

Macron, Pashinyan meet in Paris



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meets with President of France Emmanuel Macron, Paris, 14Sep2018

French President Emmanuel Macron met with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Paris on September 14 for talks focused on an upcoming summit of Francophonie nations to be held in Yerevan next month.

According to the Armenian prime minister's spokesman, Macron and Pashinyan also discussed issues pertaining to the business form to be organized within the framework of the Francophonie summit in the Armenian capital.

Greeting Pashinyan, Macron reportedly highlighted the importance of the Armenian leader's visit to France, expressing conviction that "it will promote and give a new impetus to the further development of friendly relations between the two countries."

The French president underlined that his

country is ready to continue the efforts aimed at "expanding close cooperation with friendly Armenia in different spheres."

The French leader reportedly expressed confidence that the upcoming Francophonie summit in Yerevan will be held at a high level. The Armenian prime minister, for his part, said: "I am convinced that our meeting will give a new quality to our privileged relations based on centuries-old historical friendship." He stressed the importance of Armenia's hosting the 2018 Francophonie Summit, describing it as one of the most important events in Yerevan since the South Caucasus country gained independence in 1991.

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT BY VIVACELL-MTS

Reference to numerous comments and inquiries in social networks on the latest announcement made by VivaCell-MTS, we would like to inform that:

base transceiver stations, switching and information systems of VivaCell-MTS do not provide for technical capacity to save the content of subscribers' phone calls and SMS messages, or to wiretap the phone calls. Wiretapping can be conducted only by means of special equipment and software services intended for special services, and VivaCell-MTS has never had the technical capability to access such equipment and software;

the Company's network is fully protected by a special system that complies with guidelines of international encryption standards, and it is impossible to unlock the encryption system and wiretap the calls between subscribers without special technical equipment and interference;

the accusations of wiretapping have no grounds, not only because, in accordance with the RA Legislation, mobile operators have no right to wiretap the phone calls of their subscribers, but also for the simple reason that wiretapping would require regular expenses from the Company aimed at the acquisition and maintenance of corresponding equipment necessary for holding large amounts of data. It could not have any business purpose for the Company and in itself would be an unjustified expense.

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Armenian FM, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights meet in Geneva

Armenian minister of foreign affairs Zohrab Mnatsakanyan had a meeting on September 13 with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet within the framework of a working visit to Geneva.

Congratulating on taking office, the Armenian FM wished good luck to the High Commissioner and expressed hope that he will have significant contribution in advancing the agenda of protecting human rights.

The sides praised the existing close cooperation between Armenia and the UN Human Rights office, stressing readiness to enhance it even more. Both sides attached importance to the presentation of Armenia's 2nd midterm report within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review.

Speaking about the "velvet revolution" which took place in Armenia, the Armenian FM noted that the ongoing reforms of the government, which is based on the mandate from the people, are aimed at strengthening democracy and human rights in Armenia, equality before the law, ensuring unbiased and effective justice and combating corruption.

Michelle Bachelet said that the domestic processes of Armenia were under the OHCHR focus. He was pleased to note the peaceful nature of the processes. The High Commissioner expressed willingness to support Armenia in implementing democratic reforms.

The sides addressed the efforts of the international community aimed at the prevention of genocides and crimes against humanity, praising Armenia's significant contribution in the matter.

Speaking about women's rights protection issues, the Armenian FM mentioned that they have finalized the developments of the national report based on the UNSC Resolution 1325.

Mnatsakanyan presented the preparation works for the 3rd Against



the Crime of Genocide Global Forum, due December 9 in Yerevan. He said that Armenia will make coherent efforts to make this forum become another platform of genocide prevention.

The FM reiterated Armenia's commitment to the exclusively peaceful settlement of the NK conflict settlement within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship. He stressed that Artsakh has joined the UN human rights fundamental documents, has ratified them and is implementing them.

Mnatsakanyan mentioned that human rights are universal, and that cooperation on protecting them should also be universal without any exception, especially for those who have coherently proved their commitment to these rights.

Pashinyan holds meeting with France-Armenia Senate friendship group

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has held a meeting on September 13 with the delegation of Gilbert-Luc Devinaz, chairman of the France-Armenia friendship group of the French Senate, the

government's press service said.

During the meeting the Prime Minister attached importance to the activities of the friendship group aimed at further developing the Armenian-French relations

and praised the level of intergovernmental cooperation between Armenia and France. Pashinyan expressed conviction that his upcoming visit to France will also contribute to further deepening of bilateral ties.

At the same time, the Armenian PM emphasized that Armenia is intensively preparing for the upcoming 17th La Francophonie summit and expressed certainty that it will be held on a high level.

The sides were pleased to note the bilateral cooperation in various fields and attached importance to expansion and development of economic ties, including the continuous increase of trade-turnover volumes.

The sides also addressed the processes in Armenia, the reforms which are being carried out in various directions, including the development of democracy, amendments in the electoral code, improvement of the business environment, simplification of the tax and customs administration, encouragement of investments and other issues.



PRESS OFFICE OF THE
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Armenian civilian wounded as Azerbaijani military opens heavy cross-border gunfire at border town and 3rd Army Corps

A civilian has suffered minor wounds as Azerbaijan kept an Armenian town under heavy cross-border gunfire for 40 minutes last night.

The victim, a 61 year old local of the town of Koti in Armenia's Tavush province, was wounded in the lower limb.

Armenian defense ministry spokesperson Artsrun Hovhannisyan told ARMENPRESS that the Azerbaijani shooting overall targeted not the village itself, but the 3rd Army Corps of the Armenian Armed Forces.

He said that the Azerbaijani military used various firearms in the shooting: up to 12,7mm caliber machine guns.

The Armenian forces suppressed the gunfire attack, according to Hovhannisyan.

Two days ago the Azerbaijani military had again opened cross-border gunfire at Armenian civilian settlements. The September 14 shooting targeted the Chinari village in Tavush province.



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Pashinyan reaffirmed his government's commitment to ensure a successful holding of the summit and expressed confidence that "it will contribute to the further rise of the reputation and influence of the Francophonie."

The French president is due to visit Yerevan for the events on October 11-12.

