



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 17, 2008

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### POLITICS

#### 1. IT IS ENVISAGED SIGNING NEW AGREEMENT ON ARMENIAN-CYPRIAN INTERPARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

The heads of the parliaments of Cyprus and Armenia have agreed to deepen bilateral relations, the President of the House of Representatives of Cyprus Marios Karoyian stated at the joint press conference of the speakers of the Armenian and Cyprian parliaments at the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on November 13. In his words, Cyprus as a EU member state is ready to assist Armenia in implementing its programs with the EU.

M. Karoyian said that during his meeting with Armenia's president, prime minister and foreign minister, the sides informed each other about the foreign policy problems of the two countries and expressed a desire to deepen cooperation in the spheres of economy, tourism and culture. According to M. Karoyian, the businessmen who arrived with him in Armenia have expressed an intention to cooperate with Armenian colleagues. Noting that until now the level of economic cooperation was quite low, he expressed a hope that henceforth the commodity turnover between two countries will grow. Both sides intend to make mutual investments, and concrete programs will be developed and presented in the near future.

In the words of M. Karoyian, in the foreign policy sphere, both Armenia and Cyprus conduct policies aimed at ensuring security, peace and stability and their policies are based on the principles of international law and European cooperation. He stated that in this issue Cyprus has the same position as Armenia, taking into account the fact that the South Caucasus is gradually acquiring a greater geopolitical significance in the world. He underlined that Cyprus also tries to solve its problems by peaceful negotiations. According to him, historically, Cyprus and Armenia have the same adversary - Turkey that in 1994 occupied 37% of the territory of Cyprus, keeps a 45,000-strong army there, and has moved illegally 185 thousand people from Anatolia. Human rights, principles and resolutions of the UN and the EU are constantly violated in Turkey. While proposing programs on peace and stability in the region, Turkey has not recognized so far the fact of the genocide of 1.5 million innocent Armenians and continues keeping its border with Armenia closed. According to M. Karoyian, when giving its consent as a EU member for the start of negotiations on Turkey's membership of the EU, Cyprus put forward a number of preconditions, none of which has been implemented so far.

The Speaker of the RA National Assembly Hovik Abrahamian in his turn said that Cyprus was one of the first countries to recognize the 1915 Armenian Genocide, while its House of Representatives in 1975 declared April 24 as the National Day of Genocide Remembrance. He announced that his counterpart has invited him to Cyprus where it is envisaged signing a new agreement on interparliamentary cooperation. According to H. Abrahamian, it is planned to revise and expand the agreement signed between the parliaments of Armenia and Cyprus in 2003.

#### 2. TURKEY CANNOT BE A MEDIATOR IN ISSUE OF NAGORNO KARABAKH SETTLEMENT, ARFD BUREAU MEMBER CONSIDERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

The Declaration on Nagorno Karabakh settlement signed by the Presidents of Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan on November 2 in Moscow does not imply any considerable changes. ARFD Bureau member Aghvan Vardanian expressed such an opinion at the November 14 press conference.

Touching upon the Armenian-Turkish relations, he said that the latest explanations of the RA President and Foreign Minister gave answers to the questions ARFD is concerned with. That is, no Armenian official will make the issue of Armenian Genocide a subject of discussion and hinder the process of recognition of the Genocide. And Turkey, according to A. Vardanian, on the background of every important international event tries to push forward its interests and to become an important player. However, one thing is clear: Turkey cannot be a mediator in the issue of Nagorno Karabakh settlement, and its assistance in that issue can be only its influencing Azerbaijan.

In A. Vardanian's opinion, the presidential elections in the United States brought some changes in the whole world, a necessity to look at the world in a different way, to show other approaches emerged. "It is too important here that Armenia be able to work rightly with all power centers of the world," A. Vardanian said. In that respect the ARFD Bureau member advises "not to look for traitors among us, but



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to try to go into the details of the problems faced by the country and to find such solutions that will guarantee safe and secure future for Armenia and NKR."

### 3. ZHARANGUTIUN CHALLENGES CORRESPONDENCE OF CREATION OF EXPERTS' FACT-FINDING GROUP TO CONSTITUTION [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

The signing of the Moscow declaration based on the Madrid principles causes serious concerns. Stepan Safarian, a member of the RA NA Zharangutiun (Heritage) faction, stated at the November 14 parliamentary press briefing. In particular, according to him, it is alarming that there is no signature of the Karabakh side in that document signed after 14 years' interval in the negotiations of Nagorno Karabakh settlement. On the other hand, the declaration has been signed by one country-co-chair of OSCE Minsk Group, Russia, while official Yerevan constantly declares the necessity to settle the problem within the Minsk Group format.

Member of the same faction Zaruhi Postanjan said that the consequences and dangers proceeding from the Moscow declaration and Madrid principles are not visible to the population of Armenia. Therefore, the Joining initiative is going to carry out the respective propaganda in all regions of Armenia. The deputy said that if the authorities forbid to hold the events in the halls, the organization is ready to hold the meetings in the open air.

Touching upon the experts' fact-finding group on study of the March 1 events, Z. Postanjan said that the RA President's decree on its ceation and activity is anti-constitutional, as the President is not empowered to do it. Such a group was to have been created as a result of the adoption of the respective law. S. Safarian said that though a representative of their party is also involved in the group, nevertheless Zharangutiun will continue challenging group activity's correspondence to the Constitution.

