



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, December 18, 2009

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

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### POLITICS

1. Number of Armenian Genocide Resolution supporters in Senate reaches 10 and in House of Representatives 135 [Noyan Tapan, 12/16/09]

American Senators Barbara Boxer and Joe Lieberman decided to join the Senators supporting the resolution (N 316) demanding recognition of the Armenian Genocide submitted to the Congress.

This week another Congresswoman, Linda Sanchez has also joined the supporters of the Genocide Resolution (N 252) introduced to the House of Representatives.

ANCA Executive Director Aram Hambarian welcomed the decision of the Congressmen meanwhile adding that work to increase the number of supporters continues so as it will be possible to ratify the resolution as soon as possible.

Thus, the number of resolution's supporters in the Senate has reached 10 and in the House of Representatives 135.

2. Turkish organizations of America call Congress for reconciling them with Armenians [Noyan Tapan, 12/16/09]

Turkish organizations of America called U.S. Congress for reconciling them with Armenians. According to Aztag, the Turkish Alliance of America and the Union of Associations of American Turks proposed Congress persuading Armenians to reconcile with Turks instead of raising historic issues. In their opinion, if Congressmen support the "versions" of Armenians, the process of normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey can be endangered. "Our government in Turkey has launched a historic reconciliation process with Armenians but American Armenians continue their anti-Turkish activity. However, the point is that a number of Congressmen also support the policy of dual standards," Mehmet Ozgunar, a member of the Turkish diaspora in Washington, reported. "Show your sincerity," they called Armenians.



### **3. J. Pennington, "Normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations and Nagorno Karabakh conflict regulation are separate processes" [Armenpress, 12/17/09]**

The issues on the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations and Nagorno Karabakh conflict regulation are separate processes, Deputy Head of U.S. diplomatic mission in Armenia Josef Pennington stated at the meeting with Armenian and Turkish journalists today on the initiative of "Eurasia Partnership" Foundation and Center for Global Political Trends pointing out that the regulation of Nagorno Karabakh conflict is a separate process and it is not possible to be accepted as a precondition. "We have many times stated that they are separate processes. Besides that, the peaceful and lasting solution of NK conflict will be a positive step in itself", the deputy ambassador said.

Contrary to U.S. claims, the Turkish side has made statements for many times, according to which NK issue is viewed as a precondition in the regulation of Armenian-Turkish relations.

In answer to the question of Armenpress on such a position of Turkish officials, J. Pennington noted that this issue has been discussed also during the visit of the Turkish prime minister to the USA, "We can make a judgment about it also by President Obama's statement made after the meeting.

We support the both sides in ratifying the protocols and expect them to do it soon", U.S. deputy ambassador said.

### **4. Serzh Sargsyan managed to persuade Diaspora while Turkey is not able to persuade Azeris, Turkish journalist says [Noyan Tapan, 12/17/09]**

"We accept the Armenian-Turkish protocols without preconditions but real life is different: the Turkish government is pressed by society and Azerbaijan," Badri Gursev, a correspondent of the Milliyet newspaper, who arrived in Yerevan, declared at a December 17 press conference. "I do not think that against Azerbaijan's opinion the protocols can be ratified," he mentioned emphasizing that the Azeri moods are used by the Turkish opposition. According to B. Gursev, the opposition protests saying that Azerbaijan's interests are violated and therefore the issue of protocols has reached a deadlock.

The Turkish journalist expressed an opinion that at the price of losing Azerbaijan Turkey will move forward only in some cases and in certain situations but found it difficult to mention in what situations concretely. B. Gursev also stressed that the Armenian-Turkish relations regard not only the two countries but also the whole region and in order to succeed Azerbaijan should also take part in the negotiations process.

The other speaker, CNN Turk TV channel's correspondent Ferhat Boratav, declared that today Armenia and Turkey "do not dance tango two together," another three states, including U.S. and Russia, also dance that tango. Turkey and Azerbaijan, as he mentioned, are players of a big game which is called "axis of East-West energy carriers." "No one imagined at first that Azerbaijan can leave the game," F. Boratav said.

He mentioned that at the stage of discussion of the protocols President Serzh Sargsyan visited Diaspora's communities, gave explanations to Diasporan Armenians, and the Turks considered it natural. Just this way, according to F. Boratav, Turkey considers it necessary to consult with Azerbaijan which is also a natural phenomenon. However the difference, according to him, is that S. Sargsyan managed to persuade the Diasporan Armenians while Turkey is not able to persuade Azeris.

