



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, June 1, 2009

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### POLITICS

#### 1. ACCORDING TO ZHARANGUTIUN REPRESENTATIVE'S PREDICTION, POSITIVE CHANGES WILL BE MADE IN ARMENIA AFTER MAY 31 ELECTIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

Positive changes will be made in Armenia after the May 31 Yerevan Council of Elders elections, at that, in case of any election outcome. RA NA Zharangutiun (Heritage) faction head Armen Martirosian predicted at the May 27 meeting with journalists.

According to him, the opposition has won all elections in Armenia since 1996, but it was not recorded officially. This time, if free and fair elections are held, which is improbable, opposition's inevitable victory will bring positive results. If the elections are held as always, under the circumstance of no elections in the near future, President Serzh Sargsyan will have enough time to make real changes. A. Martirosian is sure that the March 1 events will not recur, as neither the authorities nor the people have sufficient resource for it.

According to the deputy, talks that an amnesty will be announced soon are circulated at NA, at that, among pro-governmental sector representatives. And though the recent statement of NA Speaker about it was presented as a good wish, the process is becoming mature. He expressed the hope that an amnesty will be announced one of these days, which will also have a positive influence.

A. Martirosian considers that it will be politically more beneficial if the amnesty is announced before Yerevan Council of Elders elections. Though in that case the political prisoners on the March 1 case will not have been released yet and cannot go to ballot, nevertheless, the fact of amnesty itself can discharge the strained atmosphere in society.

Granting an amnesty will be also right in consideration of the expected discussion of the issue of Armenia in PACE. A. Martirosian reminded that the Monitoring Committee meeting will take place on June 5 and the PACE plenary sitting on June 24. He said that this structure attaches importance to the May 31 elections, and the Congress of Council of Europe Local and Territorial Authorities will also observe the elections.

A. Martirosian stated that Zharangutiun is going to control elections' legality with all possible means. According to him, this time party's task is not supporting this or that political force, but protecting fairness and legality.

#### 2. 25% YEREVAN VOTERS TAKE NO INTEREST IN COUNCIL OF ELDERS ELECTIONS [Azg, 05/30/09]

According to the surveys conducted by the Sociometer sociological center in April-May, 25% Yerevan residents take no interest in the forthcoming Yerevan Council of Elders elections and 4% are going to boycott them. Sociometer Director Aharon Adibekian reported at the May 28 press conference. In his words, 22% voters have not decided yet whether to go to ballot or not, 29% will go to ballot and know for whom to vote. And 17% voters refused to say for whom they are going to vote.

A. Adibekian said that 20% voters follow the election campaign and political advertisements, but only 3% wants to get acquainted with political forces' programs. Only 37% voters trust their preferred force, the others have other reasons for their choice. A. Adibekian also said that the interest of 5% voters has grown during the election campaign and only 4.4% have oriented themselves by the advertisement. According to the sociologist, it is noteworthy that only 15% voters are ready to take electoral bribe, which permits to suppose that for political forces it will be very difficult to succeed through voter buying.

#### 3. HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST MIKAYEL DANIELIAN: TALK ABOUT AMNESTY IS A SHOW FOR EUROPEAN STRUCTURES [Aravot, 05/30/09]

By speaking about his readiness to grant an amnesty, Armenia's President Serzh Sargsyan just wished to continue the show that is being held before European structures for a long time. Human rights activist Mikayel Danielian, the Chairman of the Helsinki Association, expressed such an opinion at the May 29 press conference. Touching upon S. Sargsyan's words that political organizations and the Public Council should tell him that there is a demand of amnesty in society, M. Danielian said that the President should not say such a thing, as it is a "conduct of a child."



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"Who should apply to him: the Republican Party, the Bargavach Hayastan or the Orinats Yerkir?," M. Danielian asked stressing that those political forces will never speak about the necessity of amnesty. Speaking about the Public Council, the human rights activist reminded that Public Council Chairman Vazgen Manukian had stated from the very start that he will not attend to the issue of political prisoners.

#### 4. SERZH SARGSYAN EXPRESSES READINESS TO GRANT AMNESTY "IF THERE IS SUCH PUBLIC DEMAND" [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

RA President Serzh Sargsyan at the March 28 interview to journalists stated that he is ready to use his constitutional right of granting an amnesty to people detained on cases of the 2008 March 1-2 mass disorders, if "there is such a public demand." Therefore he called country's political forces, public figures, the Public Council for presenting their proposals on the necessity and conditions of amnesty to the presidential residence: "And if as a result it proves that there is such a wish in society, I will immediately use my constitutional right and will apply to the National Assembly for adopting a law."

The country head is content with Yerevan Council of Elders election campaign, the coverage was balanced and unbiased, the political forces had an equal possibility to present their conception of Yerevan development, used various promotion technologies and means. "My appeal, by address, my request to the political forces is not to create unnecessary tension, to continue in that spirit and to finish their election campaign, election activity within these several days and to hold good elections on May 31 that can become a ground for population and international organizations to say that these were the best elections in the Republic of Armenia," the RA President said.

According to the President, Armenia's political forces and coalition partners have good possibilities in the May 31 elections and in Yerevan government new system. "As a Yerevan resident and as the President of the Republic of Armenia I think that no one doubts what I want. My wish is obvious and I should say that I am glad that the Republican Party managed to organize well this process and to approach the elections with very good possibilities. I think no one calls in question at least this fact," the President said. He also expressed satisfaction that their coalition partner Bargavach Hayastan party also treated the elections with responsibility and is among the leaders today. "I think no one doubts that BH will play its role in the issue of Yerevan government. Certainly, I wish our other coalition partner, Orinats Yerkir also to succeed, the same regards Dashnaktsutun, I think being a constructive opposition ARFD plays a great role in the issue of Yerevan government and I think that their participation in Yerevan government will only do good to our country and Yerevan." President's main expectation from Yerevan Council of Elders elections is a legal and fair process, the results of which will be equally acceptable for both the authorities and the opposition.

The interview to journalists took place in the territory of Sardarapat memorial complex the President visited on the occasion of the Republic Holiday, May 28, the 91st anniversary of Sardarapat heroic fight.

#### 5. 771 477 CITIZENS ON FINAL LIST OF VOTERS IN YEREVAN COUNCIL OF ELDERS ELECTIONS [Hayastani Hanrapetutian, 05/29/09]

771 477 voters are included in the final list of voters in Yerevan Council of Elders elections. Norayr Muradkhanian, the Head of the RA Police Passport and Visa Department, reported at the May 29 press conference.

He said that 12 calls connected with clarifications of electoral rolls were received by the hot line operating at the department since April 5. Two messages from Patvakan Hovakimian, Plenipotentiary Representative of the Armenian National Congress (ANC) bloc were also received.

According to ANC, data of 106 dead people, 189 people not registered in the given address, 35 people doing their term military service, 7 imprisoned people are on voters lists.

