

Nikol Pashinyan, Emmanuel Macron discuss Armenia-EU visa liberalization



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, November 12, 2019

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the Paris Peace Forum on November 12.

According to the Armenian prime minister’s official website, Macron thanked Pashinyan for accepting the invitation to attend the event and highlighted “the importance of developing cooperation with friendly Armenia in different directions.”

In his turn, the Armenian prime minister reportedly thanked the French leader for “the warm reception and the high level of organization of the forum.” He said that “meetings held on different occasions give a new impetus to the development and strengthening of bilateral ties.”

According to the report, Pashinyan and Macron discussed “the urgent issues of the Armenian-French relations, as well as steps taken towards launching the Armenia-EU dialogue on visa liberalization.”

“The two parties stressed the importance of organizing high-level mutual visits and reaching an appropriate agreement [page 3](#)

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Pashinyan urges Aliyev to support his statement

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan challenged Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to support his vision of a Nagorno-Karabakh settlement that would be considered acceptable by all parties to the conflict as he addressed the second Paris Peace Forum in the French capital on November 12.

On a number of occasions Pashinyan said that any solution to the protracted dispute must be acceptable to the peoples of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. “Aliyev can list the people of Azerbaijan first,” the Armenian premier said.

In his remarks to the audience, Pashinyan dwelled on the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, stressing that Azerbaijan refuses to engage in direct negotiations with the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

“At the same time, authorities in Baku insist that Nagorno-Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan. This is odd. It means that they want territory without people. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh know that they will not have any guarantees of security within Azerbaijan,” he said.

Pashinyan said that when Aliyev acknowledges that any solution to the conflict must be acceptable to all peoples, including the

people of Nagorno-Karabakh, “it will mean

from the position of force,” Pashinyan underscored.

The Armenian premier also took issue with the Azerbaijani blogger’s remark that Nagorno-Karabakh is an internationally recognized part of Azerbaijan.

“If Nagorno-Karabakh is an internationally recognized part of Azerbaijan, why are you negotiating for deciding the status of Nagorno-Karabakh? Isn’t that strange?” he said.

Nagorno-Karabakh, a mainly Armenian-populated autonomous district in Soviet Azerbaijan, broke

free from Baku’s control amid Soviet Union disintegration in the early 1990s, triggering a three-year war that killed an estimated 30,000 people and left ethnic Armenians in control of the region.

A Russia-brokered ceasefire put an end to large-scale fighting in 1994, but sporadic skirmishes along the line of contact have continued to claim human lives on both sides since then.

International diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict led by Russia, the United States and France as part of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have brought little progress during the past 25 years.



that we have a breakthrough in the whole negotiation process.”

After Pashinyan’s speech an Azerbaijani blogger, in particular, asked him about how his recent statement that “Nagorno-Karabakh is Armenia, period” helps the peace process.

To this Pashinyan referred to statement coming from official Baku that different parts of Armenia are Azerbaijani territory. “And they continue threatening to occupy not only Nagorno-Karabakh, but also Syunik and capital Yerevan. Why are we making similar statements? Because we don’t want to leave an impression of being a frightened nation. No one can talk to us

Dariga Nazarbayeva congratulates Nikol Pashinyan on successful chairmanship over EAEU

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan received on November 15 Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan Dariga Nazarbayeva.

As the Office of the Prime Minister of Armenia informs, welcoming Dariga Nazarbayeva’s visit to Armenia, the PM noted that the activation of high-level interactions speak about the high level of relations and Armenia is interested in deepening relations with Kazakhstan on both bilateral and multilateral platforms. Nikol Pashinyan highlighted the cooperation in the sidelines of international organizations, such as the EAEU and the CSTO, highly assessed the bilateral political dialogue and expressed gratitude for the balanced position of Kazakhstan towards Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Speaking about trade and economic relations, PM Pashinyan noted that here is a great potential for deepening



it by both bilateral projects and in the sidelines of the EAEU.

Dariga Nazarbayeva noted that she is impressed by her 1st visit to Armenia and Kazakhstan highlights strengthening relations with Armenia, which is also fostered by the active inter-parliamentary relations. The Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan congratulated Nikol Pashinyan on the successful chairmanship

of Armenia over the EAEU, during which agreements on trade were signed between Singapore and the EAEU, which create good opportunities for the development of the EAEU.

According to Dariga Nazarbayeva, Kazakhstan is interested in attracting investments from Armenia.

The interlocutors highlighted the role of the Armenian community as an important factor for friendship between the two countries.

The Armenian PM thanked the leadership of Kazakhstan for their attitude towards the Armenian community.

Nikol Pashinyan recorded the high level of Armenia-Kazakhstan dialogue and noted that Armenia will be glad to host Kazakhstan’s President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev who will pay an official visit to Armenia next year.

Armenian opposition criticizes government over ‘unrevolutionary’ budget



(RFE/RL – Yerevan) - Opposition lawmakers criticized the government for submitting an “unrevolutionary” draft budget bill for next year as the debate over the country’s main financial document proceeded in the Armenian parliament on November 15.

The opposition claimed the document lacks ambitious programs and drastic reforms and is largely based on inertia from previous years.

The draft budget bill calls for a sizable increase in public spending which would total 1.88 trillion drams (\$3.9 billion). The government’s tax revenues are projected to rise just as strongly. These targets are based on the assumption that the Armenian economy will grow by 4.9 percent in 2020.

When presenting the draft state budget for 2020 in parliament last month Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that the government opted for a “conservative” growth projection in order to maintain continued “macroeconomic stability” in the country. Actual economic growth next year may well beat this forecast, he told members of the parliament’s economic committees.