During the meeting at the Elysee Palace the two leaders also addressed the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Along with the United States and Russia, France co-chairs the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk Group, an international format promoting a peaceful resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

According to the information posted on the prime minister's official website, Pashinyan praised the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries, including France's efforts aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the region. The prime minister underlined that Armenia is committed to continue negotiations to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

"The Armenian prime minister and the French president attached importance to a peaceful settlement of the problem through the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs," Pashinyan's spokesman informed.

The two leaders reportedly agreed to discuss the agenda of the French-Armenian relations in more detail during Macron's state visit to Armenia next month.

During his two-day visit to Paris the Armenian prime minister also held meetings with representatives of the French-Armenian community as well as with business circles of France.

Addressing members of the French Enterprise Movement today, Pashinyan, in particular, called for French investments in the Armenian economy.

"I want to assure you that all investors will have dialogue-based relations with the Government of Armenia within the limits of honesty and legitimacy. Those who engage in economic activity will not have competitors in the government, since business and politics should be separated, and those who are engaged in politics should not engage in business. The Armenian government has been able to enforce this condition within a short period of time because it enjoys full confidence of the Armenian people," Pashinyan said, as quoted by his press service.



Campaigning Kicks off in Yerevan Elections

Twelve political parties and alliances are taking part in municipal elections in Yerevan in which campaigning formally kicked off on September 10.

Residents of the Armenian capital will go to the polls on September 23 to elect a 65-member Council of Elders reflecting their vote proportionally. The body will then elect a new mayor of Yerevan. Under Armenian election law, if any of the political parties and alliances manages to gain more than 40 percent of the vote, the top candidate on its list will be elected mayor automatically.

This is the first major election in Armenia since the change of government that took place in spring, with reformist leader Nikol Pashinyan forming a new cabinet.

Pashinyan and his team members have vowed to ensure free, fair and democratic elections.

Opposition parties and groups in Armenia have for years insisted that elections are rigged in Armenia in favor of the ruling party. Vote buying and administrative pressure on voters have been singled out by Armenian opposition leaders as the most common ways through which the governing party and its candidates managed to win elections in Armenia in recent years.

The Pashinyan government last week had a raft of amendments passed by parliament to criminalize not only direct vote buying but also other enticements that candidates and parties running in elections may offer to voters in exchange for their votes.

The pro-Pashinyan alliance at the current elections is led by popular actor and producer Hayk Marutyan.

Marutyan, 41, leads the My Step bloc that includes members of the Civil Contract party of Pashinyan as well as representatives of civil groups and individuals like himself who actively participated in the peaceful street protests that led to the change of government in April-May.



Apart from promising to solve major problems facing Yerevan residents, including transportation, waste management, housing construction and others, Marutyan above all vowed that “all publicly important decisions must be taken through local referendums.”

Other political parties and groups also launched their campaigns in the Yerevan elections, vowing to do their best for residents of the Armenian capital.

Lawmaker Naira Zohrabyan, who tops the list of the Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) of tycoon Gagik Tsarukyan, met with voters in the southeastern Nubarashen district where the presence of a landfill nearby is a major problem.

Zohrabyan promised that, if elected mayor, she will solve the problem of the Nubarashen landfill site, regulate issues connected with transportation, housing construction, road repairs, etc. “No one will steal a single penny from Yerevan residents anymore, be sure. I will be hundred times as strong as all the law-enforcement structures, the police, the National Security Service. The National Security Service and other law-enforcement agencies will become redundant in Yerevan,” she said.

BHK leader Tsarukyan also attended the party’s first meeting with voters as part of the current campaign. As during previous years citizens approached him asking for help in solving various problems.

Still before the start of the campaign Tsarukyan categorically denied the speculation that he had instructed his team to give out cash for votes. “Those who make such speculations are our enemies. If anyone can prove it, if such a thing happens I am ready to be subjected to punishment,” the tycoon said on September 4.

The start of the campaign was marred by an incident on Sunday in which a member and a supporter of Heritage, one of the parties running in the elections, were briefly detained by police for sidewalk graffiti.

Armen Martirosyan, the leader of Heritage, said the two young men did not break any law and expressed a hope that no such thing will occur again during the campaign period.

Heritage’s mayoral candidate is Raffi Hovannisian, who served as Armenia’s first foreign minister in 1991-1992 and was a top rival of former President Serzh Sargsyan in the disputed 2013 presidential election.

Among other major parties and blocs contesting the elections are Yerkir Tsirani of former lawmaker Zaruhi Postanjyan, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun), Orinats Yerkir of former secretary of the Security Council Artur Baghdasarian and the Luys alliance led by Pashinyan ally Artak Zeynalyan, who currently holds the post of the justice minister.

The former ruling Republican Party of Armenia is not participating in the current elections. Its senior member Taron Margaryan resigned in July after serving as Yerevan mayor for seven years. The Council of Elders could not elect a new mayor, triggering early municipal elections by popular vote.



Armenia hosts Francophonie forum ahead of Summit



A forum of the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF) opened in Yerevan on September 12, one month before the Armenian capital is to play host to the 2018 summit of French-speaking nations.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and OIF Secretary-General Michaëlle Jean attended the event.

In his opening remarks delivered in French Pashinyan welcomed representatives of all civic organizations taking part in the forum.

“I am proud to say that our country assumes an important task and lives through an important period of time by playing host

to the Francophone Summit. I want to assure you that our government and the whole of Armenia have mobilized their forces to host the participants of the summit in the best traditions of hospitality. I hope this summit will promote the development of Francophonie all over the world, and Armenia will become one of the centers of diplomatic activity of Francophonie,” the head of the Armenian government said.

OIF Secretary-General Jean, in her turn, said that the Armenians are preparing for the 17th Francophonie summit with the hospitality typical of them. “It is a great honor for us to hold a summit in a country where a velvet revolution, a peaceful change of power have taken place,” said Jean, adding that while in Yerevan she had an opportunity to meet young people who took civil responsibility to advance the achievements of the velvet revolution.

About 200 representatives of civic organizations from Francophonie member countries are attending the Yerevan forum.

The leaders of Francophonie countries, including French President Emmanuel Macron, are due to visit Yerevan for the Francophonie Summit that will be held in the Armenian capital on October 11-12.

