

Armenia and the European Union held their Partnership Committee



Established under the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), the EU-Armenia Partnership Committee met for the third time in Yerevan on 28 April 2022 and for the first time since the CEPA entered into force on 1 March 2021. The Partnership Committee reviewed the implementation of the Agreement.

The EU emphasized its strong engagement in the region, and expressed appreciation for Armenia's continued commitment to reform and for the very good cooperation in various sectors. The EU encouraged the country to carry on with the implementation of concrete reforms in line with the CEPA. The EU welcomed recent efforts to engage into peace talks and highlighted the humanitarian and recovery support it continues to provide.

As a key reform partner for Armenia and the largest donor, the EU stands ready to provide further expertise and financial assistance to strengthen the government's capacity to design and deliver key governance reforms and approximate to the EU standards in line with its CEPA commitments. The ultimate aim of our partnership is to provide concrete benefits to the citizens of

both the EU and Armenia.

To strengthen the country's long-term resilience and leverage public and private investments to support the green and digital transition, the EU will continue to work closely with Armenia and partner with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to progress with the implementation of the Economic and Investment Plan and its priority flagship projects.

Regarding the implementation of the CEPA, the discussion focused on the rule of law, including the role of an independent and efficient justice system, the fight against corruption and the respect of human rights. The EU and Armenia will continue their policy dialogue and their cooperation on the implementation of the Justice sector reform, while expanding such policy discussions to the education sector to advance the finalization and implementation of the education reform strategy. The EU encouraged Armenia to make further progress towards greater freedom of the media, while appreciating the work done.

The Partnership Committee also looked at CEPA implementation in the fields of transport, energy, environ-

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PM Pashinyan receives WHO Regional Director

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received Hans Kluge, World Health Organization Regional Director for Europe.

The Prime Minister assessed the Armenia-WHO cooperation as effective, expressed gratitude for supporting the Armenian healthcare sector, especially mentioning the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. Nikol Pashinyan stressed that the development of the healthcare sector is one of the priorities of the Armenian Government, the executive is implementing key reforms to maintain and improve public health, aiming to provide affordable high-quality services. In this context, the Prime Minister attached importance to the provision of consulting support by the World Health Organization.

The WHO Regional Director empha-

sized the cooperation with the Government of Armenia, praised the measures taken by Armenia to overcome the pandemic, which saved lives and at the same time kept the economy open. Hans Kluge welcomed the reforms initiated by the Government and headed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia in the field of public health and expressed the WHO's support to the process.

The interlocutors discussed the current situation over Covid-19 pandemic. Consistent implementation of the vaccination process was underlined. The sides also exchanged views on the reform process launched in different directions, emphasizing their importance.

During the meeting, the interlocutors touched upon the humanitarian issues cre-



ated by the 44-day war. In this context, the Prime Minister mentioned the issue of the return of Armenian prisoners of war, hostages, other detainees, emphasizing the need for raising the issue by international organizations.

The parties reaffirmed their readiness to deepen the effective partnership.

France will continue to stand by Armenia, Macron tells Khachaturyan

On April 24, on the occasion of the 107th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the President of France Emmanuel Macron sent a message to the President of the Republic of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan.

"Today, on April 24, France commemorates the 107th anniversary of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. The barbarity committed against Armenians obliges us to continue the fight against hatred and violence, as, unfortunately, we are reminded of it by the events unfolding on the European continent. That is why, in 2019, I included the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in the national calendar. This memorable date also reminds us of the solidarity between France and Armenia," Macron said.

"France will never stop fighting against



oblivion, encouraging the transmission of the memory of the genocide. This struggle for justice, the historical truth, belongs to the Armenians, but also to the whole of France, because respect for human rights is at the core of the brotherhood of the French Republic. That is why genocide denial must be tirelessly prevented, especially in the school environment. At European level,

we are developing legal tools to curb hate speech on the Internet. Our presidency of the Council of the European Union is an opportunity to work with our European partners to finalize the draft law on digital services so that the genocide can no longer be denied with impunity," the French President noted.

"On this sad day of remembrance, we look to the future. This day also symbolizes the rebirth of the Armenian people, as evidenced by the Genocide Memorial at Tsitsernakaberd. I assure you that France will continue to stand by Armenia to support the latter's democratic process and economic development efforts. You know very well how important it is for me to strengthen our ties at all levels," Emmanuel Macron concluded.

Armenian, Russian, Azerbaijani FMs to meet on May 13



Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan had a telephone conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

The interlocutors expressed satisfac-

tion with the results of the Armenian Prime Minister's official visit to Russia, reaffirmed the commitment of the parties to the provisions of the April 19 joint statement of RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The Foreign Ministers discussed the implementation of the commitments undertaken by the trilateral statements of November 9, 2020, January 11, 2021 and November 26, 2021, and referred to the formation of the Commission on Demarcation and Border Security between Armenia

and Azerbaijan.

Ararat Mirzoyan reaffirmed Armenia's position on the processes aimed at establishing regional peace and stability, negotiations on a comprehensive peace agreement with Azerbaijan.

Minister Mirzoyan agreed with the proposal of the Russian side to hold a trilateral meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan within the framework of the sitting of the CIS Council of Foreign Ministers to be held on May 13 in Dushanbe.



The relations between Armenia and Georgia have a great potential of political and economic development, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Ilia Darchiashvili said during a joint press conference with Armenian counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan in Yerevan.

“We stated that a great potential of political and economic cooperation exists between the two countries. Trade, transport, energy, tourism, culture, education: these are the sectors which play important role in our bilateral relations”, the Georgian FM said, presenting the results of his meeting held with the Armenian FM during his official visit in Yerevan.

Talking about the history of the bilateral relations, the Georgian FM reminded that this year Armenia and Georgia celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. However, he noted that the historical and friendly ties of

Important to strengthen Armenia-Georgia friendly ties in rapidly changing geopolitical environment – FM Darchiashvili

the two countries have a history of centuries.

“I am confident that the existing cooperation between Georgia and Armenia will continue in the same way. In a rapidly changing geopolitical environment it’s important to strengthen the friendly relations between our countries in order to be able to jointly overcome the new challenges and use the opportunities”, he said.

Ilia Darchiashvili said that they have also discussed in detail the ongoing developments and challenges in the region and the efforts of the two countries directed to these challenges.

“Georgia has always supported the peaceful cooperation and co-existence in South Caucasus. We highly appreciate Armenia’s unconditional support to Georgia’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, which speaks about the partnering relations between the two countries”, he said.

