



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, January 23, 2009

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### POLITICS

#### 1. HENCEFORTH TURKISH PUPILS INSTEAD OF EXPRESSION "THE SO-CALLED ARMENIAN GENOCIDE" WILL SAY "THE EVENTS OF 1915" [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

When touching upon the Armenian Cause pupils in Turkey's schools instead of the expression "ungrounded" or "the so-called Armenian Genocide" henceforth will use the expression "the events of 1915." According to the reports of Turkish media, Turkey's Ministry of Education made such a decision. The change, in particular, regards the expressions in the history textbook for the 8th form pupils.

It should be mentioned that as far back as on July 3, 2007 Turkey's government sent a circular letter to all Turkey's ministries, structures attached to them, governor's offices, municipalities, Supreme Educational Council, judicial structures, and Armed Forces General Headquarters, which prohibited using the expression "the so-called Armenian Genocide" in the country. Instead it was demanded using the expressions "the events of 1915" or "Armenian allegations regarding the events of 1915."

#### 2. MATTHEW BRYZA ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO PARTICIPATION OF NKR IN NEGOTIATION PROCESS [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

At the January 20 meeting with U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, the U.S. co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group Matthew Bryza, the speaker of the RA National Assembly Hovik Abrahamian restated Armenia's position on peaceful solution of the Karabakh problem. At the same time he called attention to the bellicose statements of Azerbaijan which are not conducive to the peaceful settlement process. From the viewpoint of the problem's solution, he underlined the importance of the primacy of the right of self-determination, the international guarantees of Karabakh's land link with Armenia and security of the Karabakh people, as well as the importance of participation of the authorities of the NKR in the negotiation process. H. Abrahamian expressed a high opinion about the efforts of the OSCE Minks Group for peaceful solution of the problem, attaching importance to its solution within the framework of the OSCE. According to him, in terms of regional peace and security it is essential to establish Armenian-Turkish dialog and develop relations with all neighboring states.

Speaking about the activities of the National Assembly's ad hoc committee and the fact-finding group on inquiry into the March 1-2 events in Yerevan and their reasons, H. Abrahamian underlined the necessity of presenting an impartial and objective conclusion which will help engage in social dialog and restore an atmosphere of trust in the country. The interlocutors also discussed the process of implementation of PACE Resolutions 1609 and 1620.

Welcoming the activities of the NA ad hoc committee and the fact-finding group on inquiry into the March 1-2 events in Yerevan and their reasons, M. Bryza also underlined the importance of presenting a comprehensive and impartial conclusion to the public.

Expressing satisfaction at the constructive approaches of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents to peaceful solution of the Karabakh problem, the U.S. co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group said that the co-chairs see the solution of the problem only through peaceful settlement. He attached importance to participation of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in the negotiation process.

According to the RA National Assembly PR Department, the issue of continuing the Millennium Challenge Program was discussed in detail during the meeting, at which the U.S. ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch was also present.

#### 3. PETITION FOR SELF-WITHDRAWAL TO BE FILED TO PRESIDING JUDGE IN CASE AGAINST MATENADARAN DEPUTY DIRECTOR [Aravot, 01/21/09]

The petition for self-withdrawal of the presiding judge Ruben Apinian will be examined at the January 23 sitting of the general jurisdiction court of Yerevan's Kentron and Nork-Marash communities that examines the case against the deputy director of the Matenadaran Arshak Banuchian and others. At the January 20 court sitting, the defence petitioned to be given 3 working days for preparing a petition. The petition of the defence was granted.

Arshak Banuchian is charged with embezzlement and tax evasion while serving as executive director of the "Friends of Matenadaran" Fund. NT correspondent was informed by his defence lawyer



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Tigran Atanesian that the purpose of opening this case is to dismiss A. Banuchian from his post as deputy director of the Matenadaran.

To recap, in connection with the February 19 presidential election and the March events in Yerevan, a criminal case was opened against A. Banuchian under the following articles of the RA Criminal Code: Article 225 Part 1 (organization of mass disorder), Article 154 Part 2 (hindrance to implementation of a voter's free will), and Article 225 prim Part 1 (organization and holding of a public event in violation of the order envisaged by law). The case has been quashed, and A. Banuchian has been released.

#### 4. ANC REPRESENTATIVE: TODAY PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT IS AS MIGHTY AS NEVER [Haykakan Zhamanak, 01/21/09]

"After the March 1 slaughter the authorities committed for the purpose of stopping people's peaceful actions a deep political crisis goes on in Armenia up to the present." Levon Zurabian, the Coordinator of the Armenian National Congress Central Office, stated at the January 21 press conference. According to him, its main reason is that the authorities refuse to look for political solutions. According to him, the "regime has adopted a dull-brained strategy having no prospects, aimed at wearing out and demoralizing the people's movement through keeping political hostages," and the authorities are ready to do anything to achieve that, in consequence of which Armenia suffers much losses. In particular, country's positions in the Nagorno Karabakh negotiations become weak, the investments within the framework of the Millennium Challenge corporation have been dampened, cooperation with the European Union is endangered. "First of all the authorities are responsible for all this, the imprudent policy of which first of all leads them by the way of self-demoralization," L. Zurabian said.

While, according to him, today the people's movement is as mighty as never: the consolidation has been kept and ANC structures and abilities continue becoming strong. "We demand that the authorities stop the policy having no prospects, release all political prisoners. After it by establishing a dialogue with the opposition together find ways of Armenian political system's rehabilitation and restoration of democracy," L. Zurabian said.

In his opinion, there are all bases for making a decision to use sanctions to Armenia during the coming PACE session, as no progress has been recorded in the issue of fulfilling the demands. According to L. Zurabian, the Armenian authorities well realize and are terrified of the consequences of the sanctions to be used, but outwardly they show calmness to encourage their team-mates.

