

Pashinyan, Macron discuss Armenia-France cooperation, regional Issues



At the Élysée Palace, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan held a private meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron.

Prime Minister Pashinyan warmly congratulated President Macron on the occasion of France’s National Day, wishing prosperity and well-being to the friendly people of France.

President Macron thanked the Armenian Prime Minister for the kind wishes and reaffirmed his commitment to further developing and deepening multifaceted cooperation with Armenia.

The two leaders discussed a number of

key issues on the Armenia-France bilateral agenda, including the implementation of joint programs.

Prime Minister Pashinyan also briefed President Macron on the discussions held earlier the same day in Brussels, highlighting his government’s goal of further deepening cooperation with the European Union.

The sides also exchanged views on issues of regional importance.

Later French President Emmanuel Macron has commented on his meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in a post on X.

“I am pleased to welcome Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to Paris. I have reaffirmed France’s support for his courageous efforts to establish peace with Azerbaijan. The possible swift signing of a peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan could open a new chapter for all the peoples and countries of the region and beyond,” Macron has said.

According to him, the meeting also provided an opportunity to review bilateral relations, with the goal of deepening cooperation in all areas and soon consolidating the strategic partnership between the two countries.

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## Alexandra Cole appointed new UK Ambassador to Armenia

The UK Government has announced the appointment of Ms Alexandra Cole as His Majesty's next Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia.

She will succeed Mr John Gallagher, who will be moving to a new role within the UK Diplomatic Service.

Ms Cole is expected to assume her duties in Yerevan in September 2025.

Alexandra Cole joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1990 and has since held a wide range of positions in

London and abroad. Her recent roles include Head of Contingency Planning for the Middle East and North Africa at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, as well as Deputy Head of Mission in both Doha and Tbilisi.

She has also served at the UK Mission to the United Nations in Geneva as Counsellor for Specialized Agencies, and held earlier postings in Cairo, Islamabad, Sarajevo, and Tehran. In London, her work has spanned the FCDO Policy Unit, the



Engaging with the Islamic World Group, and the Finance, Personnel, and Migration departments.

## Armenian Ambassador briefs Japan's State Minister for Foreign Affairs on Crossroads of Peace initiative

Armenian Ambassador to Japan Monica Simonyan met with Japanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hisayuki Fujii.

Ambassador Simonyan commended the long-standing friendly relations between Armenia and Japan based on shared values, mentioning the continuous assistance provided by Japan through a number of programs.

State Minister Fujii emphasized the potential for deepening cooperation both on a bilateral level and within international organizations. The two officials underscored the importance of mutual visits



and highlighted opportunities for collaboration around major international events, including the upcoming World Expo 2025

in Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

The meeting also included an exchange of views on the security situation in the South Caucasus and ongoing efforts to promote peace in the region. Ambassador Simonyan presented the Armenian government's "Crossroads of Peace" initiative, aimed at fostering regional stability and connectivity.

Referring to the ongoing negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the peace agreement already agreed upon in principle, State Minister Fujii expressed hope that the document will be signed soon and that regional issues will be resolved peacefully and on a lasting basis.

## Hambartsum Matevosyan to replace Hakob Simidyan as Armenia's Minister of Environment



President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan has signed a decree appointing Hambartsum Matevosyan as the country's new Minister of Environment. The decision was made based on the proposal of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, in accordance with Article 131 of the

Constitution and Article 5, Part 1 of the Law on the Structure and Activities of the Government.

In a separate decree, President Khachaturyan released Hakob Simidyan from the post of Minister of Environment.

Hambartsum Matevosyan, 33, was born in Gyumri and began his public service career in 2018, when he was appointed Governor of Armenia's Armavir Province. He later served as Deputy Prime Minister and most recently held the position of Chief Adviser to the Prime Minister.

Matevosyan received his higher

education in the United States. He studied World Sciences at Grossmont College in California and continued his education at San Diego State University from 2012 to 2015, where he specialized in International Relations, International Security, and Conflict Resolution.