In a Facebook post Pashinyan wrote: “I hope I will have fully learned French by the time the summit of Francophonie is held in Yerevan. Learn foreign languages! A citizen of Armenia should speak at least three foreign languages. I prefer French, Russian and English, and I should keep improving my knowledge of all the three languages.”



Moscow confirms plans for Putin's visit to Armenia



Russian President Vladimir Putin will pay an official visit to Armenia, according to a Kremlin spokesperson.

The Russian Izvestia newspaper quoted Dmitry Peskov on September

13 as saying that the exact date of the trip still has to be decided.

“The dates will be agreed,” the Kremlin official said.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan was in Moscow on September 8 for talks with Putin. He later told media that he had invited the Russian leader to pay an official visit to Armenia in the near future.

In an interview with the Russian daily Kommersant Pashinyan said that the Russian president's visit to Armenia is expected by the end of the year or early next year.

Putin is expected to pay a visit to Azerbaijan in late September. He met with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev in the southern Russian city of Sochi a week before hosting Pashinyan.

Armenia and Azerbaijan are locked in a protracted dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh. Along with the United States and France Russia co-chairs the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Minsk Group, an international format promoting a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

PM invited investors to participate in Armenia's economic flight



Armenia's Prime Minister invites all investors to participate in the flight the country is preparing for. Addressing a meeting with members of Movement of the Enterprises of France (MEDEF), the Prime Minister said the "the velvet revolution in Armenia will be useless, if not

followed by an economic one."

"In this sense, this is indeed the most important stage of our revolution, and we must ensure an economic breakthrough for the Republic of Armenia," he stated.

He said there are only two rules in place for those engaged

in economic activity – the activity should be in full compliance with law and taxes should be evaded.

Referring to the government's economic outlook, Nikol Pashinyan said "the executive's goal is to turn Armenia from agrarian country into a high-tech coun-

try."

"And this is not just an ambition because those who know Armenia know that there is a great human resource for such a structure and all prerequisites are there," he said.

The Prime Minister added that the IT sector in Armenia is dynamically developing, and a number of companies have expressed interest in launching activity in the country.

"We invite all investors to participate in the flight the Republic of Armenia is preparing for," Pashinyan said.

He reiterated the government's willingness to solve all issues through an open, frank and honest dialogue, because, he said "the success of any economic activity is the success of the Armenian Government, the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people."

The Prime Minister assured that those engaged in economic activity will not have competitors in the Armenian government, as "those engaged in business should not be engaged in politics, and those engaged in politics should not be engaged in business."

PM Pashinyan assures fight against corruption is meant to improve investment environment

During the last months Armenia carried out serious fight against corruption aimed at improving the investment environment, as a result economic indexes have improved, ARMENPRESS reports PM Pashinyan said at the National Assembly, answering the question of RPA MP Karine Achemyan.

Achemyan noted that international analytical centers have published information that in the second quarter investments have declined by 43% in Armenia. She also raised concerns that some people take out assets from Armenia.



"All the international institutions have always recorded that there are 3 main obstacles in any coun-

try for investments – corruption, monopolies-oligarchs and corrupt judicial system. And I think we

lead a serious fight against corruption aimed at improving the investment environment. And we can say that corruption is crushed in Armenia. There are no monopolies and the establishment of an independent judicial system is in process", Pashinyan said.

Referring to the outflow of assets Nikol Pashinyan said, "Unfortunately, a number of individuals linked with your faction have decided to take out their money from Armenia, as a result of which we have the numbers you indicated. But I assure, all those sums will be discovered and returned to Armenia".

Armenian PM Hosts Georgian counterpart, praises relations with Tbilisi

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan praised the current level of relations between Armenia and Georgia as he hosted his Georgian counterpart Mamuka Bakhtadze in Yerevan on September 10.

Bakhtadze, who was elected head of the Georgian government in June, arrived in the Armenian capital on his first official visit to the neighboring country.

After longer-than-planned talks with Bakhtadze Pashinyan spoke about “ambitious tasks” in the relations between the two countries.

“Today we had a very important conversation. During the negotiations we formulated quite ambitious tasks for the development of our further relations. Of course, the relations between Armenia and Georgia are brilliant, they are very good, and we face the task of bringing the economic component of our relations in conformity to the substantial, emotional level of relations that exists between our two peoples,” Pashinyan said at a joint press conference with his Georgian counterpart.

The head of the Armenian government said that the Georgian prime minister presented “a very ambitious program.”

“And we fully support it,” Pashinyan continued. “A concrete objective was formulated: to take our trade turnover to the level of \$1 billion in the next few years. This is a concrete subject, for which we



can have a clear roadmap and take concerted steps towards the implementation of this task.”

For his part, the Georgian leader expressed a hope that relations between Yerevan and Tbilisi will deepen in different directions.

“During today’s meeting my counterpart and I discussed the main directions of cooperation and emphasized our aspiration to intensify political relations. We discussed issues related to the spheres of transportation, energy, tourism, culture, education and innovations, and we made sure that we still have some untapped po-

tential in many areas,” Bakhtadze said, as quoted by the Armenian prime minister’s official website.

The Georgian prime minister said that he also spoke with Pashinyan about Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration process and “the significant progress that Georgia has made in this direction.”

“At the same time we welcome the activation of relations between Armenia and the European Union,” Bakhtadze said.

“We agreed to maintain the dynamics of high-level meetings and at the same time to support the holding of narrow-sector meetings.”

Amulsar mine issue requires conclusion from int’l organization with indisputable reputation, according to PM

(Yerevan, Armenpress) Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has presented details from his meeting with the chairman of the board of Lydian International in Paris.

Speaking to reporters after the inauguration of a new medical facility in Yerevan, the PM said that during the meeting he has said that the final decision of the Armenian government should be based on facts.

Currently the Amulsar mine, which is operated by Lydian Armenia, has stopped functioning due to ongoing protests of environmentalists. The government has said that it will make a decision whether



or not to allow the company to continue operations after having conclusions from experts in terms of safety.

“Unfortunately, when I was

in Jermuk later June or early July, I suggested the company to cooperate in order for us to be able to reach a conclusion over the facts, but they re-

fused, and now we are forced to take another path,” the PM said.

