastan alliance has formally demanded that the National Assembly remove its pro-government speaker Alen Simonyan, accusing him of undermining Armenia’s national security with controversial statements.

Presenting the impeachment motion on December 13, a senior Hayastan lawmaker, Artsvik Minasyan, pointed to Simonyan’s disparaging comments about Armenian prisoners of war and other statements that carry “risks for our foreign policy.”

Minasyan clearly alluded to Simonyan’s recent claim that Russia sought to restore Azerbaijani control over Nagorno-Karabakh through peace proposals made before last year’s war.

The Russian Foreign Ministry denounced the “baseless” claim on December 3. It argued that the peace plan jointly

drafted by Russia, the United States and France stipulated that Karabakh’s internationally recognized status would be determined through a future referendum.

Simonyan, who is a leading political ally of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, was also caught on camera saying recently that many of the Armenian soldiers taken prisoner by Azerbaijan “laid down their weapons and ran away” during hostilities. He claimed that their relatives have not protested lately because they realize that the soldiers are deserters.

The remarks sparked uproar in Armenia, with angry relatives of POWs staging street protests and opposition and civil society members demanding the speaker’s resignation. Pashinyan’s Civil Contract party did not disavow or disapprove of them.

Predictably, a lawmaker representing



the party made clear that it will reject the impeachment motion also backed by Pativ Unem, the other opposition bloc holding seats in the Armenian parliament. Vahagn Aleksanyan accused the parliamentary opposition of trying to earn “cheap political dividends” with initiatives that are doomed to fail.

Simonyan also scoffed at the demands and stood by his statements. “Your political ineptness is at its peak. As for me, I have gotten everything right so far,” he wrote in a Facebook comment addressed to the opposition.

## Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyan says has no intention to cooperate with any political party

Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyan has said he has no intention and wish to cooperate with any political party.

Addressing the residents of Yerevan and all compatriots, Marutyan said he has three important things to say so that “no one tries to mislead” them.

The Mayor wrote on Facebook:

1. I have never met Robert Kocharyan under any circumstances, even by accident

2. If I had time for meetings outside of work, I would meet my kids

3. I do not have the intention or wish to cooperate with any political party.

The ruling My Step faction of the Yerevan City Council has initiated a no-confidence motion against Mayor Hayk Marutyan and will nominate incumbent Deputy Mayor Hrachya Sargsyan for the post.

According to the Law on Local



Self-Government in the City of Yerevan, the no confidence motion passes if the nominated candidate receives the majority of votes of the City Council.



The relevance of the development of integration processes within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Union's enlargement is more than obvious to all those who are familiar with the mutual relations between its member states and the regional developments, Russian Ambassador to Armenia Sergei Kopyrkin said during the 7th annual conference of the Eurasian Expert Club, commenting on the 7th anniversary of Armenia's membership to the EAEU.

"I want to say that Russia, Armenia and other member states are closely cooperating in the Eurasian Economic Union, and as we are in Yerevan now, I would like to

## Armenia plays big role in expansion of EAEU's ties with third countries – Russian Ambassador

specifically highlight the constructive, interested approach of the Armenian side on integration development matters. Armenia plays a great role in the expansion of the EAEU's ties with the third countries", the Russian Ambassador said.

He said that one of the key directions of the Union's work is the expansion of its geography through the establishment of ties with third countries and regional integration unions.

As of now, EAEU has five member states – Armenia, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Moldova, Uzbekistan and Cuba have a status of an observer. Trade agreements have been signed with five more countries, such as China, Iran, Vietnam, Singapore and Serbia.

In this context Ambassador Kopyrkin

reminded that the 2019 October meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council was also attended by the leaders of Iran and Singapore.

According to him, Armenia's economic benefits gained from the EAEU are also obvious. The evidence of this is Armenia's mutual trade growth with the other member states of the EAEU. "In the first 9 months of this year, Armenia's export volumes to the EAEU states have increased by almost 30%. Moreover, the growth has been registered with all partners", Kopyrkin added.

*The annual conference of the Eurasian Expert Club was also attended by the Ambassadors of Belarus, Kazakhstan to Armenia, the representatives of the 102nd Russian military base in Armenia and members of the Eurasian Expert Club.*

## Armenian Justice Minister presents Azerbaijani gross violations of int'l humanitarian law to CoE Secretary General

Minister of Justice of Armenia Karen Andreasyan met with Secretary General of the Council of Europe Marija Pejčinović Burić in Italy, the ministry reports.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Justice Minister thanked the Council of Europe and the Secretary General, in particular, for the efforts aimed at stopping the armed clashes during and after the 2020 Artsakh War, eliminating the humanitarian consequences of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, as well as returning the prisoners of war.

The minister presented to the CoE Secretary General the gross violations of international humanitarian law by Azerbaijan against the Armenian captives, Baku's refusal to return the captives, as well as provided facts and eye witnesses about the torture, inhuman treatment carried out by the Azerbaijani armed forces against the POWs. The minister asked Marija Pejčinović Burić to continue applying all procedures within the Council of Europe for returning the Armenian captives from Azerbaijan.