Between 2016 and 2018, he worked at the American University of Armenia as Manager of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and served as an advisor on general education.



## Armenia sees unblocking of regional communications under its territorial integrity, sovereignty and jurisdiction – PM



Armenia's vision on unblocking the regional communications is reflected in the Crossroads of Peace project, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at a press conference on July 16.

Referring to what is being discussed within the framework of unblocking regional communications, PM Pashinyan said: "The Republic of Armenia is committed to unblocking regional transport routes and is open to facilitating communication between Armenia's regions via Azerbaijani territory, and between Azerbaijani regions via Armenian territory. We also support bilateral trade, as well as international transit from Armenia through Azerbaijani territory to third countries, and vice versa."

The Prime Minister emphasized that Armenia sees all these processes under Armenia's territorial integrity, sovereignty and jurisdiction and any further discussion will take place within this framework.

Referring to the possibility of delegating the management of those routes to other companies, he noted that even today there are several well-known such cases in Armenia, some of which can be considered successful, while others not

as much.

As examples, Pashinyan cited the management of Zvartnots International Airport, the water supply system, and the Armenian railways, all of which are managed by external operators. "I don't believe Armenia's sovereignty, jurisdiction, or territorial integrity has been compromised in any of these cases," he stated. He also referred to previous experience with the outsourcing of Haypost, Armenia's national postal service.

Importantly, Pashinyan emphasized that while these infrastructures are under outsourced management, they remain the property of the Republic of Armenia. "It is essential to underline that Armenia retains ownership of its railway, Zvartnots Airport, and water system," he said.

Referring to the unblocking of regional routes within the framework of the "Crossroads of Peace" initiative, Pashinyan mentioned that the government is considering the creation of a company that would attract the necessary investments for the project, which he described as having "enormous investment potential." According to him, beyond roads and railways, the project also envisions pipelines for oil and gas, power transmission lines, fiber-optic cables, and other infrastructure.

"This is an economic network that needs to be created and managed," the Prime Minister said, emphasizing that Armenia envisions this network as part of its own sovereign infrastructure.

Addressing public concerns over

possible land lease agreements or foreign involvement in infrastructure projects, Pashinyan explained that under Armenian law, such arrangements fall under the concept of "development rights." He clarified that any infrastructure developed under this framework would become or remain state property after the expiration of the contract.

The Prime Minister also said he could not provide more specifics at this stage, since a wide range of proposals are under discussion. "If there were a finalized agreement, we would be able to speak about it concretely. For now, I am outlining the scope of discussions," he said.

Speaking more broadly about Armenia's role in regional logistics, Pashinyan underscored that Armenia has expressed willingness to take certain steps to simplify transport-related procedures as part of the "Crossroads of Peace" project. He added that competition among countries to attract transit of goods and energy flows is increasing, and Armenia must offer attractive conditions to international investors.

"It is surprising that some in Armenia present the reopening of railways through Armenian territory as a tragedy, while the real tragedy is that there is currently no functioning transit railway crossing Armenia," he said.

"If Armenia were – and I am convinced it will be – a hub for international freight transit, it would become a significant factor of national security," Pashinyan concluded.

## The Prime Ministers of Armenia and Belgium meet in Brussels

A meeting between the Prime Ministers of Armenia and Belgium, Nikol Pashinyan and Bart De Wever, took place in Brussels.

The interlocutors discussed a number of issues on the agenda of Armenia-Belgium relations. The parties expressed satisfaction with the dynamic nature of the political dialogue and emphasized the importance of taking consistent steps to develop trade and economic partnership,

investments, and expand business ties.

The Belgian Prime Minister expressed his country's support for the development of Armenia-European Union relations, expressing confidence that the visit of the Prime Minister of Armenia to Brussels will give a new impetus to the development of bilateral cooperation.