In response to the question of whether he is ready to personally apologize for the Armenian Genocide B. Gursev declared that he is not at the court. And F. Boratav in connection with the same question mentioned that not apologizing but knowing and accepting the truth is important. He also expressed an opinion that not historians but lawyers and the court can give a final conclusion on the Genocide.

## **BUSINESS**

### **5. There are 700 women entrepreneurs in Armenia [Armenpress, 12/17/09]**

The participation of men and women in the Armenia's executive and political field is unequal, chairman of the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen Arsen Ghazaryan said today at the conference on "Assessment of opportunities of development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Women Entrepreneurship in Armenia".

According to him, recently a research work and individual inquiries have been conducted with business women and as a result of the discussions relevant conclusions have been formed which are



aimed at ensuring women's representation in small and medium-sized enterprises. A. Ghazaryan said there are 700 women entrepreneurs in Armenia which have about 5000 employees

These women according to him, always face obstacles in acquiring territory, getting financial means and the lack of relevant knowledge in this field. For increasing the role of women in economic and political affairs, A. Ghazaryan said it is necessary to create wide studying opportunities, work out program on the development of women entrepreneurship.

Executive director of the union Gagik Makaryan, presenting the results of the researches, noted that the 47.3% of the small and medium-sized enterprises are centralized in Yerevan. He noted that the researches showed that the number of employees in the big-sized enterprises of the republic is 650,000, in small and medium-sized enterprises 1 million 111,700 people. As of today there are 74,900 unemployed.

## **6. India intends to open Armenian-Indian center for information technologies in Armenia [Noyan Tapan, 12/17/09]**

RA National Security Council Secretary Artur Baghdasarian met with newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to RA Achal Kumar Malhotra on December 17. The interlocutors attached importance to the issue of formation and further deepening of cooperation between RA and Indian Security Councils. A. Baghdasarian invited his Indian counterpart to Armenia for outlining the directions of cooperation in the security sphere.

According to the National Security Council Press Office, the Ambassador expressed readiness to support deepening of bilateral contacts in various spheres of mutual importance. He said that in 2010 India intends to initiate a number of programs in Armenia, in particular, it intends to open an Armenian-Indian center for information technologies in Armenia.

## **7. Around 80 U.S. companies operate in Armenia [Armenpress, 12/18/09]**

About 80 U.S. companies operate in Armenia. They cover various sectors of economy, such as IT, banking, tourism and hospitality, manufacturing, etc. Executive Director of American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia (AmCham) Diana Gaziyan told Armenpress that these, as well as heavy industry, are the spheres which are of particular interest for U.S. companies.

According to her assessment, even though there are some obvious issues hindering the development of business in Armenia, the country's business legislation is rather liberal and foreign investment oriented. There is no need to create new laws; the fair application of the existing ones will be enough. The country is quite attractive from doing business perspective, which is proven by the fact of the presence of some major international players.

According to the Armenian Statistical Service, the U.S. investments in the real sector of the economy during the January-September were 15 million 783,3 USD. This index, though, as compared with the same span of the past year, reduced by 27,9%. D. Gaziyan says because of AMD depreciation in Armenia attractive sectors are those which export or add value or manufacture here.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia has been operating in Armenia since 2000. Currently, AmCham has around 80 member companies, which represent various sectors or economy, such as financial services, insurance, banking, energy and mining, information technologies, consumer goods, manufacturing, tourism, marketing and promotion, infrastructure development, internationals organizations, etc. AmCham is a member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and European Council of American Chambers of Commerce.

The executive director assures that one of the most important areas of AmCham activities is lobbying for the business interests of its members in its strive to create more competitive business environment in Armenia. AmCham creates opportunities for its members to network, enlarge the scope of their business contacts and find new partners. D. Gaziyan says another important direction is increasing the business relations between Armenia and Turkey, and AmCham realizes that the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border will have a significant impact on the business environment development in Armenia.

AmCham is issuing its Quarterly Business Magazine, each issue of which is devoted to a specific topic. For example the last issue was devoted to real estate prices in global financial economic crisis conditions, while the upcoming one will be devoted to the business consequences of possible opening of Armenia-Turkey border.

**DIASPORA**



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## **8. Denialist Erdogan in the White House: An Unworthy Guest! [Noyan Tapan, 12/16/09] By Harut Sassounian Publisher, The California Courier**

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan made insulting statements on the Armenian Genocide during his visit to Washington on December 6-8. Rather than hosting him in the White House, Pres. Obama should have declared him 'persona non grata' -- an undesirable person!