Karen Andreasyan also introduced the priorities of the large-scale reforms in the justice sector.

On the sidelines of his visit in Italy, the Armenian Justice Minister also had meetings with his counterparts of the CoE member states.

## Armenia appoints special representative for dialogue with Turkey – MFA

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia Ruben Rubinyan will be the special representative of the Republic of Armenia for the process of the dialogue between Armenia and Turkey, the Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Vahan Hunanyan said in a statement.

"Armenia, as always before, is ready for the process of normalization of relations with Turkey without preconditions, which is enshrined in the Armenian government's program, the Spokesperson said in response to media questions.



The comments come after Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Armenia and Turkey would appoint special

representatives for normalization of relations.

Turkey has appointed Serdar Kilic, former ambassador to the US, as special envoy to discuss steps for normalization of ties with Armenia, the Turkish foreign minister said on December 15, Anadolu News Agency reports.

Kilic's appointment has been made with the approval of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said.

## Armenia, Serbia consider opportunities of establishing joint ventures

Minister of Economy of Armenia Vahan Kerobyan on December 13 received Chargé d’Affaires of Serbia Tatyana Panayotovich-Tsvetkovich. Deputy Ministers Arshak Aslanyan and Rafayel Gevorgyan were also present at the meeting. Minister of Economy of Armenia informs that greeting the guests, Vahan Kerobyan highlighted the necessity of expansion of mutually beneficial relations in the economic sphere. The Minister emphasized that Armenian-Serbian economic relations have a big potential of expansion and offered to outline the main directions which are more expedient for cooperation. For that purpose, Tatyana Panayotovich-Tsvetkovich was briefed on the priorities of the Government of Armenia, the priorities of economy

and the ongoing state-supported programs.

Then the interlocutors discussed a wide range of issues of bilateral interest. Vahan Kerobyan mentioned that Armenia and Serbia can cooperate, in particular, in light and heavy industry, agriculture, solar energy, information technology and high technology, mechanical engineering, diamonds, pharmaceuticals.

Informing that in Armenia is planned to create 3 industrial parks of high-quality infrastructures, the Minister offered that Serbian companies also get included in this process.

A reference was made to the implementation of investments by Serbian companies in priority fields in Armenia, the establishment of Armenian-Serbian joint

ventures, organization of business forum



and holding meetings in B2B framework were observed.

The opportunities of creation of intergovernmental committee on issues of Armenian-Serbian economic and scientific-technological cooperation were discussed.

## Armenian Central Bank approves another rate hike



The Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) raised its benchmark interest rate on December 14 for the seventh time in a year as it continued to grapple with rising inflation.

The CBA’s governing board set the refinancing rate at 7.75 percent, up by 0.5 percentage points.

The minimum cost of borrowing stood at 4.25 percent when the bank began tightening its monetary policy in December 2020 after a major weakening of the Arme-

nian currency, the dram, followed by rising consumer prices.

In a statement, the CBA blamed the latest increase on a “substantial increase in inflationary pressures” on the Armenian economy emanating from the outside world.

The statement said annual consumer price inflation in the country accelerated from 9.1 percent in October to 9.6 percent in November, the highest rate in many years. It is well above a 4 percent target set by the Armenian authorities for 2021.

The higher-than-projected inflation was primarily driven by sharp rises in the prices of key foodstuffs. Armenia imports some of them.

The CBA said that international food and commodity prices keep rising. “In these circumstances, inflationary pressures on Armenia’s economy coming from the external sector are expected to increase,”

it warned.

After concluding a three-week visit to Yerevan on November 12, a senior official from the International Monetary Fund stressed the importance of “reducing inflation towards the Central Bank’s target of 4 percent.”

The bank also reported on Tuesday a slowdown in economic activity in the country, raising more questions about the Armenian government’s GDP growth projections.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in July that the domestic economy is on course to grow by 6 percent this year after contracting by 7.4 percent in 2020. The IMF and the World Bank forecast more modest growth rates this fall.

The government’s Statistical Committee registered a GDP growth rate of just 2.7 percent in the third quarter of 2021.

## Restoring 45 km section of railway to Azerbaijan will cost Armenia about \$200 thousand – Deputy PM

The Armenian government is planning to restore 45 km of the Yeraskh-Julfra-Ordubad-Meghri-Horadiz section of the railway, for which it will spend about \$200 million, Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan told *TASS* on December 18.

“According to preliminary estimates of experts, the restoration of sections of railway tracks passing through the territory of Armenia will cost about \$200 million. The length of the section [passing through Ar-



menia] will be about 45 km, and the total

length of the track – about 340 km,” he noted.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister, the railway route connecting Armenia and Azerbaijan will operate “according to the accepted international procedures for the implementation of railway transportation, on the principles of reciprocity, within the framework of the sovereignty and jurisdictions of the countries through whose territories it passes.”

## Armenia to raise basic pensions, allowances from January 2022



From January 1, 2022, Armenia will raise the minimum pensions and a number

of benefits for vulnerable groups. A relevant decision was adopted at the Government sitting today.

The basic pension will thus raise from 26,500 to 28,600 AMD (about \$58).