### 4. NEWLY APPOINTED AMBASSADOR OF LATVIA HANDS HIS CREDENTIALS TO RA PRESIDENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

On November 13, Nils Yanson, the newly appointed Ambassador of Latvia to Armenia (residence Vienna), handed his credentials to RA President Serzh Sargsyan. Congratulating the Ambassador on the occasion of assumption of his post, S. Sargsyan gave assurance that he will do his best during his activity to contribute to deepening of the two countries' cooperation. Attaching importance to Latvia's experience of European integration, he said that Armenia strives for rapprochement with Europe and expects assistance by its partner countries on that way.

As Noyan Tapan was informed by the RA President's Press Office, S. Sargsyan also highly evaluated the two countries' cooperation within the framework of international structures and Latvia's balanced position over the Nagorno Karabakh problem.

Emphasizing his country's readiness to deepen the contacts with Armenia, N. Yanson said that the Armenian-Latvian cooperation can be carried out in all spheres, where Armenia has interests and Latvia possibilities.

### 5. ACCORDING TO STEPAN DEMIRCHIAN, PRIMARY TASK OF ARMENIA SHOULD BE INVOLVING KARABAKH AS PARTY IN NEGOTIATIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

"It was reasserted in the Moscow Declaration that the settlement of the Karabakh conflict should be within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group and in a peaceful way. The negative aspect is that Karabakh did not participate in the Declaration's signing," the leader of People's Party of Armenia (PPA), member of the Armenian National Congress (ANC) Stepan Demirchian stated at the November 14 press conference. In his words, today the primary task of Armenia in the Karabakh problem should be making Artsakh a party in the negotiations. As for the Madrid principles, S. Demirchian said that it will be possible to make detailed judgements about these principles only after their declassification. However, it is clear from the information that the opposition has received so far that the Madrid principles give cause for some concern. "We are against unilateral concessions," the PPA leader said.

By his forecast, no rapid solution to the conflict can be expected in the coming months.

Speaking about the criminal case opened against 7 opposition political figures in connection of the March 1 events, S. Demirchian considered it as false. "It was not a coup attempt. People began to gather near the French embassy after they had been subjected to violence in Liberty Square where they were legally expressing their protest against the rigged election," S. Demirchian said.



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## 6. MOST POLITICAL TECHNOLOGIES USED IN ARMENIA ARE DECONSTRUCTIVE, DIRTY AND OF CRIMINAL NATURE, EXPERTS SAY [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

Among political technologies used in totalitarian countries are the intimidation of people, keeping them in an atmosphere of fear, banning rallies, the existence of political prisoners. Aram Manukian, member of the Armenian National Movement (ANM) party's board and the Armenian National Congress (ANC), made this statement at the November 14 discussion at the National Press Club. According to him, today Armenia corresponds to the above mentioned criteria. The political technologies have become mixed with criminal methods which is highly unacceptable to the opposition and society.

Political technologist Armen Badalian in his turn said that a nomenclature system has formed in Armenia, as a result of which most political technologies used are dirty. These technologies are electoral bribe, taking people to police stations "for a talk", intimidation, etc. It is becoming fashionable in the circles of young political figures to flatter senior politicians and compare them to Churchill and de Gaulle.

In the words of the deputy chairman of Armenia's PR Association Arman Saghatelian, deconstructive competitive political technologies now prevail in Armenia's political reality. "For example, if someone sees that his rival is taller, instead of trying to grow up he hits the rival in the head to make him shorter," A. Saghatelian said.

According to political scientist Andranik Tevanian, if such notions as "idea" and "leader" are absent in the political field, any technologies are powerless here.

## 7. RA NA SPEAKER TO LEAVE FOR RF ON OFFICIAL VISIT ON NOVEMBER 17 [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

RA NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamian will leave for Moscow on an official visit on November 17. As Noyan Tapan was informed by the RA NA Public Relations Department, H. Abrahamian will meet with RF State Duma Chairman Boris Gryzlov, Chairman of RF Federal Assembly Federation Council Sergei Mironov, and CSTO Secretary General Nikolay Bordyuzha.

## 8. FOREIGN MINISTER OF ROMANIA LAZAR COMANESCU TO ARRIVE IN YEREVAN ON WORKING VISIT ON NOVEMBER 15 [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

Romanian Foreign Minister Mr Lazar Comanescu will be in Armenia on a working visit on November 15-16. He will have meetings with RA NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamian, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, and Chairman of NA Standing Committee on European Integration Avet Adonts. According to the report provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department, L. Comanescu will also visit the French University, where he will meet with lecturers and students.

The Foreign Minister of Romania will also visit Matenadaran and Etchmiadzin.

## 9. SERZH SARGSYAN: CREATION OF NEW DIVIDING LINES IN CAUCASUS MAY BE HIGHLY DANGEROUS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

The Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan gave an interview with Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper. Below are excerpts from the interview, the text of which was submitted to Noyan Tapan by the RA presidential press service.

Question: Mr. President, last week in Moscow you reached an agreement with the Azeri president on settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, a conflict which has kept the relations between the two countries strained for a long time. How will it develop today?

Answer: We attach importance to the fact that a document has been signed that rules out the resolution of the conflict in a military way. Of course, it is just a declaration but we would be glad to turn it into an agreement. Anyhow, I do not want to underestimate the significance of this document. I am also glad that Azerbaijan has signed a document that accepts all the principles of international law and not only the principle of territorial integrity for solution of the conflict. I also regard as positive the fact that despite the recent sharp opinions about efficiency of the OSCE Minsk Group, importance was attached to the format of the Minsk Group and the role of the co-chairs - the U.S, Russia and France as mediators.