In his turn Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said that there is a political dialogue between Armenia and Geor-

gia, and the mutual partnership both in bilateral and multilateral platforms is at a high level.

At their meeting the two ministers specifically touched upon the transit potential of the South Caucasian region. The Georgian FM said it is of “critical” significance not only for Georgia, but also for Armenia.

“It was stated that the sides will support new transit projects, taking into account the strategic goals and issues of the two countries. In terms of economic cooperation, we attach importance to the complete use of the existing potential. I am happy that the sessions of the bilateral economic commission are being held on a regular basis. We have expressed readiness for further effective collaboration. I am deeply convinced that our future relations will continue in accordance with the best traditions”, the Georgian FM added.

He thanked his Armenian counterpart for the welcome and also expressed readiness to host Mirzoyan in Tbilisi at a convenient time.

Armenia not afraid not to find itself on any maps: FM Mirzoyan responds to Aliyev

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan commented on the statements of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev according to which they will rely on all the maps of 1918 and those existing before the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union during the border clarification process with Armenia, and that according to some maps of 1918-1920 Yerevan, Syunik were allegedly part of Azerbaijan.

The FM gave a comment to ARMENPRESS:

Question: The President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev stated yesterday that the process of clarifying the borders with Armenia will be implemented on the basis of all

the maps of 1918 and the once that existed before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and that according to some of the maps of 1918 to 1920, Yerevan and Syunik were allegedly part of Azerbaijan. How would you comment on these statements?

Answer: We are not against the research of the maps. But why consider only the 20th century? We can start from the maps created in Babylon in the 6th century BC, or by Herodotus in the 5th century BC, or by Strabo in the 1st century BC, or created by Claudius Ptolemy in the 2nd century AD, or from the maps created by Pliny the Elder in the same period, and then to continue with numerous Latin, Byzantine,



Arabic and other geographical descriptions and maps of later periods. Armenia is not afraid not to find itself on those maps.

However, being interested in the effective work of the forthcoming Commission on demarcation and border security, the Republic of Armenia believes that this work should be based on maps that are accepted by both sides and have legal force.

US working with Armenia and Azerbaijan to make sure no one takes steps that would revert to conflict

The US is working with Armenia and Azerbaijan to prevent steps that would lead to a renewal of the conflict, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said as he testifies before the House Committee on Foreign

Affairs.

“I have spoken repeatedly with the Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev trying to ensure first of all that no

one takes steps that would potentially revert to conflict, but also to try to advance and support a long-term political settlement,” Secretary Blinken said.

Ruling Party Slams Opposition Push for Regime Change

(RFE/RL) - Representatives of the ruling Civil Contract party on April 28 denounced opposition efforts to bring down Armenia's government through street protests and said they will end in failure.

Accordingly, they ruled out Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's resignation demanded by the country's two leading opposition blocs.

The Hayastan and Pativ Unem blocs began on Monday small-scale protests in preparation for mass demonstrations aimed at toppling Pashinyan and preventing what they say are sweeping concessions to Azerbaijan planned by him.

Pashinyan signaled earlier this month his administration's readiness to recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity through a bilateral peace treaty. Critics say he is intent on helping Baku regain control of Karabakh. The premier's political allies deny this.

Artur Hovannisian, a parliament dep-

uty from Civil Contract, accused the opposition of exploiting the Karabakh issue for political purposes.

"This narrative ended after 2018," Hovannisian told RFE/RL's Armenian Service. "They are now trying to revive it because they have no legitimate source of coming to power -- namely, the people's support -- because we can see that their actions are not accompanied by strong support from citizens."

Hrachya Hakobyan, another pro-government lawmaker and Pashinyan's brother-in-law, also said that the opposition forces will fail to unseat the current government.

"The [average] guy sitting at home and following their actions hears only negative messages and will not participate in those actions," he said.

Both lawmakers rejected any parallels between the ongoing opposition campaign and the 2018 mass protests that brought Pashinyan to power.

Meanwhile, large groups of opposition members and supporters staged "awareness marches," blocked streets and entered university campuses in Yerevan for the fourth consecutive day. Riot police stepped up arrests of protesters as they unblocked traffic through those streets.

A spokesman for the Armenian police said that about 40 persons were detained by late afternoon. They were expected to be set free a few hours later.

"We must achieve the final result," Hayastan's Gegham Manukyan told RFE/RL's Armenian Service as he led a group of supporters that began marching to Yerevan from Armavir province in the morning.

"We must defend Artsakh," he said. "We must defend Armenia and restore our security by ousting these authorities because these authorities are not capable of doing anything anymore."

The opposition is scheduled its first major rally in Yerevan on Sunday.



The number one beneficiary of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement is Artsakh and the people of Artsakh, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan said at a meeting with President of Artsakh Arayik Harutyunyan and Artsakh Cabinet members in Yerevan.

PM Pashinyan said that the Government of Armenia has always attached importance to informing the Government of Artsakh on the negotiations around the NK conflict, the content and course, challenges and opportunities, and that this principle

Artsakh, people of Artsakh are number one beneficiary of NK conflict settlement - Pashinyan

will be preserved.

"The number one beneficiary of the NK settlement is Artsakh and the people of Artsakh, and therefore any content that would be negotiated and implemented covertly is illogical and it is impossible to imagine such thing," Pashinyan said.

PM Pashinyan praised President of Artsakh Arayik Harutyunyan's recent statement that the authorities of Artsakh are also adopting the peace agenda. "The agenda of peace is not an agenda of defeat. The agenda of peace is an agenda of overcoming the disaster of the war and the following difficulties and guaranteeing the security and rights and future of the peo-

ple. As a result of cruel, difficult work I see the sequence of steps that should lead us to this destination that we are talking about, that being the guarantee of the security and rights of the people of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh," the PM said.

The PM highlighted that Artsakhis should live in Artsakh, consider themselves Artsakhis and Armenians.

"A huge part of our joint work concerns the socio-economic sector and it is principled for us that people live in Artsakh and feel themselves safe in Artsakh. I am sure that we are on the right track and I am happy that the authorities of Artsakh share this agenda," Pashinyan said.

Armenia, Turkey representatives to meet in Vienna on May 3

The next meeting of the Special Representatives of Armenia and Turkey in the Armenia-Turkey normalization process will take place on May 3 in Vienna, Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vahan Hunanyan informs.

Special Representatives for the normalization process between Armenia and Turkey – the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia Ruben Rubinyan



and Ambassador Serdar Kilic – last met in Vienna on February 24.