“I believe that the economic revolution in the Republic of Armenia is gaining momentum,” Pashinyan stressed then.

The prime minister continued to speak optimistically about economic development in Armenia as he addressed parliamentarians on Friday.

In his remarks Pashinyan said that budget

revenues in 2020 will increase by nearly 30 percent as compared to the “pre-revolutionary” 2018 state budget. Pashinyan stressed that thus his government has fulfilled his promise made before he became prime minister that “within a couple of years Armenia can increase its budget by 30-35 percent.”

Pashinyan reminded the parliament about the budget surplus at the end of 2018 and also suggested that in real terms the budget increase next year would have been even higher - more than 35 percent - had the government not made changes in the tax laws.

“This is a direct answer to the question as to whether this budget is revolutionary or not,” he said. “This budget is revolutionary because it precisely fulfills my pre-revolution rather than pre-election promise.”

Opposition Bright Armenia faction member Mane Tandilyan still drew comparisons with Georgia, claiming that “post-revolutionary” Armenia develops at a much slower pace than its neighbor once did.

“Georgia showed an economic growth of 11.1 percent in 2003 when a revolution took place in that country. In the subsequent years up until the crisis year of 2008 Georgia’s economy expanded at an average of 9.7 percent a year. How revolutionary is this budget bill? I’d rather call it conservative and even that would be its mildest description,” the opposition lawmaker said.

Tandilyan also noted a slow rate of investment growth in the country despite

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in that direction,” it added.

Pashinyan arrived in the French capital on November 11 for a two-day working visit during which, besides attending the Paris Peace Forum, he was also scheduled to take part in the proceedings of the 40th UNESCO General Conference and visit the Office of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie to meet with OIF Secretary General Louise Mushikiwabo.

On November 11, Pashinyan and his wife Anna Hakobyan attended an official reception hosted on behalf of the French president at the Élysée Palace.

“government assurances that there are no obstacles to investors.”

“During these past two years the growth of investments has not exceeded 6.7 percent. If we look at the example of the revolutionary Georgia, the volume of investments there increased 2.5 times, reaching \$1 billion. I leave it to you to make your judgment,” she said.

Arman Babajanyan, who is not affiliated with any parliamentary faction, stressed that during the 2018 “velvet revolution” Armenian citizens gave the mandate to the current governing force to carry out “drastic, systemic reforms in the country.”

“But next year’s state budget bill is devoid of such content,” he claimed. “It largely preserves the spirit of inertia. Financing on different articles and in different directions simply pursues the goal of ensuring the continuation of the previous inertia. The budget bill lacks ambitious programs and drastic systemic reforms, it generally lacks creativity and innovation.”

Hayk Gevorkyan, of the pro-government My Step faction, countered: “In the period of 2013-2017 we had an increase in the nominal GDP in dollar terms of only \$400 million. From \$11.1 billion it increased to \$11.5 billion. If we divide it up between five years, we’ll get an average annual GDP growth of only 0.7 percent. During the two years after the revolution – in 2019 and 2020 – we will have a GDP of about \$14.7 billion. In other words, the growth will amount to about 20 percent.”

Armenia slams Erdogan's distortion of reality



The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has released a statement on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's remarks delivered in the United States about the Armenian Genocide.

"In light of the further advancement of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, the President of Turkey recently made controversial statements, which distort the reality.

These statements contain claims aimed at justifying the Genocide by means of insulting the dignity of the victims. On April 24, 2019 the President of Turkey already attempted to justify the Armenian Genocide by qualifying it as "the most reasonable act" and referring to the victims of the Genocide as "Armenian gangs and their supporters". All the more, presently the President of Turkey deprives the victims of the Armenian Genocide of their historic homeland by way of calling them nomads, thus forgetting the history of his ancestors and the indigenous people of the region.

Indeed, the recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide is essential for serving truth and historical justice. However,

today it is essential not merely for history and historians but rather for the entire humanity, and particularly the potential victims of the identity-based crimes. It is essential for all those persons and peoples who are accused of being terrorists simply because of their ethnic and religious origin and then subjected to violence and forced deportations by the Republic of Turkey in its neighboring country. It is essential for overcoming genocidal perceptions and protecting the universality of human rights.

The Armenian Genocide is a reality for the descendants of the Genocide and the international community. This reality has also served as a basis for elaborating the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the subsequent mechanisms for the prevention of genocides and crimes against humanity.

By justifying and denying the Armenian Genocide, pursuing aggressive policies marked by the use of force against its neighbors, sustaining land blockade of Armenia for more than two decades and providing political and military assistance to Azerbaijan in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Turkey continues to be a security threat to the Armenian people, which survived the genocide.

Turkey should reconsider its current hostile policies against Armenia and the Armenian people, which may become the first step in overcoming the consequences of the Genocide and reducing regional threats", the foreign ministry said.

Senator Graham blocks resolution recognizing Armenian Genocide

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) blocked a resolution on Wednesday that would have formally recognized the Ottoman Empire's genocide against the Armenian people, *The Hill* reports.

Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) asked for consent to pass the resolution that would have provided "official recognition and remembrance" of the Armenian genocide.

"The United States foreign policy must reflect an honest accounting of human rights abuses, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and genocide. We cannot turn our backs on the Armenian victims of genocide," he said.

Menendez noted that he listened to President Trump's press conference Wednesday with Turkish President Recep Tayyip



Erdogan. The Turkish president scolded a House-passed resolution recognizing the genocide and instead promised to "establish a history commission."