Question: Are you prepared to withdraw your troops from the seven regions adjacent to Karabakh - as required?

Answer: The pivotal problem of the conflict is the issue of status of Nagorno Karabakh. Azerbaijan must recognize the exercise of the Nagorno Karabakh population's right of self-determination.



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The solution of this main problem may be followed by the other issues. Control of the territories is not an end in itself to us, but it aims to ensure Karabakh's security. Today we must negotiate on the principles of settlement, which may be followed by the major peace agreement. We still have a long way to pass.

Question: You are yourself from Karabakh. Can Karabakh remain as an autonomous region of Azerbaijan?

Answer: The matter concerns creation of such conditions that will allow ensuring further development of the population in safe conditions. The history showed that this is impossible in case of Karabakh's being part of Azerbaijan. We have never thought that Karabakh in some status or other may remain part of Azerbaijan.

Question: You were in Brussels recently. Can the EU prove useful in the resolution of the conflict?

Answer: Europe should point out when one of the sides deviates from the road and violates the nature of peaceful settlement of the process. Besides, if an international organization indicates the importance of one principle of the conflict's settlement, it encourages the actions of this country in that direction and displays a non-constructive approach. The U.S. and a number of European countries applied the principle of self-determination of nations with respect to Kosovo. When Russia applied the same, it was rejected by the U.S. and Europe.

Question: You are also a member of NATO's partnership program. Is the lesson to be drawn from the war is that the Alliance should keep away from the Caucasus?

Answer: I do not agree with your choice of these words. In that case the further development of our relations with NATO would be impossible. We believe that our cooperation with the Alliance is a component of our security system. On the other hand we do not strive to become a NATO member. The creation of new dividing lines in our region may be highly dangerous. This is the lesson drawn from the Georgian war.

## 10. MOSCOW DECLARATION TO ENSURE SOME PERIOD OF STABILITY FOR ARMENIA, GALUST SAHAKIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

If the political field is tired or lacks subjects to speak about, then speculation on the Karabakh problem begins. Expressing this opinion at the November 14 parliamentary briefing, the chairman of the "RPA" faction Galust Sahakian said that he "does not expect any dangerous consequence from the signing of the Moscow Declaration", quite the opposite, it creates a basis for continuing the peace negotiation process. In his words, like the Agreement on Ceasefire signed in 1994, the Declaration is a "nonwar" document that will ensure some period of stability for Armenia.

Member of "Prosperous Armenia" faction and the Security Council Avet Adonts said the fact that Armenia is in favor of solving the Karabakh problem through peace negotiations "does not mean that we are afraid of a military intervention". According to him, there are no Madrid principles of the conflict resolution, but there are Madrid proposals that can form a basis for developing some principles during further negotiations. A. Adonts pointed out that despite the latest initiative of Russia, the Minks Group format continues to be the optimal one for solution of the Karabakh problem.

The chairwoman of the "Orinats Yerkir" party Heghine Bisharian stated that their party is in favor of compromises. However, according to her, no compromise proposal has been put forward at the negotiation table today so it is early to speak about the return of the territories. Besides, the assessment on the ways of solving the Karabakh problem should be "given by the people in its collective speech".

## 11. FORMER HEAD OF RA POLICE WAS IN GENERAL CONTROL OF POLICE ACTIONS DURING MARCH 1-2 EVENTS IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

The former head of the RA police Hayk Harutyunian was in general control of the police actions during the March 1-2 events in Yerevan. At about 5:30-6 pm on March 1, Hayk Harutyunian instructed the deputy heads of the police Alexander Afian, Hovhannes Hunanian, Armen Yeritsian and the former head of the 6th department of the police Ashot Gizirian to implement direct control of police operations in the area adjacent to Monument to Myasnikian and some sections of Grigor Lusavorich and Mesrop Mashtots Streets in Yerevan. The deputy head of the RA Police, Major General A. Afian said this at the November 14 sitting of the National Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Inquiry into March 1 Events.

According to the deputy head of the RA police, he did not give an order to fire at demonstrators and, in his opinion, nobody gave such an order. However, in the words of A. Afian, under the law, the policemen who were attacked by demonstrators had the right to use fire-arms. It was also mentioned that



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after finding grenades, rods, etc. during the operation in Liberty Square early in the morning of March 1, a decision was made to bring marz (regional) police sub-units to Yerevan.

Information about the control of police actions in response to persistent questions of National Assembly deputies during the two-hour sitting was the only revelation. All the other questions either remained unanswered or received the official viewpoint regularly published in the past 8 months - about the restraint of the police, the aggressive actions of demonstrators, the plundered shops, and the vehicles which were damaged or destroyed.

In the words of the RA ombudsman Armen Harutyunian, who was with the rapid response group of his office in the area near Monument to Myasnikian during the events, his impression was that the demonstrators did not argue aggressively but they were afraid that the police, which appealed to them with the demand to continue the rally in some other area, were going to "cudgel" them. According to A. Harutyunian, in order to ensure their safety, the demonstrators chose an area adjacent to some embassies and were armed with batons and rods for self-defence. He testified that indeed there were attackers on policemen, but these persons were "obviously provokers". It was mentioned that the demonstrators erected barricades from buses and trolleybuses not in order to take streets and attack policemen but to protect themselves from police. A. Harutyunian said that what continues to be unexplained and incomprehensible is that if the demonstrators were really the persons who plundered some shops in the area, why they did not steal anything from "Svin" gun store located near these shops.