The Special Representatives confirmed that the ultimate goal of the negotiations is to achieve full normalization between Armenia and Turkey, as agreed during their first meeting in Moscow.

They exchanged views on possible concrete steps that can be mutually undertaken to that end and reiterated their agreement to continue the process without preconditions.



The Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia Armen Grigoryan referred to the statement of the Assistant to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Hikmet Hajiyev that the main expectation of Azerbaijan from Armenia is the recognition of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. In response to inquiry of ARMENPRESS, Armen Grigoryan noted that in the context of that announcement, the

Azerbaijani officials should specify which territories they see in the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan - Grigoryan

Azerbaijani officials should specify which territories they see in the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, so that Armenia could specify its position.

- Assistant to the President of Azerbaijan Hikmet Hajiyev stated that the main expectation of Azerbaijan is the recognition of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan by Armenia. What is Armenia's position on this issue?

- We have already stated that there is nothing unacceptable in the proposal of mutually recognizing each other's territo-

rial integrity by Armenia and Azerbaijan. We also said that Armenia and Azerbaijan recognized each other's territorial integrity in the early 1990s. The Nagorno-Karabakh issue is not a territorial issue for us, but an issue of security and rights for the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. But some statements by a number of high-ranking Azerbaijani officials need to be clarified. In the context of these statements, we believe that the Azerbaijani officials should specify which territories they see in the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan so that Armenia could clarify its position.

Armenia said to seek 'strategic' ties with Iran

Armenia has reportedly communicated to Iran its desire to turn relations between the two neighboring states into strategic partnership.

According to an Iranian government statement, Arsen Avagyan, the new Armenian ambassador in Tehran, made this clear after handing his credentials to Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi on April 25.

"Armenia is ready to raise relations between the two countries to the level of strategic relations," Raisi's office quoted Avagyan as saying.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said Avagyan told Raisi that he will do his best to help deepen Armenian-Iranian ties. A ministry statement on their conversation made no references to Yerevan's desire to make those ties "strategic."

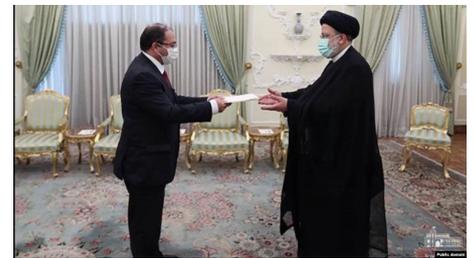
Raisi was cited by his office as noting

"potentials for the development of friendly, long-lasting relations between Tehran and Yerevan." He said that Tehran supports the territorial integrity of states.

Raisi emphasized that support in a January phone call with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. "In this regard, Tehran supports the sovereignty of Armenia over all territories and roads passing through that country," he said at the time.

Armenia and Azerbaijan are to reopen their border to commercial and passenger traffic under the terms of a Russian-brokered ceasefire that stopped their six-week war for Nagorno-Karabakh in November 2020. The deal specifically commits Yerevan to opening rail and road links between Azerbaijan and its Nakhichevan exclave.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly claimed that it envisages



an exterritorial land corridor that would pass through Armenia's Syunik province bordering Iran. Armenian leaders have dismissed his claims, saying that Azerbaijani citizens and cargo cannot be exempt from Armenian border controls.

Some Iranian officials accused Aliyev last fall of seeking to effectively strip Iran of a common border with Armenia. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian likewise warned that any "changes in the region's map" are unacceptable to the Islamic Republic.

Why should Kosovo benefit from international mechanism of salvation and compensation, but not Artsakh? - Artak Beglaryan

Why should Kosovo or other internationally unrecognized countries benefit from the international mechanism of salvation and compensation, but not Artsakh? State Minister of the Artsakh Republic Artak Beglaryan voiced this rhetorical question on his "Telegram" channel.

"It was a pleasure to hear Russian President Vladimir Putin talk to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres about the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on Kosovo. Undoubtedly, this was a precedent for the peoples who live under the existential threat, fight for their right to self-determination, among which the indigenous people of Artsakh are in the forefront.



Needless to bring proofs of the genocidal policies against the Armenians of Artsakh over the decades, including the ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Azerbaijan and Artsakh, deportation, destruction

of cultural heritage, systemic policies of anti-Armenianism, and a number of other existential threats, as evidenced by the decision of the UN International Court of Justice, as well as similar documented facts of many other international organizations.

And now the rhetorical question is why Kosovo or other internationally unrecognized countries should benefit from this international mechanism of salvation and compensation, and Artsakh, which meets all the standards of international law, no. We should not forget the many cases when the international community did not fulfill its preventive responsibilities, as a result of which different peoples were subjected to genocide," Beglaryan wrote.

page 1 ➔ ment and climate action. On air transport, the EU and Armenia agreed to enhance collaboration on air safety, building on the Common Aviation Area Agreement signed in November 2021. On Energy, the EU and Armenia agreed to follow the implementation of the Armenian National Action Plan on nuclear safety, adopted as a part of the EU supported Stress test process. The discussions also took stock of economic development, employment and education reforms. The EU congratulated Armenia for joining Horizon Europe [1]. The meeting also re-

viewed progress on migration and mobility and acknowledged the willingness of Armenia to start a visa liberalization dialogue.

Finally, the Partnership Committee discussed issues related to the Eastern Partnership and regional affairs.

The meeting was co-chaired by Mr Paruyr Hovhannisyan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Mr Luc Devigne, Deputy Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia at the European External Action Service.

The Horizon Europe Framework



Agreement on Research and Innovation was signed on 12 November 2021 by the European Commission and by Armenia and it applies retroactively as from 1 January 2021.

Iran views Armenia as a “gateway” to enter the markets of Russia and other EEU member states



Minister of Economy of Armenia Vahan Kerobyan received the delegation led by the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyed Ehsan Khandouzi on April 28 to discuss the opportunities of expanding bilateral relations in the economic sphere.

As the press service of the Ministry of Economy informs, the meeting was also attended by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Republic of Armenia Abbas Badakhshan Zohouri, the Deputy Minister

of Economy of Armenia Narek Teryan and Armenia’s Trade Representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran Vardan Kostanyan.

Welcoming the guests, Vahan Kerobyan noted that although Armenia’s trade turnover with Iran increased by 25% in 2021, there is a great potential for further expansion of bilateral cooperation and bringing that figure to \$ 1 billion. In his speech, Vahan Kerobyan also presented the priority directions of the Armenian economy and the mechanisms of state support.

