

## Russia`s Putin praises “friendly” ties with Armenia



*Russia -- Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) meets with his Armenian counterpart Serzh Sargsyan at the Kremlin in Moscow, March 15, 2017*

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## Presidents of Armenia, Russia discuss Karabakh settlement

Presidents of Armenia and Russia paid special attention to the Karabakh issue as they held a meeting in Moscow on March 15.

“Russia continues to support the parties in seeking mutually acceptable ways for the conflict both within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group and during direct contacts with Yerevan and Baku,” Russian President Vladimir Putin said following talks with visiting President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan.

“We discussed issues of security in our region, paying special attention to the Karabakh conflict settlement, creation of conditions conducive to the furthering of the negotiation process,” President Sargsyan said, in turn.

“We value the contribution of Russia and other Minsk Group co-chairing countries to the process of exceptionally peaceful settlement of the conflict,” Serzh Sargsyan said.

“We stressed the importance of observing the trilateral ceasefire agreements of 1994 and 1995. We stressed the need to implement the agreements reached in Vienna and St. Petersburg. We are united



in the opinion that the use of force or the threat of force are absolutely unacceptable and strike a blow to the negotiation process,” Serzh Sargsyan stated.

## President Sargsyan attends general meeting of Academy of Sciences

President Serzh Sargsyan attended on March 17 the general meeting of the National Academy of Sciences dedicated to the main results of the Academy's 2016 scientific and administrative activities. The President of the Academy, academician Radik Martirosyan presented the most important results of the scientific works of the Academy's structures and applied developments, spoke about activities in the area of international co-operation, training of scientific cadre, programs of the Academy aimed at the enhancement of scientific research and some other activities of the Academy in 2016.

Noting that currently the country has entered the pre-election period, the President of Armenia said that he would refrain from making a statement and expressed readiness to respond to the questions raised by the participants of the meeting and listened to their proposals.

Today, President Sargsyan also sent a congratulatory message to the academician of the National Academy of Sciences, professor Sergey Hambardzumyan on his 95th birth anniversary and on the occasion of the impressive jubilee wished him success, strength and tenacity to carry on with his patriotic activities.





## **“Bread Bringer” Dies in hospital after hunger strike**

A man who delivered food last summer to anti-government gunmen occupying a police compound in Yerevan died on March 16 ten days after being released from prison following a 25-day hunger strike.

Artur Sargsyan, 49, passed away at Yerevan’s Armenia Medical Center where he underwent urgent bowel surgery the previous night.

The head of the hospital’s intensive care unit, Suren Makaryan, said “acute heart and lung failure” was the likely cause of Sargsyan’s death. “His breathing was never restored,” Makaryan told RFE/RL’s Armenian service.

Sargsyan drove his car through a police cordon to deliver food to armed members of the Founding Parliament radical opposition group during their two-week standoff with security forces. He surrendered to them on July 31 along with the remaining gunmen holed up in the compound.

Sargsyan, who came to be known as “the Bread Bringer,” was arrested and charged with aiding the gunmen. Armenia’s Special Investigative Service (SIS) agreed on December 31 to free him pending trial due to his deteriorating health condition. The suspect suffered from several chronic illnesses.

The SIS again detained him on February 9, saying that he ignored a summons from SIS officials investigating the standoff which left three police officers dead. Artur Sargsyan began a hunger strike in protest against his detention.

The Office of the Prosecutor-General ordered Sargsyan’s release only after six opposition parliamentarians posted bail for him on March 6. He was transported from a prison hospital to the Armenia Medical Center, from which he was discharged several days later.



The prosecutors said later on Thursday that they instructed another law-enforcement body to conduct a thorough inquiry into Sargsyan’s death. Armenia’s human rights ombudsman, Arman Tatoyan, demanded such a probe in a statement released through his spokesman.

More than a hundred angry supporters of Sargsyan rallied in downtown Yerevan as the news of his death spread. The

mostly young crowd marched to the prosecutors’ headquarters and the nearby Justice Ministry building, chanting “Artur!” and “the Bread Bringer was killed!” It briefly scuffled with riot police.

Nikol Pashinyan, one of the opposition lawmakers who helped to secure Sargsyan’s release, also laid the blame on the Armenian government and law-enforcement agencies. “All those individuals who did nothing to free him [earlier] are to blame for his death,” Pashinyan charged.



## **Russia’s Putin praises “friendly” ties with Armenia**

Russian President Vladimir Putin praised the “truly friendly character” of Russia’s relations with Armenia and expressed confidence that they will grow even closer after holding talks with his visiting Armenian counterpart Serzh Sargsyan on March 15.

“Russia and Armenia are sincerely seeking to reinforce their mutually beneficial cooperation and comprehensive strategic partnership,” he told reporters in the Kremlin.

“We will be making joint efforts to further strengthen our strategic alliance,” Sargsyan said for his part.

A separate joint communique released by Putin and Sargsyan said they will strive to realize “the huge potential of Russian-Armenian relations” in the political, economic and military areas.

Both leaders hailed a sizable rise in Russian-Armenian trade which was recorded last year despite economic recessions in both countries.

“Russia is Armenia’s leading trading partner,” Putin stressed. He also pointed to Russian investments in Armenia’s energy, mining and transport sectors.

While pledging to help boost Russian-Armenian commercial ties, the two leaders announced no concrete agreements to that effect. Putin said only that the two governments are now considering using each other’s national currency in bilateral trade.

Visiting Moscow in late January, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan called for the creation of a Russian-Armenian “investment fund” that would finance business projects in Armenia. He said afterwards that

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev “positively assessed the proposal.” Neither Putin nor Sargsyan mentioned the matter in his statements to the press.

Predictably, the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was also on the agenda of Sargsyan’s latest official visit to Moscow. The joint statement said the two leaders agreed on the need to bolster the cease-fire regime in the conflict zone with concrete measures that were worked out at Armenian-Azerbaijani summits held last year.

Putin hosted one of those meetings in Saint-Petersburg in June 2016. Sargsyan and Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev signaled progress towards a peaceful settlement after those talks. However, the peace process stalled again in the following weeks.

“Russia is continuing to render all kinds of support to the search for mutually acceptable solutions to the conflict both within the framework of the OSCE Mins Group and in direct contacts with Yerevan and Baku,” Putin said on Wednesday. He gave no details of his Karabakh-related discussion with Sargsyan or signal plans to arrange fresh peace talks.

Putin also noted that Sargsyan is visiting Moscow in the run-up to Armenia’s parliamentary elections. He said the authorities in Yerevan are making “every effort” to ensure that the vote is democratic.

“I would like to wish you success in this endeavor,” Putin told the Armenian leader. “Russia is sincerely interested in a stable, independent and dynamically developing Armenia.”

## EU “very concerned” about pre-election violence in Armenia

The European Union expressed on March 16 serious concerns at violent attacks on opposition supporters in an Armenian village, warning that failure to punish their perpetrators could complicate the proper conduct of Armenia's upcoming parliamentary elections.

Piotr Switalski, head of the EU Delegation in Yerevan, also urged Armenians not to sell their votes and made clear that the Armenian authorities will be able to count on more EU aid if the April 2 polls meet democratic standards.

“Of course, we are very worried, very concerned,” Switalski said, commenting on the election-related incidents that occurred in the village of Jrarat.

Three Jrarat residents sympathetic to the ORO opposition alliance were hospitalized with serious injuries on Tuesday after being attacked by a large group of other men allegedly linked to the village mayor affiliated with the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK). One of the victims was shot and wounded while another was stabbed.

The incident occurred two days after a police officer living in Jrarat fired gunshots while clashing with several ORO sympathizers following a rally held by the opposition bloc in the village 20 kilometers southwest of

Yerevan. The officer, Lernik Yeranossyan, is a brother of Levon Yeranossyan, a controversial deputy chief of the Armenian police. The Jrarat mayor is their cousin.