He added that the matter requires the conclusion from an international organization having indisputable reputation. “I believe that we must have the answers of two questions. To what extent is the project safe for Sevan [lake], and to what extent if the project safe for the waters of Jermuk and generally for the drainage basin,” the PM said.

He said the government will allow the company to continue operations if in fact the conclusions will prove that the project is safe for the abovementioned issues.

PM Pashinyan dines with representatives of the Armenian community in France

Headed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, a government delegation has arrived in the French Republic on a working visit. The Prime Minister left the airport for Yerevan Park in Paris, where he laid a wreath at the monument to Komitas, paying tribute to the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

Later on, the Premier had dinner with representatives of the Armenian community in France, involving MPs, politicians, public figures, businessmen, artists, particularly Mayor of Lyon Georges Kepenekian, Deputy Mayor of the 9th district of Paris Alexy Govchian, ex-member of the French government Patrick Devedjian, co-chairs of the Coordinating Council of Armenian Organizations of France Ara Toranyan and Murad Papazyan, businessmen Daniel Kourkchyan, Serge Churuk, Vardan Srmakesh, Armen Petrosyan, Alain Mikli, President of the Union of Filmmakers Alain Terzian, world-famous football player Yuri Djorkaeff and others.

In his speech, the Prime Minister noted that the presence of prominent French-Armenians symbol-

ized the opportunities available today in the Republic of Armenia. "What happened in Armenia is quite easy to understand. The citizens of Armenia and the Armenian people regained their trust and self-confidence. This is the key change that has taken place. No matter who is government and who is opposition – people are the only source of power in the Republic of Armenia and there is no exaggeration in it.

Earlier today, I hosted and talked to representatives of the France-Armenia Friendship Group. I told them that a new governance system is being shaped in the Republic of Armenia, that of direct democracy. Since this statement may give rise to some misunderstanding, I wish to note that by saying this I mean the following: citizens should have greater participation in decision-making, specifically by means of referendums.

I think a new process has started in Armenia, which will spread all over the world. I want to believe that the Armenian people and Armenia have assumed a role which is of global significance, and I also

believe that the Armenian nation has the necessary potential, historical background and skills to have a say in developing new systems in the world. Seeing those present, I want to believe that our State will take its share of leadership instead of skidding in the backdrop of modern politics. The Armenian nation has that very potential, and as the representative of the people which was the first to adopt Christianity as a State religion, I believe in the idea that we have far more serious and greater potential.

We must unite our forces just because the velvet revolution took place not only with the participation of Armenian citizens, but also with that of Diaspora Armenians.

What do I mean by participation? Namely, that your clear-cut position and positive stance were the most powerful factor that could change the political situation in Armenia. It is important for me reach out the spiritual, cultural and political content of what happened, which, as it turned out, should bring us together.

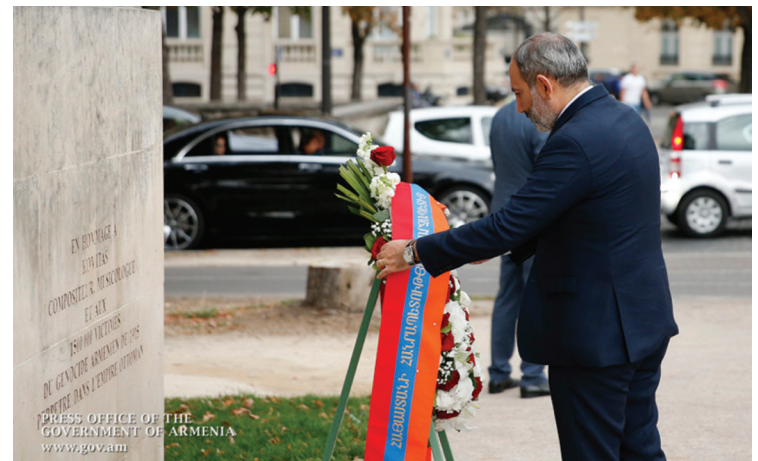
I do believe that the Armenian people have shouldered a new role,

and that new role is first of all to create a free and happy homeland. I can guarantee that today all people are equal before the law in Armenia. Being or having more and less in the country is the cornerstone on which our new reality is to be built. I would like to thank you for your position and reception.

Many things remain to be said yet, but I want to assure you that I could read in your eyes everything you wanted to say, and I hope you have seen in my eyes what you wanted to hear.

We are the descendants of the same patriarch, we are the children of the same homeland, the bearers of the same dreams, we are the creators of the same victory and we must be together," the Prime Minister concluded.

During the exchange of opinions that followed, the Premier answered numerous questions raised by French-Armenian public figures concerning the changes underway in Armenia: development of democracy, fight against corruption, betterment of the business environment, attracting investments, etc.



"Yerevan holds a special place in Parisians' hearts" - Nikol Pashinyan meets with Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who was paying a working visit to France, met with Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo. To begin with, the parties stated with satisfaction that the two countries have boasted privileged relations of close partnership since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the PM's office said.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the Mayor of Paris emphasized the importance of developing and strengthening cooperation between the twin capital cities. Nikol Pashinyan expressed conviction that the Armenian-French cooperation will be continued which will surely give its fruits.

"Armenia's new leadership intends to not only preserve the current level of Armenian-French relations, but also to give new breath and dynamics to the agenda of bilateral cooperation," the Prime Minister said, prioritizing the ever-growing cooperation between the Yerevan and Paris municipalities, in which great is Mrs. Hidalgo's personal contribution. The head of the Armenian government said he is aware that the municipal administrations keep in close touch everyday and share best practices with each other.

According to the prime minister, the experience of Paris - one of the best managed cities in the world - is valuable in all spheres. Nikol Pashinyan expressed the hope that a constructive dialogue will be established with Yerevan's new mayor and tangible results of cooperation will be recorded.

Noting that this year we are celebrating Yerevan's 2800th anniversary, the Premier reaffirmed his invitation for Anne Hidalgo to visit Armenia whether on Yerevan's 2800th anniversary or on another convenient occasion.