The ad hoc committee members were also interested to know whether law enforcers in civilian clothes had participated in the actions as the well-known video spread by the opposition shows some young men standing beside the law enforcers and arming. A. Afian said that he is not aware of this fact but the men in civilian clothes could have been employees of the operative service. The deputy head of the police noted that he did not watch that video so he cannot explain why at 7:15 am the policemen were attacking a peaceful demonstrator and throwing stones at him in Republic Square. In this connection the chairman of the committee Samvel Nikoyan said that stones could hardly be among the special antiriot weapons of the police. A. Afian was given a copy of the videofilm so that he could watch it.

The chairman of the United Labor Party Gurgen Arsenian declared that he is becoming more and more convinced that there was a third disorientating side. Otherwise it is incomprehensible based on whose information the then president of Armenia Robert Kocharian stated for the world to hear that the demonstrators hidden behind buses were firing at law enforcers (which was not confirmed so far), and based on this he declared a state of emergency for 20 days and introduced restrictions for the 3.5 million population of Armenia.

S. Nikoyan announced that with the aim of receiving explanations, the former and current police officials who led actions of law enforcers in other sections of Yerevan, as well as the opposition figure Levon Zurabian will be invited to participate in the committee's sitting soon.

## 12. LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT SAYS THE STABILITY OF CAUCASIAN REGION IS VERY IMPORTANT [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus stated that the stability in the Caucasian region is very important not only for the region itself but also for the international community.

"It is really important that Caucasian countries have equal participation in international relations and international community", Adamkus said.

"Lithuania can support in this issue. We are going to work together over the common idea and common aim – to establish stability in the region", Lithuanian president added.

## 13. ARMENIAN NA SPEAKER TO VISIT MOSCOW NOVEMBER 17 [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Armenian National Assembly Speaker Hovik Abrahamian is leaving November 17 for Moscow on an official visit.

NA public relations department told Armenpress that the program of the visit intends meetings with the Chairman of Russian State Duma Boris Grizlov, Chairman of the Federal Council of the Russian parliament Sergey Mironov, CSTO Secretary General Nikolay Bordyuzha.



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## 14. DEVELOPMENT OF ARMENIAN-ROMANIAN COOPERATION ISSUES DISCUSSED [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan met November 15 with the Romanian Foreign Minister Lazar Comanescu and the members of his delegation.

Governmental press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the prime minister highly assessed the current level of Armenian-Romanian relations, pointing out that there exists potential for the development of cooperation almost in all the spheres from year to year.

The head of the Armenian government presented to the guest the suggestion of the Armenian side directed towards the development of bilateral cooperation in transport, agricultural, scientific and educational, justice, cultural, defense and other spheres.

The prime minister considered it useful the expansion of partnership between Armenian Development Agency, Armenian Trade-Industrial Chamber, Union of Armenian Manufacturers and Businessmen and the same establishments of Romania, organization of business forums, exchange of business information between the two sides.

Noting that the small and medium-sized business sphere of Armenia is one of the important priorities of Armenia's economy, Tigran Sargsyan underscored the establishment of partnership between Armenian and Romanian establishments supporting the development of the sphere, exchange of experience and implementation of joint programs.

The two sides also pointed out the importance of cooperation in tourism sphere, exchange of tourism operators, organization of familiarizing visits of journalists.

The Romanian minister considered Armenia's suggestions over development of Armenian-Romanian relations acceptable, noting that Romanian diplomacy provides big place to the economic sector and the involvement of Romanian businessmen in the delegation is agreed with it.

The minister also said that he brought with him the messages of Romanian president and prime minister in which they express readiness to expand cooperation with Armenia in political, economic and other spheres.

## 15. OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRS AND PRESIDENT OF NAGORNO KARABAKH DISCUSS KARABAKH CONFLICT REGULATION ISSUE [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

President of Nagorno Karabakh Bako Sahakian met November 15 with the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group Matthew Bryza (USA), Yuri Merzlyakov (Russia), Bernard Fassier (France).

Nagorno Karabakh Presidential press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the sides discussed a wide range of issues related to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement. They particularly referred to the Moscow declaration signed by Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian presidents.

Bako Sahakian pointed out that Artsakh values any document that can contribute to the establishment of a civilized dialogue in the Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflict settlement process. In the meantime, the head of the state noted that the settlement process will be impossible to make comprehensive without full-fledged participation of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, especially taking into consideration that Artsakh has its view on the settlement of the conflict.

The co-chairs in their turn reaffirmed that without consent and participation of Nagorno Karabakh and its people it will be impossible to settle the conflict.

NKR foreign minister Georgy Petrosian and personal representative of the OSCE chairman-in-office Andrzej Kasprzyk were also present at the meeting.

## 16. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT RECEIVES OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRS [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan received today OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs Matthew Bryza (USA), Yuri Merzlyakov (Russia), Bernard Fassier (France) and personal representative of the OSCE chairman-in-office Andrzej Kasprzyk. At the meeting present was Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the interlocutors discussed the current round of negotiations over Nagorno Karabakh conflict regulation.

The co-chairs informed the president about the results of the meetings conducted earlier in Baku.



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## 17. ISSUES OF ACTIVATING ARMENIAN-ROMANIAN COOPERATION DISCUSSED [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian met November 15 with Romanian Foreign Minister Lazar Comanescu who is in Armenia on a working visit.

Press service of Armenian Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that greeting the guest E. Nalbandian said that he is pleased with the traditional relationship between Armenia and Romania and the dynamic development of Armenian-Romanian relations.