The Minister of Economic Affairs and

Finance of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyed Ehsan Khandouzi noted that the policy of the new government of Iran emphasizes the development of relations with neighboring countries, especially neighboring friendly country Armenia. According to Seyed Ehsan Khandouzi, the Iranian side strongly attaches importance to not only the development of economic relations with Armenia, but also views Armenia as a “gateway” to enter the markets of Russia and other EEU member states.

During the meeting, issues related to the implementation of joint investment programs, the construction of an industrial zone with the participation of the Iranian side, the improvement of logistics infrastructure, simplification and regulation of procedures in the cargo transportation process, as well as revision of transit cargo payment rates were discussed.

Reference was made to the most promising directions of cooperation in the economic sphere, a number of other issues of mutual interest, which will be discussed in more detail during the forthcoming 17th sitting of the joint intergovernmental commission of the Republic of Armenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Armenia, India boost cooperation in employment and social protection field

Armenia's Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Narek Mkrtychyan says that during his recent visit to India a number of agreements were reached to boost the cooperation in employment and social protection sector.

During a press conference on April 28 the minister said this is the first experience of such a level of dialogue.

"India is a very important country for Armenia in the context of multi-sectoral cooperation. In this respect I would like to note that the visit was quite productive and was full of agreements reached. Working groups have already been formed to deal with the implementation of these agreements", he said.

He particularly highlighted the meeting with the executives of Skill India large state corporation. The corporation is cooperating with different business associations, major companies and is engaged in development of human skills, trainings. It also has active relations with educational institutions, business organizations, clarifies priority areas and what kind of specialists are needed. It trains 60 million people annually. Minister Mkrtychyan informed that a memorandum has been signed with

the corporation's leadership on introducing such an institute in Armenia.

"India's experience in training a large number of people, making them competitive in the labor market is very important for us. Today we re-assess our employment programs in order to make them more targeted. And studying the successful international experience is very important here. India has quite a successful experience in this respect. If we manage to introduce such a system in Armenia, we will be able to offer new paths for development of skills to our citizens", the minister said.

Mkrtychyan informed that he had a productive meeting also with the Indian Minister of Labor, Employment and Environment, and they agreed to sign agreements in a number of directions. A working group has already been formed to deal with pushing forward these activities. "We will start these activities next week. One of the directions relates to the discussions over an organized labor migration. As you know,



a labor force from India is attracted to Armenia's different areas. We are planning to put this movement on legal relations, provide legal consulting, formalize everything that is informal and give an opportunity for training", he said.

The next direction, he said, is the field of social protection and working relations, which is again developed in India. Narek Mkrtychyan said India is among those unique countries that granted people working remotely a status by including them in the social protection system. "This is also important for Armenia. A process of exchange of experience will start in this direction", he added.

Armenia to provide additional 20 billion drams to Artsakh for housing projects

The Government of Armenia will provide an additional 20 billion drams to Artsakh for housing projects given the urgent needs of apartments in Artsakh, State Minister of Artsakh Artak Beglaryan announced after the meeting of Artsakh President Arayik Harutyunyan with Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan.

"The two main issues on the agenda were Artsakh's socio-economic condition and the Azerbaijani-Karabakhi conflict settlement process,"



he said.

Beglaryan added that an agreement was reached that the Government of Armenia will provide an additional 20 billion drams to Artsakh for housing projects given the urgent needs of apartments in Artsakh.

"Of course, ideas were also exchanged on Artsakh's security, status and conflict settlement process," he added.

Statements on corridors around communication routes unacceptable for us – Iranian Ambassador to Armenia



Governor of Syunik province Robert Ghukasyan received Ambassador of Iran to Armenia Abbas Badakhshan Zohouri. The meeting was also attended by Mayor of Kapan Gevorg Parsyan and head of the Syunik department of Police Alexander Mamikonyan, the Governor's Office said.

The main topic discussed at the meeting was the Consulate of Iran that is going to open in Kapan and in this context the actions to be taken to deepen and strengthen the cooperation between Syunik and Iran in different areas.

Governor Robert Ghukasyan thanked the diplomat for the visit, stating that the relations with Iran are very important for

Armenia, especially for Syunik, and the governorate is ready to do everything to make the bilateral ties more effective.

In his turn the Iranian Ambassador said that despite the close cultural ties, the economic relations between the two countries are not at a desirable level, stressing the need for efforts on this direction. He also thanked for helping Iranian citizens who appeared in a difficult situation in the inter-state highway because of heavy snows this year in March.

The Ambassador reminded the position of Iran on the inviolability of Armenia's internationally recognized borders and said that all countries should respect it. "Statements on corridors around communication routes are unacceptable for us, we believe that Armenia should preserve its territorial integrity", he said.

The Governor of Syunik and the Mayor of Kapan thanked the Ambassador for Iran's official position on "corridor". "Your opinion is important and is appreciated by each resident of Syunik", Robert Ghukasyan said.

kasyan said.

9 months ago, the Iranian side reached an agreement to open a consulate in Kapan, and the Ambassador said that the purpose of this is to develop the relations in all areas. He also introduced the consul at the meeting, adding that they will soon present the staff of the consulate to the Armenian foreign ministry.

The Iranian side also talked about its interest to the section of the North-South highway passing via Syunik and informed that there are Iranian companies who expressed readiness to participate in the construction of that section.

The sides also discussed economic, cultural, educational and other issues.

Gevorg Parsyan informed that the teaching of Persian will start in the community's educational institution from September.

At the end of the visit the Iranian guests observed sites for the future consulate building in Kapan.

UNESCO assessment mission's visit to Nagorno Karabakh urgently needed - Armenia MFA spokesperson

Armenia strongly condemns the acts of vandalism and desecration of the St. Harutyun Church in the city of Hadrut, that came under the control of Azerbaijan after the 2020 war, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Vahan Hunanyan said in a statement released over the St. Harutyun Church in Hadrut.

The statement says:

"We strongly condemn the acts of vandalism and desecration of the St. Harutyun Church in the city of Hadrut, fallen under the control of Azerbaijan.

These pre-planned actions carried out



by the authorities of Azerbaijan, aimed at destroying and desecrating the identity of Armenian religious, historical and cultural monuments in the territories under the

control of the Azerbaijani armed forces, are another manifestation of Azerbaijan's ethnic and religious intolerance and the continuation of the policy of depriving Artsakh of Armenians and the Armenian trace.