Anne Hidalgo, too, highlighted the development and deepening of Armenian-French relationships and praised the Armenian community in Paris, emphasizing that several members of the community have achieved great success in



various fields of activity and have made a significant contribution to the development of the city, as well as in public and political life.

The Mayor of Paris expressed her admiration of the Armenian TUMO Center for Creative Technologies and advised that they were going to set up a similar center in Paris to become another bridge of friendship. Anne Hidalgo gave details of the ongoing support programs implemented by the Paris Mayor's Office and expressed readiness to exchange experience with the Municipality of Yerevan.

"Yerevan holds a special place in the Parisians' hearts, and we are eager to further strengthen the ties with the Armenian capital," Anne Hidalgo said.

After the meeting, a reception was held in the municipality of Paris in honor of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, attended by Armenian community representatives. RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo delivered speeches.

The Mayor of Paris stated, in part: "Honorable Mr. Prime Minister, Dear Nikol Pashinyan, I wish you welcome and see that there are many familiar faces from the French-Armenian community here. I am happy to host you and I want to thank you for responding to the invitation. I am sincerely glad that the friendship between Paris and Armenia is so deep. We have a shared past record and a

common future to build.

The present consists of those young people that stood up for you, stood up for democracy and for their future, and the peaceful march that brought you from Gyumri to Yerevan and was a peaceful wind blowing in your country.

Today, there is a generation that shares your enormous responsibility. Youth is uniting us today; within just a few days a TUMO center will be inaugurated in Paris: the idea was inspired by your country. This will allow thousands of Parisians to train in digital technologies in an atmosphere of kindness, respect and trust.

We worked hard and have chosen a beautiful cultural establishment in Paris, and I want to greet the Director, as well as Mary Lou and Bekor Papazyans for accepting the challenge. We face the challenge of building our present and future days together; we must multiply the joint programs and implement them together. I know that we want to build more democratic, just and modern societies.

Mr. Prime Minister, I understand that you know very well the cost of the struggle. Let us reach our goals together."

Prime Minister Pashinyan stated, in turn: "Dear Mrs. Mayor, dear compatriots, dear guests, it is a great honor for me to be here today with the Mayor of Paris in this historic building. Since Mrs. Hidalgo repeatedly evoked the recent events in Armenia, I would

reserve the right to make some parallels and place today's meeting in the context of what happened.

The Armenian revolution actually started from the Square of France which features one of Rodin's masterpieces that France has donated to Armenia. We rallied around Rodin's sculpture, and I used to warn people several times a day that the statue was a masterpiece of art, and our greatest problem was not only to change power in the country, but also to make sure that the masterpiece is not damaged. Every time I spoke at the Square of France standing by Rodin's masterpiece, I evoked stories related to different revolutions in the past. I constantly had in my mind France, one of the largest centers of revolutions. I realized the progress brought to mankind through different revolutions, but at the same time I remembered the misery that revolutions have brought to peoples.

As I recalled the history of the French Revolution and other revolutions, a very clear problem came to be formulated before us, namely to make a revolution that will lead to progress, will lead to new opportunities, and will rule out a new tide of suffering. And we managed to clearly formulate our task: our revolution must be that of love and solidarity, not suffering, not that of gains and losses. And we succeeded in carrying out a revolution of love and solidarity, a revolution carried out for the sake of citizens' happiness, freedom and without any suffering.

I feel that the idea of our revolution and the fact that TUMO centers will be inaugurated in Paris, Moscow, Lebanon, Tirana, Berlin shows the key content of the New Armenia. We are a country that wants and can become an important and useful participant of human progress and civilization, make human life freer, happier, more tolerant and more civilized. And we are walking this way more confidently day after day, and in fact, we are walking."

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT BY VIVACELL-MTS

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“MTS Armenia” CJSC ensures the accessibility, confidentiality and integrity of physical and electronic information assets of the Company with the purpose of protecting its customers’ personal data of and the reputation of the Company. The Information Security Management System of the Company meets all requirements of ISO/IEC 27001:2013 International Standard.

Earlier Armenia’s leading telecom operator officially announced that it “does not and has never conducted wiretapping of phone calls. The Company does not have the authority and

technical means for conducting wiretapping.

As announced, criminal proceedings have been initiated concerning the wiretapping, and the Company refrains from making any comments on the information related to this case.

However, given the necessity to protect the business reputation of the Company and in accordance with 1087.1 Article of the RA Civil Code, VivaCell-MTS demands mass media and individuals, in particular, users of social media to stop the inappropriate speculations on the issue and dissemination of defamation against the Company”.

Partnership to Secure Wellbeing

VivaCell-MTS and Fuller Center for Housing Armenia are building yet another house. The tangible result of the discussions and the agreement signed earlier in spring are the safe roofs over their heads of the families who have. The housing project of the current year is in process; the volunteer staff members involved in construction works are steady in their efforts.

Building homes has become a beautiful tradition for the partnering sides. This time, the team of volunteers has been in Zarinja village of Aragatsotn region participating in the construction of the house belonging to Atoyan family.

Four years ago, the Atoyans tried to solve the housing problem, but the expenses it required exceeded the means they could afford; the lack



the moods of the families. Why? Because the most important purpose of the program is to have people’s despair of the years replaced with confidence in the future. The burden of housing problem is so heavy that people are oftentimes quite reserved even in expressing their joy and excitement. I am sure the perspective of the coming day is not vague any more for this young family. I believe it is equally important that the program implemented together with our partner makes people in the regions feel at the center of our attention, and lets them solve the seemingly insolvable problems in a dignified way,” VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph Yirikian** said.

“Our aim is to create simple, decent environment and to improve the family’s quality of



of financial means made them to accept the situation and to choose a temporary solution to the problem.

Aram had purchased a half-built house, but could not add a brick to it, and the family was forced to live with a Aram’s parents and his brother’s family eleven people in one place. The dream of making the half-built house a safe home remained unfulfilled.

“We still cannot believe that soon we will finish the construction and will move to live in our new home. This was a big dream that turned into a reality thanks to your support. My family and I are very happy and grateful that you gave us a hand-up to finish the construction of our home,” said Aram.

“In all those places, where we take part in the construction works, I look for change in

life. It’s obvious that by building a home for Aram’s family we will also ease the burden of his parents’ family and that is a double success,” said Fuller Center for Housing Armenia President Ashot Yeghiazaryan.