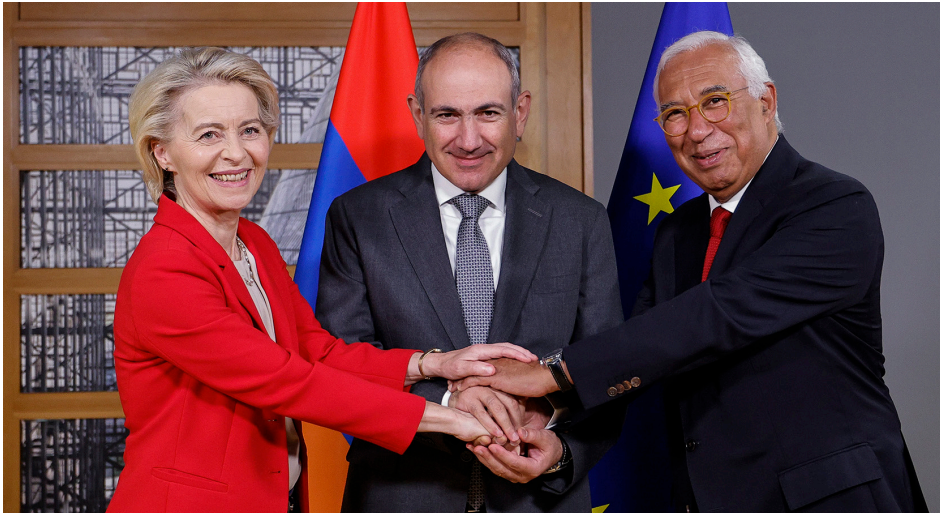
Prime Minister Pashinyan expressed satisfaction with the results of the meetings held today and emphasized the

commitment of the Government of Armenia to develop cooperation with the EU, including the effective promotion of institutional reforms.

Nikol Pashinyan and Bart De Wever exchanged views on regional developments, including the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's working visit to Brussels has concluded.

## A joint press release was adopted following the results of the trilateral meeting between Nikol Pashinyan, António Costa and Ursula von der Leyen



A trilateral meeting between the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, the President of the European Council António Costa and the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen took place in Brussels.

A joint press release was adopted following the results of the meeting, which is presented below:

“EU and Armenia reaffirm and advance their partnership during a leaders’ meeting

Today in Brussels, European Council President António Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, met with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to reaffirm and advance the growing partnership between the European Union and Armenia. President Costa and President von der Leyen welcomed Armenia’s ambitious reform agenda and expressed their support for Armenia’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, and democratic reforms.

During the meeting, the leaders welcomed the recent political agreement on the text of the EU-Armenia New Partnership Agenda, a key milestone in their

shared commitment to deepening ties. They also noted with satisfaction the progress in the visa liberalization process and Armenia’s recent law ‘On the Launch of the process of European integration’.

The EU reaffirmed its strong commitment to supporting Armenia’s resilience and long-term development through substantial financial and technical assistance. Under the Global Gateway strategy, EU investments in Armenia are now expected to reach EUR 2.5 billion, fostering inclusive growth and connectivity. The EUR 270 million Resilience and Growth Plan, announced in April 2024, boosted EU funding to Armenia by 50%. With EUR 200 million in grant assistance and EUR 70 million in grant funding to leverage investments, it continues to support Armenia’s socio-economic reform agenda, closer sectoral cooperation, and investments in energy, transport, and the private sector.

In this context, the EU reaffirmed its support for Armenia’s Crossroads of Peace initiative, to promote regional connectivity and reconciliation. President Costa and President von Der Leyen also

acknowledged Armenia ongoing efforts to promote stability in the South Caucasus, particularly through continued engagement in peace talks with Azerbaijan and steps towards the normalisation of relations with Türkiye. The leaders also underlined the importance of the possibility to include Armenia’s in the European Union’s regional and economic initiatives, particularly within the framework of the Black Sea Strategy,

Furthermore, President Costa and President von der Leyen thanked Armenia for its close cooperation and the steps taken in preventing sanctions circumvention. Together with Prime Minister Pashinyan, they agreed to continue collective efforts to that end.