N. Muradkhanian explained that convicts' data are removed from voters' register after receiving a report from the penitentiary institutions, and no report on the above mentioned persons' being convicted has been received so far. Only 2 out of 35 above mentioned persons are doing their military service, and they are not on the final lists, and the rest 33 are not doing their military service, thus they are registered. According to N. Muradkhanian, 173 out of 189 citizens having no registration in the given territory, but included in the lists are registered in the mentioned territory, 3 have no registration and cannot be on the list. And 6 that were on the preliminary lists but came out of the registration after printing the preliminary lists are not included in the final lists.

The department received information from Yerevan Mayor's Office Special Service company on the death of 42 out of the 106 dead people mentioned by ANC only in May, after printing the preliminary



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lists, and they are not on the final lists. 26 citizens, according to their neighbors' reports, are dead, but there is no document confirming the fact of their death, their data were removed from the lists, 18 are registered, but were not at their apartments at that moment: no information was received about them, 10 citizens are not dead, live at their apartments, and no information was received on 10.

According to ANC's another report, data of at least 2038 citizens of various regions must be on the lists. After checking it was found out that 2025 of those persons are registered in Yerevan according to places of their residence and are on the lists. 5 citizens are registered in various regions and are not on the lists of Yerevan voters. Information about another 8 citizens is being clarified.

## 6. AS OF 11:00 O'CLOCK 90 450 VOTERS OR 11.72% OF PEOPLE HAVING AN ELECTORAL RIGHT TAKE PART IN THE ELECTIONS OF COUNCIL OF YEREVAN ELDERS [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

As of 11:00 o'clock 90 450 voters or 11.72% of citizens having an electoral right took part in the elections of Yerevan Council of Elders. The data have been presented by a member of Central Electoral Commission Harutyun Shahbazian. There are the following results in the 13 electoral constituencies of the capital: in the #1 electoral constituency 7,392 voters or 12.7% of citizens having an electoral right have taken part in the elections, #2 – 7,848/13.21%, #3 – 8,017/13.6%, #4 – 4,783/8.4%, #5 – 6,890/11.39%, #6 – 7,233/12.83%, #7 – 7,262/12.76%, #8 – 5,947/9.86%, #9 – 5,603/10.63%, #10 – 5,687/10.17%, #11 – 8,754/14.19%, #12 – 9,320/15.22% and in the #13 electoral constituency 5,713 voters or 8.56% of citizens having an electoral right have taken part in the elections of Yerevan Council of Elders.

## 7. ALL THE 439 POLLING STATIONS OPENED AT 08:00 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

All the 439 polling stations of 13 Yerevan Electoral Constituencies opened at 08:00 o'clock in the morning in which 771 477 voters of the capital will have an opportunity to take part in the elections of Council of Yerevan Elders. The elections will last by 20:00.

Nearly 6000 international and local observers follow the electoral process including the observing mission of CoE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, diplomats accredited in Armenia and nearly 29 local organizations.

The Central Electoral Commission will in three-hour periodicity present information on the number of voters as well as got application-complaints.

According to the Electoral Code the initial results of the Elections will be summarized not later than 24 hours after the end of elections.

## 8. SERZH SARGSYAN PERFORMS HIS CIVIL DUTY [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

At 11:00 o'clock Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan with his wife and daughter performed his civil duty in the 9/10 polling station at the #24 school aft. S. Spandarian voting for his preferred candidate nominated in the elections of Yerevan Council of Elders.

The Armenian President refused to answer to questions of journalists noting that today is "a day of silence". From 1936 voters of the polling station the Armenian President was the 189<sup>th</sup> one.

6 parties and one pre-election fraction fight in the elections of Yerevan Council of Elders.

## 9. PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN RECEIVES OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRS [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

President Serzh Sargsyan received the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs Yuri Merzlyakov (Russia), Matthew Bryza (USA), and Bernard Fassier (France), who arrived to Yerevan in the framework of their regional visit, as well as the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk. Present at the meeting was also the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Edward Nalbandian. The Minsk Group Co-Chairs presented to the President of Armenia the results of their negotiations in Baku.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that the parties discussed the NK peace negotiations based on the Madrid proposals, as well as issues related to the forthcoming expected meeting of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Saint Petersburg.



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## 10. G. BEGLARIAN SAYS THESE ELECTIONS ARE VERY IMPORTANT FOR EACH YEREVAN RESIDENT AND THAT HE HAS GREAT EXPECTATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

"These elections are very important for each resident of Yerevan and I have great expectations. Tomorrow's Yerevan must have a new body for which fair and free elections must be held," after voting in the 9/5 polling station Mayor of Yerevan, leader of the ARP list in the elections of Council of Yerevan Elders Gagik Beglarian said.

He came to the polling station at 12:00 o'clock with his wife and daughter. According to G. Beglarian, by that moment the elections have passed very quiet, the activeness of voters was assessed as well and the electoral headquarter got no urgent calls.

G. Beglarian's first pre-election promise is that he will work very hard and coordinated.

"My promise was to work hard for each resident of Yerevan and our capital," he stressed.

During the brief conversation the delegates of CoE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities who conduct observation mission in the polling station said the candidate that they implement their work in an unbiased way.

As of 12:00 o'clock 700 from 1948 voters registered in the 9/5 polling station situated in the #39 secondary school of the capital have realized their civil debt.

## 11. T. SARGSYAN SAYS HE IS VOTING FOR THE SAKE OF STABILITY TO BE ABLE TO OVERCOME ALL THE DIFFICULTIES AND HARDSHIPS THROUGH JOINT EFFORTS [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan realized today his civil debt in the 10/21 polling station noting that the elections of Council of Yerevan Elders differ from all the previous elections. The Armenian prime minister came to the polling station with his wife.

"I am voting for the sake of stability, continuity to be able to overcome all the difficulties and hardships through collaborative efforts," T. Sargsyan said. According to him, today we need stability which is conditioned not only by sub-republican but also world processes. T. Sargsyan said that states which are able to ensure stability are also able to better overcome the results of world financial-economic crisis.

The Prime Minister expressed hope that the political powers are ready to admit any result.

"We must form a new tradition that the defeated side has courage to admit its defeat," he said.

T. Sargsyan also said that he regularly gets operative information on the process of elections and as of 13:30 everything was normal.

"We hope this stability will be preserved during the whole day," he noted. According to the Armenian Prime Minister this pre-election campaign was quieter than that of previous elections.

The Armenian Prime Minister was the 319<sup>th</sup> voter in the 10/21 polling station. According to the head of the polling station commission Samvel Hambardzumyan no force-majeur cases have been registered as of 13:30 o'clock.

## 12. L. TER-PETROSIAN REALIZES HIS CIVIL DEBT [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

At 13:00 o'clock former Armenian President, head of the "Armenian National Congress" Levon Ter-Petrosian came to the 9/10 polling station situated in #24 school aft. S. Spendiarian to vote.

He came to the polling station with his family – wife, daughter-in-law and grandsons. L. Ter-Petrosian promised to answer all the questions of journalists only tomorrow.

As of 13:00 o'clock 412 from 1936 voters registered in the 9/10 polling station had realized their civil debt.