The amount of the military pension for the disability of a serviceman of the compulsory military service will see a 3,000 AMD raise. Those in the first, second and third disability groups will receive 43 000, 33 000 and 30 000, accordingly.

The families of killed soldiers that have lost the breadwinner will get 30 000 AMD

(against the current 27 000 AMD).

The old age and disability benefits, as well as the allowances for caring for two minors and losing the breadwinner will rise to 28 600 (instead of the current 26 500), while the benefits for children with disabilities will make 37 000 (instead of the current 26 500).

The allowance for children under the age of two is also expected to rise. A parent on childcare leave will receive AMD 28,600 instead of the current AMD 26,500.

## FLYONE Armenia starts Yerevan-Lyon flights

FLYONE Armenia airline has started regular direct flights on Yerevan-Lyon-Yerevan.

Yerevan-Lyon flights will be operated from Zvartnots International Airport to Lyon Saint-Exupéry Airport twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, at an affordable cost for everyone from 44 euros, or 39 euros for FLYONE CLUB members.

The launching of regular direct flights was marked by a special event at Yerevan Zvartnots International Airport. Head



of the Advisory Board of FLYONE Armenia Aram Ananyan cut the symbolic

ribbon, announcing the opening of the long-awaited direction.

The company's Director General Mircea Maleca noted: "FLYONE Armenia has become the first Armenian airline to operate flights to an EU country after more than a year of Armenian airlines being on the EU aviation blacklist. Given the size of the Armenian diaspora in France, Lyon is a key destination, and it is no coincidence that we begin our flights to Europe with flights to this city."

## Funds raised at Christmas Market to help displaced people

– The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and UN Armenia have announced that all proceeds from the organizations' Christmas Market, around \$25,000, will be directed to the projects helping displaced people in Armenia. The event took place in Yerevan on December 12, 2021, and was held in partnership with the Tovmasyan Charity Foundation.

Over 80 vendors participated in the Christmas Market, with more than half of them representing Armenian NGOs, including the UN agencies and Aurora's beneficiaries. More than 1,000 people attended the event where a variety of Armenian products were sold to raise funds for humanitarian programs while celebrating the spirit of giving back.

The Christmas Market included a charity Gift-Sharing Program that anybody could participate in. A range of exciting gifts awaited the lucky ones, and after cou-



pons were drawn, some guests found out on the spot that they were to receive one of the over 30 coveted gifts provided by the organizers and partners of the Market.

Many participants have chosen to donate their presents to the Zinvori Tun ("Soldier Home") Rehabilitation Center, so Armenian soldiers may get a lovely surprise in time for the winter holidays. When it came to the two main gifts, Ms. Roza Navoyan received an exclusive invitation to the 2022 Aurora Prize Ceremony – wherever it may take place – while Mr. Seryozha Tsatryan, one of the soldiers mentioned above, will have a chance to attend the high-level ceremony dedicated to

UN's 30th anniversary in Armenia.

UN Armenia will allocate the raised funds to the humanitarian and development projects in Armenia.

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative will use the money to ensure food security for displaced people from Nagorno-Karabakh. The project will be implemented in partnership with the Azhdahak Social and Environmental Center NGO (Gavar, Armenia) in rural Armenian communities currently hosting them. Socially vulnerable families will be provided with food (potatoes, cabbage, cheese, etc.) for consumption during the winter season. In addition, those interested in cultivating potatoes will be given seeds originating from the Gavar region, famous for its high-quality potato crops. This initiative is expected to benefit over 3,200 people.

## EU will make available an expert mission to support the border delimitation and demarcation between Armenia and Azerbaijan



The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, hosted the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, for a discussion on the evolving situation in the South Caucasus region and ways forward regarding EU relations with both countries.

President Michel assured both leaders of the EU's commitment to work closely with Armenia and Azerbaijan in overcoming conflict, creating cooperation and an atmosphere of trust, with a view to sustainable peace in the region ultimately underpinned by a comprehensive peace agreement. The common aim of all three leaders is to build a South Caucasus that is secure, stable and prosperous for the benefit of all people living in the region.

Prime Minister Pashinyan and President Aliyev reconfirmed that key commitments undertaken in the framework of the two trilateral statements of 9 November 2020 and 11 January 2021 would be honored and that understandings reached in Sochi on 26 November 2021 should be built upon. President Michel commended steps taken by both leaders to ensure the de-escalation of tensions following recent armed clashes along the border between

Armenia and Azerbaijan. In particular, the successful establishment of a direct communication link between the Ministers of Defence of both countries, facilitated by President Michel, was acknowledged. This mechanism can serve to prevent future incidents and make a positive impact by helping de-escalate tensions on the ground.

President Michel stressed that resolving key humanitarian issues is of crucial importance. He welcomed the recent release of ten Armenian detainees by Azerbaijan and the handover of all remaining mine-maps by Armenia. He called for the full and speedy resolution of all outstanding humanitarian issues, such as the release of further detainees and addressing the fate of missing persons, while recognizing that humanitarian gestures by both sides also promote confidence and help create an environment conducive to progress towards peace and reconciliation. The EU will continue to support humanitarian de-mining efforts, including by providing expert advice, and assistance to conflict-affected populations, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The EU will also continue to support confidence building measures between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The leaders discussed key existing and

prospective trade and economic partnerships between the EU and both countries. They also discussed the EU's intention to launch an economic advisory platform to build confidence, contribute to peaceful coexistence and build up economic cooperation in the region.