Security cooperation featured prominently in the discussions. The leaders welcomed the launch of EU-Armenia Security and Defence consultations, underscoring their shared commitment to peace, stability, and democratic resilience’

Addressing a range of security concerns, including foreign information manipulation and interference, disinformation, and cyber threats, the EU proposed to work together with Armenia to assess its needs, identify priority areas for cooperation, and leverage available EU instruments. To support Armenia’s information ecosystem, the EU announced a new EUR 1.5 million envelope to strengthen independent media.

EU leaders welcomed that Armenia will host the European Political Community Summit and the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

## Armenia appoints new Defense Attaché to France

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan has signed a decision appointing Artur Aznavuryan as Armenia’s new Defense Attaché to the French Republic.

According to the official decree, and in line with Article 10, Part 9 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On Diplomatic Service,” Artur Aznavuryan will assume

the position starting from August 1, 2025. His term will last for three years, and his official residence will be in Paris



## Diplomatic ties with Turkey will be established, border will open: Prime Minister

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has positively assessed his recent meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Responding to Armenpress's question regarding the meeting, the Prime Minister described the discussions as open and sincere.

"I went to Turkey not with the Armenian-Turkish agenda, but with the agenda of Republic of Armenia-Republic of Turkey relations. This is an important nuance.

"My impressions from the meeting with the Turkish president are positive. All issues were discussed from the opening of communications to the restoration of the historical Ani bridge,"



the Prime Minister said during a press conference.

Pashinyan noted that although the meeting did not result in concrete

outcomes, such as the opening of the border, the process should be viewed from a long-term perspective.

"Such complex and deep issues cannot be resolved with a single action. We need to build trust and prepare the public. But I have no doubt that we will reach that point: diplomatic relations will be established, and the border will be opened," Pashinyan said.

The Prime Minister underlined that the normalization of relations with Turkey is part of the broader strategy aimed at preserving Armenia's independence, sovereignty, and statehood.

## Business magnate Samvel Karapetyan faces new charge over alleged money laundering

Samvel Karapetyan, the founder of the Tashir Group of Companies, has been charged with money laundering in connection with the activities of several companies, his defense team said a statement, describing the charges as "obviously unfounded."

On June 17, Karapetyan, a Russian-Armenian billionaire and owner of the Tashir Group, accused the Armenian government of conducting an anti-church campaign, declaring that he



would intervene "in his own way" to stop it. Authorities said his statements made

in Yerevan amount to a threat to seize power. As a result, investigators filed criminal charges against him for "publicly calling for the usurpation of power." A court subsequently approved a two-month pre-trial detention.

Karapetyan has denied any wrongdoing.

Following his arrest, Karapetyan has announced the formation of a new political force.

## In Brussels Prime Minister Pashinyan voices Armenia's wish to join EU

During his recent working visit to Brussels, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told European officials that Armenia wants to join the European Union.

Pashinyan said that during the discussions in the EU, they were asked whether a law adopted by Armenia's parliament on initiating the country's accession process to the EU means that Armenia wants to become an EU member.

"My answer was: yes, Armenia wants

to become a member of the European Union."

However, Pashinyan said that the process is complex.

"It is necessary that all EU member states agree, and that Armenia meets European standards."

The Prime Minister stressed that regardless of whether EU membership becomes a reality, the government will continue on its strategic reform path,

also relying on the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement and the expected new agenda. "We have an ambitious reform strategy, and we will implement it in any case," he stated.

Pashinyan added that Armenia will continue its reforms until the country fully aligns with European standards, assuring that even if EU membership does not realize, Armenia will remain committed to the path to ongoing reforms.

## Resilient Syunik Program: €50 million EIB loan agreement signed in Luxembourg

The signing ceremony of the “Armenia – Resilient Syunik Program” financing agreement took place at the European Investment Bank (EIB) Headquarters in Luxembourg, with the participation of Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia Mher Grigoryan and President of the European Investment Bank Nadia Calviño, the government’s press service has said in a press release.