## 13. TATEV OHANIAN SAYS AS OF 14:00 THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION GOT NO SERIOUS APPLICATION-COMPLAINTS [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

The elections of Council of Yerevan Elders are passing in a natural order; the commissions provide the natural course of the voting.

Press secretary of Central Electoral Commission Tatev Ohanian told Armenpress that as of 14:00 the CEC got no serious application-complaints and no serious incidents have been registered. People conducting observation mission in the elections continue their activity in a natural course visiting different polling stations. They have also registered no data on violations.



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29 local and 1 international organizations with correspondingly 6000 and 15 observers follow the voting process.

14. AS OF 14:00 O'CLOCK 226 487 VOTERS OR 29.93% OF CITIZENS HAVING AN ELECTORAL RIGHT TAKE PART IN THE ELECTIONS OF COUNCIL OF YEREVAN ELDERS [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

As of 14:00 o'clock 226 487 voters or 29.36% of citizens having an electoral right took part in the elections of Yerevan Council of Elders.

According to the data issued by the Central Electoral Commission there are the following results in the 13 electoral constituencies of the capital: in the #1 electoral constituency 20,256 voters or 33.08% of citizens having an electoral right have taken part in the elections, #2 – 18,583/31.28%, #3 – 18,209/29.66%, #4 – 13,424/23.57%, #5 – 16,850/27.84%, #6 – 17,621/31.25%, #7 – 18,231/32.04%, #8 – 15,931/26.40%, #9 – 15,072/28.59%, #10 – 15,217/27.20%, #11 – 20,014/32.44%, #12 – 21,747/35.52% and in the #13 electoral constituency 15,332 voters or 22.97% of citizens having an electoral right have taken part in the elections of Yerevan Council of Elders.

15. THE CRIMINAL-EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT OF ARMENYAN MINISTRY OF JUSTICE ENSURES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ELECTORAL RIGHT OF THE IMPRISONED PEOPLE [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

463 from the 483 imprisoned people having a right to take part in the elections of Council of Yerevan Elders have refused from voting.

Press secretary of the Criminal-Executive Department of Armenian Ministry of Justice Arsen Babayan told Armenpress that the criminal-executive institutions have ensured the transportation of 20 imprisoned people to the polling stations established in the places of their registration where they voted.

For the imprisoned person document which confirms his identity is the passport or the card of first type. An imprisoned person presents written application about participation or refusal to the head of the institution which has authorities to keep under arrest.

16. ACCORDING TO INITIAL INFORMATION 52.85 PERCENT OF YEREVAN RESIDENTS PARTICIPATED IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS [ARMENPRESS, 05/31/09]

According to the initial information, out of 771,477 eligible voters 407,745 participated in the municipal elections in Yerevan, or 52.85 percent of the Yerevan residents. Today at 20.00 pm all the 439 polling stations of 13 electoral constituencies were closed.

17. RA PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY ALREADY VOTE IN YEREVAN COUNCIL OF ELDERS ELECTIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/31/09]

RA President Serzh Sargsyan and members of his family, his wife and daughter, voted at polling station N 9/10 located at Yerevan Kentron community's Spandarian school N 24 as of 11:00, May 31, in Yerevan Council of Elders elections.

"Today is a day of silence," the RA President said in response to journalists' questions and left the polling station.

As Arevhat Ghazarian, the Chairwoman of the polling station commission, informed journalists, as of that moment, the RA President and members of his family were the 189-191st citizens among 1936 voters included in polling station's list. In her estimation, the voting was active.

18. NA DEPUTY LEVON SARGSIAN'S BODYGUARDS BEAT A NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS AT POLLING STATION N 9/1 [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/31/09]

Today, at about 10:25, NA deputy Levon Sargsyan burst into polling station N 9/1 and ordered his bodyguards to take out correspondents of the Chorrord Ishkhanutyun, Hayk, Zhmanak Yerevan newspapers Gohar Vezirian, Tatev Mesropian, and Marine Kharatian. In response to journalists' questions, according to the report provided to Noyan Tapan by the Armenian National Congress, the bodyguards and their chiefs beat the correspondents, took away their recorders and telephones and drove them away from polling stations. The journalists are going to present a report to the police station on that occasion.



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## 19. AS OF 12:00, ARMENIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ALREADY RECORDS A NUMBER OF VIOLATIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/31/09]

As of 12:00, the Armenian National Congress had already recorded a number of violations. As Noyan Tapan was informed by the ANC headquarters, at about 08:10 bribes were given out near Avan Chess School. Besides, in the above mentioned community Taxi Z service and minibuses N 5 belonging to Avan prefect Taron Margarian are completely used for taking residents to polling stations with groups, in an organized way. As of 10:30, they took residents of Narekatsi and Durian streets to the polling station located near Avan Cinema.

According to the same source, ANC representatives also recorded a violation in the Davitashen community, where people in green shirts try to move away from the electoral district people approaching the polling station with the exception of people they know, whom they accompany to the voting place.

At about 08:00, member of Malatia-Sebastia community's commission of polling station N 7/08, Gor Sargsian nominated by the judicial department beat a member of the Zharangutiun (Heritage) party commission and ANC proxy, then drove them away from the polling station. Chairman of polling station N 8/02 of the same community, Vardan Vardanian at first hindered the work of ANC proxy Armen Abrahamian, then beat him. And a brawl took place at polling station N 7/18, the circumstances are being cleared up.

According to the ANC headquarters, at about 09:00, at polling stations N 7/27 and 7/28 deputy prefect of Achapniak community, Armen Baghdasarian hindered the work of the ANC proxy, observers, did not permit correspondents to do their work, had a brawl with the latter. According to the same source, ANC representatives recorded an open voting at polling station N 9/20, a complaint was made up.

he same voters were taken to different electoral districts by groups by a Gazel microbus at about 09:30 in the Shengavit community. The violation was recorded and prevented by ANC, the Police were informed about the violation.

According to the report, people were moved from Gyumri to Yerevan by Gazel minibuses with the registration numbers 19415, 18594, 36245, 16393, 12711,06617, 17953, 45777, 18053, 19415, 45032, 10911, 45746, 45345, 10918, 45344 and by another 20 cars for them to vote. They were accompanied by police cars with the registration numbers 23202 and 34001 and by Gyumri Mayor personally. Transparency International organization's observers recorded accumulation of minibuses near Gyumri Mayor's Office.

## 20. SERZH SARGSYAN AND LEVON TER-PETROSIAN VOTE AT SAME POLLING STATION [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/31/09]

First RA President Levon Ter-Petrosian will answer all questions on June 1. He declared this to journalists on May 31, on the day of Yerevan Council of Elders elections, after voting at polling station N 9/10 located at Spandarian school N 24 in Yerevan Kentron community. Members of first President's family had also come with him to the polling station.

According to the data of 13:00, when L. Ter-Petrosian also voted at the same polling station, over 425 out of 1936 voters of the polling station had voted.