President Aliyev and Prime Minister Pashinyan agreed that in the context of the planned launch of negotiations on the delimitation and demarcation of the state border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, further tangible steps will need to be taken to reduce tensions on the ground to ensure a conducive atmosphere for the talks. President Michel called on both Yerevan and Baku to actively engage in good faith and to work towards de-escalation. He stressed that ensuring the appropriate distancing of forces is an essential element of incident prevention. The EU will make available an expert mission/consultative group to support the border delimitation and demarcation issues by providing technical assistance to both countries.

President Michel also emphasized the importance of restoring communications infrastructure between Armenia and Azerbaijan in particular and the South Caucasus more broadly, while fully respecting the sovereignty of all countries. It was agreed to proceed with the restoration of railway lines, with appropriate arrangements for border and customs controls, based on the principle of reciprocity. The EU is ready to support the development of connectivity links, in line with its Economic and Investment Plan. The proposed economic advisory platform can also support this process.

The leaders agreed to follow-up on outcomes of their meeting and to stay engaged.



## Human Rights Defender Responds to Ruling Party Attacks

(Asbarez) - Armenia's Human Rights Defender Arman Tatoyan issued a statement Friday defending himself against a barrage of comments made by ruling party lawmakers and other government officials.

Tatoyan said that several members of the ruling Civil Contract lawmakers, in public statements and interviews, have suggested that Tatoyan is still at his job because of their "patience" with him. Whereas, since last year's war Tatoyan has been on the ground meeting with residents, especially in the border regions, and reporting on threats to the rights of Armenia's citizens in the wake of continued Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia.

Earlier this fall, Tatoyan accused Armenia's Defense Ministry of leading a smear campaign against him and his office after the Human Rights Defender showed evidence that Azerbaijani forces were fortifying their positions in the Gegharkunik Province where they have been camped out since breaching Armenia's sovereign borders in May.

The position of Human Rights Defender—or Ombudsman as the person is known—is in line with European Union standards and Armenia is a member of the European organization of human rights defenders recognized by various bodies, including the United States. Azerbaijan does not enjoy the same level of recognition.

Tatoyan's term in office ends in February. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's Civil Contract Party has signaled that it will nominate a party member, Kristinne



Grigoryan to replace Tatoyan. The post of the Human Rights Defender is usually filled with a person not affiliated with any political party. But true to form, a party hack will be nominated for the post, whose nomination must be approved by parliament.

Grigoryan, who is not an attorney, served as Armenia's deputy justice minister, before being elected to parliament.

"To date, my stay in office as Human Rights Defender of Armenia, has been due to my persistence and loyalty to my oath, and it is not because of the goodwill of any person or political force," Tatoyan said in a statement issued on Friday.

He said he was compelled to respond to the claims made by ruling party lawmakers, who he said, boast about never having evaluated the activities of the Human Rights Defender, calling such remarks and claims "inaccurate."

"During my term in office as Human Rights Defender, especially after the war, there have been various forms of pressure,

which are prohibited by law, starting with demands presented by several high-ranking officials to stop or essentially minimize the activities [of the Human Rights Defender's Office] due to the post-war situation and ending with the seizure of Human Rights Defender's Office employees vehicles by a government decision in order to reduce our capabilities," explained Tatoyan.

He cited other examples of attempts to impeded his and his office's work, including efforts to make the Human Rights Defender's Office depended on government funding, as well as smear campaign against his person by high-ranking government officials and lawmakers.

Pashinyan-affiliated lawmakers attempted to cut funding for Tatoyan's office.

"Regardless of the difficulties and obstacles, I have never presented and will not present myself as a victim and have only done my job as a human rights activist, guided by non-political and unbiased principles," Tatoyan said.



The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) is calling on the Biden Administration to condemn Azerbaijan's aggression, halt all U.S. military aid to Baku, and enforce sanctions against Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and other senior members of his regime as part of an overall reset of U.S. policy towards Armenia, Artsakh, and the broader Caucasus region.

"Left unchecked, Azerbaijan and our NATO 'ally' Turkey will continue to deploy the full force of their combined military capabilities to complete the Armenian Genocide, the planned, systematic destruction of the world's first Christian na-

## ANCA urges Biden Administration reset of U.S. policy on Armenia and Republic of Artsakh

tion – a proud country of just three million people struggling to survive on the frontier of world freedom," stated ANCA Chairman Raffi Hamparian, in a December 14, 2021, [letter to President Biden](#), shared with Senate and House Committees on Foreign Relations, Armed Services, and Appropriations.