The agreement was signed by Armenia’s Minister of Finance Vahe Hovhannisyan and EIB Vice-President Teresa Czerwińska.

The program, which includes a €50 million loan, aims to support the sustainable development of the Syunik region in the Republic of Armenia. The Armenian government will use the funds to promote



economic development and improve infrastructure in key sectors such as water supply, healthcare, and education.

The initiative will also help address the needs of displaced persons and host communities residing in Syunik.

Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan delivered a welcoming speech during the event, expressing gratitude to the EIB

for their cooperation in preparing the agreement and wishing for its successful implementation.

“The cooperation between the Armenian government and the Bank contributes to strengthening the Armenia-European Union political dialogue, which has entered a more intensive phase. The expanding partnership agenda is based on shared values of sustainable development, economic growth, and enhancing the resilience of the region,” said Mher Grigoryan.

During his visit to Luxembourg, the Deputy Prime Minister also held meetings with EIB President Nadia Calviño and Vice-President Teresa Czerwińska. The discussions focused on prospects for expanding cooperation and implementing joint programs with the Bank.

## Armenian Ambassador, Greek Deputy Foreign Minister discuss economic cooperation

Armenia’s Ambassador to Greece, Tigran Mkrtchyan, held a meeting with the newly appointed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, Haris Theocharis, who is responsible for overseeing economic diplomacy.

During the meeting, Ambassador Mkrtchyan reviewed the progress made on the agreements reached during the 6th session of the Armenia-Greece Intergovernmental Commission held in December 2024. He also highlighted the ongoing collaboration stemming from the Memorandum of Understanding signed in February 2024 between Armenia’s “Investment Support Center” Foundation and Greece’s “Enterprise Greece” agency, during Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s working visit to Greece.



The officials discussed the active cooperation between various executive and sectoral bodies of the two countries, as well as upcoming initiatives and joint steps to further strengthen bilateral ties.

Particular emphasis was placed on expanding multifaceted cooperation in the field of tourism, given its strategic importance to both Armenia and Greece. Ambassador Mkrtchyan noted Armenia’s regular participation in the Thessaloniki

International Fair and the Philoxenia Tourism Exhibition, where Armenia was honored as the guest country in 2022, significantly increasing its visibility in the Greek tourism market.

The sides underscored the importance of deepening sectoral collaboration, organizing B2B events, and holding specialized business forums to foster increased interest among economic stakeholders and promote bilateral investment opportunities.

Deputy Minister Theocharis reaffirmed Greece’s support for Armenia in the implementation of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the European Union and expressed readiness to provide further assistance within the EU framework, as needed.

## Armenia seeks SCO membership, PM confirms

Armenia has applied to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan confirmed during a press conference in Yerevan.

“Armenia has applied to the SCO for membership. This aligns with our agenda of pursuing a balanced and balancing foreign policy,” said the Prime Minister.

He reminded that Armenia currently obtains an observer status in the organization.

Pashinyan also noted that the move is connected to the substantive and structural changes currently taking place within the organization.

The Prime Minister emphasized that Armenia aims to continue implementing

a balanced foreign policy and maintain partner relations in the north, south, west, and east.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry announced on July 3 that Yerevan had expressed its interest in becoming a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.



## Armenia is open to Chinese investments: Minister Papoyan receives Ambassador Li Xinwei

Armenian Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan received the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Armenia, Li Xinwei.

According to a readout issued by the ministry, Papoyan congratulated the ambassador on his appointment and expressed hope that, thanks to his efforts, trade and economic cooperation between the two countries would gain new momentum.

"We have all the necessary prerequisites for the further expansion and deepening of economic ties. Armenia is open to

Chinese investment," Papoyan said.

During the meeting, the sides discussed prospective areas of cooperation.

