

U.S. Helsinki Commission considers Armenia a democratic example in the region



The U.S. Helsinki Commission has addressed Armenia on social media platform X, noting that despite the country's precarious strategic situation it remains a democratic example in the region.

“Armenia is in a precarious strategic situation, but it is also a profoundly resilient country that is a democratic example in the region looking towards a European future.

The US has an important opportunity to support Armenia on its democratic,

pro-West path, “the US Helsinki Commission has posted.

On September 10 the Helsinki Commission will hold a hearing on “Supporting Armenia’s Democracy and Western Future.”

In July, bipartisan members of the Helsinki Commission leadership from the House and Senate and other senior members of Congress visited Armenia to observe for themselves the fruits of Armenia’s democratic and increasingly pro-West

orientation. Members observed Armenia’s precarious strategic situation, but also its profound resilience, democratic example in the region, and sociopolitical consensus in favor of a European future.

This hearing is intended to chart out ways that the United States and Congress can support Armenia in continuing its democratic path, securing its sovereignty, finalizing peace and normalizing ties with Azerbaijan and Turkey.

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Georgia reiterates support to regional peace efforts



On an official visit to Georgia, Armenia Defense Minister Suren Papikyan met with the Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli

Kobakhidze.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to Georgia, Ashot Smbatyan, also attended the meeting.

The sides emphasized the strategic relations between Armenia and Georgia, highlighting the effectiveness of regular high-level contacts between delegations.

The Prime Minister of Georgia welcomed the strengthening of Armenia-Georgia cooperation in the defense

sector and expressed his full support for this ongoing process.

Minister Papikyan, in turn, underscored the importance of enhancing defense cooperation and conveyed greetings from Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Irakli Kobakhidze and Suren Papikyan emphasized the importance of establishing long-term and stable peace in the region.

The Georgian side expressed its readiness to continue supporting efforts to establish peace in the region.

Armenian Deputy FM and Polish counterpart discuss opportunities for expanded cooperation

On September 3, on the sidelines of the Bled Strategic Forum, Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia Vahan Kostanyan had a meeting with Jakub Wiśniewski, the Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland.

According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, Vahan Kostanyan and Jakub Wiśniewski exchanged views on the prospects of enhancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest and across various formats. They emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation



within international organisations and in this context, shared insights on the

possibilities of mutual support.

The parties discussed opportunities for further deepening and expanding the partnership between Armenia and the EU.

According to the source, the interlocutors touched upon regional security issues as well. The Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia briefed his Polish counterpart on the latest developments in the normalisation process of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations, highlighting the stance of the Armenian side on the key matters.

PM Nikol Pashinyan meets with FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu in Yerevan

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has received Qu Dongyu, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

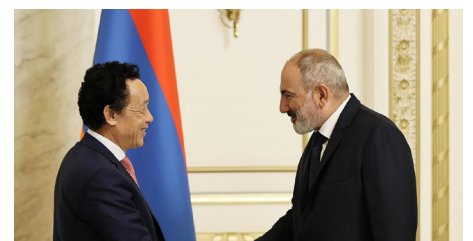
PM Pashinyan lauded the effective cooperation that has been developed between the Armenian government and FAO, namely in ensuring food security.

The Armenian Prime Minister attached importance to the continuous

implementation of joint programs in agriculture and environmental protection sectors. He expressed conviction that Director-General Dongyu's visit will convey momentum to the development of partnership.

FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu said he had effective discussions with Armenian government officials about the course of the current programs and possibilities

of new initiatives. The purpose of implementing new programs is to contribute to ensuring food security and resolve existing problems in the sector, he said.



Armenian Government okays ratification of Regulation on joint activity of border commissions

The Armenian Government has approved the ratification of the [Regulation](#) on joint activity of the commissions on delimitation and border security signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The regulation will now be forwarded to the Constitutional Court to check its compliance with the Constitution before being submitted to parliament for ratification.

Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan



will represent the Government at the Constitutional Court.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry announced the signing of the Regulation on August 30.

The Regulations states that the commissions will rely on the Alma-Ata Declaration as a fundamental principle of the process of delimitation of the state border between the two countries.

The Regulation implies organization of border demarcation works and adoption of relevant documents, preparation of the state border crossing protocol-description and guidelines for creation of delimitation maps.

Armenian Ambassador briefs Greek lawmaker on ongoing negotiations with Azerbaijan

Armenia's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Greece Tigran Mkrtchyan met with Theodora Bakoyannis, Chair of the Greek Parliament's Standing Committee on National Defense and Foreign Relations.

Ambassador Mkrtchyan emphasized the excellent level of Armenian-Greek relations and highlighted the role of parliamentary diplomacy in the context of promoting bilateral cooperation.

The briefed Theodora Bakoyannis on the ongoing negotiations on the

Armenia-Azerbaijan peace treaty, the border demarcation process and the need to implement it in accordance with the Alma-Ata declaration, the steps taken against the Armenian cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh and the imperative to release the Armenian prisoners of war and other detained persons in Azerbaijan.

In turn, Mrs. Bakoyan thanked the Armenian Ambassador for the visit and referred to the importance of inter-parliamentary contacts in promoting multilateral cooperation between the two friendly countries.

The Ambassador presented the latest



developments in Armenia and the region. A number of measures aimed at intensifying the bilateral parliamentary ties were discussed.

Russia hopes for resumption of Armenia's full participation in CSTO – Zakharova

Russia expects Armenia to resume its full participation in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova said at a briefing on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok.