The volunteers performed the plastering of the walls. The dream of the family to live in a decent home will soon become a reality.

OSCE PA to continue supporting Armenia's democratic development: Tsereteli concludes visit



(Yerevan- Armenpress) Concluding a two-day visit to Armenia, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President George Tsereteli (MP, Georgia) welcomed the ongoing efforts to implement electoral reforms in the country, urging broad political consensus for any changes to the electoral system, the OSCE PA said in a press release.

He reiterated the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly's commitment to supporting Armenia's continued democratic development. OSCE PA President Tsereteli and Secretary General Ro-

berto Montella met with President Armen Sarkissian, Parliament President Ara Babloyan, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, parliamentary leaders, civil society representatives, members of the international community, as well as students and faculty from Yerevan State University.

"Following a dramatic change of government earlier this year, the Armenian political system has been put to a new test. I'm pleased to see a willingness for political forces to work together constructively, and with planned reforms

to electoral processes, broad consensus is doubly important," said President Tsereteli.

"The responsibility for this process lies clearly in the hands of Armenia's people and authorities, and the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly remain committed to supporting this process for the best possible outcome."

In his first presidential visit since being elected to the position at the OSCE PA's Annual Session in July this year, the President welcomed the opportunity to consult with colleagues in the Armenian parliament regarding their priority concerns within the OSCE. In his meetings with officials, President Tsereteli discussed a range of issues including economic development, electoral reform, anti-corruption efforts, regional relations, and Armenia's work within the OSCE.

He reiterated the OSCE PA's support for the work of the OSCE Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs on Nagorno-Karabakh, but stressed that the ultimate responsibility on delivery of concrete results and progress lies with the political leaderships of the parties involved.

"Coming from the South Caucasus region myself, I understand the challenges and sensitivities impacting Armenia. I hope that the authorities will make full use of the range of tools that the OSCE has to offer, to help the country fully live up to the expectations of its people," said Tsereteli.

Noting that both the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Enzo Moavero Milanesi and OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger have visited Armenia in recent months, the President stressed the strong commitment of the Organization to Armenia's continued development.

To contribute to Assembly activities in the region, the President is expected to appoint a new Special Representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on the South Caucasus region. The President and Secretary General welcomed the active participation of Armenian parliamentarians in all OSCE PA activities. The OSCE PA will hold its annual Autumn Meeting from 3-6 October in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

U.S. House leadership urged to allow a vote on Armenian Genocide Resolution

Amid unprecedented strains in U.S.-Turkey ties – with Ankara's traditional advocates and apologists on Capitol Hill running for cover – the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) has launched a petition drive asking U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) and Majority Leaders Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) to schedule an immediate up-or-down vote on H.Res.220, a bipartisan genocide-prevention measure that draws upon the lessons of the Armenian Genocide and the broader Ottoman Turkish genocidal campaign to destroy Armenian, Greek, Assyrian, Chaldean, Syriac and other Christian nations on their biblical-era homelands.

Speaker Ryan, Majority Leader McCarthy, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) are all on record, during their Congressional tenures, supporting U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Among the measure's more than 120 cosponsors are Chairman Ed Royce (R-

CA) and Ranking Democrat Engel of the Foreign Affairs Committee and Chairman Nunes and Ranking Democrat Schiff of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

"Today, Turkey stands alone. Congressional advocates and apologists who once covered for Turkey on Capitol Hill are today running for cover themselves," said ANCA Director Aram Hamparian. "As we approach a closely contested mid-term election, it's only Erdogan's Embassy and the lobbyists on his payroll who are working overtime against H.Res.220 – and their strategy is to block a vote because they know that Members of Congress, given the chance, will overwhelmingly pass this straightforward genocide-prevention measure."

H.Res.220 is a humanitarian measure that speaks to both the human rights and religious freedom aspects of U.S. leadership in the prevention of genocide and other atrocities. It specifically encourages the U.S. government

to draw upon the lessons of the Ottoman Empire's 1915-1923 genocide of Armenians and other Christians in order to help prevent modern-day atrocities against religious and ethnic minorities.

The Armenian Genocide has been recognized by 48 U.S. states and more than a dozen NATO allies, including Germany and France. The Eisenhower and Reagan administrations each went on record recognizing the Armenian Genocide, but recent U.S. administrations have, avoided using this term, in deference to Turkey's irrational sensitivities.

The ANCA's aim – as outlined in the ANCA360 review of Armenian American policy priorities – is "breaking with U.S. complicity in Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide, clearing the way for active American leadership including direct, sustained U.S. pressure on Turkey toward a truthful, just, and comprehensive resolution of this crime."

Armenia reiterates its strong support to the universality of human rights – FM

Armenia is committed to the universality of human rights and their applicability on an equal footing, without any discrimination and distinction in conformity with the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other fundamental instrument, Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said in an address to the 39th Session of Human Rights Council.

Addressing the session, Minister Mnatsakanyan briefed the attendees on the recent fundamental democratic changes in Armenia and the vision for the future.

"In April hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of cities and towns of Armenia to peacefully protest against the authorities and the entrenched negative practices undermining justice and the rule of law. They claimed direct and vocal participation in public affairs. Most conspicuously, public protests in Armenia have demonstrated the strength of our civil society. They have demonstrated the evolution of the public of Armenia to a considerably high level of political maturity and legal literacy," the Foreign Minister said.

"The transformation in Armenia was of a strictly domestic nature and was motivated by distinctly domestic realities. It was carried out by the people, and for the people, having women and youth in particular at the forefront of the change. Armenia is proud of a vibrant and engaged generation fully in charge of their rights and freedoms," Minister Mnatsakanyan added.

He said that "over the past four months, empowered with the overwhelming support and mandate of the people, the Government embarked on the implementation of the reform agenda aimed at anchoring resilient democratic institutions, the protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms, strong and independent judiciary, the rule of law, resolutely fighting corruption and promoting equal and fair conditions for all in economic and social life. These objectives take prominence in the Government programme."

