



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Thursday, January 29, 2009

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### AGBU NEWS

#### 1. SERZH SARGSYAN RE-ELECTED IN THE POSITION OF CHAIRMAN OF RA CHESS FEDERATION [Azg, 01/27/09]

On January 26, RA Chess Federation held a conference to sum up the results and achievements of the 2008 and hold new elections. The conference took place at the Tigran Petrossian Chess House with the participation of 129 out of 137 deputies. Chairman of the Chess Federation, President Serzh Sargsyan joined the event closer to the end.

Before starting the conference the attendees stood up for a minute of silence in memory of Karen Asryan, our grand master, whose untimely death shocked everyone last year.

After that Deputy Chairman of the RA Chess Federation, Smbat Lputian, presented a report on the past two years of the federations' activities. He underscored the importance of popularization in the development of any sphere. Today, 42 cities of the republic have chess centers. 17 out of them have been opened within the past two years. For the past three years the Chess Federation is holding interschool chess Olympiads with participation of 16,000 school children. In the organization of these events invaluable is the contribution of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), which provided the schools with chess boards. In the past two years the RA Chess Federation has organized nine international tournaments in the republic. Courses have been organized to raise the qualifications of the chess trainers and referees.

After a 30-minute break RA President Serzh Sargsyan, who is also the Chairman of the RA Chess Federation congratulated the newly-elected members of the presidium, and handed in financial awards to several chess players, their coaches and the winners of the RA male and female chess championships.

Serzh Sargsyan was unanimously re-elected in the position of Chairman of the RA Chess Federation.

### POLITICS

#### 2. AMNESTY GRANTED TO 16 PEOPLE CONVICTED FOR PARTICIPATION IN MARCH 1 MASS DISORDERS IN YEREVAN [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 01/26/09]

On January 24, RA President Serzh Sargsyan signed a decree on granting amnesty to 16 people sentenced to 2-3 years' imprisonment for participating in the March 1 events in Yerevan, getting, selling, moving, carrying illegal arms, ammunition, explosives, as well as using violence to a power representative. These people are: Mkrtych Armenakian, Grigor Barseghian, Rafael Galyan, Vardan Gasparian, Ashot Gyurjian, Aghvan Grigorian, Armen Grigorian, Edik Grigorian, Mesrop Zakarian, Tigran Hakobian, Vahagn Hareyan, Yurik Ghukasian, Artur Margarian, Garegin Petrosian, Mher Sargsian, and Khachatur Stepanian.

As Noyan Tapan was informed by the RA President's Press Office, the decision on signing amnesty decrees was made in consideration of appeals for mercy addressed to the RA President, as well as having no previous convictions, circumstances of the criminal case, family, health, and other circumstances.

#### 3. ARMENIAN AND AZERI PRESIDENTS' NEGOTIATIONS PLANNED ON JANUARY 28 IN ZURICH [Azg, 01/26/09]

RA President Serzh Sargsyan leaves for Switzerland on a working visit on January 28 to take part in Davos World Economic Forum.

According to the report provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA President's Press Office, Armenian and Azeri Presidents' negotiations over the Nagorno Karabakh settlement are planned the same day in Zurich. It was mentioned that after S. Sargsyan's assuming RA President's post Zurich meeting is the third one between S. Sargsyan and I. Aliyev.

A number of bilateral meetings with heads of other states and representatives of international organizations are envisaged within the framework of Davos World Economic Forum.



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S. Sargsyan will also meet with the Armenian community of Switzerland.

As Noyan Tapan was informed by the RA Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department, RA Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian left for Zurich on January 26. He will meet with Azeri Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadiarov and OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs on January 27.

#### 4. PRESIDENT'S AMNESTY DECREE IS A COLLECTION OF DECEPTIONS, ANC STATES [Aravot, 01/26/09]

The Armenian National Congress (ANC) spread a report touching upon the decree RA President Serzh Sargsyan signed on Saturday, according to which amnesty was granted to 16 people. The ANC statement, in particular, read:

"The regime uses its whole arsenal of deceptions and tricks, starting absurd "circular letters" up to shameless falsehood to avoid both the demand to immediately release the political prisoners and not to be deprived of the vote in PACE. For that purpose, in particular, in the past month, the regime did its best to extort appeals for mercy from political prisoners to introduce "progress" to the Assembly. After failing this immoral plan at the last moment usurper Serzh Sargsyan made a new trick, an obvious falsehood, on January 23 signed a decree on granting amnesty to 16 convicts."

The statement authors mention a number of reasons why they consider the decree a deceit, in particular, they mention that the cases of those persons are not connected with "arms and ammunition," 2 out of 14 in their time confessed in the court that they were Serzh Sargsyan's proxies, and 1 Bargavach Hayastan (Prosperous Armenia) party member, 10 out of the rest 11 are people unknown to ANC having nothing in common with the demonstrators, who were sent by the regime to organize robberies and provocations.

According to statement's text, ANC has information, according to which one more list of "convicts granted amnesty" is being prepared, which will be published in PACE at the last moment so that PACE deputies could not check the authenticity of the facts introduced by them.

#### 5. RA NA DELEGATION IN PACE LEAVES FOR STRASBOURG [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/26/09]

RA National Assembly's delegation left for Strasbourg to take part in the PACE January 26-30 session. The delegation includes delegation head David Haroutiunian, delegation members Avet Adonts, Armen Rustamian, Grigor Margarian, Artsruni Aghajanian, Naira Zohrabian, and Hermine Naghdalian. Noyan Tapan was informed about it by the RA NA Public Relations Department.

#### 6. ARMENIAN DEFENSE MINISTER MEETS WITH YSU LEADERSHIP AND STUDENTS [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

On the occasion of the coming Day of Army, Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian visited today Yerevan State University (YSU), met with its leadership and the students and the conducted works and the future plans of the Defense Ministry.

According to Seyran Ohanian, the Defense Ministry had both successes and flaws, which must be eliminated this year. He stressed the importance of military-patriotic education and with this aim in collaboration with the Education and Science Ministry the Armenian Defense Ministry attached a regiment to all the schools of the country, where the pupils of the school will have an opportunity to get acquainted with all the details of military service.

According to S. Ohanian, 2008 was a difficult year for them: various reforms have been conducted, which were directed towards the implementation of qualitative changes. All the subdivisions of the army have been provided with necessary technical base, the medical institutions have been filled with medical equipment, etc.

"Reforms are necessary for ensuring the future development"- S. Ohanian noted.

Last year within the frameworks of CSTO and NATO two extended commander-headquarter trainings have also been conducted.

"These military trainings are necessary for the improvement of the armed forces and we will continue to cooperate with different international institutions", - the Minister assured

He also reminded about different cases of violation of the Armenian and Azerbaijani borders by Azerbaijan, and noted that the Armed forces could neutralize all the threats of the enemy.

The present people addressed different questions to the Defense Minister which mainly concerned to the intended changes in the "Law on military service", according to which all the Armenian 18 year old young people must serve in the army.