Would Pres. Obama have welcomed Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the White House and sang his praises, given his revisionist views on the Holocaust? Inviting Erdogan to the U.S. is even more offensive, akin to receiving a German leader who denies the Holocaust!

Erdogan made a series of outrageous remarks and denialist statements during five public appearances in Washington: At PBS, the Willard Hotel, the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced and International Studies, SETA-DC Turkish think tank, and the German Marshall Fund.

During his December 8, hour-long PBS TV interview by Charlie Rose, Erdogan brought up the Armenian issue by claiming that his government had recently restored 'an Armenian Church' in Van, without disclosing that the Holy Cross Church on Akhtamar Island in Lake Van was reopened not as a house of worship, but as a cultural site to attract tourists! Indeed, the Turkish authorities refused to allow a cross to be placed on the Church's dome!

Erdogan's boastful comments led Charlie Rose to raise the Armenian Genocide issue in a passive manner by asking: "What is necessary in order to -- what more evidence does history need with respect to the genocide?"

The question threw Erdogan into a rage, making him spew hateful statements about the Armenian Genocide: "I can say very clearly that we do not accept genocide. This is completely a lie. I invite people to prove it.... Something like this is really not possible, and there is no truth to it." These are the shameful words of the same man who claimed there was no genocide in Darfur, since he saw no trace of such a crime during his visit to Sudan!

When asked by Charlie Rose if Pres. Obama had brought up the Armenian Genocide issue during the White House meeting, Erdogan said yes, adding that it was in the context of normalizing relations with Armenia: "It was Turkey that initiated the normalization process. It was Turkey that took upon itself the risk. We believe in ourselves. What we would like to see is for this normalization process to go forward. And in that it's important that we go into that and the Karabagh issue between Azerbaijan and Armenia be resolved. There is an occupation. We have to solve that problem. ...And if the positive developments that we would like to see do not come about, then I do not believe that our parliament will have a positive result as a result of its deliberations."

During his appearance at the Johns Hopkins University, Erdogan proudly claimed that his 'ancestors have never committed genocide.' The real issue is not whether his grandparents participated in the Armenian Genocide, since there was no shortage of Turks who did. What's more important is that the Prime Minister has chosen to become an accomplice to these heinous crimes by participating in their cover up!

Despite all the diplomatic pleasantries exchanged between Erdogan and Obama, there were indications that the two leaders had a tense meeting. According to media reports confirmed by White House sources, Pres. Obama bluntly told Erdogan that if the Turkish Parliament did not ratify the Armenia-Turkey Protocols in a timely manner, the U.S. Congress could well adopt a resolution on the Armenian Genocide.

The two leaders also clashed over their divergent views on several key issues: Turkey's unwillingness to send more troops to Afghanistan, refusal to support a recent IAEA resolution to censure Iran's nuclear program, the signing of a multi-billion dollar energy contract with Iran in defiance of U.S. sanctions, worsening ties with Israel, continued occupation of Northern Cyprus, and manifest disregard of minority rights in Turkey.

In the midst of Erdogan's crucial visit, Turkey's Ambassador to Washington Nabi Sensoy tendered his resignation unexpectedly, after an argument with Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu over the logistics of the White House meeting. This scandalous development must have been highly embarrassing for the Prime Minister!

Upon returning to Turkey, Erdogan faced a major political crisis and bloody clashes in the streets of Kurdish populated cities, triggered by the Constitutional Court's banning of the Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP). The court expelled two DTP members from Parliament, while 19 others resigned in protest.

It is a shame that Armenia's leaders, rather than repudiating Erdogan's offensive statements on the Armenian Genocide, continued to talk about normalizing relations with Turkey! Armenian Americans were equally negligent, failing to express their outrage. Erdogan should have been confronted in



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Washington with massive protests and demonstrations! Sadly, silence makes genocide denial an acceptable practice!

## **9. A new supreme council elected at the annual general forum of “Assembly of European Armenians” [Armenpress, 12/17/09]**

A new supreme council chaired by Karo Hakobyan has been elected at the annual general forum of the “Assembly of European Armenians” held lately in the German town of Köln.

An official from the “Assembly of European Armenians” told Armenpress that the Supreme Council will rule the further activity of the assembly. Local and working commissions and bodies were elected that day as well.