"We expect that in the interests of the future security of Armenia itself, and indeed the entire region, our partnership

with Armenia within the CSTO will be fully restored," the diplomat said.

She emphasized that Yerevan "de jure remains a full member of the organization" and retains all ensuing rights and obligations.

"At the current stage, the Armenian leadership is actually adhering to the policy of moving away from such interaction, which, from the position of the Russian

side, contradicts the interests of the Armenian people," Zakharova stated.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan [said](#) at a press conference over the weekend that Armenia's decision to freeze participation in CSTO is "sufficient at this stage."

He said there is no need for a different decision for now, but did not exclude that such could be made in the future.

Iran against geopolitical changes in the Caucasus

An aide to Iran's foreign minister and director general of Eurasia affairs has expressed Tehran's support for regional peace and stability and reiterated its opposition to any change in internationally-recognized borders and the geopolitical status quo, [IRNA](#) reports.

At a meeting with the Russian ambassador in Tehran Alexey Dedov on September 2, Mojtaba Demirchilou also stressed the need to pay attention to the interests and legitimate concerns of all countries in the region.

The two diplomats, while exchanging views on the current developments in the Caucasus, mentioned respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and



mutual interests of countries, which they said are the guarantor of sustainable peace and regional cooperation.

Demirchilou and Dedov also stressed

the need to use the capacity of regional countries to resolve issues and help consolidate peace and stability in the region and implement economic plans, keeping in mind the interests of all parties.

They also talked about the upcoming meeting of the 3+3 consultative format which comprises three South Caucasus countries of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan plus Russia,

Turkey, and Iran. The format addresses the issues regarding security, unblocking economic and transport ties in the region.

Justice Minister says latest agreement signed with Azerbaijan in line with OSCE guideline

The regulation on the joint activities of the border delimitation commissions between Armenia and Azerbaijan will be sent to the Constitutional Court after passing confirmation at the Cabinet meeting on September 5, Justice Minister Grigor Minasyan has said.

The regulation, as a draft international agreement, will be confirmed at the Cabinet meeting as required by the procedures.

Then, the regulation will be sent to Constitutional Court to check its conformity with the constitution.

"I believe this is a consensual and high-quality document in line with the OSCE guideline," Justice Minister Grigor Minasyan told Armenpress.

On August 30, Armenia and Azerbaijan [signed](#) a regulation on joint activity of delimitation commissions.



The document will have to pass the constitutional court and then debated in parliament for ratification.

Up to Armenia and EU to decide on the presence of EU monitors – MP

The presence of the EU Monitoring Mission in Armenia is an issue to be discussed between Armenia and EU, Chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Sargis Khandanyan said at a briefing with journalists.

"The EU monitors are deployed on the territory of the Republic of Armenia and carry out monitoring on the Armenian side of the border. Therefore, it's up to Armenia and EU to decide on the terms of EU presence.



When the peace treaty is signed, when the delimitation process is completed, and regional peace is established, logically there could be no need for the monitoring mission, but the issue is not being discussed at the moment," Khandanyan said.

The comments come after an aide to the Azerbaijani President said the agreement on the border commission "should be seen as sufficient for the withdrawal of the EU contingent."

Luis Moreno Ocampo calls on Armenians to lead the world to a truly peaceful COP29

Rights activist and the first Prosecutor General of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo, issued a [second open letter](#) to Armenians worldwide on Wednesday.

“Three problems are interrelated,” Ocampo wrote. “Armenia remains at risk, as a peace treaty with Azerbaijan is being negotiated; there is no clarity on how the Nagorno-Karabakh people, the victims of the 2023 genocide, could safely return to their ancestral land; and 23 Armenian hostages are still in Baku prisons.”

“Azerbaijan is hosting COP29, the UN Climate Change Conference, in Baku in November 2024, under the guise of a ‘COP for peace.’ If Armenians are not released and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is ignored by the delegates attending COP29, President Aliyev will be handed a powerful platform to surge his geopolitical ambitions to occupy the entire Armenia,” Ocampo added.

“Such a scenario will not only deny the Nagorno-Karabakh genocide and condemn the hostages to remain in jail for many years, but it will also relegate the



entire community to a forgotten relic of the past, and it would escalate the risk to Armenia itself,” the former ICC prosecutor general said.

“During the past month thousands of people from more than 30 countries, many with Armenian ancestors, came together in digital forums and on social media. In addition to the online campaign, protests were held from Yerevan to Toronto demanding the return of the Armenian hostages incarcerated in Baku,” Ocampo emphasized.

“Now is the time to broaden the movement and connect it with the decision-makers worldwide. Armenians are not the only Aliyev victims. He is affecting the environment, Azeris citizens, and

even European parliamentarians. Azerbaijan, a country enriched by fossil fuels, postures as a leader in climate change-diverting global efforts. The regime has no mercy, it represses journalists, academics, and any dissenters within its borders. Just a few days ago, it banned entry to Azerbaijan for 76 European parliamentarians from 26 countries for exposing its

corruption. During my recent visit to high schools in Buenos Aires, I met teenagers who understood that such activities undermine their future and are eager to start TikTok campaigns to reach their peers around the world,” he explained.

“The next step will be to demand the delegates to COP29 raise their voices about these issues, including Aliyev greenwashing his fossil energy incomes, Nagorno-Karabakh genocide, corrupting the political system in Europe and the US, and the political prisoners and Armenian hostages in Baku,” Ocampo outlined.