Graham objected to passing the resolution in the Senate, saying senators shouldn't "sugarcoat history or try to rewrite it." Under the Senate's rules, any one senator can ask for consent to pass a bill or resolution, but any one senator can block it.

Graham's objection came hours after he took part in a White House meeting with Trump, Erdogan and a group of GOP senators.

"I just met with President Erdogan and President Trump about the problems we face in Syria by the military incursion by Turkey. I do hope that Turkey and Armenia can come together and deal with this problem," he added on the Senate floor.

Graham added that he was objecting "not because of the past but because of the future." The resolution passed the House in a 405-11 vote.

The House vote came in the wake of Ankara's military incursion into northern Syria after the Trump administration pulled troops from the area.

Yerevan condemns killing of Armenian priests in Syria

The Foreign Ministry of Armenia has strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Syria as a result of which two Armenian priests were killed.

Unknown gunmen shot dead an Armenian Catholic priest and his father as they were traveling in a car in northeastern Syria on November 11.

Father Hovsep Petoian, the head of the Armenian Catholic community in the Kurdish-majority city of Qamishli near the border with Turkey, and his father, Father Hana Abraham Petoian, were heading to the province of Deir Al-Zor when they came under attack.

The two men were due to oversee the restoration of a church in Deir ez-Zor. A third man, a deacon from the town of Al-Hasekeh, was reportedly wounded in the attack, which was claimed by the Islamic State (IS) extremist group.

“We condemn in the strongest terms the terrorist act committed in the Deir ez-Zor province of Syria, which claimed the lives of two priests,” the Armenian Foreign Ministry said, stressing that the clergymen “lost



their lives while serving the war-torn community of Deir ez-Zor.”

“The military invasion in the north-east of Syria last month and the subsequent resurgence of terrorist groups and their activities make the civilian population, including ethnic and religious minorities, particularly vulnerable. The ongoing identity-based persecutions and killings should be decisively condemned by the international community.

“We express our deepest condolences and sympathy to the relatives of the victims, the Armenian Catholic community and to all Syrian Armenians and wish them fortitude,

endurance and strength of spirit in overcoming this tragic incident.

“Armenia will continue its humanitarian support to contribute to the stabilization of the humanitarian situation in Syria,” the Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a statement released on Tuesday.

In a Twitter post on Tuesday Pope Francis also expressed sympathy over the killing of the Catholic priests in Syria.

“I am close to Armenian Catholics of Qamishli, in Syria, as they gather for the funeral of their parish priest, Father Hovsep Bedoyan (Petoian), who was killed yesterday together with his father. I pray for them, their families, and for all Christians in Syria,” the Pope wrote.

More than 100,000 ethnic Armenians lived in Syria, mainly in the northwestern province of Aleppo, prior to the Syrian civil war. Many of them have fled, including thousands to Armenia.

IS militants persecuted Christians and displaced tens of thousands of them when it ruled large parts of Iraq and Syria.

Armenia investigating ‘numerous’ cases of illegal adoptions

Armenian authorities say they have launched a criminal investigation into the “numerous” cases of foreigners illegally adopting Armenian children.

“Two citizens of Armenia have used their contacts at one of the local maternity hospitals and at several agencies and orphanages to organize the adoption of more than 30 babies by citizens of Italy with gross violations of Armenian laws,” the National Security Service (NSS) said in a statement on November 14. The statement said the illegal adoptions took place from 2016 to 2018,

but it did not provide any information about the current status of the babies. During that period a total of 54 children were officially adopted in Armenia by foreigners and were taken abroad. Most of the cases involved citizens of Italy and the United States. The scarcity of information released by the Armenian government agencies has fueled speculation that the case could involve the sale of organs. “There is no word about any sale of organs at this time. If there is any additional information in this regard it will be reported,” Security Coun-

cil Secretary Armen Grigoryan said. Armenia’s Health Minister Arsen Torosyan also reacted to the NSS’s statement, saying that “any medical institution or health care provider that has been or will continue to be involved in such illegal schemes must be held accountable by the full force of the law.”

The process of adoptions in Armenia was suspended in September after minister of labor and social affairs Zaruhi Batoyan expressed suspicions over discrepancies in the official numbers presented by different agencies regarding adoptions of Armenian children by foreigners.

Armenia to see 122 percent growth in military production budget in 2020

Armenia will see a 122 percent growth in its military budget for FY 2020, Minister of High-Tech Industry Hakob Arshakyan said at the National Assembly.

Addressing the Parliament on November 15, the Minister said the budget envisages AMD 12.5 billion to the Ministry, of which AMD 6.3 billion will be allocated to the military production.

Part of the fund will be directed at the implementation of research programs, Minister Arshakyan said, adding that the rest will be spent on developing the producing capacities, taking into consideration Armenia's defense needs and the opportunities of taking Armenian goods to foreign markets.

"On many occasions, the government has declared talent, innovation, high technologies and military production a priority, and the budget of the newly created Ministry of High-Tech Industry is built upon these priorities," the Minister stated.

He said that for this purpose the 2020-2025 strategy of high-tech development,



advancement and digitization of military production has been developed and will be made public soon.

The State Budget also envisages AMD 1 billion for about 90 grant programs to help startups to grow their ideas into products and then business.

With a view of internationalizing the Armenian products, funds will be allocated to promote the participation of Armenian companies in different international event and organization of international exhibitions in Armenia.

Mutual trade between EAEU member states discussed with businessmen in Yerevan, Armenia



The ministry of economy of Armenia organized a meeting with the business community representatives which was chaired by Timur Zhaksylykov, Member of the Board – Minister in charge of Economy

and Financial Policy at the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), the ministry told Noyan Tapan.