Hamparian's correspondence to the White House sets forth that the first step in a U.S. – Caucasus policy reset is ending the Administration's "patently false 'both-sides' narrative by clearly and consistently calling out Azerbaijan as the belligerent that launched the September 2020 attack on Artsakh." Hamparian went on to note the key criteria for a policy reset on Armenia and Artsakh, including:

- withdrawing the waiver of Section 907 restrictions on U.S. aid to Azerbaijan
- providing \$100 million in direct aid

to assist the over 100,000 Artsakh Armenians ethnically cleansed by Azerbaijan

- imposing Global Magnitsky sanctions on Azerbaijani leaders for war crimes committed during the 2020 Artsakh and Armenia attacks

- condemning Azerbaijan's illegal detention of Armenian POWs

- conducting an investigation of Turkey's hiring of Syrian mercenaries and use of illegal munitions against Artsakh and Armenia civilians.

- Denouncing Turkey's material military backing of Azerbaijan's ethnic-cleansing of Artsakh and ongoing Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia

- Actively countering Turkey's attempts to arm-twist Armenia into "normalizing" bilateral ties at the expense of Artsakh's independence or justice for the Armenian Genocide.

## Ombudsman sends report on violation of rights of Armenia's border residents to OSCE Chair, Minsk Group Co-Chairs

Armenia's Human Rights Defender Arman Tatoyan has sent a special report to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs on the violations of the rights of the border residents of Armenia by the actions of the Azerbaijani armed forces.

"With concrete facts and examples the document shows that the actions of the Azerbaijani armed forces, deliberately organized by the Azerbaijani authorities, violate the rights of people living in Gegharkunik and Syunik regions, in the border areas of our country, disrupt security and normal life (examples from Yeraskh community of Ararat region are provided)," the Ombudsman says.

Therefore, he says, restoring the normal life of people, ensuring their rights and security is a priority.

The report analyzes the violations of rights by groups (for example, the right to life, the right to free movement, children's rights, etc.).

"I have mentioned that alternative roads are not a solution in Syunik, as the



safety of the people is not ensured. The Azerbaijani armed forces continue to monitor these roads, civilians and their homes. Moreover, armed servicemen are demonstratively present on the roads, in areas visible to civilians, and are committing atrocities that violate human rights," the Ombudsman says.

"I have substantiated that the human rights violations in the border areas are nourished by the Azerbaijani authorities' policy of patronage of Armenophobia and hostility towards Armenians, which has further deepened after the war," Tatoyan adds.

Therefore, he says, the conclusion is clear, "There should be no Azerbaijani

armed servicemen in our villages, in many cases near the houses and on the roads. Moreover, this applies to all their deployments and not only to the May incursions."

In other words, there must be a demilitarized security zone, the Human Rights Defender insists.

"This does not mean that we thus immediately decide whose territory it is. It will be decided later, at least as a result of delimitation and demarcation that starts in parallel," the Ombudsman says, adding that for now it's simply necessary to urgently restore people's rights and normal life.

In the report the Human Rights Defender emphasizes that on the basis of his proposal, the idea has already been enshrined in a resolution adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on September 27, 2021.

"These approaches of mine are directly derived from the requirements and experience of the OSCE, the UN and other international organizations," the Ombudsman concludes.



There is no alternative to the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Armenia's Permanent Representative to the OSCE, Ambassador Armen Papikyan said at an online conference hosted by the Swedish Presidency of the OSCE.

During the three sessions of the conference dedicated to the aftermath of the Second Artsakh War and the OSCE's role in the political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict the participants discussed role of confidence-building measures in preparing peoples for peace, including the unblocking of economic and transport links, addressing environmental challenges, and protecting the region's cultural heritage, as well as human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Ambassador Papikyan noted that there is no alternative to the peaceful settlement

## OSCE Swedish Presidency hosts conference on aftermath of Second Artsakh War

of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, and stressed that the results of the use of force cannot serve as a basis for lasting peace. He noted that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict started as a result of Azerbaijan's suppression of the Artsakh people's right to self-determination, massacres and ethnic cleansing of Armenians for that purpose, adding that a comprehensive and permanent settlement of the conflict is possible only if this inalienable right is exercised.

Speaking about the means of preparing the people for peace, security and trust-building, Ambassador Papikyan stressed that Armenia has always been in favor of establishing a favorable environment for peace. From this point of view, he noted that Azerbaijan should adopt a similar approach, first of all, return all Armenian prisoners of war and other captives, withdraw its troops from the sovereign territory of Armenia, refrain from new provocations, belligerent rhetoric and territorial claims on Armenia.

Armen Papikyan noted that the destruction, falsification and illegal misappropriation of the Armenian cultural heritage

also hinder the advancement of the peace agenda in the region and attached importance to the unimpeded entry of international specialized organizations into the Karabakh conflict zone. From the point of view of the protection of the Armenian cultural heritage, the RA Permanent Representative stressed the importance of the decision of the International Court of Justice.

The Permanent Representative reaffirmed Armenia's readiness to engage in good faith in the peace talks on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. The importance of resuming the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs' visits to the region was stressed.

Ambassador Papikyan noted that the fact that Azerbaijan does not participate in this conference organized by the Swedish OSCE Chairmanship, which is aimed at promoting dialogue, clearly shows Azerbaijan's real approaches to the resumption of the negotiation process and the normalization of relations with Armenia.