The discussion also focused on the Armenian government's "Crossroads of Peace" project, which, according to the minister, "could become an important platform for regional and large-scale economic cooperation."

Ambassador Li Xinwei expressed gratitude for the warm welcome, noting that Armenia has great potential to increase its presence in the Chinese market. He also emphasized the strong interest among



Chinese consumers in Armenian products, particularly cognac (Armenian brandy), wine, and cigarettes.

## Etihad Airways to launch direct flights to Yerevan in March 2026

Etihad Airways has announced the launch of direct flights to Yerevan as part of its continued network expansion strategy aimed at increasing point-to-point travel to Abu Dhabi.

The Armenian capital is among seven new destinations added to the airline's growing route map, alongside Almaty, Baku, Bucharest, Medina, Tbilisi and Tashkent.

Flights to Yerevan are scheduled to go

on sale in the coming days, with operations set to begin in March 2026. Yerevan will be served with 10 weekly flights.

The addition marks another step in Etihad's broader plan to boost tourism and business travel to the UAE capital.

"This new route strengthens our goal of bringing more people directly to Abu Dhabi," said Etihad CEO Antonio Neves, highlighting the importance of linking with culturally rich and rapidly growing

regions.

With this announcement, the number of new destinations unveiled by Etihad for 2025 and beyond has reached 29.



## Armenia to participate as observer in multinational exercise 'Agile Spirit 2025' in Georgia



Armenia will take part as an observer in NATO's multinational military exercise *Agile Spirit 2025*, which will be hosted by Georgia from July 25 to August 6, 2025. This marks the twelfth iteration of the exercise held in Georgia, aimed at

strengthening interoperability, operational readiness, and joint capabilities among participating forces.

Agile Spirit 2025 will involve military personnel from Georgia, the United States, Türkiye, Germany, Italy, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Poland, with Japan joining Armenia in observer capacity.

The exercise will be conducted across various locations in Georgia — including Krtsanisi, the NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center (JTEC), Vaziani Combat Training Center and fire-range, Norio, Mukhrovani, and Senaki's 2nd

Infantry Brigade, as well as in Türkiye. It will feature a command post exercise, tactical convoy along the Senaki-Vaziani highway, live-fire drills, joint operations involving Special Operations Forces, and the validation of Georgia's Combat Training Center.

Agile Spirit 2025 will kick off on July 21 with a joint airborne operation near Adana, Türkiye, where U.S. and Turkish paratroopers will conduct a combined parachute jump. Georgian armored vehicles and air assets will take part, alongside U.S. combat vehicles and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, as well as Türkiye's Puma AS332 helicopter.

The West Command of the Georgian Defense Forces will co-lead the exercise with the U.S. Georgia Army National Guard.

## MEP calls for common EU defense and security policy



Cyprus MEP Costas Mavrides has emphasized the need for the European Union to develop a common policy in the field of defense and security.

In an interview with Armenpress' Brussels correspondent, Mavrides stated that such a policy should not be directed against any particular country but should aim to protect the EU, its Member States, and especially the external borders.

The MEP also addressed Turkey's continued occupation of the northern part of Cyprus and the EU's stance on the matter.

**- Mr. Mavrides, this year marks the 51st anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus which is a deeply painful chapter in European history. Looking back, what do you see as the most lasting political and humanitarian consequences of that invasion that still affect the island and its people today?**

- Many times, we forget that since 2004, Cyprus has been part of the European Union officially, because the Republic of Cyprus, with all its territory including the northern part which is under illegal Turkish occupation, is part of the Republic of Cyprus. Although it is de facto controlled by the Turkish army illegally, all of the

territory remains part of the Republic of Cyprus and, therefore, part of the EU.

So, if you ask me what is perhaps the only promising factor after more than half a century, 51 years since the Turkish invasion, I would say it's the European perspective. That is the only hope we have, both Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Armenians, Maronites, Latins, and so on.