Plenipotentiary representatives and individuals of the organizations arrived from European countries participated in the forum. Regulatory and organizational issues of the “Assembly of European Armenians” were discussed, as well as the proposed relevant solutions and institutional reforms were confirmed at the forum.

The participants of the general forum discussed also a number of issues and challenges connected with Diaspora Armenians, especially with Armenians living in Europe. The issue on the efficient activity of the youth deserved a special attention.

The forum stressed the undeniable importance of strengthening and developing the home state.

## **10. Meeting of Armenians residing in China held in Beijing [Noyan Tapan, 12/17/09]**

The Armenian embassy in China held a meeting of Armenians residing in China on December 12. Armenians, who are citizens of Armenia and other countries and reside in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Hong Kong and other cities of China, have attended this meeting organized for the first time. Among the meeting participants were students, businessmen, employees, people of various ages and professions.

On behalf of the organizers, French citizen Mihran Papazian and U.S. citizen Vatche Petrosian addressed the meeting.

The Armenian Ambassador to China Armen Sargsyan made a speech of welcome, in which he thanked the organizers and participants for initiating and realizing the meeting. The ambassador stated the embassy's readiness to sponsor various kinds of events for Armenians who reside or sojourn in China. He stressed the importance of the meeting in terms of establishing close links among Armenians living in the homeland and China.

## **ARTS**

### **11. Belgian Armenians mark 140th birth anniversary of Komitas [Noyan Tapan, 12/16/09]**

The Nuard Armenian cultural union of the city of Antwerp, Belgium, organized an event dedicated to the 140th birth anniversary of Komitas on December 12.

Union Chairman, editor-in-chief of the Lragir monthly newspaper, Chairman of the newly founded Federation of Armenian Organizations of Belgium Gevorg Minasian opened the event and spoke about the life and activity of Komitas.

Songs of Komitas were performed by Armenak Shahmuradian, recordings of Komitas songs performed by him also sounded, Lena Beglarian delighted the spectators with her voice. The children's choir of Nuard union's Saturday school (conductor Lena Beglarian) performed versions of songs by Komitas, the reciting group of the school recited under the directorship of school teacher Lilit Ginosian. A small theatrical performance made by reciter Anya Nalbandian and Narine Shahverdian was presented at the event. Violinist Ara Hakobian performed.

Pastor of Belgian Armenians, Archimandrite Zatik Avetikian was present at the event.

### **12. Gala-concert dedicated to the 85<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Armenian opera singer Gohar Gasparyan will be conducted December 22 [Armenpress, 12/18/09]**

A gala-concert dedicated to the 85<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Armenian opera singer Gohar Gasparyan will be conducted December 22 in Aram Khachaturyan Philharmonic Hall.

Deputy Culture Minister David Muradyan told Armenpress that pupils of Gohar Gasparyan, and laureates of 1<sup>st</sup> contest dedicated to the opera singer will perform at the event.



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“On that day the audience will have an opportunity to feel the breath of Gohar Gasparyan. We are sure that the audience will enjoy the concert as everyone evaluated the art of Gohar Gasparyan,” David Muradyan said.

Gohar Gasparyan was born in Cairo in 1924, studied in the local music academy. In 1948 she returned to homeland and from 1949 started performing in Armenia's Opera and Ballet National Academic Theater. Gohar Gasparyan passed away May 16, 2007.

### **13. Overall 53 thousand people visited Matenadaran in 2009 [Armenpress, 12/18/09]**

About 3 632 groups have paid a visit in the running year to the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts after M. Mashtots – Matenadaran, in which 53 010 people were involved.

Head of the exhibition-hall of Matenadaran Aida Charkhchyan told Armenpress that this index has decreased a bit over the previous year.

About 3 717 groups visited Matenadaran in 2008, in which 56 640 people were involved. According to Charkhchyan, the decrease is connected with the global financial crisis, as well as with AH1N1 infection.

“A great number of school-children visit Matenadaran annually over the months of December and November, but schools were closed this year because of the infection”, A. Charkhchyan said.

France is in the first place with the number of tourists who visited Matenadaran, then comes Italy, Germany, Russia and USA. Last year the number of tourists Germany was especially great. The number of tourists arrived from Japan has decreased this year over 2008 as well.

About 300 manuscript books dating back to 5-18<sup>th</sup> centuries are presented in the 2 halls of Matenadaran, 14 000 of which are in Armenian and 3 000 - in other languages. Overall 17 000 manuscript books and 100 000 archive documents are kept in the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts.