"Conducting genuinely free and fair elections are equally at the top of this Government's priorities. In about a week's time Armenia will hold municipal elections for the capital city of Yerevan. The Government, the Parliament and all relevant institutions are preparing the necessary legal changes and institutional capacities for the conduct of nationwide parliamentary elections, which will consolidate the democratic transformation of Armenia and will accurately reflect the current political landscape. Implementation of all these reforms are not an easy job, there are challenges to face, of course. However, at the heart of the reforms is the resolute political will of the Government, reinforced by the strong mandate from the people. In all those priorities Armenia successfully and effectively cooperates with all its international partners," he said.

"Together with its agenda for democracy,

the Government is also reinforcing its reform agenda for development. The wave of modern changes is embracing every walk of life. High technologies and start-ups, creative education and innovation define the nature and the direction of our development agenda, firmly embrace the national talent as the drivers of smart development," the Foreign Minister stated.

"Conducive environment for innovation, creative thinking and the use of technologies is amongst the strategic priorities of the Government. Often all the Government needs to do is just support and promote private initiatives and public-private partnerships. Just to share one single example, every year thousands of young people sign up for free state-of-art creative education and technology courses in technological centres across Armenia and learn the ways of channelling creation and innovation into wealth generation," he added.



According to Minister Mnatsakanyan, "the international community at all levels should continue to resolutely address the dangerous phenomena of the abuse of information technologies and the media for the dissemination of hatred and intolerance. History knows well about the dangerous consequences of unbridled hatred. One should be reminded that those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it." "Armenia and the Armenian people have been a consistent target for massive and systematic hate induced and xenophobic rhetoric emanating from Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani state propaganda is not merely a product of a targeted policy, but also a consequence of the weak democratic institutions, absence of free media and a poor record of human rights," he stated.

"We observe a direct correlation between the intensity of bellicose rhetoric and aggressive militarism from Azerbaijan directed against the Armenian people. The crimes committed during the military aggression of Azerbaijan against Nagorno Karabakh in April 2016 reinforce the validity of the exercise of the right to self-determination. This right is of existential value for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh," Zohrab Mnatsakanyan stated.

"Armenia reiterates its strong support to the universality of human rights and their applicability on an equal footing, without any discrimination and distinction in conformity with the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other fundamental instruments. Equally, the

commitment to "leave no one behind" is at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We should recognise the existence of territories and peoples that are striving for the realization of their rights and, first of all, the right to self-determination. The acknowledgement of and the respect of the people's right to self-determination and other related rights are a serious test for the UN and its human rights protection system. Meanwhile, once again, I wish to reiterate the strong commitment of Armenia, of its new Government to the strictly peaceful and negotiated settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, strictly within the internationally agreed format of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship. Armenia reiterates the importance of establishing and promoting an environment conducive to peace. Armenia also underlines the critical priorities of status and security for the people of Nagorno Karabakh," he said.

"Armenia has been actively involved in the initiatives launched within the UN and co-operated with many structures and subdivisions of the organization. Armenia is a signatory to numerous international treaties including to all fundamental instruments in the sphere of human rights. International treaties ratified or acceded by Armenia are an integral part of the legal system of the country and have prevalence over national laws," he said.

"Armenia has established an internal mechanism for reporting and coordinating activities in a follow up to the recommendations stemming from the UN human rights mechanisms. The Foreign Ministry has elaborated a consolidated database of all national commitments and has identified focal points from line ministries in charge of implementation and co-operation with specific monitoring mechanisms. This national mechanism, together with the National Action Plan for the Protection of Human Rights, constitutes an integral part of Armenia's human rights protection system and is a solid platform for effective cooperation between the Government and the civil society," the Foreign Minister stated.

"Armenia continues the practice of preparing periodic reports for submission to different UN treaty bodies with the active participation of NGOs and broad public consultations. The latest public discussion on the draft report on the implementation of provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was organized at the beginning of August," he added.

In conclusion, the Foreign Minister stressed that in a relatively short period of time the new Government of Armenia has managed to considerably advance the democratic reforms in a comprehensive and irreversible manner.

"The Government has an overwhelming popular support for upholding the ideas of the Armenian Velvet Revolution and is fully determined to carry out the ambitious reform agenda," he concluded.

Australian Chess Master Arianne Caoili to bike through historic Armenia in support of COAF

Chess Master Arianne Caoili, will embark on a 2-week cycling tour throughout Cilicia, Anatolia and northern Iran this month. Arianne will start her journey from the medieval Armenian port city of Ayas in Cilicia on September 21 and will finish the trek in the town of Agarak located on the Armenian-Iranian border. Born in Manila, Arianne Caoili moved to Armenia in 2013 and has been engaged in various entrepreneurial and philanthropic initiatives. The Australian chess player, born to a Dutch mother and Filipino father, was awarded the title of Woman International Master (WIM) by FIDE and has competed in seven Women's Chess Olympiads.

Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) is an organization dear to Arianne's heart since its committed to improving the lives of children throughout rural Armenia by giving them opportunities for advancement. Arianne has always been passionate about helping children, especially with regard to education, music and disabilities. The biking tour's fundraising goal of \$5,500 USD will allow COAF to expand its athletic programs for youth living in 6 villages of Armenia's Tavush region. Funds will go toward establishing clubs and much needed sporting equipment and salaries for coaches. Tavush, located on the border with