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Minister S. Ohanian said that with these changes they want to put an end to the fact that great number of young people avoid from the service for different reasons.

“The basis of the changes is that everyone serves to the country equally and do not avoid it. We think it will be more correct if a person serves in the army and then continues his education and finds a job immediately after graduating from the university. The served people are intended to be given a number of privileges during the education”, - S. Ohanian said and added that YSU administration also agrees with them in the issue of the changes. According to S. Ohanian, no final decision has yet been made and consultations with the Armenian prime minister are being held.

The Minister was suggested to create military chairs in the universities and in response to this S. Ohanian noted: “They will naturally have a positive impact but the suggestion must be examined”.

During the meeting YSU rector Aram Simonian handed a package of written suggestions to the Minister and S. Ohanian promised to discuss them with the members of the ministry.

YSU rector Aram Simonian awarded S. Ohanian with a gold medal of the university. S. Ohanian in his turn awarded A. Simonian and a number of YSU deans and heads of chairs with the medal of Armenian Defense Ministry.

## 7. ARMENIAN DM MEETS WITH FOREIGN MILITARY ATTACHES ACCREDITED IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian received today foreign military attachés accredited in Armenia.

Spokesman for the Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Shahsuvarian told Armenpress that the minister greeted the invitees and presented to them the pace of 2008 international military cooperation, as well as work carried out towards the implementation of reforms in the sphere.

In this pre-context S. Ohanian referred to the new law on “Defense” and process of review of the defense strategy.

At the end of the meeting the minister answered the questions of the military attaches.

## 8. OSCE MISSION TO CONDUCT REGULAR MONITORING OF CONTACT-LINE OF NAGORNO KARABAKH AND AZERBAIJANI ARMED FORCES JANUARY 27 [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

The OSCE mission is going to conduct a regular monitoring of the contact-line of Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijani armed forces near Talish settlement of Martakert region, NKR January 27.

NKR Foreign Affairs Ministry Information department told Armenpress that a corresponding agreement has been achieved with the NKR authorities, who expressed readiness to contribute to the monitoring conduct and guarantee the OSCE mission members' security.

From the positions of the NKR Defense Army, the monitoring will be conducted by Field Assistants of the Personal Representative of the OSCE chairman in office Peter Kee (Great Britain) and Irji Aberle (the Czech Republic).

The monitoring mission from the Karabakh side will be accompanied by representatives of the NKR Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs.

## 9. POINT ON DEPRIVING ARMENIAN DELEGATION OF THE VOTING RIGHT IN PACE WITHDRAWN FROM DRAFT OF THE NEW RESOLUTION [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

Co-rapporteurs of the PACE Monitoring Commission on Armenian issue John Prescott and Jorge Columbien presented at the yesterday's session the results of their visit to Armenia.

The head of the Armenian delegation to PACE Davit Harutyunian said that in the draft of the new resolution of the commission the point on depriving the Armenian delegation from the voting right is withdrawn.

The co-rapporteurs also registered that the Armenian authorities display political will for changing the situation. It was noted that with the decree of the Armenian president 28 convicts have been set free as well as a task group has been formed to amend the 225<sup>th</sup> and 300<sup>d</sup> articles of the Criminal code.

Chairman of the PACE Luis Maria de Puig stated yesterday that he does not think the Armenian delegation will be deprived of its voting right.

The Assembly will refer to the implementation of 1609 and 1620 resolutions by Armenia at its today's session.



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## 10. OFFICER OF "NUBARASHEN" PENITENTIARY SEVERELY REPRIMANDED [Aravot, 01/27/09]

As a result of the internal investigation into the incident that happened to prisoner Grigor Voskerchian in "Nubarashen" prison on December 23, 2008, Captain Arthur Yeghiazarian was severely reprimanded by the January 9 decree of the RA minister of justice. The website [www.hra.am](http://www.hra.am) reported that the Social Monitoring Group has received an official letter about it from the RA Ministry of Justice.

To recap, according to the Armenian National Congress, the prisoners Grigor Voskerchian, Gevorg Manukian, Armen Khurshudian and Vardges Gaspari were subjected to beating in their cells on December 23, 2008 - the day when a regular court sitting on "the case of the seven" was held.

## 11. PACE PRESIDENT DOES NOT THINK THAT ARMENIAN DELEGATION TO BE DEPRIVED OF VOTING RIGHTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

The President of the PACE Luis Maria de Puig does not think the Armenian delegation will be deprived of voting rights. He stated this on the opening day of the PACE session on January 26.

Assuming that following the latest visit of the PACE Monitoring Committee's co-rapporteurs to Armenia, the country's authorities have had some discussions on making legislative and other amendments, Luis Maria de Puig expressed a hope that these amendments will be gradually implemented by April.

Radio Liberty reported that in all likelihood the matter concerns formation of a working group at the RA National Assembly. The working group will discuss the issue of developing a draft law on making additions and amendments to the RA Criminal Code's Articles 225 and 300 (under which the political prisoners were charged).

## 12. COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS CALLS ON PACE TO DEPRIVE ARMENIA OF VOTING RIGHT [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

The Committee for Protection of Political Prisoners and Persecuted Persons in Armenia has called on the PACE to deprive the Armenian delegation of voting rights during the January plenary session.

"In Armenia, there is no parliament elected through implementation of the people's free will, and this delegation does not represent the interests of our people. The Armenian parliament today is only a body expressing the interests and acting as an appendage of the executive power that fires at its own people and has filled prisons with its political opponents," is said in the Committee's application to the PACE.

It is noted that despite Resolutions 1609 and 1620 passed by the PACE, in the past ten months the Armenian authorities have not taken any real steps to release political prisoners and create an atmosphere of tolerance in the country. "We are convinced that only your principled approaches and opinions, including the deprivation of the Armenian delegation of voting rights, will sober the Armenian authorities and contribute to a less strained atmosphere in Armenia and the rapid release of the political prisoners," the statement reads.

## 13. SAMVEL NIKOYAN SENDS OFFICIAL LETTER TO RA POLICE HEAD AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATION SERVICE [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

Samvel Nikoyan, the chairman of the RA National Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Inquiry into March 1-2 Events in Yerevan and their Reasons, has sent an official letter to Vahagn Harutyunian, the head of the group investigating this case, with a petition to organize a forensic examination at the Criminological Center of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs "in order to find out from which carabines, which have been seized in the case related to the fragments of "Cheryomukha 7" cartridges removed from the bodies of the killed and wounded persons, shots were fired". S. Nikoyan requested to inform the Committee about the results of the forensic examination.

The Committee's chairman also told NT correspondent that he has sent another letter to the head of the RA Police Alik Sargsyan with the request to present information about when the police received "Cheryomukha 7" cartridges with gas grenades (made in 1986 and 1989) used during the March 1-2 events and how many cartridges were received. S. Nikoyan also asked the RA police head to inform him whether any commission has tested the fitness of this special weapon (kept in the RA police's arsenal) for use, and if so, to present the results of this test to him.