“Armenians let’s protect Armenia and lead the world to a truly peaceful COP29,” Ocampo concluded.

France advises citizens against visiting Azerbaijan



French nationals, including dual citizens, are now advised against traveling to Azerbaijan unless for imperative reasons, the French Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

According to the Ministry, French nationals, including dual citizens, whether residents or visitors, are at risk of arrest, arbitrary detention, and unfair trial in Azerbaijan.

“This risk can affect individuals who are simply on a tourist visit or a business trip. In the event of arrest or detention, the respect for fundamental rights is not guaranteed,” MFA said.

Any French national who is arrested

is exposed to:

- Provisional detention or a travel ban, which can last for several months;
- severe sentences of imprisonment following trials that may not respect the rights of the defense.

Additionally, the Foreign Ministry strongly advises against traveling to the border areas with Armenia as well as the regions of the former autonomous Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjacent districts.

China Southern Airlines operates maiden direct flight to Yerevan



China Southern Airlines operated the maiden direct flight to Yerevan on September 3. Flights on the Urumchi-Yerevan-Urumchi route will be operated with twice a week - on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Armenia's Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Gnel Sanosyan, Deputy Minister Armen Simonyan,

Armenia's Ambassador to China Vahe Gevorgyan Chargé d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Armenia Chen Min, Chairman of the Civil Aviation Committee Mihran Khachatryan, airport director Marcelo Wenden, airline representatives and other guests were at Zvartnots Airport today to welcome the first plane from China.

Minister Sanosyan described the flight as historic. "We think there is a great demand in this direction and it will make life easier and save a lot of time for people who intend to fly from Armenia to China or vice versa. The flights will certainly increase passenger traffic, promote educational and cultural communication

between the two peoples." He noted that the direct flights will also boost trade between the two countries.

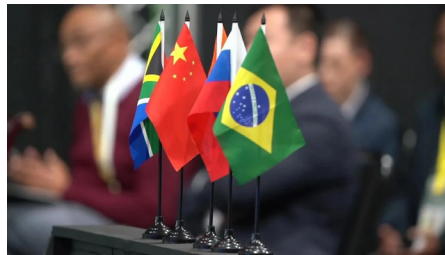
"This is the result of a consistent policy. We aim to have new directions in the aviation sector, to constantly expand the geography of flight from and to Armenia, which will eventually raise the interest in our country. We will not stop, because there are a number of new directions, and consistent work in this direction is under way. In the near future, we will have similar new flights to major cities and countries of the world," the minister emphasized.

Armenia to participate in BRICS summit in Kazan

Armenia will participate in the BRICS summit to be held in Kazan in October, Deputy Foreign Minister Mnatsakan Saryan said at a briefing with journalists in the National Assembly.

Head of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Foreign Relations Sargis Khandanyan said, in turn, that Armenia's participation will not stir tensions in the relations with the West.

"I don't think BRICS is the format that could cause any tension anywhere, especially considering that Armenia enjoys friendly and partnership relations with many of the member states. This is a platform for discussion of differed issues," Khandanyan said.



"The European Union and Western partners respect Armenia's approaches and a number of EU countries also have very good and warm relations with BRICS member states. I don't think there could be a problem here," the MP added

BRICS, originally formed in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, aims to bring together the world's most

important emerging economies, as well as act as a political and economic counterbalance to wealthier nations in the West.

The group of countries expanded earlier this year to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia was invited to join, though the Kingdom is yet to do that.

The group's further enlargement could be discussed during the summit in Kazan, Russia, from October 22-24, said the people. Malaysia, Thailand and Azerbaijan are among other countries looking to join.

Bloomberg reported earlier this week that Turkey has formally asked to join BRICS.

USAID increases Armenia assistance by \$130,000,000

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is increasing the volume of assistance to Armenia by \$130,000,000.

The bill on making changes to the grant agreement signed between Armenia and USAID on June 29, 2022 was approved at the Cabinet meeting.

The increase in assistance will bring the total USAID investment in Armenia to

\$250,000,000.

The additional funds are envisaged for institutionalization of effective and accountable governance, civic participation for strengthening democratic unity, strengthening economic management, increasing competitiveness of target sector.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Travel agency names fastest growing tourism hotspots in Armenia



The top destinations for international tourists visiting Armenia in 2024 outside Yerevan are Lake Sevan, Lori Province and the renowned resort towns of Dilijan and Tsaghkadzor, according to a travel agency.

Rima Travel agency director Rima Khachatryan told Armenpress that the preferences of the international tourists in Armenia have changed over the past years.

"In the past, tourists visiting Armenia

mostly preferred the Noravank, Tatev Monastery, Khndzoresk and the Devil's Bridge destinations, but this year it has changed. The tourists prefer the destinations to Sevan, Dilijan and Tsaghkadzor, as well as Lori, which is highly in demand this year," Khachatryan said.

Adventure and extreme tourism is on the rise, she added.

The number of inbound tourists in the

first half of 2024 has dropped 6,1%.

This has been explained by the decreasing number of tourists from Russia, which has traditionally had the biggest share in the inbound tourism.

In January-July 2024, a total of 1,184,000 tourists visited Armenia, according to Anush Babayan, the Deputy Director of the Department of International Cooperation at the Tourism Committee.

"In January-July of 2024, the number of tourists from Russia to Armenia was around 500 thousand, which is a 23 percent decrease compared to the previous year's same period. Visits from Russia comprise around 42 percent of the total visits," she said.