## 21. ACTS OF VIOLENCE TO JOURNALISTS DURING YEREVAN COUNCIL OF ELDERS ELECTIONS CONTINUE [Haykakan Zhamanak, 06/01/09]

Acts of violence against journalists covering Yerevan Council of Elders elections of May 31 continue. According to the Armenian National Congress, violence was used to correspondent of 168 Zham newspaper Armine Avetian and observer of Transparency International NGO Sona Ayyazian, as well as correspondent of tert.am website Lilit Tadevosian. Journalists witnessed stuffing of a ballot box with nearly 100 ballot papers.

## 22. PROCESS OF ELECTIONS MORE ACTIVE OUTSIDE ELECTORAL DISTRICTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/31/09]

Observers are only able to follow the elections at polling stations: they do not control processes having an impact on electoral process but taking place outside polling stations. Many of observers and proxies said this in their interviews to Noyan Tapan correspondent. Local observer Anzhela Alaverdian at polling station N 3/26 of Zeytun district, in particular, said that everything is normal at the polling station,



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but voters are periodically brought to the polling station by microbus N 71. The observer found it difficult to answer the question of whether it influences voters' position.

Bargavach Hayastan (Prosperous Armenia) party proxy Artur Sukiasian also said that everything is normal inside the above mentioned polling station, though, as of 15:30, according to him, the turnout was not high yet. Touching upon facts of moving voters to polling stations by cars, he said that he "does not control the situation outside and does not know what takes place there." "In any case, BH does not bring people to polling stations," he stated.

## 23. ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL SOURCES, REPORT ON VOTER BUYING NOT GROUNDED, NO FACT PROVIDED TO POLICE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/31/09]

The Press Service of RA Prosecutor General's Office considers not complete the May 31 report of the Armenian National Congress (ANC) that the representative of ANC Nor Nork election headquarters witnessed voter buying. The official source also mentioned that such a report was really received by the Police, but it was not grounded, no fact was provided to the Police and no violation as such was recorded.

The day before the election, on May 30, at about 22:00, Police Nor Nork department received a report that people gathered near Trade College in Nor Nork, possibly, give out election bribe. Police Nor Nork representatives immediately left for the scene of action, visited polling station N 1/33 located at Trade College, where no fact of voter buying was recorded.

Materials were prepared on the case, during which Armenian National Congress bloc's Council of Elders elections candidate Hrachya Aghabekian gave an explanation that on May 30, 2009, in the period from 20:30 to 21:00 non-identified citizens rang him up, they did not introduce themselves and reported about the above mentioned. Meanwhile he said that he did not check the mentioned fact and called Police Nor Nork department on the basis of citizens' reports. An investigation is being carried out.

## 24. ANC CONTINUES RECORDING VIOLATIONS IN ELECTIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/31/09]

According to the report provided to Noyan Tapan by the Armenian National Congress (ANC), a number of other violations were recorded in Yerevan Council of Elders elections.

In particular, at about 16:00, RA President Serzh Sargsyan's brother, Sashik Sargsyan accompanied by 50 people entered Kentron electoral district N 20 and tried to stuff ballot boxes with ballot papers. According to eye-witnesses, he declared that this is "his country and he can do what he likes." He left after the journalists started to video.

At Malatia-Sebastia community's polling station N 8/01 Transparency International organization's observer witnessed a case of stuffing ballot boxes with ballot papers. Haykakan Zhamanak newspaper's correspondent tried to take a photo, but the camera was taken away from him, and the proxies were threatened.

At polling station N 7/7 of the same community commission member Hovhannes Sargsian from RPA personally stuffed ballot boxes with ballot papers in the presence of commission member from BH Metaksia Khachatryan.

## 25. ATTEMPT OF BUYING PROTOCOL RECORDED IN MAY 31 YEREVAN COUNCIL OF ELDERS ELECTIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/31/09]

On May 31, at 14:10, at polling station N 9/28, Zharangutiun party's district electoral commission member Daniel Iohannisian made up a protocol on voting by a citizen not having a right to vote at the mentioned electoral district. According to NA Zharangutiun faction member Stepan Safarian, district electoral commission deputy chairwoman Nare Ghazarian from the Orinats Yerkir party being concerned with this fact offered to sell her the protocol on violation leaving it to D. Iohannisian to suggest the price. According to S. Safarian, the offer of "sale" was categorically rejected by the Zharangutiun representative, after which the commission tried to make up a protocol that D. Iohannisian does his duties badly and hinders commission's work.



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## 26. ACCORDING TO THE RESULTS FROM 21 POLLING STATIONS REPUBLICAN PARTY OF ARMENIA LEADER OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

Armenian Central Electoral Commission started summing up the results of municipal elections in Yerevan. As of 23.45 pm May 31 results of elections in 21 polling stations out of 439 have been summed up where 16 803 voters participated in the elections, the number of invalid bulletins reached 447.

According to the results, the majority of the voters backed Armenian Republican Party 8 079, second comes "Prosperous Armenia" with 3 482, Armenian National Congress received 3 236, ARF received 606 of the votes, Orinats Yerkir party 497, People's party 384, Armenian Labor-Socialist Party 70. The number of inaccuracies is 4.

According to the Armenian Electoral Code, the initial results will be summed up not later than 24 hours after the voting.

According to the initial information, out of 771,477 eligible voters 407,745 participated in the municipal elections in Yerevan, or 52.85 percent of the Yerevan residents.

## 27. REPUBLICAN PARTY OF ARMENIA LEADS IN THE ELECTIONS WITH 190,171 VOTES [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

According to the preliminary results published by the Armenian Central Electoral Commission the leader of the Yerevan municipal elections is the Republican Party of Armenia which received 190,171 votes. Prosperous Armenia party comes the second with 91,141 votes, followed by the Armenian National Congress with 69,871.

Orinats Yerkir party received 20,959, ARF 18,648, People's party 8,569, Armenian Labor Socialist Party 1951 votes.

Overall 412,464 eligible voters participated in the elections, the number of valid bulletins is 401,310, the number of inaccuracies – 2104, the number of invalid bulletins – 10,493.

## 28. A. BAKHCHAGULIAN SAYS THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS OF YEREVAN PASSED IN A FAIR AND TRANSPARANT WAY [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

The May 31 Municipal elections of Yerevan were conducted in a fair and transparent way, secretary of Central Electoral Commission Abram Bakhchagulian said during today's meeting with journalists.

According to him, during the elections publicity was ensured, the Central Electoral Commission applied an inner net through which the electoral commissions of polling stations operatively conveyed information on the process of elections and calculation of votes. A. Bakhchagulian noted that the representatives of polling station commissions and Central Electoral Commissions gave a fast respond to the flaws and violations registered in the polling stations by visiting the place of incident and rectifying them.

9:00-14:00 o'clock is the deadline for presenting the application-complaints to the commissions of electoral constituencies. A. Bakhchagulian said that after their discussion it will become clear what kind of flaws and violations took place and whether they had an impact on the results of elections or not.