## Armenia's representative calls ICJ's recent orders a victory

The recent orders of the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, are a victory and success for Armenia, the Representative of Armenia at the European

Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and ICJ Yeghishe Kirakosyan told a press conference in Armenpress, commenting on the ICJ's December 7 orders indicating provisional measures in the cases between Armenia and Azerbaijan concerning the

application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

"There can't be second opinion here. Both the Court's order and the reaction of our neighbors to these orders prove it. We see that there is a painful reaction by them to these orders. This shows that it has reached its point. We hope that all these will be more implemented in the future as a result of an agreed work. Maybe, this is also a good chance to strengthen trust among our public towards international processes, rule out skeptical approaches", he said.

On December 7, International Court of Justice issued its orders on the requests for provisional measures made by Armenia and Azerbaijan in the proceedings instituted by Armenia against Azerbaijan and the counterclaim of Azerbaijan against



Armenia under the "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination" (CERD)

The orders reflect the Court's acceptance of numerous critical arguments raised by Armenia, and the validation of its positions before the Court.

In its request for provisional measures, Armenia presented evidence of Azerbaijan's racially motivated murders and torture of the Armenian prisoners of war and other detainees, as well as of its consistent policy of racial hatred of Armenians and destruction of Armenian cultural heritage.

The Court found that there is an imminent risk of irreparable harm to the rights of the Armenians under the "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination", and ordered Azerbaijan to:

1. "Protect from violence and bodily

harm all persons captured and remained in detention in relation to the military conflict of 2020, as well as ensure their security and equality before the law";

2. "Take all necessary measures to prevent the incitement and promotion of racial hatred and discrimination, including by its officials and public institutions, targeted at persons of Armenian national or ethnic origin";
3. "Take all necessary measures to prevent and punish acts of vandalism and desecration towards Armenian cultural heritage, including churches and other places of worship, monuments, landmarks, cemeteries and artifacts".

It should be noted that during the oral proceedings on Armenia's request for provisional measures the Court took full cognizance on the representation made by the agent of Azerbaijan that the mannequins depicting Armenian soldiers and displays of helmets worn by Armenian soldiers during the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War have been permanently removed from the so-called "Military Trophies Park" and will not be shown in the future.

## Far-Right French Presidential Candidate Visits Armenia

French far-right presidential candidate Eric Zemmour called for strong Western support for Armenia at the weekend as he began a surprise visit to what he described as a Christian nation situated “in the middle of an Islamic Ocean.”

The former journalist and commentator, known for provocative statements against Islam and immigration, is the main challenger to longtime far-right figure Marine Le Pen for a place in a second round of France’s presidential election slated for April. One of them could face the incumbent President Emmanuel Macron in the runoff vote.

Zemmour announced his decision to officially join the presidential race last Tuesday. He said on Friday that he chose Armenia for his first campaign trip because “it is an old Christian land” and “one of the cradles of our civilization.”

“Armenia is in danger,” the AFP news agency quoted him as saying. “It was once a martyr land during the times of the Ottoman Empire and massacres like the Armenian genocide. This country is harassed again by its neighbor Azerbaijan and especially by Turkey.”

Zemmour laid flowers at the Armenian genocide memorial in Yerevan and attended a Sunday mass at the ancient Khor

Virap monastery located just a few kilometers from the Armenian-Turkish border.



“On the border between Armenia and Turkey, facing Mount Ararat, I want to tell the Armenians what a model of resistance they have been for centuries,” the 63-year-old tweeted afterwards.

Zemmour spoke of a renewed “great confrontation between Christianity and Islam.” “We see it here, with Armenia, a Christian nation ... in the middle of an Islamic Ocean”, he told French journalists at Khor Virap.

In Yerevan, Zemmour also dined with members of the local French chamber of commerce and met with Armenian Catholic Patriarch Raphael Bedros XXI before holding talks on Monday with four members of Armenia’s parliament affiliated with the ruling Civil Contract party.

Two of those lawmakers head the par-

liament’s standing committees on legal and foreign affairs. The parliamentary press service said they discussed with Zemmour the “development of French-Armenian relations.”

While accusing Azerbaijan of systematically destroying Armenian churches, Armenian leaders have long insisted that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not a religious one. Armenia has also had a cordial relationship with another Muslim neighbor, Iran.

France is home to an influential Armenian community. The latter was instrumental in the December 2020 passage by both houses of the French parliament of resolutions calling on Macron’s government to recognize Karabakh as an independent republic.

Macron criticized Azerbaijan and accused Turkey of recruiting jihadist fighters from Syria for the Azerbaijani army shortly after the outbreak of last year’s war over Karabakh. The French president stated in September this year that France and Armenia enjoy a “special relationship” that should be deepened further.

Zemmour complained at the weekend that French leaders “talk but don’t really defend Armenia.”



## Works of Armenian-Egyptian photographer Van Léo on display in Cairo

pus, author Dina Kabil writes.

The viewer has an opportunity to explore life and work of Van Léo (1921-2002), while uncovering the place where the photographer took the shots of the intellectual elite of movie stars, those of the nightlife of Cairo theaters and cabarets, anonymous ordinary people, and foreigners living in cosmopolitan Cairo after World War II and until the 1990s.