The meeting was also attended by Armenian deputy minister of economy Varos Si-

mony.

Welcoming the meeting participants, Varos Simonyan said the meeting aims at listening to the issues of concern of the businessmen and finding effective solutions for these issues through joint efforts.

The EEC Minister informed that the issues of the businessmen of the EAEU member states are mainly the same, however, there are also exceptions, for instance, in Armenia's case, there are issues connected with the border-crossings. He added that after each discussion the issues voiced are sent to the relevant authorities in order to examine and propose solutions.

The businessmen mainly presented the obstacles existing in the mutual trade between the EAEU member states. Other issues were also discussed during the meeting.

Dilijan to have reconstructed stadium

On a working visit to China, Armenian Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan had a meeting with Huawei Vice-President.

Tigran Avinyan presented Armenia's scientific-technical potential and peculiarities, as well as the opportunities of investing in IT.

The Huawei Vice-President briefed the Armenian Deputy PM on the



main directions of the company's development, including the production of equipment and research activity.

The parties discussed the perspectives of Armenia's economic advancement, development of high technologies and solar energy sector.

An agreement was reached to explore further opportunities for cooperation, including in research and development.

New air companies to enter Armenian market

New air companies are expected to enter the Armenian market, President of the Civil Aviation Committee Tatevik Revazyan said at a government sitting on November 14.

"We have eight routes confirmed, but we expect the number to exceed ten before the start of the summer season," she said.

The Russian Azimuth Airline will launch flights to Kaluga from December 14, she said.

According to Revazyan, Ryanair could add three more routes in addition to the four announces last month.

Ryanair will operate first ever flights from Armenia with two new routes from Yerevan to Milan Bergamo and Rome Ciampino starting in January 2020, and two new routes from Yerevan to Berlin Schönefeld and Gyumri to Memmingen starting in Summer 2020.



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Age: 25-35 Years

Work Experience: 4 Years of driving experience with a reputed company or international organization (certificates from previous and present organization are required). Preference will be given to applicant with "No Accident Record" and he must be aware of routes in Yerevan, Tbilisi and other important cities in Armenia and Georgia.

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Last Date for acceptance of application: December 06, 2019

Armenia can aim for several “billion-dollar” export activities by attracting more investment – UNCTAD

Armenia can aim for billion-dollar export sales over the next 10 to 20 years in several activities that, if properly leveraged through effective investment promotion, could help concretize the economic revolution promised by the country’s authorities. This is among the key conclusions of UNCTAD’s investment policy review (IPR) of the country.

The IPR of Armenia, launched 12 November at the eleventh session of UNCTAD’s Commission on Investment, Enterprise and Development, highlights the country’s potential across a range of industries, including the booming high-tech industry, tourism, textile and garments, wine, agri-business and pharmaceuticals.

It also explores nascent activities for billion-dollar club candidates – industries with potential but for which it is too early to set such export targets. These include business process outsourcing, regional logistics and food safety, aircraft repair and maintenance, regional financial services and higher education.

Armenia is no exception to the global foreign direct investment (FDI) trend. Investment flows are struggling to recover from the heights reached before the financial crisis. A wait-and-see attitude prevails among investors, who have reacted with caution to the recent political transition.

Investment policy reforms needed

Achieving the government’s vision of fighting poverty and unemployment through a structural transformation of the economy will require investment policy reforms and a more significant investment promotion effort.

“Our country is ripe for an economic rev-



olution based on high-tech and innovative activities and we are working to modernize the business environment,” said Armenia’s ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Andranik Hovhannisyan. “Timing for investment in Armenia is now both right and ripe,” added the country’s United Nations resident coordinator, Shombi Sharp.

“The IPR will help us approach the fundamentals of our reform agenda through the prism of the Sustainable Development Goals and will provide us with a structured roadmap to engage with our international partners for development support,” said Arman Hovnanyan, deputy minister of economy.

UNCTAD’s director of investment and enterprise, James Zhan, stressed that the IPR, which was undertaken at the request of the president of Armenia, takes into account comparative advantages and constraints. It makes recommendations to develop an export-led growth through efficiency-seeking FDI.

Deputy minister of economy Avag Avanesyan underlined that “trade, investment and value addition go hand in hand” and stressed that “the IPR provides a blueprint on how to move forward in a sustainable and committed way.”

Promoting inclusive growth

Beyond measures to tap the export poten-

tial through investment, the IPR includes the broader policy objective of promoting inclusive growth and sustainable development. It underlines specific measures for spreading benefits to the country’s regions, creating employment and linkages with local suppliers, including by moving to full package manufacture in the textiles and garments industry, and extending benefits of tourism to areas outside the capital Yerevan.

The IPR also shows ways to deepen the high-technology sector and make Armenia a leading hub for innovation, data science and artificial intelligence. It outlines how to extend research and development capability in the pharmaceutical industry to transform a small generics industry into larger-scale manufacturing.

Investment in the target industries can come from a mix of sources, including domestic, FDI and joint ventures, and the diaspora, Armenia’s key competitive advantage, will continue to play a key role, the IPR says.

For each target industry, a tailored investment promotion strategy needs to envision sector-specific policy packages, including but not limited to tax policy measures and specific actions to improve the overall investment climate, concludes the IPR.

Over the last 20 years, UNCTAD has supported over 50 developing countries and countries with economies in transition by conducting investment policy reviews. It has also provided technical support to implement the reviews’ recommendations. Studies show the reviews have helped countries attract and benefit more from increased FDI, while improving their business climate.