A. Bakhchagulian considers the 52% of participation in the elections as a high result.

## 29. CoE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES WELCOMES THE FIRST MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS OF YEREVAN AND EXPRESSES ITS SATISFACTION ON THE ELECTION PROCESS [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

The CoE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities welcomes the municipal elections of held for the first time in Yerevan and expresses its satisfaction on the electoral process.

During today's press conference presenting its initial assessments the Congress delegation noted that the elections were organized in accordance with European standards. The Congress delegation expressed its gratification that Armenia with its own abilities assisted the implementation of local democracy and the May 31 elections of Council of Elders registered a great progress compared with September 2008 elections of local self governmental bodies held in the capital.

The Congress observers also registered some flaws during the elections which cannot affect the legality of the election results but will find place in the final report of the mission.



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The CoE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities was the only organization which had an international observation mission. From May 3-6 the Congress delegates observed the pre-election procedures but the short-term observers were in Yerevan from May 27 by now.

## 30. SYRIAN FM TO VISIT ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

Syrian Foreign Affairs Minister Ualid al Muallim will be in Armenia June 1-2 on a working visit. Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that the Syrian minister will have meetings with the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan and Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan.

The meeting of the two foreign ministers will take place June 2 and will be followed by a joint press conference.

## 31. OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PLACES OF COUNCIL OF YEREVAN ELDERS TO BE GIVEN TO THE ARP [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

According to the initial results of elections three political powers will be represented in the Council of Yerevan Elders – Armenian Republican Party (nearly 47.1%), “Prosperous Armenia Party” (nearly 22.6%) and “Armenian National Congress” (nearly 17.3%) the other parties did not overcome the fixed pre-election barrier of 7%.

Thus the ARP got more than 40% of the places and according to the law “On the local self-governance in the town of Yerevan” the overwhelming majority of the places will be given to this party.

According to the same law if as a result of elections of Council of Elders one of the Parties gets more than 50% of places of Council of Elders, that’s to say the absolute majority, the person who is in the first place of the party list is considered elected mayor.

The mayor assumes his post on the third calendar day after being elected with the oath given to the residents of Yerevan during the session of Council of Elders. According to the law the first session of newly elected Council of Elders is summoned on the first Monday after the official publication of the decision on the election of members of Council of Elders.

According to the Electoral Code the Central Electoral Commission not later than in 7 days after the voting summarizes the results of elections. Thus the session of Council of Elders is scheduled for June 8.

The Council of Elders may have factions which are established on the opening day of the first session of the newly elected Council of Elders; not more than 4 permanent commissions as well as ad hoc commissions may be established.

The town of Yerevan is divided into 12 administrative regions the heads of which are appointed and dismissed by the Mayor.

After the elections of Council of Elders the district communities of Yerevan are considered reformulated as Yerevan community.

## 32. INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS REGISTER THAT THE GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF ELECTIONS CORRESPONDS TO EUROPEAN STANDARDS [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

The observing mission of CoE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities welcomes the first elections of Council of Yerevan Elders.

“We express satisfaction that the Yerevan citizens elect their council and that the process was conducted in a normal way. The congress delegation welcomes the fact that by these elections Armenia on its own possibilities contributed to the implementation of local democracy. On the whole the elections were positive,” during today’s press conference organized for the presentation of the initial report the head of observing mission Nayjel Mermagen (UK) said.

According to him, the general organization of the elections corresponded to the international standards. A considerable progress is registered compared with the 2008 elections of local self governmental bodies held in Yerevan.

“The congress delegation also noted that those who have their role in politics in Armenia must change their attitude and behavior to ensure the improvement of democratic process of elections. The elections have to be clear, fair and transparent even out of the polling station and an electoral culture must be formed,” N. Mermagen noted.



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The observers registered certain flaws in the election process. They will involve all the details, all the registered flaws in their final report which cannot affect the legality of the election results. Noting that some flaws carried an organizational character N. Mermagen did not wish to go into details today.

Observers representing the United Kingdom, France, Estonia, Hungary, San Marino, Poland, Italy and Belgium were present in the polling stations before their opening, walked round more than 200-230 stations being present from 5 minutes to two hours, in some places they visited for the second time unexpectedly, they were also present at the closing of stations and final calculation.

CoE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities was the only organization which had an international observation mission. From May 3-6 the Congress delegates observed the pre-election procedures but the short-term observers were in Yerevan from May 27 by now. They met the representatives of authorities, opposition, mass media, NGOs and Ambassadors accredited in Armenia.

The Congress observers are ready to listen to notifications of any organization which will be taken into account in the final document. It will be presented during the autumn session of the Congress in mid October.

"The CoE wishes to see the consolidation of democracy in Armenia. Our presence in these elections as well as the report to be prepared will contribute to the consolidation of democracy," head of the Congress delegation noted.

## 33. MATTHEW BRYZA SAYS OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRS OPTIMISTIC OVER COMING MEETING OF ARMENIAN AND AZERBAIJANI PRESIDENTS [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

OSCE Minsk group is optimistic over the regular meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents, Minsk group US co-chairman Matthew Bryza told "Trend". He noted that the co-chairmen hope that the presidents of the two countries will continue constructive approach started in Prague.

"We hope that at the Saint Petersburg meeting the sides will reach a certain progress", Bryza said.

## BUSINESS

## 34. INSPECTORIAL CHECKS OF ALL KINDS TO BE FORBIDDEN AT SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN ARMENIA IN 2009-2010 [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

By instruction of the Armenian president, the Armenian government on May 29 will take an unprecedented decision, whose purpose is to assist small and medium business and create a favorable tax administration environment for it. Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan announced this at the May 29 joint sitting of the National Assembly standing committees, during the report on implementation of the 2008 state budget.

He said that in accordance with the government decision, inspectorial checks of all kinds will be forbidden at small and medium enterprises in 2009-2010. "We are convinced that the suspension of checks by 22 inspectorial bodies during the crisis will form by itself a more favorable environment for development of small and medium business," the prime minister declared.

## 35. 12-MONTH INFLATION MAKES 3.4% IN ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

The consumer price index made 103.4% in Armenia in May 2009 compared to May 2008, including the index of food commodities (including cigarettes and alcoholic drinks) - 99.8%, of non-food commodities - 104.1%, of service tariffs - 109.8%. The same indices made 102.5%, 99.1%, 100.6%, and 110% in January-May 2009 on January-May 2008.

According to the RA National Statistical Service, the consumer price index made 105.5% in May 2009 compared to December 2008, including the index of food commodities (including cigarettes and alcoholic drinks) - 104.4%, of non-food commodities - 106.9%, and service tariffs - 106.9%. 6.3% overall inflation was recorded in Armenia's consumer market in March-May 2009, with 1.6% inflation in May as compared to April. Prices of food commodities (including cigarettes and alcoholic drinks) rose by 2.1%, of non-food commodities - by 2.6%, and tariffs of services grew by 0.2% in May on April 2009. The average monthly growth of consumer prices made 1.1% in January-May 2009, which was lower by 0.3% than the respective index of the same period of 2008 (1.4%).