ORO leaders claim that Levon Yeranossyan personally directed the attackers on Tuesday. A police spokesman insisted on Wednesday that the police general was not in the village during the incident.

Switalski urged Armenian law-enforcement authorities to identify and hold accountable those responsible for the attacks. Or else, he said, such incidents could “snowball” into more serious trouble.

“When you don't properly react to first cases of violence then you may have a very bad situation which is very difficult to control,” warned the diplomat. “I hope that they will be doing their job,” said of the police and other law-enforcement bodies.

Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan, who leads the HHK's election campaign, strongly condemned the Jrarat violence on Wednesday. He said the law-enforcement bodies are taking “necessary investigative actions” to solve the case.

So far only one man has been arrested in connection with Tuesday's incident.

Switalski also reiterated that the EU expects the Armenian authorities to hold free and fair

elections, having provided them with over \$7 million in financial assistance for that purpose. “Good elections in Armenia will boost relations with the European Union,” he told reporters, adding that they will also lead to more EU aid to Armenia.

The EU funding cited Switalski is being used for the purchase of special electronic equipment designed to prevent multiple voting as well as web cameras for live on-line broadcasts of voting and ballot counting from the vast majority of Armenian polling stations. Installation of these devices was part of an election-related agreement reached by the Armenian government and the parliamentary opposition last fall.

Opposition representatives have already questioned the government's stated commitment to democratic elections, saying that the HHK and its individual candidates, many of them wealthy individuals, are buying votes. The ruling party denies this.

Switalski seemed to echo concerns about widespread vote buying, openly urging Armenians to refuse vote bribes. “You may be approached by people who will be offering you money or services,” he said, appealing to them. “I hope that Armenians will reject such offers. No amount of money is worth your votes. Don't sell your votes.”

## Ohanyan bloc predicts regime change

An alliance led by former Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan on March 17 claimed that President Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) will lose power as a result of the upcoming parliamentary elections.

It also said that Armenia's leading opposition forces should already formally pledge to form a “government of national accord.” The proposal met with skepticism from other major opposition contenders in the elections scheduled for April 2.

In a statement, the ORO bloc co-headed by Ohanian and former Foreign Ministers Vartan Oskanian and Raffi Hovannisian said only “two weeks remain until the end of HHK rule.” Armenians are fed up with “systemic corruption” and pre-election violence and want “radical reforms,” it said.

The statement added that ORO is ready to sign a joint declaration with other opposition contenders on a post-election pow-

er-sharing deal that will exclude the HHK.

Armen Martirosyan, a senior ORO figure, explained that such a declaration would commit signatories to not entering into post-election coalitions with the ruling party. “If they don't sign, they will show that they don't rule out a coalition with the HHK,” he said.

Naira Zohrabyan, a senior representative of another bloc headed by businessman Gagik Tsarukyan, voiced skepticism about the proposal, saying that it is still not clear which opposition groups will win seats in the next parliament.

Zohrabyan also said: “The Tsarukyan Bloc categorically rules out post-election cooperation with one force, the Republican Party, in any format ... Gagik Tsarukyan has made this clear.”

Levon Zurbabyan of the opposition Congress-HZhK alliance also described the ORO idea as premature. “I think that it is

meaningless to speak beforehand of what he will do or won't do with other forces, especially given that it's not yet clear what each political force stands for,” he told RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutjun.am).

Zurbabyan said the elections will show which nominally opposition groups are genuinely opposed to President Sargsyan. He said Congress-HZhK suspects that some of those groups are allowed by the authorities to hand out vote bribes during the election campaign. He declined to name them.

Aram Sargsyan, a leader of the opposition Yelk bloc, was also unimpressed by the idea of an opposition declaration. “I think that the Tsarukyan Bloc would definitely form a coalition with the HHK, rather than other forces, under certain circumstances,” he claimed. “The same is also true for Dashnaksutjun and Armenian Revival.”

## Russia ready to support Armenia-Turkey talks – Sergey Lavrov

Russia's relations with Armenia are at a high level, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview with Armenian Regional Post – Caucasus magazine. The text of the interview is posted on the Russian Foreign Ministry's website.

"We have a long record of friendship and mutual support and are bonded by cultural and spiritual affinity. Russia and Armenia are reliable allies in international affairs and security. Together, we are forging the forward-looking Eurasian Economic Union. We have a shared perspective on today's most pressing challenges," Lavrov said.

"Russia is Armenia's leading economic partner, whose share in the Republic's foreign trade amounts to 24.3 per cent. The bilateral trade between the two countries reached USD 1.24 billion in 2015 and USD 745.3 million in the period from January to August 2016. A considerable increase in Armenian exports of agricultural products to the Russian market has been registered lately. Accumulated Russian investments in the Armenian economy amount to USD 4.3 billion making up 40 per cent of its overall foreign investments. The total number of enterprises with Russian participation is about 1,300. They operate in a wide range of sectors, such as energy, transportation, banking, telecommunications, mining and smelting," the Russian Foreign Minister said.

"This normalization between Russia and Turkey should not be regarded as a process that may harm other States. Russia has no hidden agenda," Lavrov assured.

"We build no political and no economic alliances directed against third countries or adversely affecting any interests. In general, we are open for constructive and mutually respectful cooperation with all who express same readiness," he said.

"We are convinced that getting the Russian-Turkish ties out of months-long crisis will enhance trust and mutual understanding in the region. We expect the gradual restoration of bilateral cooperation with Ankara to benefit peace, security and stability in the South Caucasus," Lavrov said.

The Russian Foreign Minister said they would "most certainly welcome the opening of the Armenian-Turkish segment of the EAEU's external border for free movement of people, goods and



services." "This will obviously benefit the entire region," he added.

The Foreign Minister reminded that Russia played an important role in attempting to restore the relations between Armenia and Turkey during the active phase of this process in 2007-2009. "The collective efforts, first and foremost those of Yerevan and Ankara, led to the signing in Zurich on October 10, 2009 of the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations between the two countries in the presence of the Foreign Ministers of Russia, France and Switzerland, the U.S. Secretary of State and the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy."

"Sadly, the normalization process subsequently stalled and by now has come to a complete halt. It is of principled importance, though, that the sides have demonstrated the ability to reach agreement and take serious and responsible decisions. I am convinced that Armenia and Turkey are able to resolve the current problems. That said, quite a lot depends on themselves. After all, the quality of the politicians is measured not only by the depth of their realistic analysis of the objective difficulties, but also by their ability to be optimistic in order to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of their citizens. When Yerevan and Ankara sit at the negotiating table, Russia will be ready to provide them with most vigorous assistance," he added.

## Hollywood takes on a tragedy of history — in films from opposing viewpoints – The Washington Post

By Vanessa H. Larson

Turks and Armenians have been in a bitter, long-running dispute over the deaths of more than 1 million Armenians during World War I in the Ottoman Empire. Armenians call it a genocide; the Turkish government says the killings were not systematic, occurring in the midst of war.

Now, the dispute has come to Hollywood. Two films this spring feature an intense love triangle that unfolds in this historic setting — but their political agendas are vastly different.

"The Promise," opening nationwide April 21, is the first major Hollywood movie to

portray what a consensus of historians calls the Armenian genocide, which involved forced-march deportations and mass killings over several years starting in 1915.

Oscar Isaac plays a young Armenian man who moves from his small village to Istanbul in 1914 to study medicine. There, as the predominantly Muslim Ottoman Empire enters the war on the side of Germany and turns on its own minority Christian Armenian population, he meets and falls in love with an Armenian woman raised in France (Charlotte Le Bon of "The Walk"), who is romantically involved with an outspoken American correspondent for the Associated Press (Christian

Bale).

Talaat Pasha, considered the mastermind behind the killings, is one of the real-life figures in the film, which spares none of the Turkish atrocities against the Armenians, from the brutal labor camps for young men to the massacres of women, children and the elderly.