Stressing the importance of expansion of political dialogue, Armenian Foreign Minister expressed hope that the European direction may become a new format of cooperation.

E. Nalbandian stressed the importance of cooperation with Romania within the frameworks of program of actions of European neighborhood policy. He also stressed the importance of undertaking concrete steps for activating bilateral relations in different spheres.

Lazar Comanescu in his turn highly assessed the friendly relations between Armenia and Romania and expressed willingness of his country to expand them.

He also stressed the role of Armenian community in the development of bilateral relations.

In the context of regional cooperation the Romanian Foreign Minister stressed the importance of the EU Black Sea Confederation program as well as the cooperation between the two countries during Armenia's chairmanship in Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

The ministers referred to the importance of expansion of bilateral economic cooperation, underscoring the full usage of Armenian-Romanian trade-economic potential. They also spoke about the issues of mutual interest, particularly the peaceful regulation of Karabakh issue and the latest developments in the region.

The meeting of the ministers was followed by a joint press conference.

## 18. ARMENIAN FOREIGN MINISTER E. NALBANDIAN TO PAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO BALTIC COUNTRIES [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian is leaving today for Baltic countries on an official visit.

Press service of Armenian Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that November 17-19 E. Nalbandian will be in Lithuania where he will meet with Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus, Foreign Minister Petras Vaytekunas and with representatives of Armenian community. E. Nalbandian will also visit Lithuanian State University.

November 19-20 E. Nalbandian will be in Latvia. Within the frameworks of the visit he will meet with Latvian President Valdis Zatlers, Speaker of the Parliament Eriks Zunday as well as with Latvian Foreign Minister Maris Riekstins. The meeting with Latvian Foreign Minister will be followed by a joint press conference. E. Nalbandian's meeting with representatives of Armenian community is also intended.

Armenian Foreign Minister's visit to Estonia is planned for November 20-21. During it E. Nalbandian will meet with Estonian President Tumas Hendrik Ilves, Speaker of the Parliament Ene Ergma and Foreign Minister Urmas Payter.

## 19. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT RECEIVES HUNGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTER [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan received today Hungarian Foreign Minister Mrs. Kinga Goncez and the delegation accompanying her.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that greeting the guest, the president underscored the expansion of bilateral, multilateral relations as well as cooperation within the frameworks of European establishments.

Hungarian foreign minister pointed out Hungary's sympathy of Armenia and the wish to turn it to practical partnership.

Noting that the political dialogue between the two countries starts activating, President Sargsyan said that there are three circumstances for moving forward more quickly – great respect towards each other, Hungarian-Armenian community and Armenia's resolute wish to become closer to Europe.

Mrs. Goncez expressed assurance that the agreement signed today with her Armenian counterpart will become a good basis for exchange of experience. Describing Armenia's economic growth as impressive, she underscored the activation of bilateral partnership in this sphere, as well as encouragement of cooperation in education sphere, implementation of students' exchange programs.



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For effective partnership, the president of Armenia considered an important pre-condition the formation of legal-agreement field and awareness of each other's opportunities. He underscored the promotion of partnership between the two trade-industrial chambers.

The sides also spoke of opportunities of partnership within the framework of EU's Eastern Partnership. The Hungarian minister said that EU realizes more and more the growing role of this region for Europe's energy, economic security and stability.

Serzh Sargsyan highly underscored the balanced position of Hungary over Nagorno Karabakh conflict regulation issue as well as the principle position of Hungarian justice over the Azerbaijani serviceman who brutally murdered Armenian officer in Budapest.

## 20. OSCE TO CONDUCT CRITICAL MONITORING IN FIZULI SECTOR [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

OSCE will conduct a critical monitoring in Fizuli sector where late at night November 15 violation of cease-fire regime has been registered.

Personal representative of the OSCE chairman-in-office Andrzej Kasprzyk said today at US embassy in Armenia that the monitoring will be conducted in the near future when mutual agreement over it is reached.

A. Kasprzyk said that the monitoring will be of critical nature as the violation of cease-fire regime took life of a person. He said so that such cases not create difficulties in negotiations, personal representative of the OSCE chairman-in-office together with his five assistants is conducting monitoring twice in a month.

The regular monitoring of the contact zone of Armenian and Azerbaijani armed forces will be conducted November 19.

## 21. ARMENIAN AND HUNGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS ARE SURE A NEW IMPETUS TO BE GIVEN TO THE RELATIONS OF TWO COUNTRIES [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Armenian and Hungarian Foreign Ministers Edward Nalbandian and Kinga Goncz conducted today bilateral negotiations in the Armenian Foreign Ministry over the development of bilateral relations.

After the meeting E. Nalbandian told journalists that hope and confidence has been expressed that a new impetus will be given to bilateral relations.

According to Armenian Foreign Minister, there is a great potential to expand bilateral cooperation in political, economic, cultural and other spheres. An agreement has been reached during the meeting on preparing corresponding inter-state documents.

"Very few cooperation agreements have been signed by now between our two states which may serve as a bases for the development of our relations in different spheres more actively", Armenian Foreign Minister noted.

During the meeting discussions have been conducted on the development of regional relations. E. Nalbandian presented to his Hungarian counterpart the latest developments over Karabakh conflict regulation.

A document has been signed, according to which Armenian-Hungarian bilateral consultation is planned to be conducted within the number of events held within the frameworks of EU new neighborhood policy program.