Meanwhile, tourism from India, the Philippines and China has been growing.

Most tourists come from Russia, Georgia, Iran and the United States, as previously, the official said.

"These are the main countries that are the main market for Armenia. These countries are followed by European countries, such as France and Germany, and a number of countries of other regions," Babayan said.

Armenia and Kazakhstan mark 25th anniversary of signing Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation

September 2nd marked the 25th anniversary of signing The Treaty on Friendship & Cooperation between Armenia and Kazakhstan.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry described the agreement a "milestone document" outlining the "principles and priorities" of the ties between the two countries.

"Today marks the 25th anniversary of signing The Treaty on Friendship & Cooperation between Republic of Armenia & Republic of Kazakhstan,



which outlines the principles & priorities of our relations based on future-oriented strategic cooperation. This milestone

document determines the guidelines for the development of partnership between Yerevan & Astana in the spirit of long-standing traditions of mutual respect & understanding," the Armenian Foreign Ministry said on X on Monday.

The Kazakh Foreign Ministry also posted on X, saying, "Today, we commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Armenia, a testament to our enduring close collaboration oriented on future strategic cooperation."

Afeyan Philanthropies launches the Afeyan Initiatives for Armenia (AIFA)



The Afeyan Philanthropies, an organization building and advancing solutions for a better world, has announced the launch of Afeyan Initiatives for Armenia (AIFA), an initiative dedicated to building a more vibrant, resilient, and prosperous Armenia. AIFA leverages more than two decades of philanthropic efforts in Armenia by the Afeyan family and serves as the strategic and operational hub for its current and future development initiatives in Armenia. Talar Kazanjian, a seasoned organizational and nonprofit leader in Armenia and globally, has been appointed Executive Director of AIFA.

Ms. Kazanjian will strategically assess and address Armenia's development needs and implement solutions in collaboration with and in support of mission-oriented organizations. She joins David Tadevosyan, Director of Operations for AIFA, who has been working for the past several months to establish the organization in Armenia.

"For more than two decades, we have been dedicated to building a resilient and prosperous future for Armenia: one that champions innovation, fosters inclusivity, and prioritizes the well-being of all its citizens," said Noubar and Anna Afeyan, Trustees of the Afeyan Philanthropies. "Through AIFA, we aim to strengthen our existing work, implement new programs and forge partnerships and collaborations that scale impact. By harnessing the collective expertise and resources of diverse stakeholders, we seek to drive positive change across wide ranging sectors in Armenia, including health, science and technology, and the arts."

The Afeyans continued: "Talar's impressive career has been characterized by deep expertise and impact, leading numerous development and philanthropic efforts

in Armenia and globally. We look forward to the impact Talar will have in accelerating AIFA's efforts to address Armenia's economic and societal needs on a scaled basis by leveraging and working with other organizations with similar goals."

About Talar Kazanjian

Ms. Kazanjian brings a wealth of organizational leadership to AIFA. Most recently, she helped draft Armenia's first science, technology, and innovation strategy, advising the Executive Committee chair of the Prime Ministers Science and Technology Development Advisory Council, team, and expert Working Groups on a new vision for Armenia's growth in technologies of the future.

Previously, she was Chief Operating Officer of Armenia 2041, where she oversaw the launch of the Future Armenian initiative. Ms. Kazanjian continues to serve as a member of the Guardians Council for Future Armenian, a position she has held since 2022.

Prior to this role, Ms. Kazanjian was Executive Director of AGBU Armenia, where she helped transform the diaspora-based organization into an agent of change in Armenia.

Earlier in her career, she was a consultant for Booz Allen Hamilton, working with public sector and government organizations in various countries, including GCC/MENA countries, the Caucasus, and Central Europe. In this role, she advised organizations on strategic restructurings, change management, program and financial management.

Ms. Kazanjian currently serves on the boards of two nonprofit organizations in Armenia. She earned a MA in Strategic Studies and International Economics from Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and a BA from St. Joseph's University in Beirut. She is fluent in four languages.

"The Afeyan Initiatives for Armenia (AIFA) builds on a strong legacy of impact and support by the Afeyans in Armenia, and a steadfast commitment to contributing to a positive future for Armenia and Armenians," said Talar Kazanjian, Executive

Director, AIFA. "I am honored to join the organization to steward and expand its transformation vision for Armenia."

About Afeyan Initiatives for Armenia (AIFA)

Afeyan Initiatives for Armenia (AIFA) is the Armenia-focused arm of the Afeyan Philanthropies. AIFA leverages more than two decades of philanthropic efforts in Armenia by the Afeyan family and serves as the strategic and operational hub for all current and future development initiatives of the Afeyan family in Armenia. Current projects that are solely or partially supported by Afeyan Philanthropies' activities in Armenia include: Armenia 2041, Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, FAST, Future Armenian, HENAR and the Spiritual Revival Foundation.

AIFA is committed to promoting education, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, and driving sustainable development in Armenia. Through strategic initiatives, partnerships, and networks, we aim to catalyze positive change across various sectors, with a focus on education, technology, entrepreneurship, healthcare, culture, and humanitarianism.

Our vision for the future of Armenia is one where sustainable development, cultural vibrancy, human welfare, and productive collaboration with the Diaspora are prioritized, creating a prosperous and resilient society for generations to come.