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## 14. ESTONIA IN FAVOR OF CONTINUING KARABAKH CONFLICT SETTLEMENT PROCESS WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF OSCE MINSK GROUP [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

Receiving the Estonian ambassador to Armenia Toomas Lukk on January 26, the prime minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan attached importance to active bilateral cooperation with Estonia, as well as cooperation under the European Neighborhood Policy of the European Union. He said that the Armenian government displays interest in Estonia's advanced experience in the introduction of an electronic government system and the formation of an electronic society. Estonia has also introduced an interesting model in the financial sector: the market of securities, financial control, the activities of the central depository, etc, which T. Sargsyan considered worth studying.

The interlocutors said that the current level of Armenian-Estonian trade and economic links and the volumes of commodity turnover are unsatisfactory, noting the existence of great potential in this sector. The underlined the importance of holding business forums with the aim of identifying the indicated potential, becoming better acquainted with each other's markets, goods and demand, and strengthening business links.

According to the RA Government Press and PR Department, during the meeting the sides also discussed the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process. T. Lukk stated that his country is in favor of continuing the negotiations with the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group and rapidly finding a peaceful solution.

## 15. WORKING GROUP SET UP AT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WITH AIM OF DEVELOPING BILL ON AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS IN ARTICLES 225 AND 300 OF RA CRIMINAL CODE [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

By the January 23 order of the speaker of the RA National Assembly Hovik Abrahamian, a working group was set up with the aim of developing a bill on making amendments and additions to Article 225 (Mass Disorder) and Article 300 (Usurping State Power) of the RA Criminal Code.

The head of the working group - the chairman of the NA Standing Committee on State and Legal Issues, head of the Armenian delegation in the PACE David Harutyunian was instructed to present proposals by February 19.

The members of the NA Ad Hoc Committee on Inquiry into the March 1-2 Events in Yerevan and Their Reasons will also participate in the work of the group. As NT correspondent was informed by the chairman of the ad hoc committee Samvel Nikoyan, in its conclusion the committee will propose revising the indicated and some other articles of the Criminal Code so that "it would be impossible for the prosecution and the accused to confuse political goals with criminal ones".

## 16. GARNIK ISAGHULIAN APPOINTED RA PRESIDENT'S PLENIPOTENTIARY IN RA NA [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 01/28/09]

On January 27, RA President Serzh Sargsyan signed decrees on relieving Garnik Isaghulian of the post of RA President's Adviser and appointing him RA President's Plenipotentiary in RA National Assembly. Noyan Tapan was informed about it by RA President's Press Office.

## 17. VIGEN SARGSIAN APPOINTED DEPUTY HEAD OF RA PRESIDENT'S STAFF [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 01/28/09]

On January 27, RA President Serzh Sargsyan signed an order on relieving Vigen Sargsian of the post of RA President's Assistant. As Noyan Tapan was informed by RA President's Press Office, under S. Sargsyan's another decree of the same day V. Sargsian was appointed Deputy Head of RA President's Staff.

Vigen Sargsian was born in 1975 in Yerevan, in doctors' family. In 1996 he graduated from Saint Petersburg State Management Academy department by correspondence with the specialization of Staff Management. In 1997 he graduated from Yerevan State University International Relations Department and in 2000 received the degree of Law and Diplomacy Arts Master from Tufts University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

In 1995-98 he worked at RA National Assembly as an Assistant to the parliament Speaker and then as an Adviser. In 2000-2003 he served in RA Armed Forces as an officer holding the post of Defence Minister's referent. In 2003 he was appointed Assistant to RA President.



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He was awarded Movses Khorenatsi and Defence Ministry's Andranik Ozanian medals, he is the holder of French National Order of Merit.

He is married, has two daughters.

## 18. LUIS MARIA DE PUIG REELECTED PACE CHAIRMAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

On the day of opening of PACE winter plenary session, on January 26, Luis Maria de Puig was reelected PACE Chairman.

According to Council of Europe official website, representatives of 19 countries were elected Assembly Vice-Chairmen, only the post of the representative of Cyprus is vacant. Head of the Armenian delegation in the Assembly, Chairman of the RA National Assembly Standing Committee on State and Legal Issues, RPA member David Haroutiunian was reelected to Vice-Chairman's post from Armenia.

## 19. RA APPEAL CRIMINAL COURT KEEPS UNCHANGED SMBAT AYVAZIAN'S MEASURE OF PUNISHMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

On January 27, RA Appeal Criminal Court kept unchanged the November 19 2008 sentence of Yerevan Kentron and Nork-Marash communities' general jurisdiction court, by which Smbat Ayvazian was found guilty of committing crimes envisaged by part 4, Article 235, RA Criminal Court (getting, selling, keeping, moving or carrying illegal arms, ammunition, explosives) and by part 1, Article 316 (using violence to a power representative) and was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment and fine of 300 thousand RA drams.

According to the RA Cassation Court's Spokesperson, the appeal complaint was brought by the defenders of S. Ayvazian's interests.

## 20. PACE GIVES TIME TO ARMENIAN AUTHORITIES FOR FULFILLING ITS RESOLUTIONS' DEMANDS UNTIL SPRING SESSION [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

At the January 27 plenary session PACE with 141 votes "for," 3 "against," and 5 "abstained" adopted a resolution on fulfillment process of Resolutions N 1609 and 1620 on activity of democratic institutions in Armenia adopted by the Assembly in 2008. Thus, no use of sanctions to Armenia is envisaged and for fulfillment of the above mentioned resolutions' demands the Armenian authorities are given time until the PACE spring session.

The Assembly took into account the results of the repeated visit to Yerevan of Co-rapporteurs on Armenia George Colombier and John Prescott and the latter's opinion, according to which, there are some positive steps by the Armenian authorities in the direction of fulfilling the demands of Resolutions N 1609 and 1620. Proceeding from it the Co-rapporteurs proposed delaying the issue of depriving Armenia of the vote until the April session.

It should be mentioned point 9 of the initial variant of draft resolution on Armenia adopted at the Monitoring Committee December 17 sitting proposed Assembly suspending Armenian delegation's vote until the Armenian authorities show an exact political will in the direction of giving a solution to the problem of bringing an accusation and imprisoning people in connection with the March 1-2 events.

It should be mentioned that different opinions were voiced during the dispute at the sitting on depriving Armenia of the vote or not.

A number of delegates agreed with the Co-rapporteurs stating that they should not deprive Armenia of the vote but help it to return to the democratic path. They mentioned that after depriving Armenia of the vote the democratic situation in the country will not improve abruptly, and it is not a solution at all. In particular, representative of Russia Vyacheslav Timchenko categorically spoke against using sanctions, as according to him, the latest local self-government elections in Armenia proved that country's current authorities stand closer to the people. He even said that he knows all that not from reports by because his daughter is married to an Armenian, and he gets information about the situation from his many friends living in Armenia.