#### 5. RUBEN SAFRASTIAN HOPES THAT U.S. CONGRESS WILL ADOPT RESOLUTION N 106 ON RECOGNITION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [Aravot, 01/21/09]

No positive shift took place in the Armenia-Turkey relations last year: the border remains closed, no diplomatic relations were established. Turkologist Ruben Safrastian, the Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, gave such an estimation at the January 21 press conference. According to him, improvement of the Armenian-Turkish relations mainly depends on how much Turkish diplomacy is ready to renounce the policy of exerting pressure upon Armenia.

Touching upon U.S. President Barack Obama's preelection promise on recognition of the Armenian Genocide, R. Safrastian predicted that he will hardly use the word "genocide" in his April 24 address. However, as the Turkologist added, there is much hope that U.S. Congress will adopt Resolution N 106 on recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

As to Turkey's willingness to raise its own role in the South Caucasian region, according to R. Safrastian's observation, that country's efforts exerted in this direction are vain. According to him, for instance, Turkey's proposal to create a Security and Cooperation Platform has not been fulfilled so far and will not be fulfilled in the near future.

#### 6. ZHARANGUTIUN TO DISCUSS ISSUE OF RENOUNCING ITS DEPUTY MANDATES AFTER PACE JANUARY SESSION [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

For the Zharangutiun (Heritage) party it is too alarming that Armenia's law enforcement system, in essence, does not operate, and even during trials on civil cases the legal anarchy of political trials continue." Vardan Khachatryan, a member of the RA National Assembly Zharangutiun (Heritage) faction, stated at the January 21 press conference. According to him, the courts have received a carte blanche to



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act as they like when investigating both political and civil cases. As V. Khachatryan predicted it, if the justice level continues reducing swiftly as it is now, the Armenian statehood will go to self-destruction.

The opposition figure refused to comment upon RPA deputy Rafik Petrosian's statement that the Zharangutiun faction does nothing in NA except bothering and NA will lose nothing from its absence. V. Khachatryan only stated that Zharangutiun represents the interests of the opposition mass making the huge part of Armenia's society and is the only parliamentary tribune of the opposition. "If some people think that only pro-governmental forces should be represented at the parliament, it is a way of thinking peculiar to civilization out of this world," he mentioned.

V. Khachatryan also said that after the end of the PACE January session Zharangutiun will convene an enlarged Board sitting, at which the issue of renouncing the deputy mandates or not will be discussed.

## 7. HRANT VARDANIAN GIVEN TITLE OF MERITED FIGURE OF ARMENIAN ECONOMY [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 01/21/09]

Under RA President Serzh Sargsyan's decree, businessman Hrant Vardanian, the Chairman of the Grand Holding company, has been given the honorary title of the RA Merited Figure of Economy for his many years' fruitful work in the sphere of industry, considerable personal contribution in the issue of development of economy. Noyan Tapan was informed about it by the RA President's Press Office.

For the first time giving Hrant Vardanian the order certifying the honorary title, S. Sargsyan highly evaluated Grand Holding Chairman's prominent merit in country's economic progress, in the direction of reanimation and development of traditional economic branches, as well as promotion of export. He also emphasized businessman's much contribution in the issue of creation of new jobs and highly evaluated his permanent attention to children.

## 8. GEGHAM GHARIBJANIAN APPOINTED HEAD OF RA NA STAFF [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 01/21/09]

Gegham Gharibjanian, who was relieved of the post of RA Deputy Foreign Minister under RA President Serzh Sargsyan's January 19 decree, the same day was appointed head of the RA National Assembly Staff. It was mentioned on the NA official website. It should be mentioned that the post was vacant after Hayk Kotanian's resignation introduced the other day. The post of the head of Public Relations Department is vacant for the present, after Anahit Adamian's resignation.

G. Gharibjanian was born in 1951 in Yerevan. He graduated from Yerevan State University Oriental Studies Department. He masters Russian, Persian, English foreign languages. In 1995-1999 he was RA NA deputy, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee on Social, Healthcare, and Environmental Protection Issues, then the Chairman. In January 1999 he was given a rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. From the same year up to 2004 he was RA Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Islamic Republic of Iran and in 2001-2004 also in Qatar pluralistically.

## 9. ARMENIA AND FRANCE SIGN A TREATY OF COOPERATION IN THE SPHERE OF SCIENCE [ARMENPRESS, 01/22/09]

Armenian Education and Science Ministry and the French National center of scientific researches signed an agreement of cooperation January 20 in Paris.

Press service department of Armenian Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that on behalf of the Armenian Education and Science Ministry the agreement was signed by the head of State committee of science Samvel Harutyunian and on behalf of France – the head of the National center of scientific researches Mrs. Catherine Breshinyak and the chief director Arnold Migus.

The agreement aims at enhancing the cooperation between the two countries in the sphere of science. Exchanges of scientific workers of the two countries, implementation of collaborative scientific research programs and organization of joint conferences and seminars are intended with the agreement. With this aim CNRS structures of international cooperation – International programs of scientific cooperation, International united laboratories and International scientific research groups will be used. The programs will be implemented through joint financing.

During the meeting which preceded the ceremony of signing, the sides expressed gratification that the scientific cooperation between Armenia and France for many years is being put on official basis, which will serve as a new impetus for the development of this cooperation. Molecular physics, chemistry,



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mathematics, humanitarian and social sciences have been mentioned to be of great interest for the two sides.

National center of scientific researches is a state scientific research establishment which functions under the sponsorship of French Ministry of highest education and science. In 2008 the budget of the center reached 3.277 billion Euro. The activity of the center involves all the spheres of science and technologies. The center annually hosts 5 000 foreign scientists in its different laboratories, signed 85 cooperation agreements with 60 countries of the world including Russia, Belarus, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. At the same time after Russia and Belarus, France is the third country with which Armenia signed such an agreement.

## 10. RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY RECONFIRMS THAT IN 2008 RUSSIA PROVIDED NO WEAPON AND MILITARY TECHNOLOGY TO ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 01/22/09]

Russian Defense Ministry did not transfer and nor did it sell weapon and military technology to the Armenian side according to the list and quantity published by a number of mass media.