According to K. Goncz, the Armenian community in Hungary is quite active and always has its participation and contribution to the development of the country.

"We must try to create much closer bilateral relations. Hungary joined the EU four years ago and all our efforts were directed towards that aim before that. We are ready to pass our experience to Armenia", she said.

Kinga Goncz noted that EU realizes that Caucasian region, which is in an immediate neighborhood with EU, is important for it.

According to her, for the improvement of Armenian-Hungarian relations there is a great potential not only in the economic sphere but also in educational, cultural, tourism and other spheres. There are also opportunities to develop human communication.

"We hope that other documents will also be signed in the nearest future to expand and develop the spheres of our cooperation", he noted, stressing the importance of bilateral mutual visits.

Answering to the question weather it is possible that Ramil Safarov, who murdered Armenian officer Gurgen Margarian with an axe a few years ago in Budapest and now bears his punishment in Hungary, be sent to Azerbaijan, the Hungarian Foreign Minister noted that her country was seriously shocked on the days of the assassination. "I'm not the Justice Minister to give a full answer to your



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question. There is an opportunity of extradition but Hungary has no such commitment. It will be rather concerning if Ramil Safarov bears the punishment in Azerbaijan. It is still a question whether it will be so or not", she said.

Hungarian Foreign Minister also visited today in the morning Tsitsernakaberd – memorial to the victims of Armenian genocide.

At the request of reporters E. Nalbandian, commenting on the news of one of the Azerbaijani mass media that one of the Turkish deputy foreign ministers prepares a trilateral meeting of Turkish, Azerbaijani and Armenian foreign ministers in Istanbul in late December, said that he is not aware of such an initiative.

"We have not received such suggestion and there is no necessity of making any comments connected with it," E. Nalbandian said.

## **BUSINESS**

### **22. NOT ALL DEPUTIES OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SHARE OPINION THAT 2009 DRAFT STATE BUDGET IS DRAFT BUDGET OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]**

The RA National Assembly on November 13 continued the discussion of the 2009 draft state budget, but the parliament failed to finish this discussion during 4 sittings. A special session was invited on the same day on the initiative of NA deputies.

The minister of finance Tigran Davtian said in his speech that the 2009 draft state budget can be called a draft budget of sustainable development. Further discussions, however, revealed that not all the deputies share this opinion.

In particular, Stepan Safarian, the secretary of the only opposition faction - "Heritage", stated on behalf of their faction: "In an international environment which is unstable and, as the prime minister said, self-organizing and accompanied by occasional crises, such a budget can neither be considered nor called a budget of sustainable development". According to S. Safarian, as well as several deputies of the political coalition and some independent deputies, some statements in the government's message on the 2009 draft state budget do not correspond to the financing of the programs envisaged by the draft.

Particularly, the country cannot develop without industry, whereas little money has been allocated for industry. The majority of the deputies who made a speech pointed out the fact that the government speaks about the necessity to encourage domestic producers but exports decline year by year instead of growing: in 2008 the negative commodity balance made 1.2 billion USD, whereas in 2009 it is envisaged to make 3 billion USD.

Tigran Torosian, the former speaker of the NA, currently an independent deputy, in his turn said that a number of program provisions, which are related to the directions announced by the government as priority directions and were indicated by the prime minister in his speech, are not in line with the budgetary indices. In his words, it is sad and shameful that any driver in the state system is better paid than a merited scientist.

### **23. NO STAFF REDUCTION CURRENTLY ENVISAGED AT ENTERPRISES OF MINING INDUSTRY [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]**

No reduction of the staff is expected at the mining enterprises in the cities of Kapan, Kajaran and Agarak in Syunik marz (province) within the next three months, the RA minister of energy and natural resources Armen Movsisian stated at the November 12 sitting of the government.

To recap, the employees of some enterprises in Syunik marz announced their decision to go on strike and complain against the management's intention to start wage cuts and reduction of the staff. By instructions of the prime minister, on November 10 A. Movsisian together with the minister of economy and the minister of labor and social issues went to Syunik in order to familiarize themselves with the situation on the spot.

A. Movsisian said that the global financial crisis has had its impact on the mining industry, due to which the enterprises of Kajaran, Kapan and Agarak have financial difficulties at the moment. According to the minister, an agreement has been reached with the enterprises' owners that within the next three months there will be no reduction of the staff and the wages will be kept at the same level. In three months, the situation will be analyzed again and a new decision will be taken.



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## 24. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COMPLETES REGULAR STAGE OF DISCUSSING 2009 DRAFT STATE BUDGET [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

At the November 13 special session, the RA National Assembly completed the regular stage of discussing the 2009 draft state budget. The NA speaker Hovik Abrahamian announced that the discussion is interrupted for at least 4 days, and within the next 24 hours deputies, factions and standing committees must officially submit their proposals to the NA staff that will present these proposals to the government.

In his closing speech the minister of finance Tigran Davtian assured the parliament that the "budget is realistic and adequate to the challenges of next year", and the government has enough opportunities to fulfill the budget.

He said that the coming year will not be easy for the world economy but Armenia tries to be as well-prepared as possible when entering the year 2009. In particular, according to T. Davtian, the envisaged deficit of the budget is quite low: it makes up 1% of GDP. In case of necessity it may be theoretically increased up to 3% of GDP which will allow to attract additional 80 billion drams. Besides, the budget envisages a reserve fund, the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) has its reserve funds, and there are also opportunities of receiving concessionary credits from international organizations.