Azerbaijan's three delegates were for depriving Armenia of the vote, who in their speeches touched upon dual standards and Azeri agitation machine's traditional provisions. Representative of Armenia Naira Zohrabian replied to the Azeri side saying in her speech that everybody is well-acquainted with Azeris' such speeches, and commenting upon them is needless.

Representative of Sweden Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin was the most balanced among the delegates, who were for using sanctions. She said that the Armenian authorities were given a possibility to release all arrested people as far back as six months ago, but it has not taken place so far. She said that



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she had proposed discussing this issue as early as in October, but it did not take place and taking the opportunity, the Armenian authorities just drag out and do not fulfill Assembly's demands. Representative of Ukraine Olga Gerasimyuk in her turn said that she is against depriving Armenia of the vote, but she considers that Armenia's opposition should be given a possibility to have a wider participation in PACE's working process. She said that today the opposition has had only one possibility to spread its opinion in a written form.

## 21. MEETING BETWEEN ARMENIAN AND TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTERS EXPECTED IN DAVOS [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan does not exclude a possibility of meeting with his Armenian counterpart Edward Nalbandian within the framework of Davos World Economic Forum. According to the Ankara agency, the Turkish Foreign Minister personally stated it at the airport, before leaving for Davos. Ali Babacan also said that no meeting between RA President Serzh Sargsyan and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is planned in Davos.

It should be mentioned that RA Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian left for Zurich on January 26. He will meet with Azeri Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadiarov and OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs on January 27. And RA President Serzh Sargsyan will leave for Switzerland on a working visit on January 28 to take part in Davos World Economic Forum. A meeting between Armenian and Azeri Presidents is planned the same day.

## 22. PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN'S ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF ARMY DAY [ARMENPRESS, 01/28/09]

President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan addressed a congratulatory message on the occasion of the Army day. Presidential press service told Armenpress that the message runs as follows:

“Dear Compatriots,

I congratulate all of us on the occasion of Army Day.

Today, we are celebrating one of the greatest achievements of our independence – the Day of the Armenian Army. Seventeen years ago, when our independence was in peril, the establishment of the army became the imperative of the day. The Armenian army was formed and forged in the blazes of war and from day one it has been showing its best qualities – a boundless dedication to the Motherland, the unbending combat courage and a victorious spirit, and we because of these qualities were able to win and to reinforce our free will to live by our own values.

For us our Army is the matter of national pride, while for our adversaries it is a powerful means of deterrence and caution, the means whose power and abilities make it possible for many years now to maintain a fragile peace. We realize that we own that peace to our troops, who serve every day, who stay in their positions and in the trenches every day, to our officers and generals, to our brave sons.

Dear officers and soldiers,

Serving in the army is a great mission, but serving in a victorious army brings honor and responsibility to that mission. History has rooted a deep esteem for the Armenian army in our people and not surprisingly even for foreigners the Armenian warrior is a symbol of great courage and valor. It is for that reason that in our society the military profession is one of the most respected ones.

Armenia is concluding yet another stage of reforms in its armed forces. Our task is to have a modern, combat ready, and a constantly developing strong army, anchored on the most progressive experience and victorious traditions of the Armenian military.

Dear Compatriots,

Let us congratulate all those who have participated to our fight for freedom, who have served in our armed forces, who have made their contribution to the establishment and strengthening of our army. We remember all those who participated at the army-building mission, our brothers-in-arms and friends, who gave everything for Armenia's present and future. And we bow to the memory of each soldier and each officer who gave their lives for Armenia.

On this festive day I wish you peace and new achievements, and I wish our troops good service and success.

Long live the Republic of Armenia and long live the Armenian Army!”



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## 23. A NUMBER OF HIGH-RANKED OFFICERS AWARDED HONORABLE MEDALS OF NA AND DIPLOMAS OF GRATITUDE [ARMENPRESS, 01/28/09]

Armenian National Assembly Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan awarded a number of high-ranked officers with honorable medals and gratitude diplomas of the NA on the occasion of the Day of Army. Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan, members of parliament, high-ranked officers of the Defense Ministry were present at the ceremony.

NA public relations department told Armenpress that for increase of the level of protectiveness of the country, for active participation in the process of reforms of the Armed Forces, on the occasion of the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian army Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian, head of the General Headquarter of the Armenian Armed Forces Yuri Khachaturov, deputy defense minister, General-Lieutenant Alik Mirzabekian, deputy defense minister Ara Nazarian and head of the legal department of the Defense Ministry, Colonel Sedrak Sedrakian have been awarded honorable medals of the National Assembly.

For clear and conscientious implementation of service duties head of the department dealing with the work with the staff of the Armenian Armed Forces, General-Mayor Vardan Avetisian and Commander of the Armenian Defense Ministry's peacekeeping forces brigade, Colonel Arthur Simonian have been awarded diplomas of gratitude.

## 24. NAGORNO KARABALH REPRESENTATION IN FRANCE CREATED A WEB SITE [Azg, 01/29/09]

Nagorno Karabakh representation in France created a new web-site ([www.haut-karabagh.com](http://www.haut-karabagh.com)) which contains general information on Nagorno Karabakh as well as news about socio-political life of the country.

Press service of Nagorno Karabakh Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that Nagorno Karabakh history, economy, articles on the cultural life and the foreign policy as well as the activity of the representation of Karabakh in France and information on humanitarian programs implemented in Nagorno Karabakh found place in the new web site.

A tourism magazine is intended for those who want to visit Nagorno Karabakh.

Twice a month the web site will present materials and an informational resume on geopolitical news of the region.

Preparatory works are conducted to create suchlike web sites in Latin America, Middle East and a number of European countries.

## 25. HIGH-RANKED ARMENIAN OFFICIALS VISITED YERABLUR ON THE OCCASION OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMATION OF THE ARMENIAN ARMED FORCES [ARMENPRESS, 01/28/09]

Armenian National Assembly Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, chairman of the Constitutional Court Gagik Harutyunian, high-ranked officers headed by the Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian visited today Yerablur on the occasion of the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of Armenian Armed Forces.

The high-ranked officials put flowers on the tombs of Commander Vazgen Sargsyan, Andranik Ozanyan and a wreath on the memorial to the people who lost their lives in Artsakh war.

Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian told the reporters that he is proud today as the Armenian people have a regular army which it did not have for years. According to him, today all the Armenian people celebrate the Day of Armenian Army which is one of the important values the Armenian people acquired during their history.

"I want to congratulate our people, wish success and express gratitude to each person who contributed to the formation of today's army," S. Ohanian noted.

According to the minister, today the Armenian army is implementing its mission and is protecting the borders of Armenia and Artsakh. Currently relevant events are carried out to ensure development of the Armenian army.

"One of the most important issue in the recent year is the implementation of reforms. Certain reforms are necessary so that we may ensure the further development of the army and make it correspond to the contemporary progressive standards," Seyran Ohanian said.

"As a defense minister I have to do a long-lasting and difficult work to be able to reach all the goals which the army and the Supreme General Commander, President of Armenia forwarded," the defense minister said.