According to the press service of Russian Foreign Ministry, this note was handed on Wednesday to the consultant-delegate of Azerbaijan in Moscow Bakhish Zeynalov.

The note says that the publication is a disinformation, carries an obvious anti-Russian character and does not contribute to positive development of Russian-Azerbaijani friendly relations.

The Russian side finds that the issue has been settled and assures that in case of any problems the sides will not make any hasty conclusions or steps, but will dissipate the doubts jointly.

## 11. SERZH SARGSYAN MEETS WITH NEWLY-APPOINTED MEMBERS OF CASSATION COURT [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/22/09]

Each member of the Cassation Court, a body working by the mechanism of collegiate decision making, should have a sense of responsibility for every decision made. The Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan stated this at the January 21 meeting with the newly-appointed members of the Cassation Court. He pointed out that "a collegiate decision does not mean less personal responsibility".

In the president's words, the Cassation Court will play a significant role at the current stage of reforms made in the legal system and the development of the country. "If we succeed in forming really independent and impartial judicial bodies and an adequate court practice, we will succeed in becoming a normal, developed and democratic country," he said.

According to the RA presidential press service, the meeting participants discussed issues related to increasing the role of courts and efficient administration of justice, as well as measures aimed at raising public trust in judicial authorities.

## 12. ARMENIA TO PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSION OF DEPUTY MINISTERS IN TURKEY IN LATE JANUARY [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/22/09]

Armenia will participate in the discussion of deputy ministers to be held in Turkey in late January. The issue of Turkey's proposed Caucasus Security Alliance will be the subject of the discussion, Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian announced at the January 21 press conference.

Speaking about Armenian-Turkish relations, he shared Turkish foreign minister Ali Babacan's idea that Armenia and Turkey have come quite close to regulating their relations, adding: "if Turkey, like Armenia, agrees to open the border and establish diplomatic relations without any preconditions". In the words of E. Nalbandian, this is what Armenia expects from Turkey. He noted that today many in Turkey are concerned about Armenian-Turkish relations.

In response to reporters' question about what price Armenia is prepared to pay for regulation of Armenian-Turkish relations, E. Nalbandian replied that there is no such price and no such question should be put. At the same time he said that it is out of the question that Armenia should call on Diasporan structures to stop pursuing their goal of the Armenian Genocide's recognition. According to E. Nalbandian, although this problem does exist in relations of the two countries, it should be overcome, and the "bitter page of the past should be turned over" by recognizing rather than forgetting it.



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## 13. HMAK HOVHANNISIAN: SOCIETY'S INTERNAL SPLIT IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN BEING DEPRIVED OF VOTE IN PACE [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/22/09]

"The prospect of being deprived of the vote in PACE is indeed serious, but country's internal split is more dangerous," Hmayak Hovhannisian, the Chairman of the Union of Political Scientists of Armenia, said at the January 22 press conference. According to him, today Karabakh is no longer a supreme moral value for all Armenians as it was in 1988. "At that time Karabakh could not be a target of criticism: even the worst and most dubious views of Karabakh residents were perceived with tolerance in Armenia," the political scientist reminded. While at present, according to him, opinions are voiced in the opposition sphere that the Nagorno Karabakh settlement should be left to the Karabakh residents.

The way out of the formed situation, as H. Hovhannisian stated, is holding of special parliamentary elections. According to him, the people should be given a possibility to express its political position, as indeed the people is the third force of the home political sphere. H. Hovhannisian added that it is very important to disclose and to call for liability those indeed guilty of the March 1 murders to weaken the current tension. He drew parallels between the March 1 and 1999 October 27 crimes emphasizing that after the incident of "27" the immediate executors of the crime at least appeared before the court. Touching upon opinions on Council of Europe's using double standards to Armenia and Azerbaijan, H. Hovhannisian said that such standards should be used. He explained it by saying that Armenia is the first Christian state, to which democratic values should be peculiar. And Azerbaijan and other Mohammedan countries, as he classed it, hardly perceive those values, and the approaches to them can be milder. "Privileges are always given to a disabled, a weak," H. Hovhannisian said.

## 14. VAHAGN KHACHATRIAN: THERE ARE GROUNDS TO DEPRIVE ARMENIAN DELEGATION IN PACE OF VOTE [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/22/09]

European structures also have their share of guilt for the March 1 tragic events, who classed all state rigged elections of the past ten years as "corresponding to international standards." Vahagn Khachatrian, a member of the Alternative public-political initiative and the Armenian National Congress (ANC), expressed such an opinion at the January 22 press conference. According to him, only ten months later Council of Europe admitted that those imprisoned on the March 1 case are political prisoners.

According to V. Khachatrian's observation, since joining Council of Europe Armenia has not been properly fulfilling its commitments towards that structure, and there are grounds to deprive the Armenian delegation of the vote in PACE. "I consider that Armenia should be punished, RA should be deprived of the vote, as the term given for the authorities to improve the situation has expired," he said.

On the other hand, as V. Khachatrian added, if the above mentioned sanction is used it is possible that Armenia's authorities strengthen violence to the opposition, prohibit holding of any gatherings, arrest a greater number of activists. Depriving of the vote, according to V. Khachatrian, will also weaken Armenia's positions in the Nagorno Karabakh negotiations process. Answering the question of whether Council of Europe uses double standards to Armenia and does not make the same demands to Azerbaijan, the Alternative's representative said: "The Aliyev-Saakashvili-Serzh Sargsyan regimes indeed are like each other, but we have surpassed the limit: there were ten victims on March 1."

## 15. RA PRESIDENT HIGHLY EVALUATES RAPA'S HISTORIC ROLE [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/22/09]

During the January 22 meeting with RA President Serzh Sargsyan, Central Board Chairman of the Ramkavar-Azatakan Party of Armenia Mike Kharabian informed him about party's activity in Armenia and Diaspora and about it plans for the future.