In fact, the American University in Cairo (AUC) has this whole treasure of thousands of photos in its possession. In 1998, encouraged by his friend, Professor Barry Iverson, Van Léo bequeathed his

entire fortune in photographs, his entire studio, to the AUC where his friend was teaching.

“I wanted to recreate his studio in the city center where he had always lived,” explains Ola Seif, exhibition curator and director of the photo library and cinema collection at AUC.

A reproduction of the studio has been carefully planned by the AUC Rare Books Library and Special Collections Managers.

On the left is the art-deco style office where Van Léo was already photographed and where he stored his negatives and photos on the shelves. Further on, the platform

## Hard Rock Cafe announces opening in Armenia



Hard Rock® announces the opening of the brand's first Hard Rock Cafe in Armenia. Hard Rock Cafe Yerevan will be setting foot into down town to Armenian capital in 2022.

Yerevan is over 2800 years old, and with its remarkable cultural and historical heritage the city is also a fresh international center for IT solutions, a progressive and multicultural capital on the crossroads of Europe and Asia, the East and the West.

Hard Rock Cafe Yerevan is located in the historical and touristic center of the city: The Republic Square with the History Museum, Government buildings and many hotels, as well as Northern Avenue – a chic promenade with multiple shops, cocktail bars and clubs – are just a few minutes away. This contemporary restaurant and bar is the first of its kind to have a flair of modern interior design featuring a classy, sleek and uncluttered set up with Instagram-worthy spots for fans.

New Hard Rock Cafe Yerevan will be located on Pushkin Street, 3-1. The 1000-square meter outlet accommodates up to 290 guests, which consists of both indoor and outdoor dining spaces across two floors and a stage for live entertainment. The upper floor holds the indoor area and

the rock shop. Local guests and visitors to Yerevan can enjoy the one-of-a-kind live music and entertainment from the indoor dining space located on the lower ground floor of the cafe. The highlight of the cafe, is building renowned not only for its unique architecture and location, but also for its history.

Guests at the Hard Rock Cafe Yerevan get to take a walk through the memorabilia walls, of which displays a series of iconic memorabilia from legendary musicians around the globe. Over the years, the memorabilia has become a signature feature of Hard Rock Cafes celebrating unique pieces donated by or bought from popular rock stars from different eras.

At Hard Rock Cafe Yerevan, guests are provided with a selection of authentic flavors with the freshest high-quality ingredients from Hard Rock's menu, featuring the Original Legendary® Burger from the Signature Steak Burgers series, mouthwatering Specialty Entrees, Bar Bites, selection of salads, sandwiches and desserts. The cafe also offers a variety of beverages, from draft beers & wines, hand-crafted cocktails including Hard Rock's signature Hurricane Cocktail to Alternative Rock alcohol-free selections. Hard Rock's world-renowned Rock Shop, located within the cafe, offers a rock star shopping experience for collectors and fans, carrying music-inspired merchandise like the classic tees, hats, pins, glassware and accessories.

The franchise rights for the territory of Yerevan belong to Dome Arena company, established by the Food Republic company and the Armenian National Interests Fund (ANIF).

“We are glad that Yerevan – Armenia became a member of the Hard Rock family in the year of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our company. We will create around 100 direct jobs and we believe this will have a positive impact on the hospitality industry. We promise to bring the spirit and philosophy of the brand to a country rich in musical and food traditions by presenting a modern vision of a remarkable restaurant. Amazing experience and acquaintance with the world musical culture are only a small part of what awaits Armenia after arrival of Hard Rock Cafe Yerevan.” said Anibal Fernandez, Vice President of Franchise Operations, Hard Rock International

Hard Rock International (HRI) is one of the most globally recognized companies with venues in 68 countries spanning 241 locations that include owned/licensed or managed Hotels, Casinos, Rock Shops, Live Performance Venues and Cafes. HRI also launched a joint venture named Hard Rock Digital in 2020, an online sportsbook, retail sportsbook and internet gaming platform. Beginning with an Eric Clapton guitar, Hard Rock owns the world's largest and most valuable collection of authentic music memorabilia at more than 86,000 pieces, which are displayed at its locations around the globe.

Hard Rock destinations are located in international gateway cities, including its two most successful flagship properties in Florida and home to the world's first Guitar Hotel in South Florida, Global Gaming's 2020 Property of the Year. The brand is owned by HRI parent entity The Seminole Tribe of Florida.

page 12 on which his clients came to pose.

This preamble to the world of Van Léo is obvious through two very significant photos; the first shows the artist at the top of the pyramid of Giza and the second, a landscape of the famous place Tahrir in the 1940s. Both refer to this Armenian from Egypt belonging to the country and underscoring his special attachment to Cairo, and its city center in particular.

It was in Cairo that the young Léo van

Boyadjian settled in 1927, fleeing the Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire. He worked at Studio Venus, then in the family house where he remained close to his brother Angelo. In 1941, the latter left for Paris, and Van Léo founded a new studio which witnessed years of glory and downfall of an entire city.