The atrocities against Armenian churches and other cultural and religious monuments in Artsakh grossly violate the norms of international law, including the decision on application of provisional measures issued by the UN International Court of Justice on December 7, 2021.

This case reaffirms the claims of the Armenian side on the urgent need for the visit of UNESCO assessment mission to Nagorno Karabakh".

Armenian Opposition Starts ‘Civil Disobedience’ Campaign

(RFE/RL) - Thousands of protesters occupied a square in downtown Yerevan on May 1 at the start of what Armenia’s leading opposition forces described as a “civil disobedience” campaign aimed at toppling Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The opposition Hayastan and Pativ Unem alliances pitched tents in France Square, the inter-

section of four key avenues, as they rallied their supporters there after days of more small-scale protests. They said they will block streets in the city center and other parts of the Armenian capital on Monday to step up the pressure on the Armenian government.

“We will not leave this place until we achieve victory,” said Anna Grigoryan, a lawmaker affiliated with Hayastan.

Addressing the crowd, she and other opposition leaders reiterated that Pashinyan’s removal from power would prevent sweeping concessions to Azerbaijan planned by him.

Pashinyan signaled last month his administration’s readiness to recognize



Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity through a bilateral peace treaty. Critics say he is intent on helping Baku regain control of Karabakh. The premier’s political allies deny this.

“These authorities have no mandate to lead the country to new concessions,” Ishkhan Saghatelyan, a Hayastan leader, told the protesters before announcing the “large-scale actions of disobedience.”

“This is not a seizure of power,” he said. “This is an exercise of dignified citizens’ constitutional right to come out and oust these pro-Turkish authorities for the sake of Armenia, Artsakh (Karabakh) and the Armenian people.”

Saghatelyan also urged parliament dep-

uties representing Pashinyan’s Civil Contract to use the “last chance to correct your mistake” and defect from the ruling political team.

Some of those pro-government lawmakers have publicly denounced the opposition campaign and said it will end in failure.

The opposition set up the protest camp amid heightened security, with scores of riot police deployed nearby. They did not attempt to disperse the protesters.

Earlier on Sunday, Armenia’s Office of the Prosecutor-General warned the opposition against “provoking mass disturbances.”

In a separate statement, the National Security Service (NSS) claimed that there is a “real danger” of such violence. It said it will not hesitate to counter “any kind of actions destabilizing Armenia’s internal stability.”

Saghatelyan, who is also a deputy speaker of the Armenian parliament, dismissed these warnings, saying that the opposition will be staging only peaceful protests. He also urged security forces to defy Pashinyan’s “illegal orders.”

Armenian Publisher Attacked by Opposition Protesters



An Armenian book publisher known for his conciliatory views on Azerbaijan and Turkey was assaulted on April 27 by opposition supporters holding an anti-government demonstration in Yerevan.

Armen Martirosyan, the owner of the Antares publishing house, ran into the protesters on his way to a business meeting. Videos of the incident showed some of them hitting, shoving and verbally abusing

him.

“Some people in the crowd probably recognized me,” Martirosyan told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service. “They started shouting Antares, calling me a Turk, swearing.”

The Armenian police said on Thursday that they are investigating the incident. It was not clear whether anyone was questioned or detained by investigators.

Martirosyan said that riot police officers escorting the crowd did not protect him against the violence. He said that the police had also failed to act on threats received by him in the past.

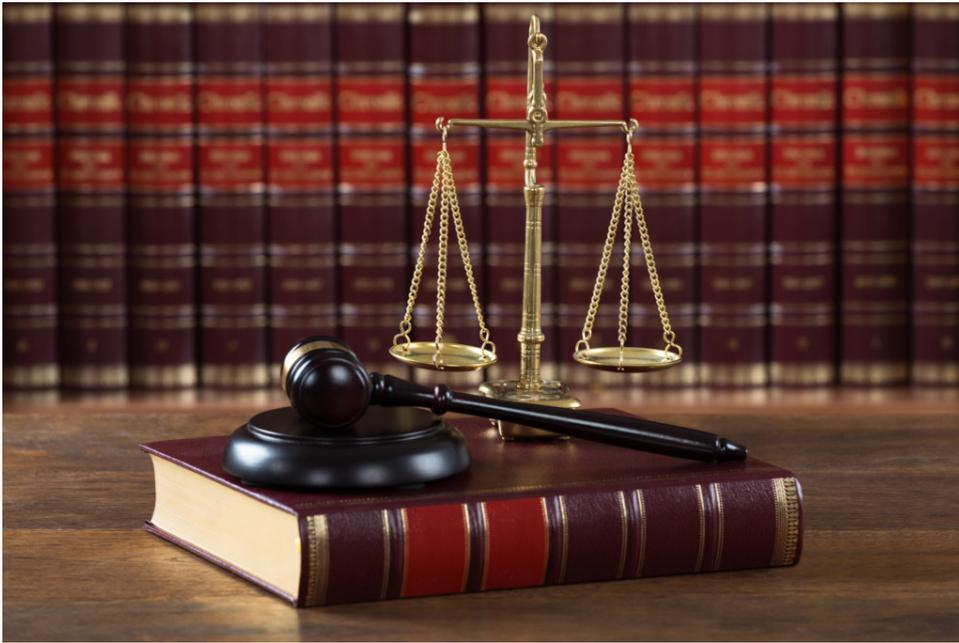
The publisher suggested that the main reason for the assault was one of his social media posts made shortly after Armenia’s

defeat in the 2020 war with Azerbaijan. He criticized at the time Armenian occupation of districts around Nagorno-Karabakh taken by Baku as a result of the six-week war. He stood by the criticism on Thursday.

“Being in the territory of Kubatli (one of those districts) is not the same thing as being in the territory of Artsakh (Karabakh),” Martirosyan said. “There is a big difference between them.”

The Yerevan rally marred by the attack on Martirosyan was part of the Armenian opposition’s preparations for mass protests against the government. Opposition leaders say they want to topple Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in order to prevent further concessions to Azerbaijan planned by him.

Legal action launched to block waiver of Section 907 restrictions on U.S. aid to Azerbaijan



A request for a temporary restraining order has been filed against US President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, which would block the waiver of Section 907 restrictions on U.S. aid to

Azerbaijan.

Hrair Kaladjian, Esq. filed the legal action, which would enjoin the Biden Administration from certifying the Section 907 waiver “until such time as the Govern-

ment of the United States properly reports on the effects of any waiver of Section 907 pursuant to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and until the Government of Azerbaijan ceases all forms of Armenophobia.”