Though "The Ottoman Lieutenant" appears similar on the surface, it offers a very different interpretation of history. The film — which opened March 10 with a limited release — tells the fictional story of a head-

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## Armenian PM reaffirms interest in energy ties with Turkmenistan

Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan again signaled Armenia's desire to import natural gas from Turkmenistan when he met with the Central Asian state's energy minister on March 15.

Charymyrat Purchekov arrived in Yerevan to attend a regular session of a Turkmen-Armenian intergovernmental commission of economic cooperation. He also held separate talks with Karapetyan.

An Armenian government statement said Karapetyan spoke of "great potential for [Turkmen-Armenian] cooperation in the economy and especially the energy sector."

"In the context of its realization, the parties stressed the importance of the Armenian prime minister's upcoming official visit to Turkmenistan, during which the sides will discuss issues, projects and programs of mutual interest," added the statement.

Karapetyan met with Iran's and Turkmenistan's ambassadors to Armenia in January to discuss what his press office called "trilateral cooperation in the field of energy" and "supply of energy resources." It was an apparent reference to possible deliveries of Turkmen natural gas to Armenia via Iran.



Hydrocarbon-rich Turkmenistan was Armenia's principal supplier of natural gas in the 1990s, until the Armenian government signed a long-term deal with Russia's Gazprom monopoly. The latter currently supplies more than 80 percent of gas used in Armenia for power generation, heating and other purposes.

The rest of Armenian gas imports come from Iran through a pipeline built in 2008. Visiting Yerevan in December 21, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said he and his

Armenian counterpart Serzh Sargsyan agreed in principle to increase Iranian gas supplies to Armenia.

Rouhani also announced that his country is ready to serve as a transit route for Armenia's gas imports from Turkmenistan. He did not go into details.

Those imports could be complicated by a financial dispute between Turkmenistan and Iran that led the Turkmen government to suspend gas exports to the Islamic Republic on January 1.

## Gazprom sees potential for swaps with Armenia's electric power and Iranian gas

Gazprom plans to swap electric power generated at Hrazdan thermal power plant (TPP) in Armenia for Iranian gas, Chief Executive Officer of the Russian

gas holding Alexei Miller said on March 15, TASS reports.

"We see the upside in improving efficiency of operations on the Armenian

market on account of performing swap operations with electricity generated at the fifth unit of Hrazdan TPP in exchange for the Iranian gas," Miller said.

Armenia plans to build a high-voltage power transmission line in 2018, "which will make possible to export electric power to the Iranian market using swaps," he added.

Gazprom prepared a master plan for development of Armenia's gas sector by 2030, Miller said. The company expects discussion of the paper will start this year, he said. Gazprom provides for reliable gas supply to Armenia, Miller said.

The natural gas price for Armenia is currently equal to \$150 per 1,000 cubic meters, Miller said. "We held talks with the government of the Republic of Armenia last December and considered possible to keep the preferential price level for the year of 2017," he said.



## President Serzh Sargsyan meets with the participants and responsible officials of the Young Scientists Assistance Program



President Serzh Sargsyan met on March 17 with the participants and responsible officials of the Young Scientists Assistance Program.

Young scientists presented to Serzh Sargsyan works carried out in the 2015-2016 period of activities of the Program, programs of co-operation and compared them with those of the previous year. They also spoke about the future works and expectations. The summary report of the Young Scientists Assistance Program included eight main directions: international scientific secondment of young scientists, conferences, symposiums, financial assistance to the organization of seminars, scientific grants, financial assistance for publication of the books authored by young scientists, financial assistance for the ac-

quisition of scientific equipment and/or materials, financial assistance for publication in the influential scientific periodicals of the scientific articles of young scientists, organization of scientific contests and lecturing of the scientists of the Armenian descent.

After listening to the report, President Sargsyan asked the scientists if the provided assistance was useful and how the young scientists assess the efficiency of the implemented programs. The participants of the meeting thanked the President for the consistent assistance and encouragement and underscored that thanks to the implemented programs, the engagement of the young people with science becomes more and more interesting by year which is also testified to by the number of the applicants for the competitions.

President Sargsyan noted that the objective of the Young Scientists Assistance Program is to promote scientific advancement and to augment this area with new cadre as well as to assist the young scientists of the Republic in their creative development, create opportunities to establish contacts with their peers abroad, to familiarize with the global scientific developments and news.

Serzh Sargsyan stressed also the importance of encouraging achievements which can be useful in securing certain advancement within the country and in parallel with the development of fundamental sciences encourage the utilization of the scientific projects.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the President of Armenia handed Letters of Commendation to the participants of the Young Scientists Assistance Program.





## Armenia hopes to launch visa liberalization dialogue with EU soon – Deputy FM

“I am sure we can identify untapped areas in the trade and economic fields in order to eliminate the disproportion, or asymmetry, as minister Kotzias said, between our political relations and economic dialogue”, stated Armenian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Garen Nazarian during an interview with the Independent Balkan News Agency.

The Deputy Minister highlighted the fact that “interstate relations between Armenia and Greece are based on historical bonds of friendship” between the two nations and added that “there is a vibrant Armenian community in Greece effectively integrated into the social, economic and political life of the country”. Finally as far as relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan are concerned Nazarian made it clear that the closing of the border by the Turkish side “has to be revised”.

*Read the full interview*

***Greece and Armenia are connected through a centuries old friendship and have always cooperated at multiple levels. Which areas of cooperation do you consider important for the further development of these relations and what do you plan to do? Mr. Kotzias spoke of three asymmetries that need to be addressed.***

First of all I would like to warmly welcome minister Kotzias and his delegation. This is his first visit to Yerevan and we will use the opportunity to have substantial discussions aimed at expanding our bilateral relations in all possible areas. The interstate relations between Armenia and Greece are based on historical bonds of friendship between our nations and we share a lot of commonalities.

During the meeting ministers rightly highlighted the asymmetric issues and we need to pay more attention to that aspect and in particular the full implementation of previously agreed commitments, including those that are entrenched in our legal framework. The latter will also need a further assessment; and we will start working on that immediately, to identify the potential areas for a beneficial cooperation.

We are fortunate to have an extensive political dialogue between our friendly governments. High-level reciprocal visits are taking place on both sides. In 2014 the President of Greece was in Armenia, in 2016 the President of Armenia visited Greece. We have regular meetings and exchanges between our foreign and defence ministers and these



are the best opportunities to exchange views on priority issues of bilateral, regional and international concern.

More meetings are planned for today between our Foreign Ministers and later on, with the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan and we look forward to the outcome of these meetings. I am sure we can identify untapped areas especially in the trade and economic fields in order to eliminate the disproportion, or asymmetry, as minister Kotzias said, between our political relations and economic dialogue.

Potential areas of expanding the sectoral cooperation would be tourism, which is already happening. As you know, the number of Armenians who are visiting Greece increased last year more than three times. We also expect Greeks visiting Armenia. We welcome the resumption of regular direct and charter flights between our countries. Strong cultural interconnections, along with the exchanges in the fields of education and science can also form solid grounds for future cooperation. And of course trade and investment issues will be on our special focus. We have been tasked to start the preparation of the business forum by the end of this year and this will require careful and targeted steps on both sides.

***What about the visa liberalisation for Armenian citizens? Can this occur soon or is it difficult?***

Visa liberalisation dialogue for the citizens of Armenia has been referred to in the joint declaration of the Riga Summit of the Eastern Partnership in 2015 and this is an important bilateral commitment on behalf of Armenia and the European Union to move towards that direction. Armenia is implementing the agreements on visa facilitation and readmission in good faith and based on the positive assessment of the implementation of mentioned agreements we hope very much to be able to launch the Visa dialogue

soon and we also count on the support of friendly Greece and other partners in Europe.