S. Sargsyan highly evaluated traditional party's historic role and great contribution to preservation of Armenian identity, pursuing the Armenian Cause, and strengthening the Armenia-Diaspora contacts. He said that joining of efforts of Armenians throughout the world and its various structures is an important guarantee for solution of problems of national importance and implementation of ambitious initiatives.

According to the report provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA President's Press Office, issues regarding organization of pro-Armenian agitation abroad, deepening Armenia-Diaspora contacts, Armenian-Turkish dialogue, as well party's activity in Armenia were discussed during the meeting.

## BUSINESS



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## 16. PROCREDIT BANK ARMENIA OPENS ITS 5TH BRANCH IN COUNTRY [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

ProCredit Bank has opened its new - 5th branch located at the Citadel Business Center, 1st floor (105/1 Terian Street, Yerevan). The first branch of the bank opened in the city of Vanadzor (Lori marz) in July 2008.

ProCredit Bank Armenia started operating on February 5, 2008. It is a bank with 100% foreign capital and provides a comprehensive package of banking and financial services. Its activities are aimed at crediting small and medium business. Another direction of ProCredit Bank's activities is to contribute to the formation of savings culture in the society.

ProCredit Bank Armenia is a member of ProCredit group which is composed of 22 financial structures operating in Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America whose activities are headed and controlled by Frankfurt-based ProCredit Holding AG.

The founders of ProCredit Bank Armenia are ProCredit Holding AG that owns 67.49% of shares, KfW Bank (Germany) with 15.84% of shares and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) with 16.67% of shares.

ProCredit Bank Armenia currently has over 4 thousand customers, including users of savings services, as well as a credit portfolio of about 24 million USD and a deposit portfolio of more than 8 million USD.

## 17. ACCORDING TO CBA, THIS YEAR ARMENIA'S GDP TO GROW BY 7-8%, INFLATION TO MAKE ABOUT 4% [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

This year Armenia's GDP will grow by 7-8%, while inflation will make about 4%. Announcing these forecasts of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) at the January 20 press conference, the CBA Chairman Arthur Javadian at the same time said that the deflationary pressures are quite great and may affect the economic growth of the country. He assured those present that the government will take a number of large-scale measures in this direction.

A. Javadian said that Armenia's currency policy will not undergo any changes, and the CBA will continue its policy of "floating" exchange rates. In his words, taking into account the not very much favorable situation in the international financial market and the global financial crisis, today it is extremely important to maintain the stability of Armenia's financial system. The intervention of the CBA in the currency market is conditioned by this fact. This intervention will be temporary, but it is still unclear how long it will last.

A. Javadian denied the rumors that the CBA allegedly sold about 100 million dollars in January. Advising citizens to keep their savings in the national currency, he noted that the Armenian commercial banks establish higher interest rates for deposits in Armenian drams than for those in foreign currency.

## 18. ARMENIA IS MORE SECURE THAN MANY EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF ENERGY SECURITY [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

In the opinion of the director general of ArmRusgazprom CJSC Karen Karapetian, today Armenia is much more secure in terms of energy security than many European countries, even though the import of gas and other power-bearing substances seemed to be much more diversified there than in Armenia.

According to information posted on the company's website on January 20, K. Karapetian, who recently took part in the Moscow international conference on gas problems, expressed satisfaction at the fact that Armenia's steps for solving the energy security problem have been efficient.

He said that despite hard conditions, the Armenian specialists have succeeded in achieving a high level of gas supply network installation and winning international recognition in this sphere. 93% of Armenia has been provided with gas supply networks by now, and by this index the country is among the top three countries in the world and in first place in the CIS since 2006. Armenia is also in first place in the world among countries with no own gas reserves where the maximum level of gas supply network installation is 40%.

Armenia has made great progress in construction of the domestic security system. In the words of K. Karapetian, the experts say that the launched process of servicing the house system in Armenia is unique as it is envisaged installing automatic switches in every apartment. This year such switches will be installed in apartments of 250 thousand users, which will reduce the probability of serious accidents to a



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minimum. According to K. Karapetian, the heads of gas supplying companies of a number of CIS states will visit Armenia soon in order to examine this experience of Armenian experts and to introduce it in their countries.

## 19. 5,407 LICENCES GRANTED BY SIMPLE PROCEDURE IN ARMENIA AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009 [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

The RA ministry of finance granted 78 licences by simple procedure in 2008, including 4 licences for apple and fruit wine making; 1 veterinary licence; 28 licences for customs intermediary activity; 20 licences for production, import or trade in pyrotechnic products; 5 licences for production of distilled alcoholic drinks (except for liqueurs under 220870 cipher of the classifier "The nominal list of commodities of external economic activity" and other alcoholic drinks under cipher 220890 that contain up to 9% spirits) and production of ethyl spirit from fermentation substances; 7 licences for production of alcoholic drinks under cipher 2208 of the classifier "The nominal list of commodities of external economic activity" that are made of only fruit and berries (except grapes) and contain 40% and over spirits; and 6 licences for trade, import, export and transportation of cut or rough, but not set, natural diamonds under the ciphers 710210000, 710221000, 710231000 of the classifier "The nominal list of commodities of external economic activity".

The commission giving conclusions for suspension or cancelation of licences granted by simple procedure held 24 sittings last year, during which 40 licences were recognized as invalid. State duties of 643,193,130 drams (about 2 mln 75 thousand USD) were collected from the sector in 2008.

As NT was informed by the press service of the RA ministry of finance and economy, 5,407 licences by simple procedure were granted by January 1, 2009.

## 20. CBA BOARD CONSIDERS IT EXPEDIENT TO REDUCE GRADUALLY INTEREST RATES [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

At the January 13 sitting, the Board of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) made a decision to reduce the CBA refinancing rate by 0.25% to 7%. The interest rates of attracted deposits and lombard credits were established at 4% and 10% respectively.

The decision was made based on the situation report, which assessed, by using new information, the forecasts about the current situation, the risks and the new macroeconomic forecasts as well the possible risks related to these forecasts. The situation report also contained new results received by using the CBA quarterly forecast model, and these results continue bearing evidence of the tendencies to a deepening deflation environment.