## 25. A NEW AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED BETWEEN ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Head of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Haruhiko Kuroda will pay a one-day visit to Armenia November 18.

During the visit Haruhiko Kuroda will meet the Armenian President Serzh Sargsian, Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.

An official from the bank told Armenpress that on November 18 H. Kuroda will officially open the first office of ADB in Armenia, which will coordinate the activity of the bank in Armenia.

Within the frameworks of the visit a new agreement between ADB and Armenian government is expected to be signed within the frameworks of which the bank will support the development of country's rural roads and will improve the management of transportation sphere.

Transportation sphere, town services and the reforms of social sphere are considered the strategic issues of ADB in Armenia.

Since 2005, when Armenia joined the ADB, two programs have been financed by the bank – programs of development of rural roads and water supply system of the towns.

Armenia has a definite program of economic development directed towards providing a stable growth and reduction of poverty. The Asian Development Bank closely cooperates with Armenian government in the implementation of the program and the improvement of level of living", Haruhiko Kuroda said.

The ADB is a bank of multilateral development the owners of which are 67 member states. The main tools for development of the member states are the political dialogue, credits, the investment of own means, guarantees, grants and the technical support.

In 2008 the ADB adopted the 2020 strategy – a long lasting strategic program within the frameworks of which three additional strategic issues are included – multilateral growth, ecologically stable growth and territorial integration.

## ARTS

## 26. CULTURAL DAYS IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

The embassy of Germany together with the German academic exchange service and the Tbilisi and Yerevan institutes after Gote will conduct cultural days in Yerevan November 15-23.

Public relations department of German embassy told Armenpress that within the frameworks of cultural program, concerts, German films watching in Armenian national gallery and "Moscow" cinema, theatrical shows, reciting will be organized.

The opening ceremony of the cultural days will take place November 18 in the concert hall after A. Babajanian with the concert of "Siminology" jazz band.



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## 27. WEEK OF BRAZILIAN AND SPANISH FILM WATCHING TO BE HELD IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

A week of Brazilian and Spanish film watching will be held in Yerevan from November 25. Deputy Consul Brazilian in Armenia Hovsep Seferian told Armenpress that 6 films of different periods have been chosen which will be shown in Brazilian Embassy in Armenia: each person may take part in the film watching.

According to H. Seferian, Brazilian and Spanish film culture will be presented so that Armenian people have an opportunity to get acquainted with it more closely.

Embassy of Brazil in Armenia intends to conduct a week of Brazilian culture in Armenia: the main programs will be clarified in the nearest future.

## SOCIAL

## 28. STARTING FROM 2010 ARMENIAN CITIZENS TO RECEIVE PASSPORTS WITH BIOMETRICAL DATA [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

Reforms are being implemented at the Passport and Visa Department of the RA Police, and a concept of introducing passports with biometrical data has been approved. The deputy head of the RA Police, Colonel Gevorg Mherian said during the November 11 meeting with reporters that the respective legal acts have already been prepared and will be soon put into circulation. According to a schedule, passports with biometrical data will be put into circulation starting from 2010, which will allow Armenian citizens to get visas in the Schengen zone by a simplified procedure. According to G. Mherian, this has already been agreed on with EU member states. The concept envisages availability of passports of two types: an ID and a passport for a foreign country. The cost of passports will be determined only after holding a competition for their printing.

G. Mherian informed reporters that in Yerevan, citizens may receive passports within a 5-day period. In his words, a draft decision of the government is now being developed, by which in case of making the respective payment, this service can be provided in a period of less than 5 working days. It will be necessary to pay 20 thousand drams for receiving a passport within one working day, and 10 thousand drams for receiving it within 4 working days. It was mentioned that an exit visa will be granted to citizens within one working day without any additional payment.

Some changes have been made in the periodicity of changing the passports of under-age citizens: under-age citizens of any age will have the opportunity to get passports for a 3-year period and to change their passports at any time.

Henceforth the consent of both parents with a notary's attestation will no longer be needed for getting a passport and an exit visa for an under-age child. The deputy head of the RA police announced that this order will not be valid only in case of an argument between the parents about moving the child out of the country or granting him a passport. In this case the argument must be settled in court. G. Mherian said that henceforth no under-age citizen will have problems with an exit visa: "Certificates from the military registration and enlistment office were required in the past. The law does not envisage such a restriction".

According to G. Mherian, criminal cases were opened against the officials who had committed abuses. "A criminal case was opened against some employees of the airport's visa unit, there are arrested persons. A case was also opened against the head of the Jermuk passport service. He was arrested, and now the issue of choosing arrest as a precautionary measure with respect to him is being discussed".

## 29. ACCORDING TO AGHVAN VARDANIAN, NA CONTROL CHAMBER HAS NOT SAID ANYTHING NEW ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM ON ASSISTANCE TO ALUMNI OF ORPHANAGES [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/14/08]

The reference on the violations, which were revealed by the National Assembly Control Chamber in the Program on State Assistance to the Alumni of the Orphanages implemented in 2003 by the RA ministry of labor and social issues, contains no point which was not discussed by the ministry at the time. The former minister of labor and social issues, ARF Bureau member Aghvan Vardanian stated this at the November 14 press conference. In his words, the NA Control Chamber has not said anything new in this respect.



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A. Vardanian said that under the program, assistance was to be provided to 250 alumni of orphanages. The program envisaged not only provision of apartments to them, but also giving jobs to them, supplying them with property and household appliances, as well as provision of medical, social, legal and other services.