***The geographical position of Armenia has made it a crossroads of civilizations and tensions. Over many years, your relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan were strained. Which is the best way to resolve these differences? How can Greece help in a solution?***

As you know the border is closed by the Turkish side and this unilateral coercive measure imposed on Armenia is subject for international condemnation. This action by the neighbouring country has to be revised in order to make the implementation of different projects possible in the region at large and create a conducive environment for regional cooperation. As a landlocked country we give an utmost importance to create and maintain a favourable political and economic environment in order to further our relations with the neighbouring countries, as well as the EU, Russia and others. So, we are very much interested in continuing the dialogue with Greece and other interested countries on this and other regional matters and I am glad that in many aspects, including on the issue of closed borders, we share the same views and positions.

***A few days ago you proceeded to an agreement with the EU for a more integrated partnership. At the same time you participate in the Eurasian economic union (EAEU). Isn't this contradictory?***

Some ten days ago the President of Armenia was in Brussels and during the meeting with the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, they jointly announced the completion of negotiations between Armenia and the EU on the new legal framework. Armenia has been advocating from the very beginning of this process the need to seize the opportunities for cooperation with different integration formats. Throughout the process of negotiations with the EU we have identified compatible areas of cooperation with both EAEU and EU. This exercise, these negotiations have demonstrated that it is possible to be a member of the EAEU and at the same time have a comprehensive and enhanced partnership with the EU. As I said, we already completed the negotiations and we look forward to the next steps – the initialing and signing of the agreement.

***It is known that the Diaspora has approximately three times as large a population than the permanent citizens of Armenia. How much do they affect the political and***



*economic life of the country? Is there a balance in this relationship?*

Since ancient times, Armenians have established communities in many regions throughout the world. However, the modern Armenian diaspora was largely formed as a result of the Armenian Genocide of 1915, when the Armenians living in their ancestral homeland were systematically exterminated

by the Ottoman government. The remnants of the nation miraculously found refuge in neighbouring countries. Today, there is a vibrant Armenian community in Greece effectively integrated into the social, economic and political life of the country. The Armenian communities serve as an important bridge between the homeland and their host countries. They are strongly linked with Ar-

menia and very much focused on the domestic and foreign policy that Armenia conducts in number of areas. It is important to maintain this strong linkage and traditions in our relationship with Armenians living abroad. This is another area where we can effectively cooperate and combine our efforts given that fact that there is a strong presence of Greeks in many countries of the world.

## Hollywood takes on a tragedy of history...

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strong American nurse (Icelandic actress Hera Hilmar) who travels to eastern Anatolia (now Turkey) to work at an American Mission Hospital. During the war, she is pulled between two men seeking her affections: an American doctor (Josh Hartnett) and a Muslim Ottoman lieutenant (Michiel Huisman of "Game of Thrones").

The film takes an approach similar to the position of the Turkish government, which has long held that there was no state-organized policy of ethnic cleansing against Armenians. Rather, Turkey insists, during the fighting on the Ottoman Empire's eastern front against the Russians, Turkish and Armenian civilians alike died in the course of wartime violence.

Taner Akcam of Clark University, one of the few historians from Turkey to recognize the events as a genocide, says that the country's government refuses to acknowledge Turkish culpability partly because of the sensitive issue of reparations for survivors and their descendants. But the stance also stems from deeper roots: the country's founding in 1923 on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire.

"If you acknowledge the Armenian genocide, then you have to acknowledge that an important number of Turkish founding fathers were either involved directly in genocide or became rich during the genocidal process" through the seizure of Armenian property, said Akcam. Both films were in the works well before the April 24, 2015, centenary of the tragedy, which helped increase awareness of the subject.

"The Armenian genocide is one of the most well-documented humanitarian catastrophes of the 20th century," said Eric Esrailian, lead producer for Survival Pictures, which produced "The Promise" — his first film, as he's also a physician at UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine. "It was, in real time ... frequently written about in U.S. newspapers. There was a huge humanitarian relief effort."

It is largely due to Turkish pressure on the film industry that a movie like "The Promise" was not made sooner. In the 1930s, MGM

acquired the film rights to "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh," Franz Werfel's best-selling novel inspired by the true story of several thousand Armenians who survived a mountaintop siege. But lobbying by Turkish Ambassador to the United States Mehmet Munir Ertegün (whose son Ahmet went on to found Atlantic Records) forced the studio to drop the project.

Recent years have seen a couple of small-scale indie features that deal with the tragedy, including Armenian Canadian director Atom Egoyan's "Ararat" (2002) and Turkish German director Fatih Akin's "The Cut" (2014).

"The Promise" was also developed outside the studio system, financed entirely by the late mogul Kirk Kerkorian, who owned MGM for many years and later founded Survival Pictures in 2012.

"The 'promise' means so much to us personally," said Esrailian. "The promise was from Mr. Kerkorian to make the film. The promise was from us to complete the film. The promise is for us to never forget. And the promise is for us to also vow to do something so that it never happens again."

With a budget of nearly \$100 million, the film is one of the most expensive independent films ever made, according to Variety. And the entire endeavor is not-for-profit: Survival Pictures has committed to donating all proceeds to nonprofit organizations, including the Elton John AIDS Foundation and "other human rights and humanitarian groups."

"The Ottoman Lieutenant" was also made with private financing, in this case from a group of Turkish producers working in film, TV and advertising. They teamed up with producer Stephen Joel Brown ("Seven"), as well as an American director, Joseph Ruben ("The Forgotten"), and screenwriter, Jeff Stockwell ("Bridge to Terabithia"), to make a feature that would have high production values.

In an interview, Brown maintained that their film was not seeking to promote a particular political agenda, describing it as "a classic love story, set at a time and place that

we really haven't seen in cinema."

While foregrounding the clandestine romance between the American nurse and the Ottoman lieutenant, the movie does not completely shy away from showing the suffering of the Armenians, particularly in one crucial scene involving Turkish soldiers. "That [scene] seems kind of unequivocally saying, Turks force-marched Armenians and then slaughtered them along the way," said Stockwell, the screenwriter. "Whatever you want to quibble about, there it is. Now, is there enough? Is it soft-pedaled?"

Nevertheless, focusing the action on the town of Van and showing one of the few Armenian insurgencies, which took place there in April and May 1915, has the effect of promoting the Turkish narrative, which points to the Van resistance as a justification for repression of the Armenians.

"The official Turkish argument is that deportation of Armenians was a response to Armenian uprisings," said Akcam (who has not seen "The Ottoman Lieutenant"). "This is the reason the Van event is crucial in Ottoman Turkish historiography. This argument is not correct, because ... we know that the decision for deportation was already taken before the Van uprising."

A sizable contingent of Turks, as well as many in the Armenian diaspora, have been aware of "The Promise" for some time. Last October, outlets including the Independent reported that it had more than 85,000 ratings on IMDb, nearly all of them either 1 or 10 stars. Given that the film had had just three public screenings by that point, it seemed clear that users who had not even seen it were "rating" it based purely on their politics.

Similarly, before "The Ottoman Lieutenant" had even opened, it was quickly dismissed in Armenian American publications and in YouTube comments sections as Turkish propaganda.

While neither movie is likely to settle the debate over the events of World War I, these portrayals might prompt some Americans to look into the historical record — and draw their own conclusions.

**City Spa**, one of the founders of Aesthetic medicine in Armenia, that was established 14 years ago, is still following the main principles that were implemented since the launch: to use only clinically and scientifically approved, highly effective and safe with FDA approval products and equipments imported mainly from UK and Europe.