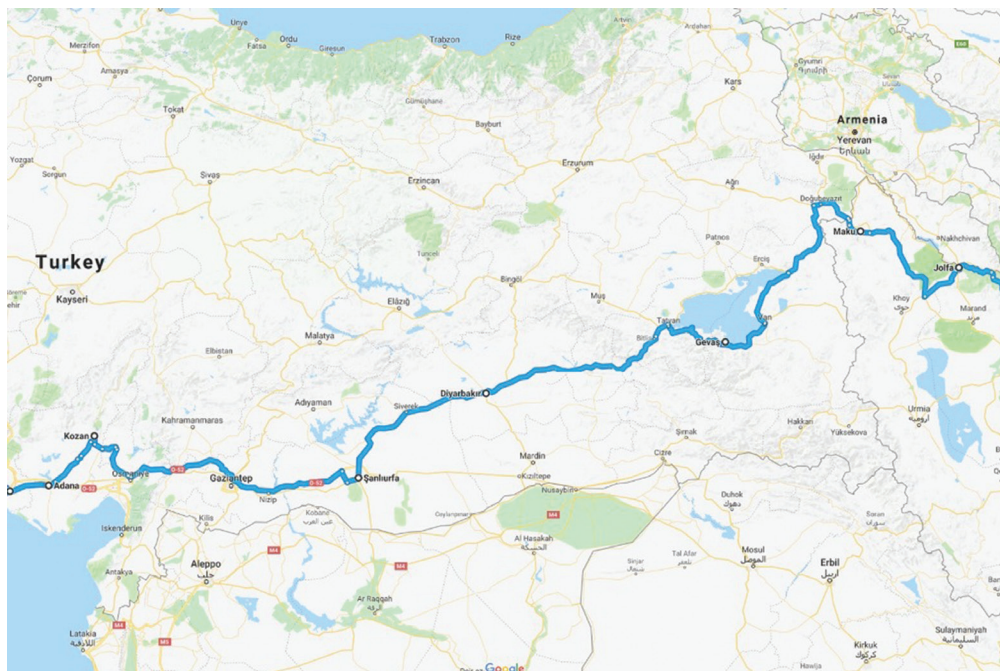


Azerbaijan, is prone to sporadic attacks and is in vital need of programs aimed at revitalizing the region and giving youth newfound opportunities and health-oriented activities.

Caoili has utilized her professional background in public and private sector consulting as an advisor to the Armenian government. In 2015, she established Armenia's first boutique strategy consulting firm, Akron Consulting, which specializes in business and public policy advising. She is also owner and editor-in-chief of

Champord, the only free, mass-distributed newspaper in the Caucasus region, with the largest print run in Armenia. She serves as chairman of the board for the Champord Fund, an organization invested in the development of civil society and the training of young Armenian journalists. Arianne is currently the CEO of one of Armenia's largest alcohol distributors, 40 Degrees, a fast-growing, unique and novel start-up which she founded 3 years ago. She is married to Armenian Chess Grandmaster Levon Aronian.

Arianne's cycling expedition will be documented by GoPro action cameras and journalists who will accompany her. Converse Bank has agreed to cover some of the expenses Arianne will incur on her trip. COAF will regularly share footage of Arianne on the road via its social media outlets. Stopping points on the route include Adana, Sis, Gaziantep, Tarsus, Urfa, Diyarbakir, Van, Doğubayazıt, and Maku. "I am excited to explore the rich history and amazing culture of medieval and ancient Armenia. Throughout the cycling tour I will encounter the vestiges of Hellenistic and Roman empires in Armenia. Further afield we will discover ancient cultures and temples that predate recorded history," stated Caoili in a recent interview.



Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

Plan to work and play alone this week. You likely will be feeling restless and generally tense. Your patience could be short and you might say things you'll wish you hadn't. You have a desire to break free from restraints. It is a short transit. Look for a way to handle this moderately.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

A relationship or friendship that began with gusto in late March arrives at a point of evaluation. The question of commitment may always be an issue in this situation. Tensions that have been submerged may suddenly erupt and one of you may depart the scene. If in a normally stable relationship, then one of you is looking for some fresh excitement.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

Communications with significant others may be misunderstood, snarled, or lost altogether. Do not make assumptions about what others mean. Ask questions and clarify for best results. Accidents are possible due to mechanical breakdown. Give attention to odd sounds from any machinery, including the car.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

You are conflicted on the subject of romance versus caretaking, which is your natural instinct. Perhaps you are caught in the middle between the needs of a spouse and your children. Sometimes a Cancer becomes a parent to the partner, which usually creates a troubled atmosphere. Set aside decisions on these matters until you are more centered.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

The subject of healing and caretaking seems prominent. You may feel obliged to care for a family member at the expense of yourself during this week. It is fortunate that this aspect is fairly short lived. By next week you will no longer be conflicted.



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

A misunderstanding could develop between you and a close friend or family member. The blame game is useless. Do your best to unwind the thread to the point that it began and start fresh. It is possible that you will have a minor issue with a belly ache. Pipes, whether in your body or your house may need clearing.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

There may be a financial surprise as this week begins. It looks expensive, but fortunately you have saved a stash that will help you through it. Your personal taste leans toward the luxurious. Look at the big financial picture before you give in to it.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

Either you or others in your life are behaving erratically. It is difficult to make firm plans or sustain a solid conversation. This sometimes generates a rift between you and another because one of you needs to be alone. Don't fight it. Just let it be. It is temporary. Take it with a spoonful of generosity and humor.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

An opportunity is coming any day now to increase your income via a work opportunity. It is possible that if you agree to do some small thing in good spirits, the work will become a project that grows to your benefit. If you are already employed, you likely will get approval soon for a job that has been pending.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

Listen to the Guardian, who speaks to you from the inside. This is a time in which your Guardian will protect you. It is sometimes hard to pick it out from the voice of Ego. If the Voice is flattering you, set it aside. That is not the true Guardian. The true Guardian offers wisdom, not criticism or flattery.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

Mars, the warrior, entered your sign on September 10. It will be traveling with you for ten weeks. This energy is especially helpful in defining our boundaries. Periodically we need to examine who we are as well as who we are not. Often something is eliminated. In general, it increases your courage and physical strength.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

Make a special effort to keep up with keys, tickets, and other small items. Your feelings are easily injured right now. On the other hand, you may be the offender, hurting someone else. Try to stay on the planet and think carefully before you speak. If you feel "hurt", don't leap to a conclusion before you ask what the meaning is of a behavior or a comment.

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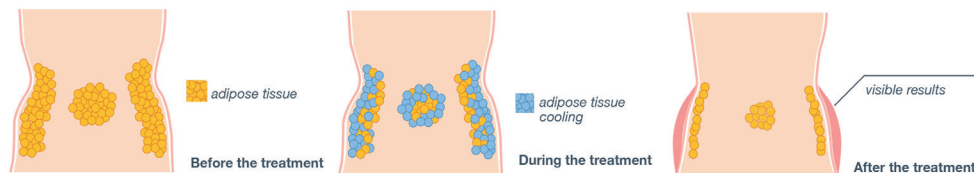
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