Although having said that, I must say there is great disappointment among Cypriots in general, especially within the Republic of Cyprus. Because despite the fact that Turkey invaded the island in 1974, expelled all the Greek Cypriots from their homes and homeland. I myself am a refugee child from 1974, who managed to survive with my sisters. We are now in 2025, and the disappointment is strong.

Whenever we compare how the EU treated Ukraine, a country not even in the EU but under Russian aggression, with many sanctions imposed on Russia and yet when it comes to Turkey, there are no sanctions at all. I can tell you very plainly that it's extremely difficult for me to explain this to the citizens of Cyprus, Greece, and even beyond.

**- In fact, according to you, the**

**European Union has not taken sufficient steps to support Cyprus, both politically and diplomatically, or to hold Turkey accountable for that country's continued military presence in the north.**

I would state it positively: not only has the EU disappointed us, but I strongly believe that if there were political will, there are many things the EU could do.

I'll give you an example. Turkey, especially in recent decades, relies heavily on energy, its geopolitical agenda, but especially on trade and its economy with the EU. The EU — the 27 Member States — is by far the number one importer of Turkish goods. Therefore, we have leverage. Leverage that we never use.

We could use this leverage to press Turkey to find a settlement in Cyprus, a settlement that would remove the illegal Turkish occupying troops, dismantle the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus", a state declared and recognized only by Turkey, and end all these illegalities.

And I repeat one more time: all of this is happening within the European Union. That is very disappointing.

**- There is an ongoing debate in Brussels about the EU's ambition for greater "strategic autonomy." In your view, how capable is the Union today of acting independently and effectively on critical foreign policy issues, especially in complex conflict zones like Cyprus or the South Caucasus?**

- I do believe there is capability, and I also believe there's a growing awareness that we must take some major steps toward a common foreign policy, starting with a common defense and security policy.

That's something I've advocated for many years and now, finally, I feel justified. ➡ page 9



page 8 ➡ Because even in my political group, and in the European Parliament, I was often alone, or with only a few others, arguing for this.

Yes, we are divided, even here. Some including the European Commission and powerful Member States want the common foreign policy to be guided by Germany and the Baltic states. Therefore, when it comes to security and defense, they primarily view it as a tool against Russia.

But that's not how we the Mediterranean countries, including Cyprus, see it. We want a common defense and security policy not to be built against someone, but to defend the EU, to defend Member States, and especially to defend our external borders.

Here's a real example. As a member of the Security and Defense Committee, I've argued about this extensively in recent months. I keep repeating that if we want to win the hearts and minds of EU citizens, we need to show them what exactly we are trying to defend, not just who or what is threatening us. The threats are many.

If the Baltic States and Poland feel that Russia is a threat, that's their right. But for us, in the Mediterranean, for example, Malta or Cyprus, Russia is not the main threat. Our threat is neo-Ottoman Turkey.

So we face different threats, and we cannot design an EU security policy that focuses only on one threat. This is a divisive issue.

**- The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy is often criticized for lacking coherence and assertiveness. What concrete reforms or strategic shifts do you believe are necessary to strengthen the EU's ability to respond to occupations and violations of international law?**

That's a very good question. What I'm about to say may not be easy to achieve, but it's the way forward if we want a

strong EU.

Of course, we want to defend our interests. But we must also remember our values and our democracy must be placed next to our interests.

Here's one example I strongly support: when it comes to defense and security, there is a €150 billion fund — EU money that will be loaned to Member States to support their national armies. I don't believe that's the right direction.

We may have national armies, but at the same time, we need to build up EU-level institutions for defense and security.

Here's a real-world example: we have Frontex, the EU's border and coast guard agency. Why not strengthen it — give it the people, the resources, the equipment — and assign it the clear mission of protecting the EU's external borders?

That's how we build up European institutions, instead of relying only on national forces.

If we follow this model, then we also answer the question: Who will protect Cyprus from neo-Ottoman Turkey? Who will protect Poland in case of Russian aggression? The answer should be: an EU institution.