PM Pashinyan: “High economic mood instills hope for economic growth in 2020”

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan attended the year-end meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia (ACCA), attended by U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Lynne Tracey, the ACCA Board of Directors with more than 100 members, as well as representatives from the Armenian government and international donor organizations.

Addressing the audience, the Prime Minister noted that from the very first days of last year’s political revolution in Armenia, his government set an agenda of economic revolution. He singled out three main components of economic revolution.

“The first is the fight against corruption; the second is the abolition of monopolies, and the third is the fight against the black economy. The actions planned for the first stage were aimed at this very objective. This approach has justified itself and shown its effectiveness as we expect 7% economic growth this year, which should bring about drastic and tangible changes in the economy, most of which come under our vision of the future. Of course, we understand that these three tools have some limited potential, which is not eternal. I mean the fight against the shade, the fight against corruption, and the fight against monopolies. They need to be continued, nevertheless their potential will at some point be exhausted,” the Prime Minister said, adding that the government should apply a new instrument for further economic development.

In this regard, Nikol Pashinyan said the government is introducing a new toolkit in 2020, including the proposed amendments to the Tax Code, which in their most visible sections reflect the government’s perception of the future day of the Armenian economy and development vectors.

“The first is the introduction of a flat income tax, which has seen some criticism of ideological nature. I want to say that the proposed legislative amendment reflects our understanding of economic trends, and we want to stimulate those areas that may be described as high-wage industries. We know that the income tax will be substantially lowered for high salaries. Starting this January 1, a 23 percent flat income tax will be applied and the process will be continued. In the coming years we will have a 20 percent flat income tax. A certain reduction is also expected in the profit tax. And what matters most here is that we are exempting micro-businesses from taxes. This shows two main vectors of our efforts: First, we stimulate technological investments in the Republic of Armenia and increase the



country’s attractiveness in this respect. In parallel, there is the well-known law on startups, the conditions of which we have improved. On the other hand, as a tool for overcoming poverty, micro-businesses are generally exempt of taxes because our perception remains that there is no other way out of poverty than work. Therefore, if we want to help our citizens overcome poverty, we must create new jobs,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

The Prime Minister reminded that the government is implementing specific programs in this direction, and the social policy is aimed at providing labor incentives. Nikol Pashinyan did not consider it unnecessary to refer to the draft law on the return of VAT arrears, which has already been approved and a relevant process is on its way. The government plans to repay 45-56 billion VAT arrears to businessmen.

“By the way, we are talking about overdue debt, but in the meantime, we have already doubled the rate of VAT return for the first 10 months of 2019 as compared to 2017. That is, against 54 billion drams settled as VAT returns in 2017, around 114 billion drams were returned in the first 10 months of this year. These are the sums that were removed from circulation unfairly or due to legal inconsistencies. And now we are sending that money back to the economy.

Of course, we have no repressive or administrative leverages to compel entities to invest in the Republic of Armenia. But we have made an appeal to those companies that have received VAT refunds, calling on them to reinvest that money in the Republic of Armenia. Indeed, some of them will respond to this call, and we will welcome such companies as our partners,” the Prime Minister said.

Referring to the current investment environment in Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan noted that he cannot say that the government has reached an ideal situation and added that we have well-known and latent issues in this area that are kept in government’s spotlight. In the Premier’s words, a key development factor from the institu-

tional point of view or one of the biggest obstacles faced today is the lack of a developed securities market.

“This creates problems for both companies and citizens because citizens have no alternative to investing in their own except the banking system, and companies have no alternative to attracting new funds except the banking system. Unfortunately, we cannot boast that the interest rates in our banking system are low, but we must note that there is a clear process of lowering interest rates in the banking system. It should also be noted with satisfaction that a number of entities did not wait for the development of the securities market and have taken the lead by issuing securities,” the Head of Government said.

Speaking about foreign investments, the Prime Minister said we are facing some problems here and have developed specific criteria for assessing the situation. “There is a tool available to the international community engaged in economic activity. I mean the Eurobonds that had a record low interest rate for Armenia and a record high demand in Armenia. We are going to refinance the debt of USD 500 million, though the market demand is over 2 billion dollars. And here we will have to deal with one of the most important issues. I mean the capital expenditures. You know that capital spending in Armenia has always been accompanied by various institutional bottlenecks. Following the events of 2018, this problem was aggravated by another component: it is the fight against corruption, which has not allowed us to exercise or overstate our plans for capital expenditures,” the Premier said, noting that the government is sensitive on the matter of tenders and will do everything possible to prevent the bad traditions.

“What does this have to do with Eurobonds? We can see that the Republic of Armenia is capable of implementing mega projects as a serious boost for the economy. In this regard, we need to make balanced and accurate decisions on such mega projects in order to stimulate the economy in the best possible manner.

We can also see that we have the necessary potential to fund such projects, namely the issue of new Eurobonds. This should be discussed with regard to specific projects. Another piece of good news is that the government can attract funds on the internal market. Most importantly, the high economic mood available in Armenia instills hope that we will be able to step up the growth rates in 2020.

Time for compensation for the Armenian Genocide

Two superpowers - the United States of America and the Russian Federation have already recognized and condemned the Armenian Genocide



On May 24th, 1915 the governments of England, France and Russia came up with special joint declaration, where three large countries publicly characterize the Turkish actions against Armenians as crimes against “humanity and civilization” for which “personal responsibility is laid on every member of the Turkish government who participated in the massacres”.

In fact, Turkey was one of the first to condemn the Armenian Genocide. In 1919-1920 the special Military Tribunal of Constantinople organized a trial of the leaders of the Young Turks, presenting them with two charges: the involvement of the Ottoman Empire in the war and the organization and implementation of the massacres, the genocide and the deportation of Armenians - subjects of the empire.