**Depilation:** Last year City Spa launched a very safe, painless and fast acting new machine for permanent hair removal. It is the "Primelase" produced by Cocoon Medical. The machine has an innovative



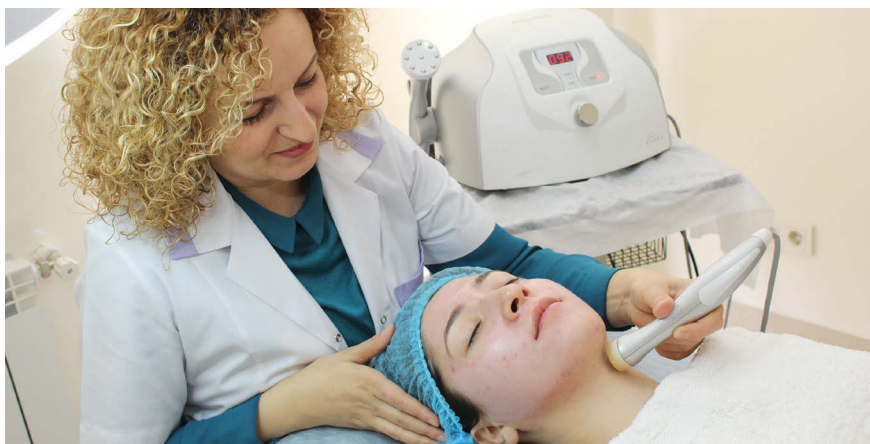
international leading brands such as ZO Skin health (Beverly Hills US), GLO therapeutics (ColoradoUS). Skin Ceuticals (US) etc.

**And that's not the all: pedicure, manicure and massage will make your day.**

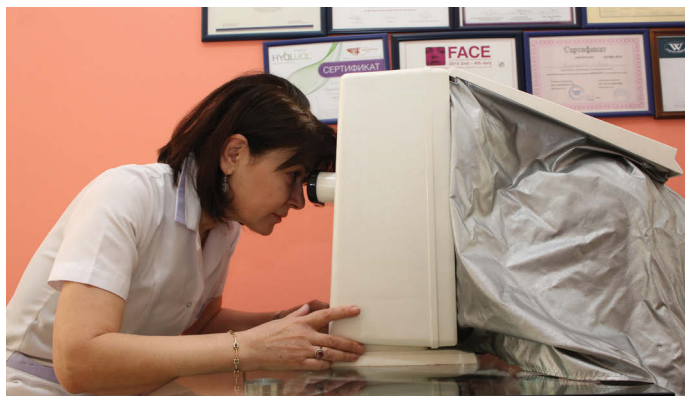
You are welcome to City Spa. The aesthetic doctor's consultations and skin diagnostics with Skin Scanner is fee. The atmosphere in City spa is full of love and peace. The pricing strategy is very flexible and discounts for good long term clients are available during whole year as well as different Gift Cards.

method (dynamic mode) which allows to treat very large areas of the body within few minutes.

**Localized fat removal:** In Armenia the first cryolipolysis method was implemented by City Spa in 2016. Cooltech is an innovative machine that acts as a none surgical liposuction, with a new method of cryolipolysis for permanent localized fat removal and body reconturing. It is safe, painless and very effective. City Spa is equipped also with the Wellshape machine for anti-cellulite treatment.



**Anti aging Facial treatments and Care:** City Spa offers the latest scientifically approved anti aging treatments and products for care. The doctors are regularly improving their qualifications in London and Paris, bringing the new inventions to Armenia. The products used in City Spa are only



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## Memorial Event Dedicated to Tatyana Hayrapetyan



By  
**Gourgen  
Khazhakian**

Chief  
Correspondent

From now on concert hall of Yerevan Tchaikovsky Specialized Music School will hold the name of **Tatyana Hayrapetyan** (1924-2016) who was the School's Principal for several decades. So on 17 March memorial plaque was unveiled by Mrs Hayrapetyan's grandson, Founding Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia **Sergey Smbatyan** and the School current Principal **Martoun Kostandyan**.

Last Friday 17 March, at the Tchaikovsky School a memorable event dedicated to a prominent violinist, Honored Teacher of Soviet Armenia, holder of Soviet "Badge of Honor" Order, Movses Khorenatsy Medal Tatyana Bagratovna Hayrapetyan (1924-2016) was held.

The event was attended by the First Lady of Armenia **Rita Sargsyan**, Tatyana Hayrapetyan's son, composer, Adviser to the President of Armenia Professor **Armen Smbatyan**, musicians, social-political and cultural figures, art lovers and, of course,

Tatyana Hayrapetyan's students.

The participants pointed out that the great master of the Armenian culture Tatyana Hayrapetyan was a loving person, a person ready to be dedicated a man. In their words, she was discovering talent in people and appreciating that talent. One of the main missions of Tatyana Bagratovna was pedagogy. She educated and shaped three generations of musicians at the School. She was proud of her children. Tatyana Hayrapetyan was a patriotic person: being educated in Moscow, she returned Armenia, becoming one of its builders.

A rep of the one of first generation of Tatyana Hayrapetyan's students is a renowned vi-



olinist, People's Artist of Armenia Professor **Edward Tadevosyan**.

Mr Tadevosyan noted that Mrs Hayrapetyan has had the great role in the aesthetic shaping of generations. *"In some periods of my life, I could say, she replaced my mother. I went to Moscow to study at her initiative. Moreover, she came with me to Moscow and was present at my Moscow Conservatory entrance exams. Today, many of Tatyana Bagratovna's students represents the Armenian culture at the best world stages,"* - said Maestro Tadevosyan.

The speakers reminded Tatyana Hayrapetyan's famous words: *"With each student I am becoming a seven year old child, and learn with him/her eleven years in the School ..."*

During the event, many musicians who were lucky to know great educator and cultural figure, said their memorial words.

Tatyana Hayrapetyan's students of different years had musical numbers during the event. To note, the Smbatyan family decided to establish Tatyana Hayrapetyan scholarship for the best student of the Tchaikovsky School.

*Photos courtesy  
Tchaykovsky School and the SYOA  
Acknowledgement:  
Marianna Galstyan of the SYOA*





## VivaCell-MTS Recent News: Helping Rural Communities...

### The Community Development in the Focus of Attention

VivaCell-MTS and the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) continue to support Mozrov village in Vayots Dzor region. In order to improve the efficiency of the agricultural labor, the cooperating organizations donated a “DT-75” caterpillar tractor, produced in 2016, to the village. The expected agricultural machinery has been provided in the framework of the joint “Community Development” program.

Despite of the strict necessity, the resi-

the community.

*“Community development has been among the major directions of our strategy for more than eleven years. That’s one of the ways to show responsible attitude. We have tried to step by step develop infrastructures. The agricultural equipment we provide today is as important as the rest of the conditions created for normal life. The borderland villages will remain within the focus of our attention this year,”* said VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian.

The result of the cooperation between FPWC and VivaCell-MTS has been registered many times in this community. In 2016, a 2050-meter-long water pipeline has been built in Gnishik community, which

ture. The cross-stones (khachkars) of 4th-5th centuries have been found here, as well as chapels, tombs, and many caves. The unique geographical position of the surrounding contributed the formation of flora and fauna, adding the locale to the list of specially protected areas of Armenia. The surrounding is a

corridor for the Armenian mouflon, registered in the Red Book of Armenia, Bezoar ibex, brown bear, lynx, Caucasus leopards and other species.

### About the “Community Development” program

The aim of the project is to develop the



dents of Mozrov have never had a tractor; they used the tractors of the neighboring villages, which caused additional expenses. For a borderland village, which is mainly engaged in agriculture, this crucially important equipment will be used as agricultural tool during the three seasons of the year, and during the winter months, in order to clean the roads of the village.

During the winter months the roads to the village are often closed because of the heavy snowfall. For this reason, the village sometimes remains isolated for weeks. Next winter, regardless the surprises of the weather, this problem will be no more insurmountable.

In order to donate the new farming equipment to the community the Founding General Manager of VivaCell-MTS **Ralph Yirikian** and the Founder of FPWC **Ruben Khachatryan** have visited Mozrov, met and exchanged ideas with the community head **Ara Levonyan** as well as the residents of



includes Gnishik and Mozrov villages in the frames of “Alternative Energy” program, which provided the community with 24/7 water supply. And in 2015, the streets of the community were provided with a light-emitting diode (LED) system. 37 columns of lighting have been installed.