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## 26. ARMENIAN AND AZERBAIJANI PRESIDENTS MEET IN ZURICH [ARMENPRESS, 01/28/09]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan met today with his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev in Zurich "Radisson" hotel. OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs and personal representative of the OSCE chairman-in-office Andrzej Kasprzyk participated in the beginning of the meeting, after which the two presidents continued the negotiations face-to-face, afterwards the co-chairs joined them again.

After the assumption of the office of the president of Armenia this is the third meeting between Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev.

Immediately after the meeting the President of Armenia is leaving for Davos where in the evening he will participate in the official opening of the World Economic Summit.

Within the frameworks of the summit a number of bilateral meetings with the heads of other states and representatives of international organizations are expected to take place.

Serzh Sargsyan will also meet with the Swiss Armenian community.

## 27. KARABAKH PRESIDENT CONGRATULATES NEWLY ELECTED PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA [ARMENPRESS, 01/28/09]

President of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic Bako Sahakyan sent a congratulatory letter to the newly elected Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill.

Central Information Department of the Office of the NKR President told Armenpress that the letter reads as follows:

"Your Holiness,

On behalf of the authorities and people of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic I cordially congratulate You on being elected Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

Your personal qualities and experience, knowledge and unshakeable faith create a firm foundation to carry out effectively the difficult and important mission of the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church.

I hope that under your leadership the ties between the Russian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic sister churches will further deepen and which will have a positive impact on strengthening Russian-Armenian relations.

I congratulate You once again and wish peace, happiness, robust health and success in all Your God-pleasing undertakings."

## 28. ARMENIAN SIDE ASSESSES ZURICH MEETING AS CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE [ARMENPRESS, 01/28/09]

President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan met today in Zurich with his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that the meeting of the two presidents started with the participation of the foreign ministers of the two countries Edward Nalbandyan and Elmar Mammedyarov, OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs as well as personal representative of the OSCE chairman-in-office Andrzej Kasprzyk.

Afterwards the two presidents continued the negotiations face-to-face. After the one-hour private conversation the negotiations again continued in an extended format.

The Armenian side assessed the results of the Zurich meeting as constructive and positive. During the meeting the sides presented their viewpoints connected with the current round of the negotiation process. As a result of the negotiations the presidents of the two countries assigned their foreign ministers to continue the process of negotiations in cooperation with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs. The presidents expressed wish that the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs continue works directed towards agreeing the approaches of the parties. An agreement has been reached over the coming visit of the co-chairs to the region.

After the end of the negotiations President Serzh Sargsyan left for Davos where he will participate in the opening of the World Economic Summit.



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## 29. TURKISH FM SAYS 2009 MAY BECOME TURNING YEAR IN ARMENIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 01/28/09]

Before leaving for Davos in an interview to Turkish CNN-Turk TV channel Foreign Minister of Turkey Ali Babacan said that the 2009 may become a turning year for the Armenian-Turkish relations.

"I will not be surprised if in the current year we solve issues with Armenia. It will be enough if the sides till the end maintain their political will. Currently the Turkish side has that will. We see it in the Armenian side as well. But the most important thing is to continue the process and bring it to a final point," he pointed out.

## **BUSINESS**

## 30. ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER VISITS GOLD MARKET OWNED BY "VAGHARSH & SONS" LTD [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/26/09]

Armenian prime minister Tigran Sargsyan accompanied by the ministers of economy, finance, labor and social issues, the chairman of the RA State Revenue Committee and a number of other state officials on January 24 visited the gold market owned by "Vagharsh & Sons" Ltd on Yerevan's Khorenatsi Street to become acquainted with the market employees' working conditions and difficulties which these people had repeatedly expressed during their protests organized in front of the government building.

During talks held with numerous employees of the market, it became clear that even elementary conditions are not ensured for employees who have a lot of problems related to hygiene and sanitary, health safety and fire protection which is a gross violation of the law. There is also a problem of cash registers: they are absent in many trade stalls. Employees also complained about the large amount of monthly payment for their work in the market. The minimum monthly payment for a stall makes 70 thousand drams, including 18 thousand drams - allegedly a state tax, 5 thousand drams to the Pension Fund, the rest are payments to the market organizers for the lease of a stall, accounting and other services.

In response to market employees' questions, it was explained that the latest legislative amendments related to fairs are aimed at reducing the tax burden of employees and shifting it to the organizers of markets and fairs. The organizer of a market is obliged to purchase cash registers and install them at a stall at his own expense, as well as to ensure working conditions envisaged by law.

According to the RA Government Information and PR Department, the prime minister conducted a consultation to sum up the results of the indicated visit and propose solutions to these problems. The chairman of the State Revenue Committee was instructed to prepare an analysis of the financial results of the activities of the gold market owned by "Vagharsh & Sons" Ltd, its rents and tax liabilities and to present this information to the prime minister as soon as possible.

The Labor Inspection of the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues was instructed to conduct checks in the gold market to reveal violations of working conditions and take respective measures. The Ministry of Emergency Situations will examine the state of meeting technical and fire prevention demands and take the necessary measures.

As a result of all this, as the prime minister underlined, favorable conditions should be created for all employees of markets and fairs in terms of improving their financial-economic and working conditions.

## 31. FINANCE MINISTER OF ARMENIA MEETS WITH WORLD BANK DELEGATION [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/26/09]

The minister of finance of the RA Tigran Davtian on January 26 met with the delegation of the World Bank. The delegation was headed by the WB Vice President Shigeo Katsu and composed of the WB Regional Director for South Caucasus Donna Dowsett Coirolo, the WB Yerevan Office Director Aristomene Varudakis and the newly-appointed Regional Director Asad Alam.

NT was informed by the Information and PR Department of the RA Finance Ministry that during the meeting the sides discussed the programs to be implemented and resources to be provided in the next four years under the World Bank's Country Partnership Strategy. They also addressed the macroeconomic situation in Armenia, problems related to the global financial and economic crisis and other issues.



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## 32. RESULTS OF THE TENDER FOR THE HEAD OF THE ALL-ARMENIAN BANK BEING SUMMED UP [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

The All-Armenian bank will start to function during the upcoming months. At present results of the tender for the head of this financial institution are being summed up.

Head of the Armenian Central Bank Arthur Javadian told Armenpress that the numerous applications received during the tender which was held from November 15 - January 15, are currently being discussed. Selection of the head of the bank will be followed by formation of its administration and the institution will be filled with corresponding experts.

The administration must work out a business program of development of the bank as well as undertake steps of cooperation with private investors. When the bank reaches the size of its charter capital, it will be licensed by the Armenian Central Bank.

According to A. Javadian, one of the main goals of establishment of the All-Armenian bank is the financing and support to the pan-Armenian programs which are recognized primary for the Republic of Armenia and are involved in the long-time prospective programs of the Armenian government.

After the round of formation of the Bank these programs will be financed.