The consumer price index made 124.7% in May 2009 on May 2005, including the index of food commodities (including cigarettes and alcoholic drinks) - 125.3%, of non-food commodities - 112.5%, and of service tariffs - 130%.



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## 36. DECLINE OF ARMENIAN ECONOMY WILL MAKE 7-12% IN LATE 2009, HRANT BAGRATIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

The decline of Armenian economy will make 7-12% in late 2009. However, as the former prime minister of Armenia, head of Freedom party Hrant Bagratian stated at the May 26 press conference, new forecasts can be made and new corrections can be probably be introduced in August.

In his words, the crisis in Armenia has now entered the second stage which leads to a deep budgetary and banking crisis. He said that it is not ruled out that the crisis in Armenia will have a fourth stage as well. "This crisis has revealed the wrong policy conducted by the state in the past 10 years," he noted.

As for the anti-crisis program of Armenian government, he said that the government does not have any program as the budgetary allocations are directed to where they are not necessary. "For example, 10 million dollars was given to mining industry, but it is not known whom this money was given to. Kajaran Copper and Molybdenum Enterprise that has serious problems today is mentioned, but Robert Kocharian is behind that enterprise," the former prime minister said.

H. Bagratian called the package of legislative tax amendments, which became a subject of heated discussion at the National Assembly, "absolute nonsense".

According to H. Bagratian, the decline of Russian economy is dependent on oil prices. If oil price rises in Russia, then this country will have a real opportunity to overcome the crisis, which in its turn will result in regulation of the economic situation in Armenia. Besides, if the anti-crisis program of the U.S. administration is successfully completed in the summer, economic growth will be recorded in Russia in 6-9 months. "It means that there will be a positive change in Armenia as well but it will take place in 2011-2012," H. Bagratian said.

## 37. FORMER PRIME MINISTERS OF ARMENIA PRESENT THEIR OPINIONS OF HOW TO GET OUT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

There are now two crises in Armenia, one of which is conditioned by the impact of the global financial and economic crisis. The second crisis began long ago and is conditioned by the transition period of the economic development and by domestic problems. So far there have been no projects that would give Armenia an opportunity to benefit from the global financial and economic crisis. The first prime minister of Armenia, currently the chairman of the Public Council and the National Democratic Party Vazgen Manukian expressed this opinion at the May 25 sitting "Armenia. Future Directions of Economic Policy" of the economic forum "Armenia. Confronting the Global Disaster". Many of Armenia's former prime ministers made speeches at this forum organized by Policy Forum Armenia organization (Washington).

In the words of Armenian prime minister in 1991-1992, currently the chairman of the Constitutional Court Gagik Harutyunian, in order to reduce the negative effects of the global financial and economic crisis on Armenia, it is necessary to make system transformations rather than partial reforms - in anticipation of qualitative changes.

In his opinion, the indicated effects will not be overcome if the legislative, executive and judicial branches of power do not confront in a balanced way the challenges caused by the crisis. He said it is necessary to take such steps which will allow implementing efficient structural reforms in terms of creating a competition environment and establishing constitutional democracy and lawfulness.

The Armenian prime minister in 1993-1996, head of Freedom party, economist Hrant Bagratian said that according to forecasts, if economic growth slows down by 3.4% in global economy in 2009 on 2008, then this slowing down will make 12.6% in Russia, 14.1% in Ukraine, and 16.8% in Armenia. And it happens in the case that these countries do not participate in the secondary values' market whose collapse caused the global financial crisis. Nevertheless, the crisis aggravated the domestic problems existing in the indicated countries, and the impact of these problems is greater than that of the global crisis. In the view of H. Bagratian, Armenia, in which the social policy is not targeted and the pensions and salaries are low, will not withstand the impact of the crisis.

In his words, high indices of Armenian GDP in the past few years were conditioned by the fact that during their calculation an old methodology having to relation to modern realities was used.

According to H. Bagratian, a fall in prices has been recorded in many countries, whereas 9.7% inflation exceeding 4fold the pre-crisis index has been recorded in Armenia.

When speaking about the impact of the global crisis on Armenia, Russia and Ukraine and their internal crises, the economist said that these countries suffer from both political and economic structural



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crises, including a fiscal crisis, a rise in the level of monopolization and corruption, and a crisis related to the judicial system and development of small business.

He said that in contrast to the slowing down of the Armenian economy, GDPs of both Azerbaijan and Georgia grew in the 1st quarter of this year when economic growth of Azerbaijan was likely to slow due to the fall of international oil prices, while economic growth of Georgia - due to the fall of transit transportation volumes.

H. Bagratian noted that they in Armenia should not have been so pleased with the double-digit indices of Armenian GDP growth in the past few years because in reality, despite the growth of its economic indices, Armenia in particular lags behind Azerbaijan: in 1996 Armenia's GDP made 3 billion USD, Azerbaijan's GDP amounted to 5 billion USD, while in 2008 these indices made 17 billion USD and 85 billion USD respectively. Besides, in 1996 the average monthly salary made 32 USD in Armenia and 25 USD in Azerbaijan, while in 2008 these indices made 250 USD and 400 USD respectively.

H. Bagratian characterized the peculiarity of Armenia's economic crisis first of all by the monopoly on import. He said that the recent amendments to the Law on Taxes envisage the presence of a tax agent at big enterprises, but do not envisage such an institution with respect to importers. The other peculiarity is related to the export of capital from Armenia and it reached 1 billion USD in 2008. Besides, Armenian economy depends on foreign remittances which amounted to 3 billion USD in 2008, while a decline in their amount has been observed this year. The economist considered as negative the fact that in 2004-2006 the national currency appreciated 2fold against the US dollar (the highest index in the world), and during the same period the national currencies of other countries depreciated by about 20%. Whereas, in the opinion of H. Bagratian, the money accumulated as a result of the inflow of dollars into Armenia should have been spent on implementation of big investment programs. Another sign of the deepening crisis is, in his view, the fact that in 2008 Armenia's imports exceeded 4fold its exports, whereas in the past months of 2009 imports exceeded 6fold exports.

Speaking about ways out of the crisis, he pointed out to a ban on provision of foreign currency credits and deposits in Armenia, along with establishing a floating exchange rate for foreign currency. Besides, banks should have no right to make investments in the real sector of economy. In his opinion, among other ways out of the crisis are demonopolization of import, re-direction of financial resources from construction to production sectors of the economy through a correct tax policy, introduction of progressive income tax, depreciation of the dram, ban on re-crediting, and development of the capital market.

According to the prime minister in 1992-1993, former speaker of the RA National Assembly, chairman of the Christian Democratic Union Khosrov Harutyunian, one cause of the economic crisis in Armenia is that the government has not established partnership-based relations with small and medium businessmen, and their negative opinions about activity of the tax service bear evidence of that. Whereas, in his words, the state should regulate the market by intervening cautiously so as not "to harm by accident the hen laying gold eggs".