The Mozrov village has 72 inhabitants. The locals are mainly engaged in agriculture, cattle-breeding and bee-keeping. The region is especially known for its historical and cultural values, as well as its rich na-

communities of Armenia with the innovative technical solutions. The frames of the project include the prevention of the environmental pollution by the use of the alternative energy resources such as solar heating and LED outdoor light systems. The project is implemented in various communities of Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Lori regions this year. As Armenia has a great solar energy, the contribution of alter-

native energy and energy-saving technologies can increase the energy efficiency of the households and promote to solve the environmental and social issues in the communities. The project is a new format in the sphere of environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources, based on the long-term cooperation between the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets and VivaCell-MTS. The project launched in 2014.



## Safe Roof for Another 5 Families

The housing problem directly affects public living standards and well-being. For years, VivaCell-MTS has tried to contribute to sustainable community development, poverty reduction and to families' aspiration for a decent life in their Homeland. The implementation of various programs with partners is a part of this strategy.

In 5 years, through the housing project financed by Viva-



Cell-MTS and implemented by "Fuller Center for Housing" Armenia, the housing problem of 135 families has been solved. Over AMD 333 mln. has been invested to that end.

As a result of the partnership, only in 2016, 42 families from 10 regions of Armenia have overcome the problem of sub-standard housing.

The heads of partnering organizations paid a regular visit to the beneficiary families of Zarinja, Kakavadzor and Avan villages of Aragatsotn region. In this region, five families benefited from the project. Owing to the support of partnering organizations, four families have completed the construction of their half-built houses. For another family, the roof and windows of the house have been replaced. The Avetisyan family of five from Zarinja village had lived in a metal container after the earthquake; their three sons were born and raised there.

*"The metal container had become the limit of our imagination on what a house is. The hope that the construction of this half-built house would ever be completed, and we would have a stone house had started to fade. It is now that we learn to live: previously it was just a fight for existence. Now everything seems possible. May all families feel how pleasant it is to have a home. I can't find words to express my gratitude. God*

*bless you,"* said **Garegin**, the family father.

*"Everything resonates: good emotions create positive charges, negative ones bring disappointments. The purpose of this joint project is to inspire faith in tomorrow and to pass on a system of values based on responsibility at the same time. It is crucially important to make our compatriots feel that they are not alone in facing hardships. That faith is necessary to have a successful country. Instead of plunging into own problems, one begins to believe in own force, shapes high self-esteem and becomes more responsible in being useful to the country,"* says VivaCell-MTS Founding GM **Ralph Yirikian**.

The Khachatryans from Kakavadzor village have also lived in a metal container for many years. Here the story is almost the same. The metal container, which was extremely hot in summer and cold in winter, had become the only model of a house for two brothers.

*"My elder son returned from the army last year, the other one is now protecting the border and has not seen our new house yet. For many years we have tried to put the stone on the stone to build our house, but could not and probably would have never completed the construction if not for this project. This is a miracle: the impossible became possible for us. Thank you!"* said **Melqon**, the father of the family.



*"The most important human quality is the compassion, the ability to lend a helping hand to someone else, not when it is convenient, but when necessary. In five years, VivaCell-MTS has assisted 135 families giving a feeling of happiness and optimism for future to 677 people. We are proud for this partnership,"* said "Fuller Center for Housing" Armenia President **Ashot Yeghiazaryan**.

The Heads of the partnering organizations also visited Avan community where they were doing construction works last spring. In this community, construction of two half-built houses has been completed.

## Schiff calls for expanded aid to Artsakh and Armenia

Ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee Rep. Adam Schiff delivered powerful testimony Thursday before key House foreign aid appropriators, calling for the expansion of U.S. assistance to Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) and Armenia, and the implementation of measures to check escalating Azerbaijani aggression, reported the Armenian National Committee of America.

The California Democrat, who also serves as a Vice-Chair of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, offered his recommendations during a hearing of the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations, led by Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) and Ranking Democrat Nita Lowey (D-NY), as this panel prepares the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) foreign aid bill.

"We appreciate Congressman Schiff's leadership in supporting a broad array of Armenian American foreign aid priorities, including continued U.S. support for Artsakh, increased assistance for Armenia's international peacekeeping missions, and a substantial contribution to Yerevan's efforts to settle Middle East refugees," said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. "We will continue to work with members of the State-Foreign Operations Subcommittees in both the House and Senate and with appropriators in both chambers to strengthen the U.S.-Armenia partnership and promote a durable and democratic peace for the Republic of Artsakh."

In voicing his support for increased U.S.



assistance to Artsakh, Rep. Schiff noted that he is "deeply disturbed by the escalation of violence in the last year and the major military assault by Azerbaijani forces against the people of Artsakh," noting the "strong evidence of human rights abuses on the part of Azeri troops, and the appalling desecration of the bodies of Armenian and Artsakh citizens." Rep. Schiff went on to outline three concrete steps Congress can take to address these concerns, including implementation of the Royce-Engel peace proposals, the suspension of U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan, and the expansion of humanitarian aid to Artsakh.

Rep. Schiff stressed that the U.S.-Armenia relationship "is founded upon a shared commitment to freedom and democratic values,"

citing Armenia's participation in U.S. led peacekeeping deployments. He emphasized the importance of ongoing foreign military financing assistance for peacekeeping purposes, funding for U.S. training opportunities for Armenian officers, and recommended no less than \$40 million in U.S. economic assistance to Armenia.

Rep. Schiff also focused on the important role Armenia has played as a "regional safe haven for Middle East refugees," noting that over 20,000 individuals from Syria have found a new home in Armenia. The Congressman requested that the Subcommittee's proposed FY18 foreign aid bill include provisions supporting Armenia's efforts through aid and international organizations.

## Armenian Assembly of America urges investigation of Azerbaijan's ties and compromising materials on U.S. Officials

The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) sent letters to the Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence expressing concern regarding the undue influence of Azerbaijan on America's democratic institutions.

In their letter to the Senate Intelligence Chairman Richard Burr (R-NC), Vice Chairman Mark Warner (D-VA), House Intelligence Chairman David Nunes (R-CA), and Ranking Member Adam Schiff (D-CA), Assembly Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian stated:

"We are writing to express our concern regarding the undue influence of yet another foreign government on America's democratic institutions, namely Azerbaijan. We are deeply troubled by recent reports about Azerbaijan's ties to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its nexus to both the Mamadov family and the highest levels of the Azeri government. We therefore respectfully request that the congressional investigations

of Russian influence be expanded to include Azerbaijan's influence peddling and any materials it may have potentially compromising U.S. officials."

The Justice Department has previously brought some cases involving Azerbaijan through the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), but much more is needed. According to the "Azeri Oil Money Got a Pass From This Ethics Committee" article in Bloomberg News, Azerbaijan continues to shell out over \$45,000 monthly to the Podesta Group, of which the columnist states "It's hard to tell whether it's this creativity and generosity or any real U.S. strategic interest that makes the U.S. overlook the country's brutal dictatorship. A combination of both is likely: Without the 'caviar diplomacy,' Azerbaijan might be considered too small to defy declared U.S. values and principles for its sake."

"When it comes to the integrity of America's democracy, the rule of law, and our governance

process, we must not turn a blind eye to Azerbaijan's influence peddling, authoritarian regime and human rights atrocities," Assembly Co-Chairs Barsamian and Krikorian said. "Further, we must ensure that Azerbaijan's rampant corrupt practices do not compromise U.S. policies and objectives. Additional evidence on Azerbaijani as well as Turkish wrongdoing is available and growing; we would welcome the opportunity to help advance a thorough investigation and United States response."

In addition to the U.S., Azerbaijan's caviar diplomacy is also amply documented in the December 2016 European Stability Initiative (ESI) report, wherein expensive watches, jewelry, computers, and large sums of money, among other gifts, were provided to several politicians from a number of countries in Europe. ESI states that "the ease with which democratic institutions and safeguards can be undermined has emerged as a fundamental threat to European democracy."



## **Turkish-Azeri Union Chair Convicted of Anti-Armenian Speech in Holland**

A Netherlands court on March 17 convicted the chairman of the Turkish-Azerbaijani Cultural Association Ilham Askin for inciting violence against Armenians.