Known for his indisputable portraits, Van Léo is distinguished by the series of inventive self-portraits which reflect his depths, his inner self. As for the portraits,

he captured numerous national figures of the time such as Taha Hussein and Doria Shafik. He also managed to capture the unknown side of big cinema stars such as like Omar Sharif, Rouchdi Abaza, Faten Hamama or Samia Gamal. In each photograph, we feel there is a unique friendship between Van Leo and objects of his works.

The viewers can explore the irreplaceable world of Van Leo at the Future Gallery, American University in Cairo, Tahrir Campus, until 22 February 2022.

## World Travel Awards: Armenia named World's Leading Heritage Destination 2021

Wings of Tatev was recognized as the winner of the 28th World Travel Awards in the “World’s Leading Cable Car Ride 2021” category, and Armenia is the winner in the “World’s Leading Heritage Destination 2021” category.

Given the gradual recovery in global tourism following the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, receiving the top tourism award this year is more important and valuable for Armenia than ever before.

Wings of Tatev is the longest (5752 m) reversible aerial cable car in the world, and has served more than 1 million visitors in 11 years. Thanks to this world-class award, Wings of Tatev can record new achievements, as well as successfully continue its work on raising awareness about Armenia and Tatev in the international tourism market.

“This achievement has once again proved the fact that Tatev Monastery and Wings of Tatev are one of the main and significant tourist destinations for Armenia



and the region, and Wings of Tatev cable car meets the highest international standards,” said **Vahe Baghdasaryan, Director of Wings of Tatev.**

World Travel Awards was established in 1993 to acknowledge, reward, and celebrate excellence across all key sectors of the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries.

“The participation and victory of Armenia in such a world-class award ceremony in both nominations make the country more recognizable in international markets. It is necessary to use such opportunities and

strengthen Armenia’s position as a world’s leading heritage destination and a leading cable car ride through continuous marketing campaigns,” said **Gayane Ayyazyan, Public Relations Expert of the Tourism Committee of the RA Ministry of Economy.**

The collaboration with World Travel Awards was launched by the Tourism and Urbanism (TUF) Charitable Foundation in June 2021. A cooperation agreement was signed to develop the capacity of specialists in the field of tourism and tourism infrastructure in Armenia.

As part of the cooperation, TUF Foundation organized a visit of Graham Cooke, the Founder and the Director of the World Travel Awards, to Armenia. In the course of the tour, Mr. Cooke visited the most spectacular and attractive touristic sites in Armenia. He got acquainted with Armenian culture, history, traditions, and national cuisine.

## Forbes: Armenia, a new wine country that is actually very old



Armenia is a small wine country but definitely not a new one. Here, in the re-

gion around present-day Armenia and Georgia, wine was made for the first time around 8000 years ago, *Forbes* writes.

“From here, the art of making wine spread south to Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq), to Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, Greece and the other countries around the Mediterranean and beyond,” authors Per and Britt Karlsson write.

They note that the country’s wines are being appreciated around the world, and

the producers are focusing on quality wines with character.

“Armenia has four main wine-growing regions. The most famous is Vayots Dzor in the southern part of the country. This is where one of the world’s oldest wineries was discovered, 6000 years old,” the article reads.

The authors say they have tasted two red Armenian wines from Vayots Dzor, made from the local grape Areni Noir.

## COVID-19: Portugal to donate 400 thousand doses of Pfizer vaccine to Armenia

Armenia will be provided with a new batch of vaccine against COVID-19 on the sidelines of the vaccine delivery process to the countries of the Eastern Partnership, the European Commission said, presenting the statement by Olivér Várhelyi, the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement.

According to the statement, the first delivery under this arrangement will be 400

thousand vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech, from Portugal to Armenia.

“Each new wave of the COVID pandemic increases the urgency to step up the vaccination rate. This is no different with the newest variant, Omicron. It is only the vaccination that can save us all. And we are talking about our Eastern Partner countries, where the vaccination average rate is only 28%. So it is high time to help them



to speed up the vaccination rate and get everybody fully vaccinated”, the Commissioner said.

# 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.

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

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

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

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

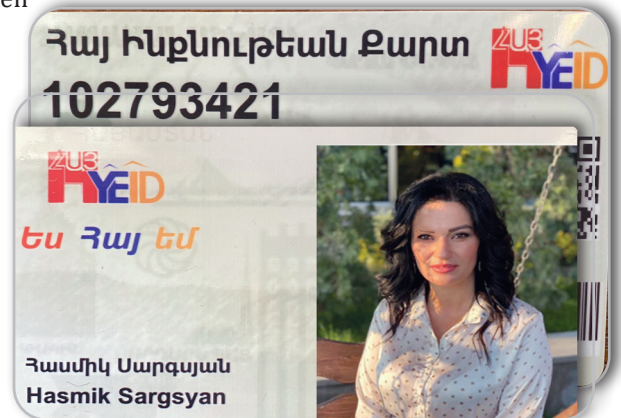
The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders who live in the Diaspora intend to utilize the possibilities made available through HyeID to form a Diaspora representative body — Diaspora Armenian Parliament — through democratic elections.

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