The law on establishment of the all-Armenian bank was signed at the end of 2008.

## 33. 40% OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE 2008 RE-QUALIFICATION COURSES IN SYUNIK HAVE JOBS [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

In 2008, 114 unemployed residents of Syunik province took part in the re-qualification courses organized by the Armenian government for becoming competitive in the labor market.

The participants got specializations of hairdresser, waiter, accountant, cook, etc. Eight of them are handicapped people.

Head of the Kapan provincial center of employment Ruben Poghosian told Armenpress that 40% of participants of the re-qualification courses have found a job.

With the efforts of the center additional 16 citizens have found jobs within the frameworks of "Partial compensation of the salary" program of the government.

## 34. ARMENIAN ECONOMY MINISTER RECEIVES REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WB [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

Armenian Economy Minister Nerses Yeritsian received January 26 deputy head of the World Banks Europe and Central Asia Shigeo Katzu, newly appointed regional director Asad Alami and former regional director who ended her mission Donna Dauset-Koirolo.

Press service of the Economy Ministry told Armenpress that during the meeting the minister presented to the guests the general economic situation in the country, the existing issues and opportunities.

As a result of the meetings with the economy minister and other members of the Armenian government the programs which must be carried out in the coming four years within the frameworks of strategic partnership between the WB and Armenia as well as the amount of the provided sum expected to be received from the WB must be clarified.

## 35. INVESTMENT OF 30 BILLION 588.2 MILLION DRAMS FOR MODERNIZATION OF THE FIFTH ENERGY BLOCK OF HRAZDAN THERMO POWER PLANT [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

For construction and modernization of the unfinished fifth energy block of Hrazdan thermo power plant, this year "Armrusgasprom" company plans to make an investment of 30 billion 588.2 million drams. Within the frameworks of this sum new equipment will also be acquired.

According to 2006 agreement between Armenian government and "Gasprom" company besides acquiring the actives of the unfinished construction of the fifth energy block of Hrazdan thermo power plant, the company takes the responsibility of finishing the construction and its modernization.

Press secretary of "Armrusgasprom" company Shushan Sardarian told Armenpress that investments of nearly 180 million drams are intended to be made for the implementation of the investment round of the program, as a result of which in 2010 an electric station of modern and efficient gas-turbine will be exploited.



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According to the information of the department of investment program of development, in 2009 total investments of "Armrusgasprom" will amount to 78.6 billion drams from which more than 30 billion drams will be spent on "Hrazdan-5".

## 36. ARMENIAN VICE PRIME MINISTER RECEIVES THE WORLD BANK DELEGATION [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

Armenian vice prime minister, Territorial Administration Minister Armen Gevorgian yesterday evening received the delegation of the World Bank headed by the deputy director of WB European and Central Asian region Shigeo Kazui. The newly appointed head of the WB South Caucasian region Asad Alam, former regional director Donna Dauset-Koirolo and head of the WB Yerevan office Aristomene Varudakis were among the members of the delegation. Head of the State committee of water economy of the Territorial Administration Ministry A. Andreasian also took part in the meeting.

Public relations department of the Ministry told Armenpress that the vice prime minister thanked Mrs. Donna Dauset-Koirolo for efficient collaborative work and expressed hope that the established cooperation will continue efficiently.

"We have ambitious goals and I think efficient cooperation will be established for their implementation", - Armen Gevorgian said.

During the meeting issues connected with additional financing of water supply and sewage programs of the communities, process of drinking and irrigation programs which are financed by the WB, enhancement of abilities of Local self governmental bodies and fight against illegal woodcuttings have also been discussed.

The vice prime minister noted that the Armenian side conducts all the works in the direction of ratification of the agreement on additional financing credit to water supply and sewage programs as soon as possible.

Armen Gevorgian stressed that although water supply of Yerevan and neighboring regions has improved there are still great work to be done in drinking and irrigation water systems.

The irrigation system continues to be one of the investment targets for Armenian government.

The deputy head of WB European and Central Asian region assured that during formation of a new strategy the World Bank will also discuss this issue.

## 37. ARMENIAN ECONOMY MINISTER TAKES PART IN THE ROUND TABLE OF INVESTORS OF DEVELOPING MARKETS IN ZURICH [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

Armenian Economy Minister Nerses Yeritsian today took part in the works of the roundtable on the investors of developing markets and delivered speech during it. The roundtable has been held in the town of Zurich, Switzerland. The event will be followed by Davos world economic summit.

Public relations department of the Economy Ministry told Armenpress that more than 200 economic experts from different countries of the world, representatives of well known organizations and companies take part in the roundtable.

The theme of discussions of the roundtable is the impact of global economic crisis on the developing markets, the primary aim of organization of the event is the discovery of new ideas, suggestions and projects within the frameworks of short-time and long-time investment programs aiming at confrontation of challenges arouse as a result of the economic crisis.

## 38. CASH REGISTERS ARE BEST INSTRUMENT FOR MAKING ECONOMY CALCULABLE, TATUL MANSERIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

The economy should be made calculable, and cash registers are the best instrument for it. However, cash registers should not be imposed on economic entities by law. As economist Tatul Manaserian said at the January 26 press conference, today fairs have the largest commodity turnover, which means that cash registers should be introduced first of all there, while the owners of fairs will establish "reasonable" lease prices.

In his words, the Armenian government needs to display will and courage in order to make big business calculable as well. "Large sums are managed by big business so big business should be obliged to pay the full amount of taxes and be made calculable. And it should be done at once and not gradually," the economist said, adding that the Armenian prime minister "must visit with the same courage not only fairs and gold markets but also big businesses".



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## 39. TATUL MANASERIAN: HYPERAPPRECIATION OF DRAM HINDERS DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTION IN ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

With the aim of reducing the negative balance of Armenia's foreign trade, it is necessary to develop domestic production, to which, however, the current hyperappreciation of the Armenian dram is not conducive, the economist Tatul Manaserian stated at the January 26 press conference. "In the past 2-3 months the Armenian dram has been the currency that has appreciated most of all in the world, whereas the Russian ruble, the euro and the US dollar are at the stage of depreciation," he underlined, adding that by his calculations, the dram has appreciated by 27-30% as compared with the indicated currencies.

In the words of T. Manaserian, the dram's appreciation is the reason why the foreign trade balance has been disturbed and domestic production rates are declining. "Thus the Armenian goods are not attractive in terms of their prices not only outside but also within the country. People prefer cheaper imported goods of the same quality," he noted.

In order to overcome the current situation, according to him, the level of appreciation of the dram should be reduced gradually: "the economic and currency policies should be flexible and in line with today's conditions". "The appreciation of the national currency is a great blow to the Armenian population's purchasing capacity, especially at the current stage of the global economic crisis when the impact of the crisis will soon be felt in the Armenian economy. I think this is a serious threat to us so both the currency and economic policies need to be revised," T. Manaserian said.