About Afeyan Philanthropies

Established by Noubar and Anna Afeyan in 2000, the Afeyan Philanthropies believes that the power of imagination and the strength of our communities can create a better world for all. We design, build, and support innovative organizations and initiatives in the areas of education, science and technology, and humanitarian action. Our programs impact communities around the world including in Armenia and the greater Boston area. The Afeyan Philanthropies provide financial support through multiple vehicles, including the Afeyan Foundation, the Afeyan Foundation for Armenia and a donor-advised fund held at Morgan Stanley.

“Zangezur Corridor” is a fake corridor - Ebrahim Azizi

The Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Ebrahim Azizi has noted that the Zangzur corridor is a fake corridor, and apparently, there are some projects to reduce Iran's military and political power in the region under the pretext of this corridor, Iranian Mehr News Agency reported.

Commenting on Russia's latest position regarding the Zangezur Corridor during the meeting of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Ebrahim Azizi said: “What is clear is that the issues related to the geopolitical



developments in the Zangzur Corridor are not in the interest of the countries of the region, and Iran is also strongly against this issue.”

Azizi warned that those pursuing such

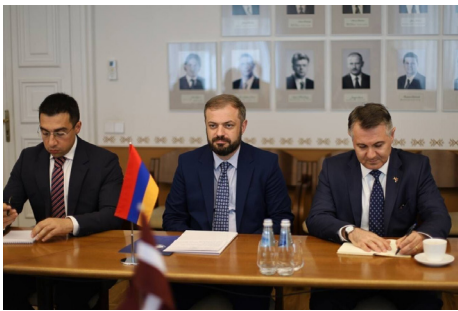
illusions would face heavy and costly consequences.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran, rationally and intelligently, never seeks to create tension in the region,” Azizi said, adding that on the other hand, the country would defend itself if its territorial integrity is threatened.

He emphasized that Iran closely monitors the developments in the South Caucasus region and reiterated that the corridor is considered a red line for Iran.

“Any change and action in it will be met with a serious and firm reaction from Iran,” Mehr quoted him as saying.

Armenian and Latvian Economy Ministers explore new directions for export and import



During his visit to the Republic of Latvia, Armenian Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan met with Latvian Minister

of Economy Viktors Valainis.

According to the Ministry of Economy, the meeting covered several areas of mutual interest. The discussion addressed the prospects for cooperation in various fields.

Both sides emphasized the existing friendly relations between the two countries, which contribute to the ongoing development and strengthening of the cooperation.

The Ministers of Economy of Armenia and Latvia discussed the possibility of finding new directions for export and

import.

Both parties expressed hope that the meeting would enhance potential partnership across various economic sectors.

During the visit, Papoyan also met with Secretary of State Ģirts Krūmiņš at the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia.

They discussed trade and economic relations between Armenia and Latvia, Armenia's economic diversification, and the expansion of cooperation in various economic areas.

Iran to collaborate with Armenia on \$3 billion projects

Iran has planned collaboration with Armenia amounting to approximately \$3 billion, said Iran's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Armenia, Mehdi Sobhani, while speaking about the existing potential for economic cooperation between the two countries and future planned projects.

“We have great potential for cooperation between our countries. The fields in which we already collaborate can serve as a strong foundation for the further development of commercial, political, and economic relations between Armenia and



Iran,” the Ambassador said.

He added that Iran has considerable experience in road construction,

particularly in bridge construction, and in the construction sector in general.

“Iran has planned cooperation with Armenia amounting to approximately \$3 billion, and we are confident that we will move in that direction. We are determined to utilize all available potential,” said Sobhani, noting that Iran supports Armenia and we will continue to do so.

Iran's Ambassador expressed his belief that a very bright future awaits the relations between Yerevan and Tehran.

Attending school in Kirants has never been safer than today, says PM



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, attending the opening ceremony of the newly built school in Kirants village of Tavush province, praised the border delimitation implemented there.

PM Pashinyan has shared a video of his visit to the village on Facebook and highly praised the improved security conditions for local residents as a result.

"I want to responsibly announce that, in the history of Armenia's independence,

attending school in Kirants has never been safer than it is today, and living in Kirants has never been safer than it is today.

This is a very important record, but I also want to add the following, which might sound a bit unusual to our audiences. When we say that it is safe to go to school in Kirants, this should also imply that attending school in the Azerbaijani village of Kherimli is equally safe. We need

to understand the interconnectedness of these issues very deeply," said Pashinyan.

According to the Prime Minister's assessment, the border delimitation process in Kirants is a significant success for the Republic of Armenia.

"I want to emphasize with certainty that this is the greatest success of the Third Republic. When you don't know where your state begins and ends, it raises questions about whether you have a



state or not. Similarly, if you don't know where your house starts and ends, it questions whether you have a house or not. In Kirants, we have laid the first serious cornerstone of Armenia's independent, strong, sovereign, and peaceful state," said the Prime Minister.

CoE Department for Execution of Judgments of ECHR delegation visits Armenia

A delegation of the Council of Europe Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Department for the Execution of Judgments of the ECHR visited Armenia on September 4-5.

The delegation was led by Clare Ovey, Head of the Department for the Execution of the Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

The CoE officials were hosted at the Office of the Representative on International Legal Affairs of Armenia.

"The purpose of the visit was to discuss the course of implementation of the ECHR judgements and decisions regarding Armenia, and the work in this direction," the Office of the Representative



on International Legal Affairs said in a statement.

The CoE delegation had meetings with members of an interdepartmental commission coordinating the execution of the judgments of the ECHR, namely with bodies of the executive government, the

General Prosecution, the Investigative Committee, the Human Rights Defender, as well as members of the judiciary.