The Armenian Genocide was recognized and condemned by 35 UN member states, including the Russian Federation and the United States, as well as the leading countries of Latin America and Europe, several UN committees, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the World Council of Churches, the Permanent Tribunal of Peoples, etc.

Hamidian pogroms of the Armenians of 1894–1896 condemned by prominent figures of that time - Jean Jaurès, Victor Berard, Anatole France, Johannes Lepsius, Lynch and others.

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation decides: To accept the statement of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation “On the condemnation of the Genocide of the Armenian people in 1915-1922”:

“The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, based on irrefutable historical facts testifying to the extermination of Armenians in Western Armenia in 1915-1922, following the spirit and letter of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the United Nations (December 9, 1948) and the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity (November 26, 1968), striving to revive the humanistic traditions of the Russian state, recalling that at the initiative of Russia, the great European powers in 1915 qualified the actions of the Turkish Empire against the Armenian people as a “crime against humanity”, noting that the physical destruction of the fraternal Armenian people in their historical homeland was carried out

in order to create conditions for destruction Russia, condemns the organizers of the extermination of Armenians in 1915 - 1922, expresses its sympathy for the Armenian people and considers April 24 as a day of remembrance for the victims of the genocide.”

In Resolution No. 296 of the House of Representatives of the US Congress on October 29, 2019, “Confirmation of the US Position on the Recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey”, it is noted:

“Affirming the United States record on the Armenian Genocide.

Whereas the United States has officially recognized the Armenian Genocide,

- through the United States Government’s May 28, 1951, written statement to the International Court of Justice regarding the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,
- through President Ronald Reagan’s Proclamation No. 4838 on April 22, 1981,
- and by House Joint Resolution 148, adopted on April 8, 1975,
- and House Joint Resolution 247, adopted on September 10, 1984; and also

Whereas the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018 ([Public Law 115–441](#)) establishes that atrocities prevention represents a United States national interest, and affirms that it is the policy of the United States to pursue a United States Government-wide strategy to identify, prevent, and respond to the risk of atrocities by “strengthening diplomatic response and the effective use of foreign assistance to support appropriate transitional justice measures, including criminal accountability, for past atrocities”:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that it is the policy of the United States to -

- (1) commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance;
- (2) reject efforts to enlist, engage, or otherwise associate the United States Government with denial of the Armenian Genocide or any other genocide; and
- (3) encourage education and public understanding of the facts of the Armenian Genocide, including the United States role in the humanitarian relief effort, and the relevance of the Armenian Genocide to modern-day crimes against humanity”.

Another decisions, treaties and the Arbitration Decision on the Rights of Armenians adopted in the years 1918-1920 by the international community:

- The Decree of the Government of Russia (Council of People’s Commissars of Russia) «About Turkish Armenia» («About Western Armenia») of January 11, 1918;
- The decision of the Supreme Council of the Allied Nations during the Paris Conference on de facto recognition of the independence of the State of Armenia of January 19, 1920;
- The decision of the Supreme Council of the Allied Nations on de jure recognition of the independence of the State of Armenia of May 11, 1920;
- Declaration of Independence of Armenian Cilicia of August 4, 1920;
- Discussion of the mandate of Armenia held in the US Senate on May 29 – June 1, 1920, which means that the USA de facto

recognized the right and title of the Armenian State in relation to the Armenian territories, thereby recognizing the right and title of the Ottoman Empire in relation to these territories as invalid;

- Sevres Peace Treaty (articles 88 - 93 which concerned the State of Armenia) of August 10, 1920;
- The Arbitral Award of the 28th President of the United States of America Woodrow Wilson of November 22, 1920 the full name of which is «The decision of the President of the United States Woodrow Wilson on the establishment of the State border between Turkey and Armenia, the issue of Armenia’s borders maritime access and about the demilitarization of the Turkish territories adjoining the Armenian border».

Taking into account the following Statements submitted by the Republic of Western Armenia (the State of Armenia) to the United Nations:

- 1) Application for membership of the Republic of Western Armenia (the State of Armenia) in the United Nations of May 25, 2018.
- 2) Statement of the Republic of Western Armenia (State of Armenia) to the United Nations «On the implementation of the Arbitral Award of the 28th President of the United States of America Woodrow Wilson of November 22, 1920 “The Decision of the President of the United States Woodrow Wilson on the establishment of the State border between Turkey and Armenia, about Armenia’s excess to the sea and the demilitarization of adjacent Turkish Armenian border territories”, aimed at establishing the Republic of Western Armenia (Government of Armenia) within the territories established by the Arbitral Award of the 28th US President Woodrow Wilson of May 29, 2018;
- 3) Statement of the Republic of Western Armenia (Armenia) to the United Nations “On demilitarization of the territories of Western Armenia and Cilicia and withdrawal of the occupation forces of the Republic of Turkey” of November 20, 2018;
- 4) Statement of the Republic of Western Armenia (Armenia) to the United Nations “On demarcation of the border between the State of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan” of August 7, 2019.

These Statements in fact relate to the decisions already taken by



the international community regarding the rights of the Armenian people but have not been implemented yet.

All the facts cited confirm the essence of the Statement adopted on October 19, 2014 at the 2nd session of the 1st convocation of the National Assembly (Parliament) of Western Armenia, “About the strategy of the State of Western Armenia (Armenia) on the Genocide of the Armenians recognition, condemnation and compensation issues”, in which says that “you just have to admit that the compulsory process of recognition of the Armenian Genocide is completed, and that we need to go to the international process of condemning the Armenian Genocide and compensation (reparation) for it. Accordingly, the Republic of Western Armenia (Armenia) welcomes the fact and the decision of the US Congress on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and believes that now is the time to make a decisive transition from the recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide to the elimination of the consequences of the Armenian Genocide, in other words, to compensation and final fair and complete settlement of the Armenian issue.