According to the results of a GAO investigation issued earlier this year, the State Department has consistently failed to inform Congress of the impact of over \$164 million in U.S. assistance to Baku on the military balance between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Secretary of State Blinken, in response to questions from Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), stated this week that the Biden Administration is still reviewing whether to waive Section 907, despite ongoing Azerbaijani aggression against Artsakh and Armenia. The ANCA, and a coalition of human rights, faith-based, and ethnic groups has called on the Bi



Human Rights Defender slams police for excessive force, failure to read rights upon arrest

The Ombudsperson Kristine Grigoryan dispatched rapid response teams to several police precincts of the Yerevan Police Department for a monitoring in relation to the arrests of demonstrators.

The Ombudsperson’s representatives had private conversations with 35 arrested citizens and studied the footages of their detention. 7 of the 35 detained individuals are minors, one of whom is 13 years old.

According to eyewitness accounts, 4 police officers detained the 13-year-old, while the others were detained by 4-6 police officers each.

When police officers were detaining the 13-year-old, some of the demonstrators informed the police officers that they

are detaining a minor, however the police officers did not take it into account. The 13-year-old was subsequently released from the police department without administrative proceedings.

The Ombudsperson’s office said that in some cases, upon detaining the demonstrators, police officers failed to notify the demonstrators on the grounds of their detention, failed to notify their rights (right to an attorney, right to remain silent, right to a phone call and other rights), and used excessive force.

In addition, in some precincts police failed to properly book the detained.

Those detained included Alexan Tumasyan, an attorney who was arrested by police as a demonstrator but who informed the officers that he wasn’t taking part in the protests but was there to represent one of his clients.

The Ombudsperson’s office said the

recorded issues are now being summed up and necessary measures will be taken.

“The Human Rights Defender is noting that the procedure of administrative arrest conducted by police officers is carried out with manifestations of gross violations of several rights and freedoms. Particularly, the police officers’ failure to issue any lawful order, failure to explain the grounds for arrest, failure to read basic rights, and the use of excessive force is of continues nature. Based on this, the Human Rights Defender is calling upon the Police of Republic of Armenia to display duly and lawful conduct while carrying out their duty and ensure the possibility of the exercise of the basic rights of detained individuals,” the Ombudsperson’s office said in a statement, adding that they continue 24/7 monitoring, including in terms of “extreme and dangerous speech”.

Exhibition on “100 Years of Armenians in Vrnjačka Banja” opens in the capital of Serbian tourism



An exhibition titled “100 Years of Armenians in Vrnjačka Banja” opened in the capital of the Serbian tourism – the famous Vrnjačka Banja spa resort, under the auspices of the Ambassador Ashot Hovakimian and the Mayor Boban Đurović.

The exhibition is organized by the newly established Union of Armenians of Vrnjačka Banja and Museum of Culture.

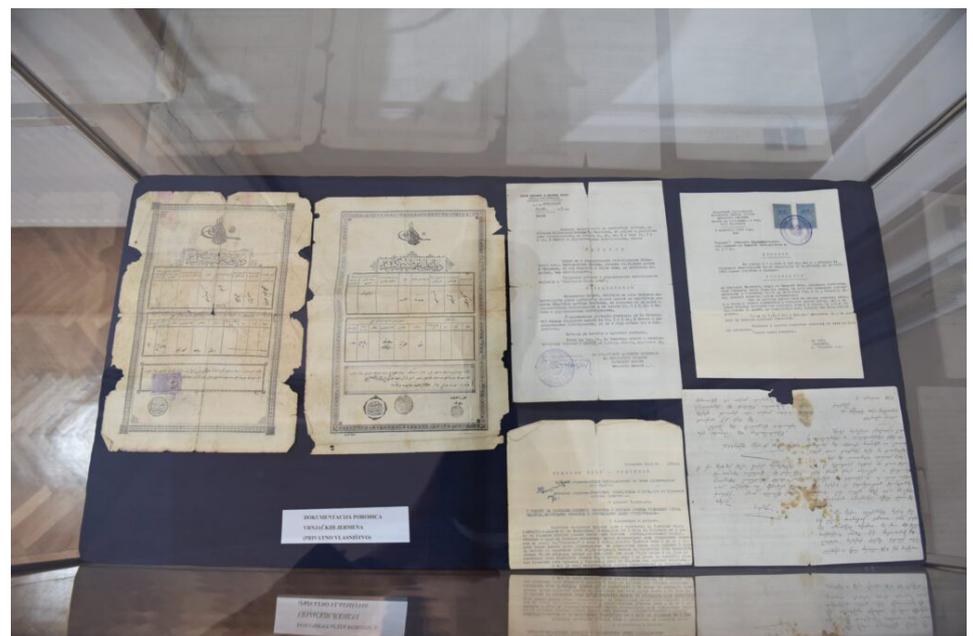
In the spring of 1922, several Armenian families that survived the Armenian Genocide (all together 40 people), sheltered in the Mediterranean coastal community of Dört Yol. They were forced to emigrate again with the Greek refugees, and when they arrived in Thessaloniki, they appealed to King Alexander I of Yugoslavia to resettle in Yugoslavia (Serbia).

As a result, a 10-year agreement on resettlement and the purchase of land was signed between them and the Royal office. This was an exceptional case of organized Armenian migration to Serbia after the

Armenian Genocide, which resulted in the existence of a successful, vibrant, closely interconnected Armenian community in the city for 100 years.

At the beginning of the ceremony, Ambassador Ashot Hovakimian, Mayor of Vrnjačka Banja Boban Đurović, President of the Union of Armenians of Vrn-

jačka Banja Čedomir Artinović-Artinjan, in the presence of the general public of



the city, a large number of heirs of the

Vrnjačka Banja Armenians from different cities of Serbia, even from abroad, laid wreaths at the monument to King Alexander Karađorđević of Yugoslavia in the central park of the city.

In the city’s Museum of Culture, which formerly was the residence of the famous tycoon Relja Belimarković, and around which the first Armenian migrants were relocated, the solemn opening of the exhibition took place, during which Ambassador Hovakimian, Mayor Đurović, the director of the Museum made the welcoming speeches.

Slavica Davidović (Der Bogosijan), the author of the exhibition “Life through Photos”, presented the life and activity of a number of Armenian families (Der Bogosijans, Artinijans, Belanijans, Setrakijans, Jegenijans) who survived the genocide and found their second home in Serbia, over the last hundred years. It was noteworthy, that the exhibition also featured the works of the fourth generation of Belanijan and Der Bogosijan families – the talented sculptor Jovana Petković Belanijan and painter Relja Der Bogosijan.