The systemic reforms in the criminal justice system, ensuring human rights in the military, as well as other reforms in the police, correctional department and other areas were also discussed.

The delegation praised the large-scale ongoing reforms in Armenia.

An agreement was reached to provide the CoE Committee of Ministers with updated information regarding the discussed topics and continue cooperation in the direction of eliminating the violations recorded with ECHR judgements.

Armenian Ambassador presents Order of Friendship to Deputy Mayor of Paris



During a solemn event organized in the Paris City Hall on September 4, Armenian Ambassador to France Hasmik Tolmajian presented the “Order of Friendship” to Paris’ Deputy Mayor Arnaud Ngatcha awarded for his significant contribution to the strengthening and development of Armenian-French friendly ties.

Congratulating Arnaud Ngatcha, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo emphasized the special ties between Armenia and Paris,

reaffirming that the city of Paris has always been and will continue to stand by Armenia and the Armenian people.

Ambassador Tolmajian emphasized that the award is a sign of gratitude for the entire city of Paris for its sincere friendship with Armenia and the Armenian people. She thanked Mayor Hidalgo, Deputy Mayor Arnaud Ngatcha and members of the Paris City Council for their unconditional support to and full solidarity with

Armenia, the Esplanade of Armenia in the heart of Paris, the opening of the park named after Charles Aznavour on the occasion of the 100th birthday of the singer, and for the adoption of resolutions and humanitarian initiatives in support of the people of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Arnaud Ngatcha said that it was a great honor and pride for him to receive the high award bestowed on him by the decree of the President of Armenia. He emphasized that as Deputy Mayor of Paris for Foreign Affairs, he will continue to contribute to the strengthening of relations and cooperation between Paris and Armenia with the same enthusiasm, conviction and commitment.

At the end of the award ceremony, the national anthems of Armenia and France were played. The event was attended by the Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry, parliamentarians, foreign ambassadors and diplomats accredited in France, deputy mayors of Paris, mayors of nearby cities, prominent social and cultural figures, representatives of the Armenian community

Participatory budgeting introduced in 15 communities

The German Embassy’s First Secretary Katrin Buder-Pelz has attached importance to participatory budgeting in terms of democratic development.

Speaking at a conference on participatory budgeting on the local governance level in Armenia, she said that participatory budgeting ensures transparency and accountability. Mentioning the participatory budgeting practice in German politics, Katrin Buder-Pelz said she’s proud that Germany, together with Switzerland, is supporting the program in Armenia.



A pilot program of participatory budgeting was originally introduced in 4 communities. Now the number of communities has increased to 15.

Minister of Finance of Armenia Vahe Hovhannisyan also attended the event.

In his speech, he said that soon Armenia will have a system for evaluating the effectiveness of expenditures.

Lukas Rosenkrantz, the Swiss Ambassador to Armenia, said in his remarks that Switzerland strongly supports the introduction of participatory budgeting in Armenia and elsewhere in the region because it embodies the principles of direct involvement of the people, which is needed for a prospering democracy.

Bulgarian President honors Armenian Ambassador with the Order of Madara Horseman



Bulgarian President Rumen Radev has honored Armenian Ambassador Armen Yedigarian with the Order of Madara Horseman of first degree, the President's office said.

"Bulgaria and Armenia enjoy excellent relations, sincere friendship and effective cooperation, built on the basis of long-standing cultural ties between our two peoples, who historically share a very common destiny," the President said.

Rumen Radev highlighted Ambassador Yedigarian's consistent efforts for the development of bilateral cooperation and dialogue at a high political level, despite the difficulties arising from various crises of a regional and global nature. In 2022, Bulgaria and Armenia celebrated 30 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations, and in the same year, at

the invitation of the head of state Rumen Radev, the President of Armenia, Vahagn Khachaturian, visited the country. During the visit, a Joint Declaration on the bilateral relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Armenia was signed.

The head of state also noted the positive development in trade and economic relations during Ambassador Yedigarian's mandate.

From 2022, exports from Bulgaria to Armenia increased by more than 50% compared to 2021, and the trend of increasing bilateral trade is still being maintained, said Rumen Radev. The opening of a permanent air line between Yerevan and Sofia and the signing of the Protocol on the establishment of a Bulgarian-Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Economy have had a positive effect on the promotion of trade and economic exchange.

"Trade and economic cooperation between Bulgaria and Armenia has an undoubted potential for development, especially in the context of the expansion of relations between Asia and Europe – in terms of transport, energy, digital connectivity and promotion of people-to-people

contacts," said Rumen Radev and noted the significant role of joint participation in a number of infrastructure projects.

The President also noted the partnership in areas such as science, education and culture, which during Ambassador Yedigarian's mandate were upgraded with the signing and updating of a number of programs and documents. The signing of an important memorandum in the field of high technologies, scientific exchange and research and development activity is imminent, Rumen Radev also said.

Ambassador Armen Yedigarian thanked for the honor and the highest state award. The diplomat noted that the Armenian community in Bulgaria has contributed to the country's prosperity and is a reliable bridge between the two countries. Armen Yedigarian added that Armenia and Bulgaria have achieved success in their efforts to continue the bilateral political dialogue unhindered.

Foreign and Bulgarian citizens are awarded the Order of Madara Horseman for particularly great merits in the establishment, strengthening and development of bilateral relations with Bulgaria.