Tigran Pashabezyan
Prime Minister of the Republic of
Western Armenia (Armenia)
November 8, 2019

English translation by Vahan Babakhanyan

Netherland’s parliament suggests opening Embassy in Armenia in support of Armenian government

The 4 coalition parties of the parliament of the Netherlands suggested the leadership of the country to provide the foreign ministry 2 million Euros for opening an Embassy in Yerevan as a message of support to the Government of Armenia, MP representing Christian Union faction, member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives Joël Voordewind told ARMENPRESS, emphasizing that by this the Netherlands will demonstrate its support to the Government of Armenia to continue the reforms, fight against corruption and protection of human rights with more confident steps.

“By the initiative of the Christian Union faction the 4 coalition forces suggested to open an Embassy in Yerevan. We want to support the velvet revolution that took place in Armenia and the courageous steps initiated by the new Government”, he said, emphasizing that they want to strengthen relations with Armenia.

Why now? It’s very clear for Joël Voordewind. Following the velvet revolution of Armenia this is a very good message to Yerevan to show the support of the Netherlands for the reforms.

The MP initiated a debate on the Turkish invasion to Syria. He noted that the attacks against Armenians in Syria remind the Armenian Genocide. “Being a NATO-member state, Turkey attacks sovereign state of Syria. Armenians are again persecuted, even killed, like a few days ago two Armenians fell victim of a terror attack in Qamishli. We witnessed the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the U.S. Congress, our parliament has also condemned it and we continue to impose pressures on the Government for recognizing the Armenian Genocide”, Joël Voordewind emphasized, who is also the Co-chair of Armenia-Netherlands friendship group.

Dr Hovik Musayelyan: “The Time Told We’ve Been On The Right Way...”

Synopsys Armenia Celebrates its 15th Anniversary



On November 6 at the overcrowded Yerevan A.Khachatourian Grand Hall they were celebrating 15th Anniversary of Synopsys Armenia company, the largest US investment in Armenia. PM Pashinyan, members of the Government, foreign Ambassadors, ICT sector leaders, public figures, dignitaries and indeed most of the Company’s employees.

After traditional congratulations PM **Pashinyan** said he believed the involvement in Armenia of well-known companies such as Synopsys means a lot to all of us.

And...

“And, first of all, the entry of this company, perhaps, coincides, although it happened 15 years ago, but coincides with the aspirations and activities of our government. We have repeatedly talked about these aspirations: we want to see the Republic of Armenia as a country of engineering thinking, activity, a technological country, and this is very important for us.

Next, I would like to emphasize the new working culture, a new way and level of employer-employee relations. To be honest, I am not so deeply familiar with the activities of Synopsys, but as far as I managed to find out earlier as a journalist and an MP,

and then as prime minister, this new culture is really important both in terms of business environment and working relationship.

Thirdly, I consider that the involvement of such companies in the technological sphere in general is extremely important in the context of our drive to form the so called a proud citizen of the Republic of Armenia, when a crucial process of forming sovereign citizens is underway in the country, and an important financial and economic basis is being shaped, when employees, unlike the old systems, are not encumbered by such unhealthy bonds as may sometimes make them give up their views, political and civil positions under the threat of loss of job.

I consider the development of the technological sphere to be very important from the point of view that when such a problem arises in such a company, there is a 100%

chance that this employee, specialist will very quickly find the same job in another company and will definitely not replenish the army of the unemployed. In this regard, the activity of Synopsis Armenia is extremely important.

If memory serves me right, this company was one of the pioneers in this field in the RA. These people played a leadership role in the development of civil society, the development of new thinking in Armenia, and this is very important.

I want to congratulate today’s award winners and emphasize that the most important condition for progress is the formation of the public demand for knowledge, and these people are pioneers in the formation of this demand.

I have said on various occasions, and I think that in the future as well, I will have the opportunity to state that knowledge



and skills should increase and expand the boundaries of the possible.

Expanding the borders of the possible is our biggest mission, and thus in Armenia the mission of expanding the borders of the possible should become a state mission, should become a public mission, should become a people’s mission. Now it is very important that in the eternal struggle between illiteracy and

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open thinking we achieve the triumph of open thinking as quickly as possible, because, by expanding the boundaries of the possible, we are expanding the borders of our country, the borders of our capabilities, the borders of the vision of the future of our people...

"...We will find few companies in which there are teams ready to perform on stage and possess such courage, confidence, mission and devotion to perform in front of hundreds of people in the concert hall number one an ethnic Armenian dance, which was forgotten and is now being reborn with a new spirit in a new form to reaffirm the national idea of our new future..."



Synopsys President and CEO **Chi.Foon Chan** and Synopsys Armenia CEO **Yervant Zorian** in their speeches touched upon history of the Company, attaching special importance to the role of the Armenian team.

Synopsys Armenia Director **Hovik Musayelyan** in his speech told the gathered in brief on the various initiatives realized in fifteen years, i.e. University Program, IT Award for the Best Student, Microelectronics Olympiad and some others.

At the Gala event the awarding of Microelectronics Olympiad winners and the Best Student took place. And, as usual for such cases, there were music and dances...