The Armenian prime minister in 1999-2000, head of Republic party Aram Sargsyan expressed an opinion that one of the causes of the economic crisis in Armenia that the officials who live by "getting into pockets of businessmen" have more benefits than the businessmen who create jobs but break laws and strive for monopoly. "Armenia will not overcome the economic crisis unless it solves these problems. Only political measures are the way out of this situation," A. Sargsyan said.

It should be mentioned that H. Bagratian was the only one to accompany his speech by "digital" analysis. The current prime minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan was also among those invited, but he did not attend the event.

## 38. GEM AND JEWELRY SECTOR TO BE EXEMPT FROM 1% MANDATORY PROFIT TAX ON REVENUES FROM RAW MATERIAL IMPORT AND EXPORT DEALS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

At the May 21 sitting, the Armenian government approved the bill on amendments to the Law on Profit Tax and the Law on Value Added Tax. By these amendments, henceforth no 1% profit tax will be levied on revenues from jewelry raw material import and export deals. By the amendment to the Law on Value Added Tax, purchase of raw material will be completely exempt from VAT, and only sale of finished products in Armenia will be taxed.

In the words of Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, these amendments allow to create a favorable tax field in the gem and jewelry sector. The prime minister said that in the opinion of representatives of the International Association of Jewelers, it will contribute to both the sector's development and investment attraction. He added that these amendments can also be viewed as anti-crisis measures.

During a briefing after the sitting, the Minister of Economy Nerses Yeritsian stated that there is a serious opportunity and prospect of development in the gem and jewelry sector. According to him, thanks



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to the amendments, the jewelry sector receives status of a free economic zone - from the import of raw materials up to their export. He assured those present that as a result of the amendments made to the laws, the companies of the sector will come out of the shadow sphere and have the opportunity to increase their turnover.

N. Yeritsian said that by the agreements reached with Diasporan Armenian businessmen, work on ensuring competition will be done in Armenia's gem and jewelry sector.

## 39. ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT PROPOSES INTRODUCING INSTITUTION OF REPRESENTATIVE OF TAX BODY [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

The National Assembly of the RA on May 21 began discussing in first reading the package of quite contentious bills (submitted by the government) which envisage amendments and additions to the RA Code of Administrative Infractions, the Law on Excise Tax, the Law on Profit Tax, the Law on Taxes and the Law on Value Added Tax. The discussion will continue at the regular plenary session to be convened on June 8.

The main target of those opposed to the package was the addition to the Law on Taxes, which in particular envisages that with the aim of implementing control the State Revenue Committee can appoint a representative(s) of the tax body at a tax payer. It concerns big business: in particular a representative can be appointed if the tax payer's revenues from sale exceeded 4 billion drams in the previous year, or if the tax payer had 500 and more employees at some moment of the previous year, or if the tax payer declared tax losses of 50 million drams and over for two consecutive years, or if the customs value of goods imported by the tax payer by "import for free turnover" regime during three months preceding some moment in the reporting year exceeded 500 million drams.

By the bill, a representative of the tax body must consider the tax payer's transaction documentation procedures, volumes of products, turnover and services, and real sale prices.

In their questions put to Deputy Minister of Finance Suren Karayan, as well as in their speeches, the deputies (who described themselves as professing both socialist and liberal values) objected to the legislative initiative of the government, noting that it contradicts first of all the program provisions of the government, including the provision on reducing the contacts between an economic entity and a representative of tax bodies to a minimum. Moreover, the introduction of the institution of representative of the tax body was considered as the government's "just another thoughtless step" against the business environment, adoption of not the best mechanisms of control of the Soviet time, etc.

## 40. "ARMTECH CONGRESS'09" ARMENIAN HIGH-TECH INDUSTRY CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN THE SILICONE VALLEY [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

The "ArmTech Congress'09" global high technology industry conference will be held in the USA Silicon Valley November 5-8, 2009. It involves famous specialists of the sphere and concerned sides aiming at fortification of the links with the representatives of high-tech industry of Armenia.

During today's press conference the General Director of Armenian Development Agency Robert Harutyunyan noted that this is already the third time such a conference is being organized "it is a wide platform for new cooperation".

This year participation of 30 companies or 300-350 individuals is intended. Mainly representatives of European and eastern states as well as Russia will take part in the conference conceived under the theme of "learning from the past and inventing the future." According to R. Harutyunyan the geography of participating states also has a tendency of enhancement. The event is designed for professionals interested in engaging the global Armenian community and the rapidly rising High Tech Industry sector in Armenia.

The conference provides an unmatched opportunity to obtain business and professional information, and to connect with government representatives, major players in the financial and services sectors, and leading academics from Armenia, the U.S. and elsewhere around the world. ArmTech Congress '09 will take place under the high patronage of the prime minister of Armenia.

Armenian Economy Minister Nerses Yeritsyan stressed that the in the conduction of ArmTech Congress even during the difficult condition established as a result of recession testifies of the great importance the IT sphere is given. According to him the scope of issues involved in it now becomes more extended making a transition from the IT sphere to the high-tech sphere.



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Speaking about the results of previous conferences the Armenian Economy Minister noted that after the next year's meeting a plan of 7 major issues has been worked out. Steps have already been undertaken within its frameworks, particularly towards the establishment of a social net.

Deputy Head of "Synopsis" company in marketing, chief executive director of "Synopsis Armenia" company Rich Goldman expressed confidence that conduction of such conferences during the recession is more important than ever. "This is a right time to show that this sphere is a reliable achievement. This is also an opportunity to come out of the recession more prosperously and can show ways to overcome them," he said.

The budget necessary for organization of the conference is now being discussed. The financial means are intended to be involved partly from participation fees, partly from sponsors; according to N. Yeritsyan the Armenian Government will in its turn participate with 30%.

Those interested in the participation in the "ArmTech'09" may submit applications, abstracts of speeches, poster presentations to be delivered during one of the thematic parallel sessions.

The topics of ArmTech'09 parallel sessions are: "IT (software industry and services)", "Renewable energy, energy saving", "Microelectronics / Semiconductor Industry", "Digital Media", "Engineering Design", "Advanced Material", "Telecommunications / Internet", "Biotechnologies", "Higher Education / Research", "Investments".

For more detailed information is placed in ArmTech website [www.armtechcongress.com](http://www.armtechcongress.com). Submission of final papers is due October 1, 2009.

## DIASPORA

### 41. ROLE OF TEKEYAN ASSOCIATION IN PRESERVING ARMENIAN CULTURE IN DIASPORA DISCUSSED IN CHAPTER OF ASSOCIATION IN BUENOS AIRES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

The president of the Montreal chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Arto Manoukian visited the Tekeyan Cultural Association headquarters in Buenos Aires and met with Nahabet Nahabetian, the honorary president of the South American region of Armenian Democratic Liberal Organization and the editor of the Sardarabad weekly, Prof. Diana Der Garabetian.

During the meeting, opinions were exchanged regarding the role of the Tekeyan Cultural Association in preservation of the Armenian culture in the Diaspora.