Turkey bids to join BRICS – Bloomberg

Turkey has formally asked to join the BRICS group of emerging-market nations, *Bloomberg* quotes people familiar with the matter as saying.

The view of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's administration is that the geopolitical center of gravity is shifting away from developed economies, according to the people, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they aren't authorized to comment.

The country's new diplomatic push reflects its aspirations to cultivate ties with all sides in a multipolar world, while still fulfilling its obligations as a key member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,



they said.

Straddling Europe and Asia, Turkey submitted an application to join BRICS some months ago amid frustration over a lack of progress in its decades-old bid to join the European Union, the people added.

The BRICS grouping, named after Brazil, Russia, India and China and South Africa, includes some of the biggest emerging economies.

It got four new members at the start of this year when Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia and Egypt joined its ranks. Saudi Arabia was invited to join, though the Kingdom is yet to do that.

The group's further enlargement could be discussed during a summit in Kazan, Russia, from Oct. 22-24, said the people. Malaysia, Thailand and Turkey's close ally Azerbaijan are among other countries looking to join.

In Armenia, FAO Director-General visits forestry, school feeding and viticulture projects



During his three-day visit to Armenia FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu, underscored how the country boasts robust environmental resources that can be harnessed to improve rural incomes and farmers' livelihoods, with agroforestry initiatives offering special promise.

"Farmers have two main bosses, the economy and the environment," Qu said during a visit to a FAO-supported forestry nursery programme near Hrazdan. "Balance is important."

Fostering healthy forests can allow for improved household incomes and a better environment, in line with the Four Betters - better production, better nutrition, better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind. Armenia's Deputy Environment Minister Aram Meymaryan

accompanied the FAO delegation on the visit.

Armenia is one of the 35 global biodiversity hotspots, and the country's forests are among the most threatened ecosystems in temperate biomes. FAO has an eight-year project, its first Green Climate Fund project in Europe and Central Asia, aimed at improving forest resilience in the country.

Since Armenia became a FAO Member in 1993, FAO has successfully partnered with the Government and other important national actors in a number of areas and today has dozens of projects underway, ranging from work on the genetics of Armenia's legendary grapes and apricots to school-feeding initiatives.

On Monday, the Director-General, accompanied by the Deputy Minister of Economy Arman Khojoyan and Hrachya Zaqoyan, Acting Rector of Armenia National Agrarian University, addressed first-year students, outlining the collaboration between FAO and the country and emphasizing the importance of science, innovation and digital technologies in transforming agrifood systems and addressing the

complexities of modern agriculture.

FAO is working with the University's soil-testing lab, focusing on soil decarbonization and enhanced data availability through the RECSOIL initiative, and would look forward to deepening collaboration with the University, the country's premier agrarian higher education institution.

The Director-General then travelled to the Ararat region to inspect a school-feeding programme FAO supports, which includes a greenhouse as well as fruit drying activities.

He later visited a vineyard supported by the Vineyard Registration System. FAO has a long history of engagement with efforts to revitalize the country's 8,000-year-old viticulture sector, which boasts a host of indigenous varieties, many of which however are at risk of extinction. "For the advancement of wine production in the country, it is crucial to focus on the genetic evaluation of grape varieties," Qu said.

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USAID-supported rapid response platform officially launched

On September 6th, the USAID-supported Rapid Response Platform was officially inaugurated in Yerevan. The platform supports the Armenian Government in more effectively coordinating assistance to people in crisis. With USAID funding, the Government of Armenia has upgraded the Rapid Response Platform to more efficiently facilitate public assistance to families in need during disasters and crises.

"I believe that the upgraded platform will enhance social service delivery for affected populations during emergencies, improve data availability for informed decision-making, and increase overall readiness to respond effectively to crises," said John Allelo, USAID/Armenia Mission Director, in his speech during the event.

This initiative promotes the planning

and coordination of social protection services during emergencies. This modernized tool is a crucial part of the ongoing social protection sector reforms led by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

"Our past experience has demonstrated that these tools are crucial for effective response. The emergency response platform ensures readiness for any situation, allowing private initiatives to assess available resources and allocate them confidently to serve people in need," said Narek Mkrtchyan, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs.

The project is completed through the "Protection, Inclusion, and Empowerment" Activity, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and implemented by Democracy International. The

Nork Technology Center developed and upgraded this digital platform.

The system is open and accessible, and serves:

Individuals or Families who have experienced adverse situations within the last 72 hours, such as floods, hail, frost, hurricanes, high winds, earthquakes, landslides, collapses, fires, epidemics, pandemics, or isolation.

Organizations and Individuals who wish to contribute resources to assist the Government of Armenia in providing support to people in need.

The rapid response platform also features a social support map, which provides access to support services available in the affected region.

Monsieur Aznavour: Teaser for Aznavour biopic released

The teaser for the biopic *Monsieur Aznavour*, which chronicles the life of the iconic French-Armenian singer Charles Aznavour, was released in France on September 3, 2024.

The film, co-directed by Grand Corps Malade and Mehdi Idir, stars Tahar Rahim in the titular role.

The film's trailer has already generated significant buzz, with audiences praising Rahim's ability to channel Aznavour's spirit. The teaser showcases key moments in Aznavour's life, highlighting his rise from humble beginnings to becoming a global superstar, beloved by millions for his evocative voice and poignant lyrics.



Monsieur Aznavour delves deep into the life of Charles Aznavour, exploring not only his professional achievements but also his personal struggles and triumphs. The narrative covers his early years in Paris, his relationship with mentor Edith

Piaf, and his relentless pursuit of artistic perfection. The film is expected to provide a comprehensive look at how Aznavour navigated the challenges of fame, his contributions to French culture, and his lasting legacy as a singer, songwriter, and actor.