It should be mentioned that by official statistics, exports from Armenia fell by 7.8% to 1 billion 69 million USD, while imports grew by 35% to 4 billion 411.7 million USD in 2008 on 2007. In 2008 the average exchange rate of a US dollar made 305.97 drams (in 2007 this index made 342.08 drams).

## 40. ARMRUSGAZPROM PLANS TO ALLOCATE 30.6 BILLION DRAMS FOR MODERNIZATION OF 5TH POWER UNIT OF HRAZDAN TPP IN 2009 [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

ArmRusgazprom CJSC plans to make investments of 78.6 billion drams in 2009, including 30.6 billion drams (about 100 million USD) for modernization of the 5th power unit of Hrazdan Thermal Power Plant (TPP).

According to the website of the company, in addition to acquiring the assets of 248.8 million USD of incomplete construction of Hrazdan TPP's 5th unit, ArmRusgazprom also assumed an obligation to complete the power unit's construction and modernize it under the agreement signed between the Armenian government and Gazprom OJSC in 2006. It is envisaged investing about 180 million USD for implementation of the project's investment stage, as a result of which a power plant with modern efficient gas turbines will be put into operation in 2010. The program is being financed through an additional issue of shares of ArmRusgazprom CJSC - for benefit of Gazprom OJSC.

## 41. NERSES YERITSIAN PARTICIPATES IN ZURICH ROUNDTABLE OF INVESTORS IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIES [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

The RA minister of economy Nerses Yeritsian made a speech at the roundtable of investors in developing economies held in Zurich on January 27. According to a press release of the Information and PR Unit of the RA Ministry of Economy, this event precedes the Davos World Economic Forum. More than 200 economists, representatives of famous companies and organizations took part in the roundtable.

The subject of the discussions was the impact of the global recession on developing markets, while the main goal of the event was to identify new ideas, proposals and projects within the framework of short-term and long-term programs for dealing with the challenges caused by the economic crisis.

## **DIASPORA**

## 42. MINISTRY OF DIASPORA READY TO ASSIST ARMENIAN COLONIES' EDUCATIONAL CENTERS [Aravot, 01/27/09]

The Armenian educational centers of the Diaspora besides giving education have a more difficult and responsible mission: they should educate the young generation living far from the homeland by the Armenian spirit. RA Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobian stated this at the January 27 online meeting with representatives of Los Angeles Armenian educational centers. She expressed Ministry's readiness to



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assist them in that difficult issue. According to H. Hakobian, virtual education is of much importance in the issue of educating Armenians in the Diaspora by the Armenian spirit. She said that the Armenian General Benevolent Union has already created a virtual college with YSU.

According to H. Hakobian, the Ministry will organize a program under the title Come Home to contribute to the important issue of preservation of Armenian identity, within the framework of which groups of 15-25-year-old Diasporan Armenian young people will visit Armenia. During the visit they will live in Armenian families, will take part in Armenian language courses, will get acquainted with historic-cultural monuments. "During the days of visits everything should be done so that those young people's abstract, imaginary homeland will become real and they return as Armenians," H. Hakobian said.

Attaching importance to more frequent organization of such meetings, the Minister said that the problems of teaching the Armenian Language, Armenian History, History of Armenian Church subjects in the Diaspora should be discussed jointly.

The issue of making more attractive the teaching of the Armenian Language subject was raised by representatives of the Armenian colonies of Diaspora. According to them, under the current high technologies for children it has become more attractive to study English than Armenian. It was mentioned that the RA Ministry of Education and Science plans also to publish the textbooks in the form of disks.

During the meeting it was proposed creating a commission of Armenian educational centers' representatives, working out and submitting programs.

## ARTS

### 43. A MONTH OF ARMENIAN CULTURE KICKS OFF IN LIMOGES [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

The month of Armenian culture kicked off January 23, in the town of Limoges, France. Press service of the Armenian Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that it started with "Armenia: a Christian country in Caucasus" exhibition in the extended hall of Limoges town library, in which authorities of Limousine regional and town councils, MPs, mayors and hundreds of representatives of the local society were present.

The opening ceremony of the month of Armenian culture started with the Armenian anthem and Komitas works performed by the young pupils of Limoges conservatory.

Member of French Parliament, Limoges first vice-mayor Mrs. Monic Bulesten and the charge d'affaires of Armenian embassy Hamlet Gasparian delivered greeting speeches.

With old and modern maps, artistic and everyday goods, archive and new photos, ancient publications and materials about new times the exhibition presents past and the present of Armenia and the everyday life of Armenians and ethnic minorities who live there.

The month of Armenian culture includes concerts of classic and modern music, recitation, shows of French art and documentary films on Armenian themes, conferences and round tables on Armenia and Armenian people. It will last until February 28. The month has been organized with the support of Limoges town authorities and with the efforts of "Caucasus-Armenia plus" NGO.

Town of Limoges which has nearly 140,000 residents, is the administrative center of Limousine region which is famous with its faience.

Though there are no Armenians in Limoges, during the last years the local society, university and student circles as well as the agrarian sector started to get interested in Armenia.

Familiarizing tours are organized, small programs in the spheres of hydro energy, animal breeding and fishing are implemented.

### 44. ARMENIAN BOOK TO BE PRESENTED IN THE INTERNATIONAL BOOK EXHIBITION IN MINSK [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

Armenian book will be presented in the international book exhibition, which will be held February 11-15 in Minsk. Head of the publication department of Publication agency of the Armenian Culture Ministry Seyranuhi Geghamian told Armenpress that nearly 100 units of books are intended to be sent to Minsk published in Armenia during the last two years.

In Minsk the pavilion which will be provided to Armenia for free will be presented by the Armenian embassy in Belarus particularly by the ambassador Oleg Yesayan.

According to S. Geghamian for this exhibition the preference has been given to historical as well as to the books and albums on Armenian genocide, Karabakh conflict, etc. There will be many books in Russian language.



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During the last 4 years Armenia regularly takes part in the Minsk exhibition. Last year the Armenian book took part in nearly 10 international book fairs. According to an official from the agency the publication in Armenia registers development tendencies as the number of publications as well as the opportunity of publishing high-quality books have increased.

"Many publications, within the frameworks of cooperation or invitation, take part in exhibitions separately presenting the Armenian literature to the foreign visitors," - she added.

## RELIGION

### 45. CONSTRUCTION OF THE YEREVAN RESIDENCE OF CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS TO KICK OFF THIS YEAR [ARMENPRESS, 01/28/09]

Construction of the Yerevan residence of Catholicos of All Armenians are planned to kick off this year. Yerevan chief architect Samvel Danielian told Armenpress that the residence will be built on Tumanian-Sayat Nova cross-road in the territory of Katoghike St. Virgin Mary church. Another church is also intended to be built there.

According to the chief architect interesting town building solutions have been suggested for the territory and now project calculation works are conducted.

### 46. CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS KAREKIN II CONGRATULATES THE NEWLY ELECTED PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIO [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 01/28/09]

Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II sent a congratulatory message to the leader of Smolensk and Kaliningrad Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Kiril on being elected Patriarch of Moscow and All the Russio.