Microelectronics Olympiad General Partner VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** said in particular:



"I am really excited we have such a generation of young people who are ready to offer ambitious and innovative solutions to the problems that surround us, merging the technology and science. What's more inspiring about this Olympiad is that it has gathered hundreds of bright minds from dozens of countries from around the world, who, I am sure, will become famous..."

On the Company's way passed in 15 years, and future plans The Highlights correspondent talked to Synopsys Armenia Director Dr Hovik Z. Musayelyan:

-Dr Musayelyan, please, in brief on the history of the company...

-As it is well known, Synopsys is the leader in EDA (electronic design automation); the company has its offices in more than 46 countries.

In 2004 the company started to acquire four companies in Armenia whose heads are ethnic Armenians: Leda Design and Monterrey Arset – in 2004, HPL – in 2005, and in 2010 – Virage Logic.

Today we have about 850 employees that is result of our very effective cooperation



with the Armenian universities having technical specialization.

When Synopsys purchased Leda Design (fmr Leda Systems), that company has already been cooperating closely with the Armenia's Polytechnic University, and a Chair was established in result of that cooperation, - "Microelectronic Circuits and Systems", and when Synopsys acquired Leda, that cooperation was also transferred to Synopsys Armenia,

as a kind of know-how between Leda and



Polytechnic University.

But later other models of cooperation were worked out. Above mentioned model is that when university comes to industry. With the Yerevan State University, Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University and the European Academy we realized the second one, i.e. when a private company comes to a higher education institution. Som chairs were established there.

But, you know, the first kind of cooperation is more effective as we can control all the educational process; our employees go out our building, walk just a couple of minutes, and ther they get their lessons, and after that then return to the company. In result of the first model half of our employees are our fmr students, and that is the reason number of our engineers is growing.

No doubt, within those 15 years we have registered numerous successes. We tried in the day when were celebrating our 15th Anniversary to put together all those initiatives

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Synopsys Armenia has been sponsoring.

For instance, in that very day we awarded and honored winners of the our annual Mycroelectronics Intl Olympiad in which this year participated reps of the 18 countries. They were at the celebration venue, Aram Khachaturian Grand Hall with their natl flags, so solemnly waving them at the stage.

The first place winner this year, as in 20018, won rep of Serbia, second prize received a guy from Egypt, and the third – a girl from Iran.

By the way, Serbian student wins for the second year in row.

I'll tell you ani interesting thing: when a few weeks ago I was in Serbia (as a member of the official delegation headed by the RA President) and met their President, I said him half-jokingly (keeping in mind that his counr's rep reached final): it will be interesting that this year as

well your country's rep will won...How I could know that what I said to Mr President it was a prophecy

So I was so inspired by this fact that I took and holding Serbia's flag at the stage...



(smiling).

Next event was awarding of the best school students, higher education institution's student, aspirant in the ICT, and the awards handed over Prime Minister of Armenia Mr Nikol Pashinyan.

Mr Prime Minister delivered a substantial speech. Interestingly, looking to Synopsys Armenia employees dancing Armenian national dances, noted (half-jokingly): *"Some people accuses us in that as if by coming*



here in Armenia transnational companies, we forget our national values, but, look, here you are: Synopsys Armenia employees are dancing forgotten Armenian dances".

And indeed that solemn night we presented our activities, what was done within those fifteen years, in particular, etc...

You know, many people in the hall heard about Synopsys, could not even realizing what kind of complicated technical solutions we have been using, which achievements, where those chips have been used, in which areas, and how big is the share of Synopsys Armenia employees there, - it was especially important for us, etc....

-And what about Synopsys Armenia plans for the foreseeable future?

-Thank you very much for good question indeed.

...If yet a couple of years ago someone told me that we'll open a chair in the second city of Armenia (that was devastated

by Spitak quake'88), program or even plans to open office, scarcely I would believe him, but now one of leading technological world companies, Synopsys Armenia implementing a program in Gyumri, and I am happy for that as – first of all – a citizen of Armenia...

When I see that inspiration of everybody we the Synopsys Armenia contact in this ancient City – from a junior student to the Governor himself, I am sure that soon there

"the situation will change"! (Mr Mousayelyan draws a parallel between last year's most popular saying in Armenia just after Revolution: "The situation has changed")

Some people are trying to tell us: listen, look how many museums are opening now in Gyumri as. First of all, Gyumri is the land of culture etc..... But, dears, if there would not be jobs, how many museums would remain there soon??

Today Gyumri first of all needs jobs that would prevent brains' pumping.

Importantly, as Arayik Harutyunyan, Armenia's Education, Science, Culture and Sports declared during Armenia's Independence Day celebration in Gyumri this Sept. 21, they are planning to transfer a bld at the Ajemyan str. to Gyumri's Polytechnic to bring there Institute's ICT block. Importantly, this bld is very close to Gyumri's Technological Center.

So we would have the same model that we have in Yerevan, i.e. cooperation wit Yerevan Polytechnic University.

However, we have a problem here: every week we send buses with our professors and lecturers to teach in Gyumri...

So our task today is to prepare lecturers to teach there in Gyumri, but I believe in few monyhs we will overcome that problem.

Photos courtesy Synopsys Armenia

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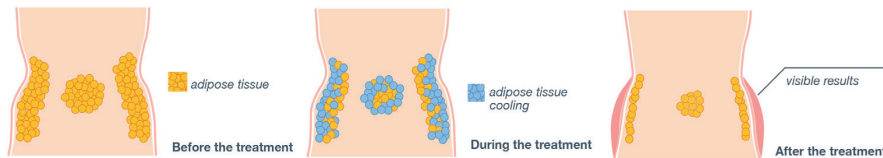
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