The Armenian community in the Netherlands, namely the Dutch Armenian Committee for Justice and Democracy (Armenian National Committee of Netherlands/ANC-Netherlands) and the Federation of Armenian Organisations in the Netherlands (FAON) welcomes the verdict, as it puts a halt to the aggression against the Armenian minority in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

He was prosecuted for making anti-Armenian remarks “Karabakh will be the grave of the Armenians” during a Turkish rally in the Netherlands city of Almelo.

The court decided to convict the man with a more severe punishment than the prosecutor had demanded. He was sentenced with 120 hours of community service and one month of suspended imprisonment with probation of 2 years. The prosecutor demanded 80 hours of community service and a suspended imprisonment of 2 weeks with probation of 2 years.

The more severe punishment is necessary according to the court, because of the seriousness of the crime and the way that it occurred. Askin also referred to the fact that he stands by his statement and did not show any insight in the case. Furthermore, there is a danger of recidivism.

On June 1, 2014 a Turkish demonstration took place in Almelo against the Genocide memorial erected on the churchyard of the Armenian Apostolic Church in that city. The Armenian community, spearheaded by the ANC-Netherlands and the FAON, had filed a



police report against the statements made during the demonstration.

“We welcome this conviction by the Dutch court to punish Ilham Askin of the Turkish-Azerbaijani Union. Chants like ‘Karabakh will be the grave of the Armenians’ have no place in the Netherlands, in Europe. This is a clear message to those who call for violence and hatred, be it in Sweden, in the Netherlands, or elsewhere. We will be very vigilant on this matter,” Chairman of the Kaspar Karapetian, President of the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (EAFJD) told the Armenian Weekly.

“No Azerbaijani or Turk can make such anti-Armenian calls under the pretext of freedom of speech. We can congratulate our partners in Netherlands for bringing this issue to the court and finding a solution to that,” Karapetian said.

## **US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu have talked on the phone, Hurriyet Daily News reports, citing diplomatic sources which talked to Anadolu Agency**

The two foreign policy chiefs have discussed the preparations for an upcoming meeting of the Global Coalition working to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which will be attended by the foreign ministers and senior leaders of the full

coalition, now at 68 members.

While this meeting will be held at the Department of State in Washington DC on March 22, it will be the first time since the establishment of the coalition that all 68 members will participate.

Tillerson and Cavusoglu also talked about the former’s visit to Turkey on March 30, sources said.

On March 16, Cavusoglu said Tillerson will visit Turkey, which would be the highest level of talks with a senior official from the new US administration since President Donald Trump took office in January, as Ankara hopes to have better relations with the White House.

“The US Secretary of State said he wanted to come on March 30 and I told him that this would suit us in Ankara. If our prime minister is in Ankara, he will meet him,” Cavusoglu told private broadcaster Habertürk late on March 16.

He added that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will meet Trump after the April 16 referendum.



## Aurora offers \$1 million for Middle Eastern students to study in Armenia



The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative in cooperation with Scholae Mundi Armenia will grant scholarships to students from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt to study at the American University of Armenia (AUA). This scholarship fund (US \$1 mln) is created as part of the Aurora Gratitude Projects.

The scholarships are for citizens of the above-mentioned countries, who wish to pursue the following degrees: BSc in Computer Science, Engineering Science, Data Science (starting 2018), Master of Public Health, Master of Engineering in Industrial Engineering & Systems Management, Master of Science in Computer & Information Science, Economics, Strategic Management, Master of Political Science & International Affairs, and Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

“Armenia has a potential to become a global educational hub and we encourage the engagement of young people from the Middle East to come and study in Armenia. This scholarship offers opportunities to talented youth who have been affected, directly or indirectly, by wars in their region.

We believe that it makes an impact not only on these young people who come to the country and benefit from its hospitality and qualitative education but enrich AUA community with highly motivated international students who will become ambassadors of Armenia and its culture in the future.

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, thus not only offers scholarships to individual students, but also expresses gratitude to the nations who were the first to open their doors to offer a helping hand to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide,” said Veronika Zonabend, the co-founder of Scholae Mundi Armenia Foundation, and together with her husband Ruben Vardanyan, co-founder of the RVVZ Foundation which helped create the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and the Aurora Gratitude Projects.

“The American University of Armenia is extremely grateful to the creators of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, specifically Ruben Vardanyan and Veronika Zonabend, who through their immense generosity have created an opportunity not only for students from the countries that hosted Armenian refugees from the Genocide to study in Armenia, but also afforded AUA an opportunity to serve these students.

Their presence on our campus will provide enhanced diversity and enrich the lives of all students. We are proud to be a part of this initiative and, through our educational programs, be able to express gratitude to the descendants of the people who sheltered Armenians during the most tragic part of their history,” said Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, President of the American University of Armenia.

The recipients will continue to receive the scholarships throughout their study at AUA as long as they are in good academic standing. The scholarship will cover tuition fees, travel and housing costs of the students. The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and Scholae Mundi Armenia have committed to granting the scholarship through the year 2023.

Scholae Mundi Armenia Foundation continues to support the Aurora Gratitude Scholarship program which initiates humanitarian and educational projects to help children, refugees and other vulnerable citizens in the Middle East. On behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, the descendants of the survivors of the Genocide transform their gratitude into action by helping with educational initiatives and scholarships, grants to humanitarian projects and promoting public awareness of humanitarian efforts. The scholarship programs of the Aurora Gratitude Projects are valued at US \$7 million.

## Concert in New York marks 25th anniversary of Armenia's UN membership

Concert dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Armenia's membership in the UN was held in New York on March 16. Attending the event were Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, UN Secretary António Guterres, heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the UN, high-ranking officials of the UN Secretariat, representatives of the Armenian community.

Addressing the attendees, Minister Nalbandian said “it's hard to overestimate the importance of the day.

“Armenia joined the UN family at a time full of challenges, but this never undermined our determination and commitment to build

a society in full compliance with the goals and principles of the UN,” he said.

“We are guided by the UN Charter, which calls to unite to maintain international peace and security, develop good-neighborly relations between states based on the respect for equality and the right to self-determination. The full and steady implementation of these commitments is the duty of all member states. Armenia is fully faithful to these commitments, including in its efforts towards an exceptionally peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict” Edward Nalbandian said.

He noted that Armenian directly contrib-

utes to global peace, participating in a number of peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Lebanon and Mali.

“We have joined the efforts of the international community aimed at non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, fight against terrorism, and search for ways to solve the migrant crisis. Armenia has provided refuge to 22 thousand refugees from Syria, making the country the third in Europe with the number of migrants per capita. Our country is doing the utmost to contribute to tolerance and promote intercultural, interreligious dialogue, fight racism, propaganda of hatred and xenophobia,” Edward Nalbandian stated.



## Barbecue: An ode to grilled meat filmed in Armenia and 11 other countries



*By Jon Herskovitz, Reuters*

The primal confluence of food, flames and family simmers in high definition in “Barbecue,” a globe-trotting new documentary and cinematic love letter to cooking meat over an open fire.

The feature-length movie filmed in 12 countries had its global premiere at the South by Southwest film festival in Austin, Texas, not far from some of the barbecue joints that inspired Australian filmmaker Matthew Salleh and his partner Rose Tucker to explore the globe’s shared barbecue culture.

“Barbecue is this perfect combination of tradition, community and culture,” Salleh said in a weekend interview shortly after the film’s debut.

“We just started talking to people and everyone was passionate about their country’s version of barbecue,” Salleh said over a plate of barbecued brisket, beef rib and sausage in Austin.

“In the six or seven months that we researched it, we were pitched by people who said ‘you have got to come to my country,’” he said, adding they are shopping for a distributor for the film.

He and Tucker went on a 200-day shoot that took them from Sweden to Uruguay, with stops including Armenia, Mongolia, Japan and a refugee camp on the Syria-Jordan border.