## **SOCIAL**

### **14. Armenian education and science minister not signed a new order on prolonging the rest in pre-educational and secondary schools [Armenpress, 12/17/09]**

Armenian education and science minister has not signed a new order on prolonging the rest in pre-educational and secondary schools operating in the republic.

Press service of Armenian Education and Science Ministry told Armenpress that the December 7 order of Education and Science Minister on suspending the educational process in schools and kindergartens December 8-19 inclusive is in force.

According to it, the classes will start from December 21 and will continue till December 28. In case of changes the ministry will inform the public.

The order on suspending the classes in the mentioned establishments has been signed on the basis of the proposal of Armenian healthcare minister aimed at preventing the spread of acute respiratory deceases.

### **15. “Armavia” plans opening of new flights for the coming year [Armenpress, 12/18/09]**

Armenian national carrier “Armavia” company is planning for the coming year opening of new flights to Barcelona, Warsaw as well as to the USA and Canada. Press secretary of the company Nana Avetisova told Armenpress that in general the company is planning to implement 250 flights in a month in more than 30 directions. As of today the company has 6 airplanes – two “A-320”, three “A 319” and one “CRJ 200”.

In April 2010 it is planned to fill the park with “Superjet 100” passenger-carrier new airplanes which have 98 places. “Armavia” was planning to get two new “Superjets” in December this year and in January of 2010 but connected with the certification issues of the new airplanes they will be brought to Armenia in April. The new planes will be acquired for transatlantic flights.

### **16. Gagik Yeganyan says presented number on Armenian citizens working in Turkey does not correspond to reality [Armenpress, 12/18/09]**

On different occasions it is spoken that the Armenian citizens leaving for Turkey to work comprise a great number. Turkish political leaders even note concrete numbers – 50,000-70,000, but recently the Armenian office of the “Eurasian” Foundation issued a research devoted to the issue, according to which,



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the numbers about the Armenian citizens working in Turkey do not correspond to reality, head of the Armenian Territorial Administration Ministry's Migration Agency Gagik Yeganyan said today at a press conference called on the International Day of Migrants.

He said according to the information, taken from the official web page of the Turkey's Statistical Institute it is seen that since 2000 about 294,000 Armenian citizens entered Turkey and 288,000 returned back. He noted that the eight years' dynamics shows that a sharp increase of Armenia-Turkey passenger transportation has been registered. The stable growth, according to him, is in the limits of 15-20% and if in 2008 for Armenia the total number of passenger-flows in all the directions decreased in case of Turkey it remained the same.

G. Yeganyan, referring to the December 9-10 Geneva gathering dedicated to the issues of refugees, noted that Armenian Vice Prime Minister, Territorial Administration Minister Armen Gevorgyan reached agreement with the UNHCR High Commissioner on finding necessary financial means for the implementation of program on ensuring apartments to the 1988-1992 resettled people from Azerbaijan and program on organization of return of inner displaced people from Armenia's remote areas to their settlements.

The first program is currently being implemented in Yerevan where the number of stakeholders reaches 1000 refugee families and for the solution of the issue around 40 million USD is needed. The total cost of the second program is 38.5 million USD.

In 2000 the UN General Assembly declared December 18 International Day of Migrants.

## **SPORTS**

### **17. Hrachya Rostomyan says "Hatis" exceeded all the expectations [Armenpress, 12/18/09]**

The Yerevan "Hatis" celebrating 3 victories in 6 games of the "F" sub-group and taking the honorable 2 place with 9 points exceeded all the expectations. From the first trial the team entered the 1/16<sup>th</sup> final of the European Cup.

Chairman of the Armenian Basketball Federation Hrachya Rostomyan told Armenpress that the first place in this sub-group has been occupied by one of the strongest clubs of Europe "Athenaikos" having gained 11 points, and it is yet early for "Hatis" to seriously compete with them, but the Armenian team managed to bypass such well-known European teams as Istanbul "Beshiktash" and Vologda's "Chevakatan" which are quite experienced teams and "Hatis" has been formed only two months ago.

H. Rostomyan noted that "Hatis" will get prepared for the next round of the European Cup at its best. The core of the team will be maintained but in general some changes will be made. Some players will be replaced by new legionnaires.

The chairman of the federation said that currently the leadership of the club is working toward strengthening of the team.

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*Established in 1906, AGBU ([www.agbu.org](http://www.agbu.org)) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City with an annual budget of \$36 million, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians on six continents.*