The event aroused great interest in Serbia, was widely covered by the central and regional press and television.

IMF completes final review under Stand-By Arrangement with Armenia, allows authorities to draw \$35 million



The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed the sixth and final review under the Stand-By Arrangement with Armenia. The completion of the review will allow the authorities to draw SDR 25.716 million (about US\$35 million), bringing total disbursements to SDR 308.8 million (about US\$415 million) under Armenia's three-year SBA. The SBA was approved by the IMF's Board on May 17, 2019 and augmented on May 18, 2020. The Executive Board's decision was taken without a meeting.

The 3-year Stand-By Arrangement, approved in May 2019, comes to an end on May 16, 2022, after the conclusion

of this review. Notwithstanding various domestic and external shocks that hit the economy over the past three years, program performance has been satisfactory and important structural reforms have been advanced.

Armenia's economy continued to recover in 2021 and early 2022, largely thanks to the authorities' economic management efforts. They persevered with strong policy implementation and remained proactive to adjust policies appropriately to unforeseen developments. More generally, over the three-year program, the authorities advanced important structural and institutional reforms, including on improving tax compliance, refining the budget process, strengthening the inflation targeting framework and supporting financial sector stability, as well as implementing reforms to strengthen governance, foster transparency, and combat corruption. A flexible exchange rate is more entrenched within the country's policy framework. The authorities have also developed an ambitious medium-term reform

program that, if successfully implemented, could lead to stronger and more inclusive growth.

The economic outlook for 2022 is subject to high uncertainty due to the spillovers from the war in Ukraine. Despite the strong momentum in early 2022, economic growth is projected to slow down to about 1.5 percent this year, primarily owing to lower consumption and contraction in trade. Inflation is expected to remain elevated on account of higher import prices, particularly food and oil, and the current account is expected to widen as the economy adjusts to shocks. In this regard, the CBA's recent policy tightening signals its strong commitment to contain inflationary pressures and anchor inflation expectations. Its ongoing supervisory initiatives would also help preserve financial stability. Fiscal space should be used prudently to mitigate the adverse impact of the war in Ukraine on the economy, while continuing to support the authorities' medium-term fiscal consolidation efforts.

Armenian FM to meet Blinken, Power in Washington



On May 2-6, Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan will pay a working visit to the United States of America to participate in the session of Armenia-US Strategic Dialogue.

In Washington, Ararat Mirzoyan will also meet with US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, USAID Director Samantha

Power, US Special Assistant to the President Amanda Sloat and other colleagues.

Meetings with high-ranking representatives of the US Congress will take place.

Within the framework of the visit, the Foreign Minister of Armenia will deliver remarks at the Atlantic Council think tank.

Cavusoglu defends Grey Wolves gesture to Armenian protesters

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has explained the Grey Wolves gesture to Armenian protesters in Uruguay.

Speaking to reporters on his way back from Montevideo, the Turkish FM said the authorities had assured that there would be no protesters at the opening of the Turkish Embassy in Montevideo.

"During the opening of our building, they assured our ambassador that that group would not be allowed in front of

it. It was a mistake to have the group approached there even though they had promised," Cavusoglu said.

He then added that "the demonstrators exhibited ugly attitudes."

"After these unacceptable and ugly attitudes, we gave the necessary answer. Our action is an insult neither to the Uruguayan authorities, nor to the Uruguayan people nor to the demonstrators," the Turkish FM said.

Mevlit Cavusoglu flashed the gesture of the ultra-nationalist Grey Wolves group at Armenian protesters in Montevideo on April 23.





The Armenian community of Istanbul is alarmed by rumors that soon they might face obstructions in holding elections of the board at the Surp Pirgic (Holy Saviour) Armenian Hospital, thus losing the 188-year-old landmark national institution of the community.

Surp Pirgic (Holy Saviour) Armenian Hospital in Yedikule, Istanbul is technically regulated as a foundation.

In 2013, the Turkish government abolished the regulations governing the elections at foundations of national minorities, and new regulations have not been approved since then.

Bagrat Estukian, an editor-in-chief at the Istanbul-based Armenian Agos newspaper, says there are rumors circulating

Armenian community of Istanbul warns of risk of losing management of landmark Surp Pirgic Hospital

in the community that the authorities will soon introduce the new regulation, but the community is concerned that this won't solve the issue.

"Very concerning developments are taking place. It's about the 2013 abolition of the regulation, which they said was taking place because a new charter was being prepared. Back then, the elections were indefinitely delayed at the Surp Pirgic Armenian Hospital, which has a status of a foundation. They couldn't prepare a new charter until now. Now there are rumors that a new charter will be introduced but nevertheless we won't be able to hold elections of the executive board of the hospital. This could be an attempt to capture our biggest institution. It's about an 188-year-old institution that is considered to be a national hospital in the community. It also has an elderly care component," Estukian said.

Estukian warns that if the Armenian community would be unable to hold elec-

tions of the board then they could possibly "lose the hospital as an Armenian institution."

"All Armenians of Turkey go and elect the current board of trustees of the hospital in the status of a foundation. Now, if we get deprived from this right, this would mean that this isn't an Armenian hospital anymore," he said.

The Armenian community recently organized an online petition against any charter or regulation that would potentially prevent them from taking part in the electoral process.

Moreover, Estukian added that this problem concerns all other national minorities of Turkey as well.

Asked whether or not national minorities could come together and join efforts against the regulation, Estukian said there are no developments like that yet.

Anna Gziryan

Armenia, WHO sign cooperation agreement promoting healthcare services



Minister of Healthcare Anahit Avanesyan and the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Europe

Hans Henri P. Kluge signed a two-year cooperation agreement aimed at high-quality health care and effective protection from health emergencies for everyone.

The agreement defines the WHO-Armenia 2022-2023 cooperation priorities, the purpose of which is to support the Armenian healthcare ministry in reaching the national healthcare goals by closely cooperating with the civil society and other partners.

The agreement is based on the achievements recorded during the many years of

partnership between WHO and Armenia, including the anti-smoking campaign, the emergency response readiness, effective response to COVID-19 and mental health.

"With this agreement, health is becoming more priority in Armenia's agenda and its importance is being highlighted as a fundamental human right and a key priority for development for a better economy, peace and security," Kluge said, noting that the cooperation with Armenia has been productive.