While the barbecue craft varied from the hot stones used to cook marmot in Mongolia to the pit used to grill goat in Mexico, the message in each trip was the same. Communities and families came together around the food.

“We have vegetarians who have seen the film and you cannot deny the cultural significance in the world of eating meat over the fire,” Salleh said.

The film starts in South Africa, where racial divides of apartheid still scar the country, and shows the separate and similar barbecue tradition among blacks and whites. It includes Philippines family gatherings around roast pig and exiled Syrians trying to recapture a bit of home at a shawarma shop in a refugee camp.

After their trek, Salleh and Tucker says they have received gentle ribbing from people asking why their country’s barbecue did not make the cut and a persistent question of what barbecue was best.

“At this point we begin the politically correct process of saying how we loved them all,” Salleh said. Tucker added the answer can be more about the experience, then the taste.

“We had some of the best experiences in Armenia where you drink vodka with the first bite of meat,” she said.

## Fly with me: Armenia premieres song for Eurovision 2017

Armenia has premiered its song for Eurovision 2017.

“Fly with me” was composed by Lilith and Levon Navasardyan. The lyrics were written by Avet Barseghyan and David Tserunyan.

“When I first wrote for Aram MP3, it was quite challenging for me, as I was new to Eurovision. With Iveta, I was much more confident, but still had a lot to learn. This time, as soon as I heard Artsvik’s voice, I knew what to do. Her voice is... diverse, her vocal range is very wide and the color of her voice is unique and beautiful. I tried to capture and pass that sense to everyone who will listen to this song” – says Lilith.

Lyricist Avet Barseghyan says he wanted to create something special for this song. “As any song composed by Lilit, “Fly with me” is extraordinary and experimental, out of this world.

Sometimes I actually believe that Lilit gets her inspiration from another universe. While



writing the lyrics, we wanted to share the message that no matter our differences, we have a universal value that unites us all – love” – says Avet.

“The first time we heard the song, Artsvik’s unique voice transported us into a fairy world,

so we knew that the lyrics had to reflect that. We had written 4 different versions of lyrics and in the end the team and Artsvik chose “Fly with me”. The girl in this fairy tale is the metaphoric symbol of love, that embodies our colors, our stories and our voices that make us who we are. The lyrics are light and easy to understand, but they carry a universal message – love is one for all of us” – says co-author David Tserunyan.

The music video was directed by Arthur Manukyan. “This music video is like my own reflection. I was greatly inspired by this song, and I hope that fans and viewers around the world will love it as much as I did” – says Arthur.

The music video was created by DOP Mkrtich Malkhasyan, stylist Aram Nikolyan, choreographer Hovhannes Sargsyan, makeup artist Yana Babajanyan, hair stylists Christina Abrahamyan and Harutyun Julhakyan.

## Zodiac Weekly Forecast



### **Aries (March 20–April 19)**

The Spring Equinox is a holiday similar to your birthday. It represents the opening of consciousness and an intake of spirit to address the new year. Now is the time to focus

on new plans for this next year of your life. Take a fresh look at where you want to direct your energy.



### **Taurus (April 20 – May 20)**

You may be surprised by a visit from the past. It could be a person or information that becomes apparent. Although you may be pleased to see this person, it is the best idea to take up where you left the relationship. Just smile, go to dinner, and be

pleasant together, but bypass the invitation to make it bigger.



### **Gemini (May 20–June 20)**

Love and social life are high on your priority list now. You may not have the time to attend to all your invitations! Short distance trips, errands, and education, whether it involves teaching or learning, are all

on the A rated list. You have a need to communicate the ideas that rush through your mind.



### **Cancer (June 21–July 21)**

You may not be feeling quite comfortable with yourself this week. It appears your mind is in conflict with your feelings. Do the best you can to deal with this issue up front, perhaps by journaling or discussing it with a

friend. Keep in mind that there is no mandate for you to settle on a decision right now.



### **Leo (July 22–August 21)**

This is a heavy time. Your heart wants to make light and easy, go out and play. But your sense of responsibility keeps you on task. You know if you ignored what must be done that you probably couldn't really enjoy the play. This is a time for

deal making with the Taskmaster inside your head. Do what must be done and reward yourself later.



### **Virgo (August 22–September 22)**

This week and next may bring you positive news concerning resources that you "share" with others. This includes one or more of the following resources: inheritance, debt payment, tax returns, invested money,

payment from insurance or windfall money. It also includes the resources of your partner. The aspect may actually pay you later.



### **Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)**

A talkative individual may land upon you to be a reflection of his/her need to communicate. Stay in touch with yourself and don't allow your time to be usurped without your internal permission. Sometimes Libra can fall into the role of "captive audience" which wastes your time and energy.



### **Scorpio (October 23–November 21)**

You may be surprised that this week brings you no interference or new issues to handle. It is rare that this happens, but take advantage of the rest. A massage or manicure

would be a good time to celebrate this time of quiet.



### **Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)**

A new plan that originated in Dec. 2016 is arriving at a turning point. Sometimes our ideas take a twist of their own. This is a time in which

you must decide whether or not to pour more resources into the plan or let it go. Generally speaking, though you would rather not have the problem, you probably will choose to see it through.

### **Capricorn (December 21–January 19)**



Your attention to the practical needs of your world is admirable. You are stable and resourceful. This week "others" in your life will call you to come out and play because they miss the part of you that can be so fun. You may have temporarily

forgotten that aspect of your personality.



### **Aquarius (January 20–February 17)**

You may be feeling low on resources during this period. "Resources" = time, money, strength. It is true that you are in a short dip,

but the gloom will not last very long. Don't beat yourself up over your history. You always do the best you can, and you cannot always know the outcome of every decision.



### **Pisces (February 18–March 19)**

A new plan that originated in late summer is arriving at a turning point. Sometimes our ideas take a twist of their own. This is a time in which you must decide whether or not to pour more resources into the plan or

let it go. Though you would rather not have the problem, you probably will choose to see it through.



# ARMENIA

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**Yerevan Address: 8, Khorenatsi St.**

Yerevan Home Care is the first and the only one company launched in 2011 in Yerevan. The company is providing a 24/7 qualified care service to older adults, disabled people, people suffering from chronic diseases or those who need postoperative care, as well as to people with dementia.

Creating the company we concenter to support many families that live abroad and have their elderly family members staying in Armenia. We succeed in supporting these families to have not only a solution of the raised problem but to have a deep feeling of satisfaction that their relatives are in good hands.

The organization's greatest wealth is educated, professional, skilled, experienced staff and people with high values and psychological knowledge.

We treat each patient with a strong sense of responsibility and show an individual approach to the families, at the same time maintaining the accepted norms and using contemporary approaches.

Taking your relative's care on our shoulders, we bring harmony between the different generations.

Apart from the professional knowledge the company pays a great attention to the humanitarian qualities of the serving staff, to their kindness, patience, attention and cour-



home health aides. Home health aides might also provide limited assistance with things such as taking blood pressure or offering medication reminders.

Nursing care is more related for patients after surgery, traumas, different chronic diseases

Rehabilitation service is for people who need professional rehabilitation in their recovery periods after some types of diseases and surgery. Dementia /Alzheimer /special care is for people with dementia in all stages when you worried about their safety or a health problem.

Yerevan Home Care provides all type of medical equipment that will increase the quality of life of your loved ones. (rent of the equipment is acceptable)

Transportation is a key issue for older adults and for people with temporary or permanent disabilities especially in Armenia where the streets and buildings are not adjusted for disabled people. Yerevan Home Care is providing a transportation service for people that are in wheelchairs.

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[yerevanhomecare.am](http://yerevanhomecare.am) 010 546 546

teous manner.

We assure that we will be your irreplaceable assistant in helping and surrounding your relative with care and support.

We provide service to all type of patients who needs care assistance.

Personal care is for elderly people who are alone and need support in daily living, such as dressing, bathing, feeding, or meal preparation. This type of care includes personal care aides, home care aides, and



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**The Noyan Tapan**  
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