The CBA PR Service reported that only 0.1% inflation was recorded in December on November 2008, as a result of which the 12-month inflation fell by 1.4 percentage points and made 5.2%, ensuring the target level of inflation. The fall in inflation rates was mainly conditioned by the continuous fall of prices in international markets of goods and raw materials because of the global recession and became apparent in domestic markets of these goods as well. Following the fall in November, a 15% fall in diesel fuel prices and a 3.5% fall in gasoline prices was recorded in Armenia in December. On the whole, the inflation recorded based on the results of the year was due to a growth in prices of food commodities (including alcoholic drinks and cigarettes) - 3.3%, nonfood commodities - 0.2% and a growth in tariffs of services - 11.4%.

The members of the CBA Board agreed that the external inflation pressures continued to weaken due to the tendencies to a decline in global economic growth rates and became apparent in the domestic markets of food and nonfood commodities, resulting in a considerable fall in overall inflation rates. In the opinion of the CBA Board, although the uncertainty of foreign and domestic economic developments has increased, the clarifications to the forecasts on economic growth in foreign countries, especially Armenia's trade partners, show that the external deflation environment continues to remain. Under these conditions it is expected that in mid 2009 inflation will form in the lower part of the target interval.

The CBA Board discussed the risks concerning a fall or growth of forecast inflation. As a result, the risks towards a decline were considered as prevailing in the overall balance of risks.

The Board also discussed in detail the possible impact of consequences of the global economic crisis on domestic economic developments in 2009. It was mentioned that the prospects of external demand continue to become worse, which will have its impact, especially on the export sector of domestic economy, leading to further decline in production volumes in the exporting branches. The impact of the global economic crisis will also be seen in construction because of declining inflow of financial resources



from abroad and the delay in financing of some investment programs. The slowing rates of inflow in the form of noncommercial transfers will be conditioned by Russian economy's capacities to overcome the consequences of the economic crisis. At the same time, it was mentioned that the forecast domestic economic developments will depend very much on the scale and directions of the additional economic programs that the government plans to implement.

Underlining the importance of the situation that has formed in conditions of the global financial and economic crisis, the members of the CBA Board focused on two possible scenarios of mitigating the monetary and credit conditions: 0.25% and 0.5% reduction of the refinancing rate. In this connection the Board has repeatedly stressed the necessity of conducting such a monetary and credit policy that will allow to combine efficiently the tasks of ensuring price stability and financial stability. There were arguments that the current interest rates continue being attractive for capital inflow. At the same time, a sharp reduction of interest rates at this moment is likely not to have desirable consequences for interest rates of the interbank market, therefore for the monetary and credit transfer chain. The Board attached great importance to an increase of credits for implementation of measures and to improvement of credit accessibility. On the other hand the continuous fall in inflation rates and the existence of risks towards a fall was put forward as the main argument for sharper reduction in interest rates. As a result, the CBA Board considered the version of gradually reducing the interest rates as most well-founded.

## 21. ARMENIAN UNION OF MANUFACTURERS AND BUSINESSMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL FORUM REFERRING TO THE ISSUES OF MIGRATION AND ANTI-TRAFFICKING [ARMENPRESS, 01/23/09]

Armenian Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen will participate February 18-20 in an international forum referring to the issues of migration and anti-trafficking.

The director of the union Gagik Makaryan told Armenpress that during the forum issues referring to migration and trafficking issues will be discussed, representatives of the countries will refer to the experience of each other.

"During the forum mechanisms will be developed towards regulating the issues and effective fighting against illegal activities," G. Makaryan said. Representatives of 11 countries will participate in the forum - from Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia and Eastern Europe.

The union will also participate in the "Bridge 2009" sixth international economic conference where political scientists, representatives of legislative and executive bodies, manufacturers and businessmen, scientists and public figures will take part. The topic of the conference is "Prospects of International Economic Cooperation – Issues and Solutions".

In the period from May to October the union expects business unions with Ukraine, Belarus as well as Italy. G. Makaryan underscored the organization of such forums, noting that this is another occasion to present Armenia's products as well as establish new business ties.

## 22. FROM JANUARY 24 NATURAL PERSONS ABLE TO APPLY TO FREE SERVICE OF FINANCIAL CONCILIATOR'S OFFICE WITH THEIR FINANCIAL COMPLAINTS [ARMENPRESS, 01/23/09]

From January 24 the financial mediator's office will start to function in Armenia, and the mediator will handle the implementation of his professional activity.

Starting from tomorrow in case of problems and complaints which were failed to be solved with a given financial organization, the consumer which is a natural person may address his applications and complaints to the mediator via 52-26-97 phone number or through hashtarak@yahoo.com e-mail.

During today's press conference over presentation of the activity of the institution in details, head of the Armenian Central Bank Arthur Javadian told journalists that the mentioned institution has been established according to the Armenian law "On Financial Mediator", with which self-dependency of the financial mediator is ensured.

Establishment of the financial mediator's office aims at providing financial services, adoption and study of complaints of the consumers as well as at settlement of the disputes between financial institutions and consumers.

A. Javadian characterized the step as a great progress in the Armenian financial life. According to him such offices mainly function in developed countries.

Armenia is the first CIS country in which the office of mediator of the financial system has been implemented, which will function according to internationally adopted principles.



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For consumers the services of the office will be exceptionally free. Consumers may present their application-complaints to the mediator only after a failure to come to conciliation with the financial institution.

In case the consumers do not agree with the decision of the mediator, they may defend the case in the court, but this is not permitted to financial institutions, that's to say they are obliged to obey the decision made by the mediator.

Expenditures of the activity of the financial mediator's office will be covered exceptionally by the financial organizations. A. Javadian also expressed opinion that the financial mediator's institution will justify the hopes and the confidence of the public towards Armenian financial system will increase.

The financial mediator's office may reject the reception of application –complaints from the consumers if there is a decision of the court or an arbitration tribunal or if the case is being examined by them. The mediator's office will also not receive the complaints in case they have an obvious slanderous nature.