In the opinion of Aghvan Vardanian, the ministry did everything within its jurisdiction to implement this program. "It was an honor and good luck for me to head this difficult and responsible sector in the Armenian government for 5 years. The qualitative changes made in the system are the result of my work as well," he noted.

A. Vardanian said that the ministry is going to give its explanations about this issue to the Control Chamber soon.

## 30. TEACHERS OF HIGH SCHOOL OF ASHTARAK TRAINED [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

The teachers of the N5 high school of the town of Ashtarak are participating in the training classes on the initiative of the Armenian Education and Science Ministry. Within the frameworks of the training all the pedagogues working in high schools will have relevant qualification for teaching in those schools.

About 30 teachers are working in the Ashtarak high school, currently 23 of them (specialists of all the main subjects) are attending the classes, the rest will have training later.

The classes are being held in Yerevan State Pedagogical University. In parallel with the classes, which will last for 2 months, the teachers also take exams and get marks according to the credit system. Simultaneously they write research works; the choice of the subject is on them. In the end the works will be defended and only after it the qualification certificates will be provided.

Ashtarak N5 school is one of the schools where experimental high school has been created. The high school is the only one in the province but in the coming year such school will open in Talin and Aparan towns.

## 31. 111 NEW CASES OF HIV INFECTION REGISTERED IN ARMENIA BY NOVEMBER 1 [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

About 111 new cases of HIV have been registered in the republic during the 10 months of the running year.

An official from the AIDS Prevention Republic Center told Armenpress that from 1988 up to November 1, 2008, 649 cases of HIV infection have been registered.

The majority of the infected are males – 484 people (74.6%), 165 (25.4%) are females, besides 13 cases among children have been registered.

About 70.4 percent of HIV infected are of 20-39 years old. The main ways the infection is transferred in Armenia are heterosexual way (49%) and drug injection (44.4%). Besides, cases when the infection was transferred from mother to child, through blood and homosexual way has also been registered.

About 278 HIV infected, of which 55 are women and 6 children, have been diagnosed with AIDS, 68 of which during this year. From the beginning of the infection 150 cases of death of people with HIV/AIDS have been registered, among them 22 women and three children.

The biggest number of HIV infection has been registered in Yerevan – 297, which is 45.8 percent of all the registered cases, second comes Shirak province with 10 percent.

The HIV/AIDS situation assessment witnesses that there are 2,800 HIV infected people in the republic.

## 32. MORE THAN 183,3 MILLION DRAMS TO BE PROVIDED TO "RURAL CONSULTATION SERVICES" PROGRAM [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

The 2009 state budget will release 183,3 million drams for the provincial and republican center of support to agriculture which functions within the frameworks of "Rural Consultation Services" program.

Head of the financial-economic and accounting department of Armenian Agriculture Ministry Hovik Hovhannissian told Armenpress that the provincial centers the activity of which has a positive impact and efficient role in the communities, will be financed by the state budget with 40%, the World Bank will finance with 30% and the other 30% the center will get from its own activity carried out on payment basis.



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An additional sum will be provided from the budget to the bordering provincial centers. Within the frameworks of the sum the institutions, besides providing consultation services to agricultural manufacturers in the provinces, will also conduct activities of implementation-assessment of new technologies of experimental-exhibiting programs and conduct seminars for farmers.

## 33. WAYS OF DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH VANDE REGION PRESENTED [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Delegation from French Vande region headed by the head of the chief council Phillip de Villien met today with students and the professor staff of French University in Armenia.

During the discussion on "Economic Model of Vande" F. De Villien noted that Vande was able to keep the variety of its activity which is based on crafts, small and medium-sized enterprises and international industry. There is an enterprise for 17 residents in Vande and according to F. de Villien, the region, being proud of its roots and identity, is at the same time a region of economic success.

The whole economy is based on four footholds – agriculture, crafts, industry and tourism. Small and medium-sized enterprises function in these four spheres which create jobs and promote dynamic economic development.

"The model of economic development of Vande brilliantly combines the traditional and the modern. At the same time, the majority of small and medium-sized enterprises still remain family institutions. Vande was always capable to adapt to economic changes and to confront them," F. de Villien added.

During the meeting the students were given an opportunity to address questions to the members of the delegation: one of the questions was connected with applying Vande economic model in the Armenian economy.

"It is difficult at this moment to say weather it is possible or not. First the inner market must be seriously studied. We want to cooperate with our Armenian partners, this is the reason why we present the economic model of Vande," F. de Villien said. He considered the person and the cultural values guarantees for success.

Representatives of chief council of the province, enterprises, trade and industrial chamber were included in the delegation.

## **SPORTS**

### 34. ARMENIAN MEN'S CHESS TEAM – IN THE THIRD PLACE OF 38<sup>th</sup> WORLD OLYMPIAD [ARMENPRESS, 11/17/08]

Armenian men's chess team played a draw of 2:2 in all the four games with Ukrainian team in the fourth round of the 38<sup>th</sup> world Chess Olympiad. The tournament is being held in the town of Dresden, Germany.

In the third round Armenian chess players won 4:0 the team from Farer Islands.

After the fourth round the Armenian chess players, together with six teams, are on the third place with 7 team points.

After the fourth round German and Russian teams share the 1-2 places.

Armenian women's chess team, which won 4:0 the second German team in the previous round, in the fourth round was defeated 0.5:3.5 by Chinese team.

In the women's tournament the Armenian team occupies the 16<sup>th</sup> place with six team points.

The leaders of the tournament are Chinese and Polish chess teams having 8 points each.

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