Press service of the Mother See told Armenpress that in his message the Catholicos said that the Armenian church is happy that its sister church with the God's wish elected its deserving Pastor – the 16<sup>th</sup> Patriarch of Moscow and All the Russio.

"Not being in high and responsible offices, conducting enormous spiritual and public activity You, as a spiritual leader, deserved love and respect of millions of believers and churchmen of Russian Orthodox as well as of its sister churches," Karekin II said in his message.

His Holiness expressed confidence that the churches will continue to enrich their century-long relationship with kind activities "for the sake of brightness of the churches and for the sake of consolation and welfare of the two peoples and states".

## SOCIAL

### 47. A NEW BUILDING OF THE GYUMRI HOUSE-HOSTEL FOR OLD AND HANDICAPPED PEOPLE TO BE BUILT [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

A new building of Gyumri house-hostel for old and handicapped people will be built this year by Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Ministry.

Assistant to the head of department of old and handicapped people of the Ministry Anahit Gevorgian told Armenpress that the present building of the house-hostel has been renovated and will continue to function. The new building is intended for 20 people.

A temporary shelter for homeless people will also be established in Gyumri for 30 people.

Works are conducted for establishment of a center of labor rehabilitation in Gyumri, which will give an opportunity to discover the handicapped people who are able to work, assess their abilities and send them to corresponding jobs.

### 48. 7 BILLION 409 MILLION DRAMS PROVIDED TO THE TOWN-BUILDING SPHERE OF SHIRAK PROVINCE FROM THE STATE BUDGET [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

Main part of the 7 billion 409 million drams provided to the town-building sphere of Shirak province from Armenian 2009 state budget will be directed to the solution of apartment construction issues.

Head of town building department of Shirak governor's office Albert Margarian told Armenpress that more than 2 billion drams are intended for the implementation of "Apartment Purchasing Certificate»



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program. Besides Gyumri this year certificates will also be provided in 31 rural communities which have homeless families.

Another program directed towards solution of apartment issues will be implemented in Maralik, where 150 million drams are intended for the construction of unfinished blocks of flats.

Within the frameworks of the sum provided to the town building sphere construction of 43 establishments, including sport halls of secondary schools, sport, cultural constructions, institutes of economy, pedagogy, geophysics and engineering seismology.

During this year former "Shirak" hotel in Gyumri will be reconstructed as an area study museum and a provincial library.

From the provided money 2 billion 599 million drams will be addressed to the road construction: Gyumri-Kars-Amasia and Harich roads will be renovated.

## 49. ISSUES OF KAPAN WATER SUPPLY DISCUSSED [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

Problems connected with the issue of Kapan water supply and which need an urgent solution were discussed January 26 in Kapan municipality.

Responsible for the sphere, heads of condominiums and chief sanitary doctor of the province were present at the consultation. A few days ago mayor of Kapan discussed the issue with the head of "Sour" organization Patrik Loren who arrived in Kapan on a working visit. The "Sour" organization has assumed the exploitation of "Armwatersewege".

According to the head of southern branch of "Armwatersewege" company Jivan Margarian, the inner network of Kapan water pipeline is out of order and numerous accidents are registered each day as a result of which water losses reach 80%.

The sewage cleaning station no longer functions and the sewages fill in Voghji river causing nature protection issues. Besides that no necessary oversight is conducted in the pools, the water supply schedule does not function normally, often violations are registered in the examined water.

Mayor of Kapan Arthur Atayan demanded from the "Sour" organization to make investments in the system otherwise he will apply to the government for returning the water supply to the subordination of the community.

## 50. DATE OF THE SYMBOL TENDER ON 500<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN PUBLICATION PROLONGED BY THE END OF JANUARY [ARMENPRESS, 01/28/09]

The date of symbol (logo) tender announced for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armenian publication has been prolonged by the end of January.

Public relations department of Armenian Culture Ministry told Armenpress that the applications for the tender are received in draft type colored or in black and white.

One chief (1 million drams) and two encouraging (300,000 drams) prizes are intended for the winners. The commission, which was set up headed by the Armenian president for celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of publication on state level, now works out list and chronology of the 2009-2012 events.

## 51. CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF GNISHIKADZOR VALLEY PRESENTED FOR BEING INCLUDED IN THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST [ARMENPRESS, 01/28/09]

The cultural landscape of Gnishikadzor valley has been presented for being included in the UNESCO world heritage list. From Armenian cultural monuments Sanahin and Haghpat monastic complexes, Geghardavank with Azat river valley, church complexes of Etchmiadzin Mother Cathedral – Hripsime, Gayane, Shoghakat and Zvartnots temple have found place in this list.

Head of the Agency of protection of historical and cultural monuments of Armenian Culture Ministry Artyom Grigorian told Armenpress that the Gnishikadzor's "nomination" differs from others because nature is actively involved here, that's to say creation by the nature and people are harmoniously juxtaposed.

"There are natural landscapes here, for example the wheat fields, gardens of grapes, water carrying system, which are also liable to protection", A. Grigorian noted. Nearly 120 historical and cultural monuments are registered in the cultural landscape of Gnishikahogh valley including the Noravank monastic complex, Areni church, Bears', Mizrov caves, etc.

"If previously UNESCO used to involve concrete objects, historical and cultural monuments in its list, now landscapes and environments are also included", - head of the agency informed.



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He noted that the final decision of being involved in the World list belongs to UNESCO World heritage committee.

At present 851 famous monuments of world importance from 141 countries are involved in the UNESCO list of world cultural heritage, 36 of which are in China.

## SPORTS

### 52. ARMENIAN SPORT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS MINISTRY ANNOUNCES A GRANT TENDER [ARMENPRESS, 01/27/09]

Armenian Sport and Youth Affairs Ministry announced a grant tender program.

An official from "The center of organization of youth events" of the Ministry told Armenpress that the themes of the tender are "Activation of participation of the youth in the social life", "Issues of employment of the youth", "Healthy life style", "Patriotic upbringing of the youth", "Spiritual-cultural upbringing of the youth", "Social issues of the youth", "Increasing of legal consciousness of the youth". The tender aims at contributing to youth social initiatives, programs and events.

NGOs which deal with youth or other spheres and are registered in Armenia and which have minimum a year's work experience in that field may take part in the tender.

The sum of the grant reaches 500,000 drams. Programs which are of higher importance according to the priorities of the state youth policy can be financed by 1 million 500 000 drams. Priority will be given to the provincial programs.

Investment from other sources is obligatory (20% at least).

### 53. EUROPEAN JUDO YOUTH AND WORLD BOXING JUVENILE CHAMPIONSHIPS TO BE HELD IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 01/27/09]

On January 26, the European Judo Federation confirmed the decision on holding the 2009 European Championship of judoists under 20 in Yerevan. It will take place on September 9-13. Boxing World Juvenile Championship will also take place on May 22-30 in Yerevan.

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