PM chairs consultation on draft of new model of assessing person's functionality

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan chaired a consultation on May 2, during which the draft of a new model on assessing the functionality of a person was discussed.

The draft has been submitted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

The meeting firstly touched upon the current system of the assessment of a person's functionality, the existing problems and shortcomings, the disability examina-

tion process, the services provided, the guarantees and the social protection.

It was reported that the new model of changing the disability policy aims at showing a more targeted approach to persons with disabilities, taking also into account the opportunities and capacities of families. Additionally, it is also planned to increase the number of current common social services from 34 to 49, improve their infrastructure and engage new professional

capacities.

Thereafter, the meeting participants discussed the roadmap for the introduction of this new model, as well as the results expected from the new system. It was reported that the model has been developed taking into account the international experience.

Summing up the discussions, PM Pashinyan highlighted taking constant steps and providing targeted support to engage disabled people into public life. He tasked to include the proposals and ideas made today into the draft.

Armenian American Museum launches Young Professionals Committee

The Armenian American Museum and Cultural Center of California has launched a new Young Professionals Committee to promote the mission of the museum, connect young professionals throughout the community, and empower the next generation of leaders.

“We are excited to announce that the Armenian American Museum has officially formed the new Young Professionals Committee,” said Executive Chairman Berdj Karapetian. “We are building a legacy through the museum project, and it is going to be our children and young people who are going to carry that legacy forward to future generations.”

The Young Professionals Committee plans to organize and host a series of events including social events that will provide young professionals with networking opportunities and educational events that will provide young professionals the opportunity to provide feedback and help shape the museum’s public programming plans. The Young Professionals Committee will also be creating sub-committees and workgroups that will create a wide range of volunteer opportunities for young people.

“It is truly an honor to serve on the Armenian American Museum Young Professionals Committee,” said Young Professionals Committee Chair Aleen Ohanian.

“We are so excited for the future of the cultural and educational center and what it means for our youth and the next generation.”

The inaugural members of the Young Professionals Committee includes: Eric Davidian, Sarine Hajjar, Maria Kevorkian, Lana Minassian, Sera Najarian, Ani Nalbandian, Deanna Nazarian, Aleen Ohanian, Arman Ohanian, Natalie Orphali, Katia Orphali, and Orzhen Rushanyan.

The inaugural members were announced at the sold-out Legacy Gala at the JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE on March 27.

Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University debuts documentary series about the Armenian community

Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University debuted their documentary series SURVIVE, THRIVE, REMEMBER about the local Armenian community in Western New York on Sunday, April 24, the *Armenian Film Society* informs.

The series looks at both memories and stories from its historical peak in the area in the mid-20th century through to contemporary expressions of Armenian cultural heritage. The event hosted 141 attendees.

The episodes each focus on a different tradition practiced locally: learn about carpentry from Arthur Garabedian and the

story behind the design of the front church doors for St. Sarkis; hear from Sonya Gregorian and Rachele Aversa as they reflect on cooking together at St. Hagop and rice pilaf; see Ophelia Adjemian’s career as a seamstress, creating a traditional dance dress for her granddaughter, and the opening of her alteration business in Niagara Falls; and more stories from other members of the local Armenian community in the Buffalo-Niagara region.

The museum plans on adding into the series over the next year with additional videos focusing on the importance of survi-

vor narratives and genocide stories passed down within families, Armenian classical music compositions, and more.

The series is now live on the museum’s YouTube channel.



World-renowned stars will perform in Armenia on the sidelines of the Haya major music festival.

French singer-songwriter Isabelle

50 Cent, Zaz and Led Zeppelin Symphonic to perform in Armenia

Geffroy, known professionally as Zaz, will give a concert in Yerevan’s Hrazdan Stadium on June 25, 2022.

American rapper 50 Cent will also perform in the Hrazdan Stadium on July 1.

On July 9 another concert is expected in the Hrazdan Stadium, by Led Zeppelin Symphonic. A total of 25 songs will be performed.

The festival will be implemented by the efforts of the company Sonati. Co-founder

of the company Sona Hovhannisyan has recently said that there are many such festivals in the world, but in order to organize it in Armenia serious ties and reputation are needed. “We are holding talks in order to host Stevie Wonder and Sting in 2023. We want to turn Armenia into a big regional hub which will open a new page for development of tourism and will contribute to economic development”, she said.

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Armenian Identity Card

The goal of the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) non-profit organization is to unify Armenians worldwide in a common platform so that through contacts, queries and referenda they can express their views and positions regarding issues of general interest to Armenians around the world and issues of particular interest to Armenian communities in various countries.

Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) also makes it possible to establish business networks, the cardholder can participate in various charitable projects, and can obtain discounts from Armenian and non-Armenian businesses all over the world. Armenians should feel themselves to be full-fledged "citizens" of a reborn Armenia and the Armenian Identity Card is the «passport» for all Armenians.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID)

network is an effective environment where Armenians can implement various projects and pan-Armenian programs. At the heart of HyeID is the creation of an Armenian database which will become the reliable and objective basis to realize the potential of all Armenians around the world. Based on that database, it will be possible to implement various permanent and temporary initiatives through the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) organization.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) worldwide network enables cardholders to elect and get elected to the leadership of The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) network structures.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can benefit from the possibility of discounts intended for HyeID cardholders when shopping for products and services in various countries of the world.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can participate in queries and referenda initiated by the HyeID network and vote on issues of national interest to Armenians.

- Ensure the security and privacy of The Armenian Identification Card (HyeID) cardholders.

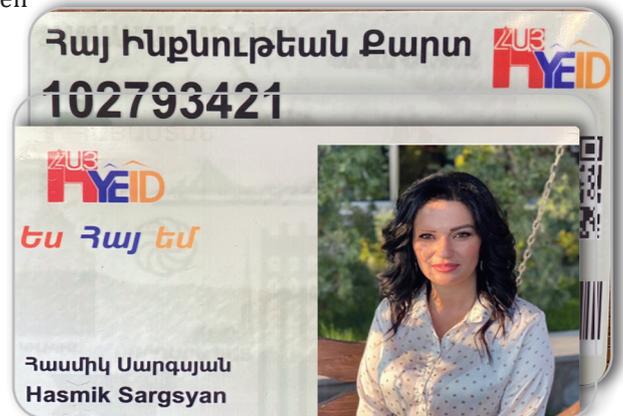
The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders who live in the Diaspora intend to utilize the possibilities made available through HyeID to form a Diaspora representative body — Diaspora Armenian Parliament — through democratic elections.

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