## 23. ARMENIA HOLDS NEGOTIATIONS WITH RUSSIA OVER INVOLVEMENT OF CREDIT OF STABILIZATION [ARMENPRESS, 01/23/09]

At present the negotiations between Armenia and Russia over getting credit of stabilization from Russia are in process. Head of the Armenian Central Bank Arthur Javadian told today journalists that the results of the negotiations will be presented when there are concrete results. He considered it early to speak about the sum of the intended money.

During the recent days Russian Finance Minister Alexey Kudrin told reporters that Armenia has officially applied to Russia with a request to provide credit of stabilization for smoothening of the consequences of world financial crisis.

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian had formerly stated that Armenia holds negotiations with the World Bank and a number of CIS countries over involvement of credits.

## 24. REVENUES OF ARMENIA'S STATE BUDGET GROW BY 19.1%, EXPENDITURES BY 24.3% IN JANUARY-NOVEMBER 2008 [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/22/09]

In January-November 2008, the RA state budgetary revenues made 695.3 billion drams (more than 2 bln 273.7 mln USD), expenditures made 673.1 bln drams, which ensured the implementation of the programmed annual indices by 90.4% and 84.7% respectively.

According to the press service of the RA ministry of finance, the state budgetary revenues grew by 19.1% or 111.6 bln drams, expenditures by 24.3% or 131.4 bln drams as compared with the same period of the previous year. The taxes and duties grew by 21.3% or 100.9 bln drams, the compulsory social security payments - by 18.4% or 14.4 bln drams, the official grants - by 93.6% or 1.7 bln drams, while other revenues (previously called "nontax revenues") declined by 17.6% or 5.4 bln drams. As a result, the share of taxes and duties in the revenues increased by 1.5%, that of official grants - by 0.2%, whereas the share of compulsory social security payments and other revenues declined by 0.1% and 1.6% respectively.

79.5% of state budgetary revenues formed from tax revenues, 2.9% - from state duties, 13.3% - from compulsory social security payments, 0.5% - official grants, and 3.7% - from other revenues. In accordance with point 18 Article 9 of the RA Law on the 2008 State Budget of the Republic of Armenia, the resources of the state institutions' off-budget funds were also included in the state budget. Their incomes amounted to over 15 billion drams in the reporting period as compared with 12.6 billion drams in the previous year.

## 25. PRIME MINISTER UNDERLINES EXISTENCE OF SERIOUS POTENTIAL IN FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR OF ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/22/09]

A consultation on problems and the development opportunities of the processing sector of food industry was conducted by the RA prime minister Tigran Sargsyan on January 21. Heads of several companies in Armenia's agricultural processing sector, representatives of interested ministries and departments took part in the discussion.

The prime minister said that the studies show there is quite serious potential in the sector so it is possible to ensure its normal development in 2009 and years to come in case of efficient joint efforts of the state and private sector. With the aim of making good progress in food industry, he attached special importance to clarification of the sector's priority directions and possible state assistance by holding joint



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discussions. The prime minister announced that the government has already made some calculations to find out how much the capacities of the operating enterprises can be increased in the sector - by commodities they produce. However, according to him, receiving direct information about the problems and proposals for development from the sector's representatives will make future decisions more realistic.

The RA minister of agriculture Aramais Grigorian presented the situation in the sector and its development opportunities. The discussion participants shared the opinion that the importers currently have greater opportunities in food industry than domestic producers (due to many factors) which is not conducive to expansion of the production.

After discussing all the problems and the proposals made by representatives of the ministry of agriculture and the private sector, the prime minister instructed the ministries of economy and agriculture and the RA State Revenue Committee to summarize them and submit a program of measures within two days.

According to the RA Government Information and PR Department, the prime minister conducted a consultation on problems of light industry the day before.

## 26. REVENUES, DUTIES AND COMPULSORY SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS OF NKR STATE BUDGET INCREASE BY 25.6% IN 2008 [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/22/09]

In 2008, revenues, duties and compulsory social security payments of the state budget of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic amounted to 17 billion 271 million drams (about 55,7 mln USD), which enabled to overfulfil the annual programmed index, the NKR president Bako Sahakian stated at the January 21 reporting back consultation of the NKR State Tax Service.

The 2008 revenues exceeded the revenues of the previous year by 3.5 billion drams or 25.6%. "And this increase was ensured in case when production volumes of Base Metals CJSC - the biggest tax payer of our republic declined because of the global crisis, as a result of which 1.6 billion drams was not transferred to the state budget," B. Sahakian said.

Thanks to the work done in order to rule out the use of double standards and different rules of game for market participants, according to the NKR president, the tax discipline as well as the quality of tax services, especially in trade, were considerably improved. At the same time he noted that the tax collection process should not become an obstacle to business activity, in particular, development of small and medium business, which can be achieved by creating equal conditions for all economic entities, which in its turn will allow entrepreneurs to develop and expand production and allocate money for solution of various social problems.

In this connection the NKR president considered it necessary to improve tax legislation and take such measures that will first of all help increase domestic and foreign investments in the economy. Special attention should be paid to correct organization of control aimed at revealing the economic entities operating in the shadow sector and making them work in a legal way.

B. Sahakian expressed satisfaction at the fact that last year 1 billion 97 million drams was transferred to the state budget as a result of collection of commercial tax, which ensured fulfilment of the programmed index by 163.8%, exceeding the 2007 index more than twofold.

B. Sahakian underlined the necessity to simplify tax administration, reduce the red tape, make the changes as accessible to economic entities as possible, and to establish normal partnership relations with them.

In this connection he pointed out the importance of a correct manpower policy based on skills and high human qualities of workers. In his words, a persistent struggle against abuses and other vicious phenomena existing in the system should be waged, without which it is impossible to carry out the envisaged tasks.

## SOCIAL

## 27. ARA VARTANIAN APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HAYASTAN ALL-ARMENIAN FUND [Azg, 01/23/09]

Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's public relations department announced that yesterday Chairman of the Fund's Board of Trustees Serzh Sargsyan signed yesterday the decision of the Fund's presidium to appoint Ara Vartanian Executive Director of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund.