Manoukian attached importance to the activity of the Sardarapat weekly and indicated the importance of its cooperation with the Abaka newspaper. According to him, that cooperation will be more stable thanks to Internet.

Finally, accompanied by Nahabet Nahabetian, Manoukian met with members of the Armenian General Benevolent Union.

### 42. CONGRESSMAN BECERRA REAFFIRMS HIS SUPPORT TO RESOLUTION ON ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

Congressman Xavier Becerra continues his support to the resolution on recognition of the Armenian Genocide, which was authored by another Congressman Adam Schiff. He announced about this at the event cosponsored by the Armenian Assembly of America, the American Hellenic Council of America and the Armenian National Committee of America. He noted that regardless of the strong relationship between USA and Turkey the Armenian Genocide should be recognized.

Assembly Western Region Director Yeghig Keshishian stated that the Assembly appreciates him as an active member of the Armenian Caucus and as a cosponsor of H. Res.252, the Armenian Genocide Resolution.

Keshishian and members of the Southern California Regional Council - Joyce Stein, Talin Yacoubian, Al Cabraloff and Richard Mushegain - also met Congressman Becerra to discuss a number of issues confronting U.S.-Armenia relations. Keshishian expressed his disappointment with President Obama's decision of 38 percent cut in assistance to Armenia and increase of military assistance to Azerbaijan.



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## ARTS

### 43. MONTH-LONG CELEBRATION OF ARMENIAN CULTURE AT NEW BRITAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

The New Britain Public Library held a month-long celebration of Armenian culture, and traditional Armenian folk and fairy tales were presented during the celebration events.

Amy Litke, head of the children's department noted that some of the fairy tales have themes similar to American stories.

The library's "World of Words" program also includes other Armenian-themed events. Pat Watson, the library's assistant head of adult services noted that within the framework of the program they each year hold an event dedicated to some country's culture, literature and history. They usually select such country which is the homeland of other nations living in New Britain.

On May 27 Armenian poetry was presented bilingually, in Armenian and in English, and on May 30 Armenian national music will be featured and national delicacy will be served.

## SOCIAL

### 44. FIVE AMERICAN ARMENIANS AWARDED ELLIS ISLAND MEDAL OF HONOR [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/29/09]

On May 9 The National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO) awarded Ellis Island Medals of Honor to five Armenian community leaders.

Tavit Najarian, ScD, Legate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and President of the National Council of Churches Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Council Members James Kalustian and Oscar Tatosian, as well as George Pagoumian were awarded for devoted service to the community, promotion of Armenian values, and building bridges between ethnic communities within the United States and abroad.

### 45. 23 APPLICANTS ENTERED THIS YEAR IN THE EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PLACES OF RUSSIAN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

24 Armenian applicants applied to study the 2009-2010 academic year in the 99 educational scholarship places of Russian higher educational establishments.

Chief specialist of International Cooperation and Diaspora Department of Armenian Education and Science Ministry Svetlana Mkrtychyan told Armenpress that 23 of them took part in the exam and got positive marks entering the preferred university.

For 10 post-graduate scholarship places 10 people applied and got positive marks. 11 Armenian graduates applied for 5 scholarship places of clinical residency.

Basic preferred professions are informatics, medicine and economy.

The applicants for the university scholarship took exams in accordance with the Armenian 2008 university entrance program and standards of assessment of knowledge by their chosen profession as well as had an interview round.

For the post-graduate scholarship professional examination was also needed in accordance with the "Order of accession in the post-graduate education" approved by the Education and Science Minister as well as passed an interview round.

### 46. LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY-AFFILIATED ORPHANAGES HAVE 37 GRADUATES THIS YEAR [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

Orphanages which are affiliated to the Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Ministry this year have 37 graduates.

According to the Armenian law on "Children without Parents' Care" these children in case of gathering lowest scores which are enough to enter the paid system of state medium and higher professional education establishments enter the unpaid systems of these establishments.

Senior scientific worker of the division of Women, family and children's issues of the Ministry Eduard Israelian told Armenpress that financed by the Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Ministry the works over the education of orphanage graduates are implemented by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR).



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The FAR workers previously meet with the children and taking into consideration their abilities and wishes present a corresponding professional conclusion according to which the graduates are sent to different higher or medium professional establishments.

According to E. Israelian if the orphanage graduates do not enter educational establishments they are sent to other establishments – crafts houses, vehicle schools, computer centers where they obtain knowledge for working in this or that sphere.

“We hold up link with beneficiaries of previous years who very often visit us with different requests and issues. We try to help them,” E. Israelian said.

There are 8 children’s houses affiliated to the Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Ministry in which at present 850 children live. Only 4 orphanages have graduates.

## 47. VIRTUAL TEXTBOOK FOR TEACHING ARMENIAN HISTORY CREATED [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

A virtual textbook has been created by the Institute of History of the Armenian National Academy of Science for all those who want to learn history through the Internet. Director of the Institute Ashot Melkonyan told Armenpress that the first part of the class is already prepared and involves the period from the formation of Armenian people up to the year of 428. “The project has found a great respond and has got a large audience. Many issues on the early period of Armenian history like formation of Armenian people, their settlement etc., have been radically reviewed. These are issues which always have a political background and are of primary importance”, he said.

A. Melkonyan noted that the teachers involved in the project in six languages (Russian, English, German, Spanish, Portugal and French) contact through Internet with the diaspora and foreign readers and teach Armenian history.

According to the director of the Institute, there is no age restriction, as the texts are designed in a way to satisfy all the interested readers. The geographic expansion of the project is also wide enough, there are foreigners who hearing of Armenia on different occasions, want to know more about the country and history of its people, about the language and culture. Each participant has a personal code. The students gain a right to take part in the next class in case they answer correctly at least to 8 questions out of 10. After that they are given an opportunity to pass to the next subject.

A. Melkonyan informed that the project is implemented with the financial support of the Armenian General Benevolent Union. The author of the texts is A. Melkonyan and the author of the maps is correspondent member of Armenian National Academy of Science, doctor, professor of historical sciences Babken Harutyunian, the methodical part is ensured by the young scientific workers of the Institute.

## SPORTS

## 48. ARMENIAN YOUTH FOOTBALL TEAM TO LEAVE FOR SWITZERLAND JUNE 4 [ARMENPRESS, 06/01/09]

Armenian youth football team will leave for Zurich June 4 from where it will depart for the town of Ville to play with the Swiss youth team. The Switzerland-Armenia youth match will take place June 5 in the “Bergholz” stadium of the town of Ville.

Press secretary of Armenian Football Federation Georgi Matevosian told Armenpress that the match will be judged by the Serbian referee brigade headed by Bozhko Jovanetich. The Armenian team will return to Armenia on June 6 and continue getting ready for the meeting with Turkish youth team.

Armenia-Turkey match will take place in the “Republican” stadium after Vazgen Sargsyan. The match will be judged by Belgian judge brigade headed by Christoph Viran.

The Armenian youth team is involved in the second group of the 2011 European Cup qualification round together with Turkish, Irish, Swiss, Georgian and Estonian youth teams.

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