With a scheduled release date of October 23, 2024, *Monsieur Aznavour* is already one of the most anticipated films of the year. The film is not just a tribute to Aznavour but also a celebration of the golden age of French music and cinema, offering a nostalgic yet insightful look at a man whose influence transcended borders and generations.

Armenia to officially celebrate Father's Day: Date up for discussion

Armenia will officially celebrate Father's Day. The National Assembly's Standing Committee on State and Legal Issues gave a green light to the draft law during its sitting on September 3.

The project envisages making amendments to the Law on Holidays and Memorial Days of the Republic of Armenia and establishing June 17 as Father's Day.

Commenting on the choice of the date,



author of the bill, MP Zaruhi Batoyan noted that the experience of a number

of countries has been taken into account, emphasizing that the US, Mexico, India, and Japan celebrate Father's Day on the third Sunday of June. The MP stressed that the date is up for discussion.

Presenting the positive position of the government, Deputy Minister of Justice Armenuhi

Harutyunyan noted that ethnographers can be consulted on the choice of the day.

Justice ministry endorses bill seeking to end early marriages

Member of Parliament Rustam Bakoyan from the ruling Civil Contract faction has introduced a legislative initiative to officially set the minimum age of marriage 18 without any exceptions.

Though uncommon, marriages among 16- or 17-year-olds have been taking place with parental consent.

Speaking at a parliamentary committee hearing, Deputy Minister of Justice Armenuhi Harutyunyan endorsed the bill, saying that the government is definitively in favor of the initiative.

"The government is definitely in favor of this initiative by the member of



parliament. Thus, the state is showing its attitude on the legislative level towards early marriages, because otherwise it would turn out that the state or the law encourage the early marriages, the marriages of underage persons," Harutyunyan said.

Harutyunyan said the ministry has data that marriages among minors have decreased.

Only five marriages involving 16-year-olds were recorded in 2021. In 2022 the number was 4, in 2023 it was 3, and only 2 in 2024.

49 marriages involving 17-year-olds were recorded in 2021, 26 in 2022, 24 in 2023 and 9 in 2024.

"These are small numbers, but nearly 100 percent of these marriages produce children, and childbirth among minors comprise a big number, which is concerning," Harutyunyan said.

Ucom and SunChild NGO bring renewable energy to Syunik's borderline regions



Ucom, in collaboration with SunChild NGO, has successfully completed a sustainable energy project in the Shikahogh settlement of the Kapan community, Syunik region.

A photovoltaic panel with an installed capacity of 10.44 kW has been installed on the roof of the Shikahogh Cultural Center. This will supply electricity to the cultural center, the local municipality, and outdoor lighting.

The Shikahogh Cultural Center is of utmost importance to the community, as

it houses the local library. Renovations are planned in the near future, enabling residents to use the center for various cultural events and activities.

“We place a high priority on sustainable solutions, and we’re pleased that through our cooperation, renewable energy is now available in the border village of Shikahogh. This is our first project in Syunik, and it not only provides sustainable energy to Shikahogh but also helps the village save resources that can be used to improve essential infrastructure,” mentioned the General Director of Ucom, Ralph Yirikian.

“This project not only helps the community manage its resources but also reduces the negative impact on the environment by encouraging the use of renewable energy. The community can now rely on cleaner, more sustainable energy sources, contributing to long-term economic and

environmental sustainability, especially in border regions” said Sona Kalantaryan, the Director of SunChild NGO.

“Incorporating solar energy into our community addresses our heating challenges and significantly reduces costs. Two of our important buildings, along with outdoor lighting, are now powered by the new system. Consistent projects like this are vital for our village. Previously, we relied on wood for heating, which depleted Shikahogh’s forest reserves. These panels will help make our community more sustainable and productive,” mentioned the administrative head of Shikahogh community, Zorik Navasardyan.

The decision by SunChild NGO and Ucom to install solar panels is of strategic importance. Both organizations prioritize environmentally sustainable solutions, ensuring long-term economic stability for the community.

City authorities plan to clean Yerevan Lake and open recreational area



Yerevan City Hall, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, is researching the Yerevan Lake with the purpose of starting a lakebed cleaning process.

The bottom of the artificial reservoir has never been cleaned before.

“The accumulated sludge on the bottom of the lake and near the shores has reduced the useful volume of the lake; we

can now store less water for irrigation and other purposes. Together with the Asian Development Bank we are carrying out a study about the volume and composition of the accumulated residue on the bottom, and innovative solutions will be proposed to clean the sludge entirely,” Gorik Avetisyan, the Deputy Director of the Environmental Department of Yerevan

City Hall told Armenpress.

After the waste removal process is completed, it will be possible to use Yerevan Lake as a recreational area. All shores will be restored, and a bridge will be constructed to connect two shores.

The entire work will last about five years, the official said.

Authorities have already restored and cleaned one shore, and opened a new public park: the process took three years.

At the same time, authorities are working to clean Hrazdan River of solid waste, which will in turn prevent waste accumulation in Yerevan Lake.

In addition to the waste collector nets and biological water treatment plants, authorities plan to build wastewater collectors along the entire river.

There are over 600 illegally built draining pipes that contaminate Hrazdan River with untreated wastewater. City officials plan to resolve the issue given its environmental significance.

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