Ara Vartanian has been working in the Fund since 2004. At first he was the Head of the Foreign Relations Department, then the Deputy Director. In June 2008, he was appointed acting executive director of the Fund.



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Vartanian received secondary education in USA, his MA degree at the Yerevan State Linguistic University. He is political scientist and a specialist of English language. He has participated in training courses in economy in different countries of the world. In 2000-2004 worked at the Trade and Industry Ministry of the Republic of Armenia, the department of cooperation with World Trade Organization and the European Union.

## 28. HAYASTAN ALL ARMENIAN FUND COMPLETES PROGRAM OF CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WATER PIPELINE IN VILLAGE OF APAVEN, LORI REGION [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 01/21/09]

The start of the new year was marked for the village of Apaven, Lori region, by operation of a new water pipeline. The program was implemented with the sponsorship of Hayastan All Armenian Fund's Montreal local structure. As Noyan Tapan was informed by the Hayastan All Armenian Fund, the water pipeline construction cost over 32m drams (nearly 103 thousand USD).

Now drinking water reaches the village from the newly built reservoir by an external line 620 meters long, and a water supply internal network with the total length of 1200 meters was built next to it. Thanks to this water pipeline pure mountain spring water already flows from each house tap.

According to Ara Vardanian, the Acting Executive Director of the Hayastan All Armenian Fund, when implementing programs in any village the Fund gives priority to solution of the most important problem of the given community, the regular proof of which is the construction of Apaven's water pipeline.

## 29. 2008-2009 SCHOOLYEAR PUPILS' SUBJECT OLYMPIAD'S SCHEDULE APPROVED [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

Under the January 21 order of the RA Minister of Education and Science the staff of the organizing committee and subject committees chairmen of 2008-2009 schoolyear pupils' subject Olympiads, republican stages schedule, and the number of republican stages participants was approved. Pupils' subject Olympiads are organized in 14 subjects, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Informatics, Armenian Language, History, German Language, English Language, French Language, Russian Language, Geography, Astronomy, Armenian Literature.

According to Ministry's Press Service, the Olympiad has 4 stages: school, territorial, regional, and republican. The regional stage will be held between March 1 to 10, and the republican between March 20 to April 25.

## 30. THIS YEAR'S EXCAVATIONS OF TIGRANAKERT IN ARTSAKH TO BE CONDUCTED IN JUNE-AUGUST [ARMENPRESS, 01/22/09]

This year's excavations of Tigranakert which is in Artsakh territory will be conducted during June-August months.

Head of the Artsakh archeological expedition of the Institute of Ethnography and Archaeology of Armenian National Academy of Science Hamlet Petrosian told Armenpress that with this aim the Karabakh authorities have provided 35 million drams instead of last year's 30 million.

This year the excavations of gates of the town and the basilica church are intended to be continued. A necessity has also arisen to restore the appearance of the town and the archeological materials which discover the chronology, but no financing has been provided in this direction yet.

As a result of the works conducted last year the main part of the remains from the citadel gates including the 9 meter tower which was built in Roman architectural style have been opened.

The mausoleum field has also been excavated which is the largest one in our region. The protocols in different languages which have been discovered in Tigranakert territory, made the specialists think that it was a multi-national town.

From a number of towns established after Tigran Mets only the place of Tigranakert in Artsakh has been archeologically proved. The excavations of the town started 3 years ago.

## 31. LAST YEAR 454 VIOLATIONS DISCOVERED IN THE SPHERE OF PROTECTION OF THE ATMOSPHERIC AIR [ARMENPRESS, 01/22/09]

The State Nature Protection Inspection of the Armenian Nature Protection Ministry during the oversights in 1123 enterprises of the country in 2008 has discovered and registered 454 cases of violation of protection of the atmospheric air (in 2007 – 353 cases) for which administrative fine has been



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applied against 150 people. The gathered 15 million drams have entered the state budget. In parallel, 44 protocols of compensation of the damage of 8.1 million drams have been formed.

An official from the office of the inspection told Armenpress that during the mentioned period studies have been conducted in the 141 gas filling stations of the country. As a result 56 administrative fines have been applied and 5.9 million drams have been gathered.

The above mentioned institutions have been tasked to be examined to find out their impact on the environment.

## 32. FIGHT AGAINST WOLVES IN KAPAN VILLAGES STARTS [ARMENPRESS, 01/22/09]

In the villages of Kapan region fight has kicked off against wolves which trouble the residents of the region. During the latest years the number of the predators in "Shikahogh" state reserve has considerably increased and for getting food at night they attack in packs the cattle of nearest Shikahogh, Chkaten, Nerkin Hand villages and attack the domestic animals.

Head of the Nature protection inspection of the Armenian Nature Protection Ministry Levon Petrosian told Armenpress that a group of hunters and policemen started the hunting of wolves near the villages.

The process will continue by the end of March. The hunting is conducted by the members of the hunters' union. In this issue the villagers also support the hunters by setting traps near the entrances to the cattle.

## 33. SCHEME OF DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL HYDRO-ELECTRIC STATIONS IN ARMENIA APPROVED [ARMENPRESS, 01/22/09]

During today's session the Armenian government approved the scheme of development of small hydro-electric stations (SHES) in Armenia. During the session Armenian Energy and Natural Resources Minister Armen Movsisian noted that with the scheme the opportunities of construction of SHESs in Armenia, resources, most efficient places of providing of areas and other issues are presented.

The scheme must be taken into consideration during providing permissions of water usage necessary for the construction of SHESs.

The Minister said that it is intended that the approval of the decision will contribute to the development of hydro-energy in the republic, additional conditions will be created for more efficient usage of the existing hydro-potential and the construction of economically profitable SHESs will be promoted. The approval of the scheme is important in respect that the most part of the hydro potential of the country is not used at present.

The graphic materials of 438 pages, summed up results of technical-economic calculations, hydrological and other information concerning to this decision will be placed in the official web site of Armenian Energy and Natural Resources Ministry and will be available for all the investors.

## 34. NOVEMBER 4 TO BE MARKED AS A DAY OF SOCIAL WORKER IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 01/22/09]

In Armenia November 4 will be marked as a day of social worker. The decision has been made during today's session of the Armenian government. According to Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Minister Arsen Hambartsumian, the decision is conditioned by the necessity to emphasize the importance of the role of the social worker.

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian congratulated nearly 4 000 social workers of the country on this decision.

## 35. ARCHEOLOGICAL MATERIALS DISCOVERED DURING EXCAVATIONS IN THE LIBERATED TERRITORIES TO BE EXHIBITED IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH [ARMENPRESS, 01/23/09]

With the initiative of Artsakh archeological expedition of the Institute of Ethnography and Archaeology of Armenian National Academy of Science and Armenian Culture Ministry an exhibition of archeological materials found during the excavations in the liberated territories, particularly in Shoushi, Handaberd and Tigranakert is expected to open February 20 in Yerevan.

Head of the expedition Hamlet Petrosian told Armenpress that after being held in Yerevan, the exhibition is intended to be moved to Stepanakert and therefore a traveling exhibition will be organized in the provinces of the country.



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The exhibition will be financed by the Armenian Culture Ministry.

## 36. PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION OF NEW WATER AND SEWAGE PIPELINES IN SHIRAK PROVINCE TO CONTINUE IN 2009 [ARMENPRESS, 01/23/09]

Process of construction of new water and sewage pipelines in Shirak province will continue in 2009, within the frameworks of the credit program of German KFW bank. In the province the program kicked off from 2002. The main works of improvement of the sphere started from 2008, which was considered the end of the first round of three-staged program.

Within the frameworks of the program the technical upgrading and reconstruction works of the building of "Shirakwatersewage" company have already been conducted.

With the second round of the program renovation works of the water supply network of Gyumri and 53 communities of Shirak province are intended.

Assistant to the head of "Shirakwatersewage" company Stepan Petrosian told Armenpress that the program will finish in 2022. The responsible for the sphere assure that by 2022 the province will have a 24 hour water supply.

## 37. INTERNATIONAL VISHEGRAD FUND PROVIDES SCHOLARSHIP TO ARMENIAN STUDENTS [ARMENPRESS, 01/23/09]

International Vishegrad fund provided scholarship to the Armenian students for 2009-2010 academic year. The applicants can get education in the accredited universities of Vishegrad countries – Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

Public relations department of Armenian Education and Science Ministry told Armenpress that within the frameworks of 1 million 884,000 euros the fund also provides grant places for a number of students from Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine and Serbia.

The grant places are provided for magistracy of 1-4 semesters and 1-2 semesters of post-graduate education. The Armenian applicants may apply by January 31.

## 38. CONSULTATION WITH PARTICIPATION OF RUSSIAN PARTNERS HELD AT RA MINISTRY OF DIASPORA [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/22/09]

A consultation with the participation of the RA minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobian, the director of the RF Foreign Ministry's Department for Work with Compatriots Living Abroad Alexander Chepurin and the Russian ambassador to Armenia Nikolay Pavlov took place at the RA Ministry of Diaspora on January 20.

Ms. Hakobian said that the RA Ministry of Diaspora functions under the general direction of Armenian president and conducts executive power's state policy on promotion of Diaspora-Armenia relations. She presented the programs implemented by this newly-created ministry, as well as programs to be implemented in scientific, legal, organizational and financial spheres.

A. Chepurin in his turn presented in detail Russia's policy with respect to compatriots living abroad. In particular, he said that a coordinating body - a governmental commission for issues of compatriots living abroad was set up in 1999. Its main goals are to support the compatriots who live in other countries, protect their rights and freedoms, and implement programs aimed at preserving and spreading the Russian language and literature. Besides, conferences of compatriots who live abroad are held every year, and congresses of compatriots with the participation of Russian president are organized every three years.

NT was informed by the Press and PR Department of the Ministry of Diaspora that at the conclusion of the meeting the sides expressed their willingness to assist each other with implementation of programs, development of mutual links and examination of Diaspora-related problems.



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## SPORTS

### 39. ALL GAMES IN CORUS INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT'S 4TH TOUR END IN A DRAW [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

All games in the 4th tour of the International Chess Tournament being held in the city of Wijk aan Zee, Holland, ended in a draw. Gata Kamski, Sergey Karyakin, Sergey Movsisian, Teymur Rajabov, and Yan Smith have gained 2.5 points each and are in the lead. Levon Aronian shares the 6-9th places with 3 participants with 2 points each.

January 21 is announced a rest day in the tournament. In the 5th tour L. Aronian will compete with S. Movsisian.

### 40. TIGRAN KOTANJIAN AND LILIT GALOYAN LEADERS IN ARMENIAN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/21/09]

Armenian Men's and Women's Chess Championships continue in Yerevan. The leaders are Tigran Kotanjian with 6 out of 8 points and Lilit Galoyan with 4.5 out of 5 points.

### 41. LEVON ARONIAN CELEBRATES HIS FIRST VICTORY IN "CORUS" INTERNATIONAL CHESS TOURNAMENT [ARMENPRESS, 01/23/09]

In the fifth round of "Corus" international chess tournament Levon Aronian won grand master Sergey Movsisian representing Slovakia and with additional standards yet occupies the second place with three points. The tournament is being held in the town of Veik an See, Holland.

The leader of the tournament is Sergey Karyakin from Ukraine.

This is L. Aronian's first victory in this tournament, and according to the chess media, with this L. Aronian signals about his claim for the victory.

It is noted that the winner of this tournament during the last two years L. Aronian was not in the first place at the beginning of the tournament both times, but later he amplified his game and became the winner.

Commenting on the present performance of L. Aronian, it is noted that he plays without mistakes and the victory against S. Movsisian was a skillful implementation of position advantage.

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