Of course, that doesn't exclude national armies. But politically, it's crucial to have EU institutions playing a role.

A few years ago, during the pandemic, we held the Conference on the Future of Europe. One of the most powerful messages from that event was this: we must empower the European Parliament. We are the only body directly elected by EU citizens. And we need more powers. Right now, we vote and we often take the correct political positions but they remain symbolic.

**- A strong example of what you're describing is the European Parliament's resolutions on Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and its**

**condemnations of Azerbaijan. Concerning the South Caucasus, what specific tools diplomatic, economic, or otherwise does the EU already possess, or still need to develop, to become a more credible actor and peace broker in the region?**

The example of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and the Azerbaijani regime's actions, are very similar to what neo-Ottoman Turkey is doing and to other expansionist regimes. These actors disregard international law entirely.

But I don't want to speak theoretically. I want to be very concrete.

After 10 years in the European Parliament, here's what I propose: If we believe that crimes against humanity have been committed - ethnic cleansing, cultural genocide, and so on - by the Azerbaijani regime, then we should connect our trade relations with the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

And if someone, say President von der Leyen, believes no crime has been committed, then I say: let's take the case to the ICC and let them decide.

If Azerbaijan is innocent, they have nothing to fear. Let justice decide.

We must move beyond just open or closed-door talks. There are specific national interests that influence some EU offices or Member States. And unfortunately, these are often prioritized over values, international law, and EU principles.

That's why we end up with hypocrisy — why the same EU that publicly defends values, human rights, and democracy continues to sign energy deals with a regime that commits crimes against humanity.

So yes, I strongly believe in the European Union. But I am also very critical when special interests poison our foreign policy.

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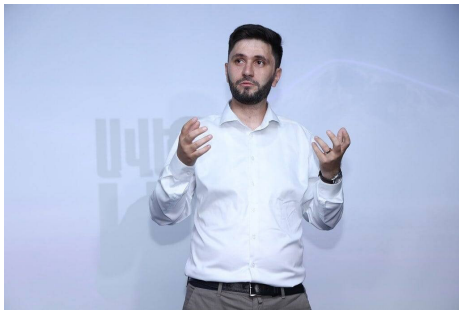
## Armenia, France working toward strategic partnership agreement, says PM Pashinyan

Armenia and France are working on a strategic partnership agreement, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced during a press conference in Yerevan.

"There is a draft agreement with France that we are working on, and I hope it will be finalized in the near future," the Prime Minister said.

"This is a document on strategic partnership, and I am confident it will be signed at the appropriate time," he said.

## Political scientist explains real reason behind tensions in Russian-Azerbaijani relations



Over the years, a military-political and philosophical trend has taken shape within the Russian elite, viewing the South Caucasus through a particular lens: when choosing between Armenia and Azerbaijan, preference was often given to Azerbaijan, which is larger in territory and richer in resources. As a result, in many cases, Russia refrained from responding harshly to Azerbaijan's actions. However, as political scientist Benjamin Matevosyan explains, theoretical assumptions are one thing; the realities on the ground are another, especially in light of the recent deterioration in Russian-Azerbaijani relations.

According to Matevosyan, for more than 250 years, Russia has constructed a security system around its southern borders, with different elements in various regions. At the core of this system were states whose political elites remained loyal to the Russian central government.

"There was a perception that by favoring Azerbaijan, Russia could integrate a significant part of the Turkic world into the Eurasian family through Azerbaijan. But what was believed to be a pro-Russian Azerbaijan has instead acted in its own interests, managing to resolve issues of vital importance to itself. The calculation

that Azerbaijan would become a loyal ally to Russia has failed," he said.

Matevosyan argues that Azerbaijan has long ceased to be a strategic ally of Russia, and has instead become a proxy of Great Britain and Turkey used at different times against various countries. "In 2020, it was used against Armenia, and during the recent 12-day war, against Iran," he noted.

He emphasized the importance of distinguishing between the real cause and the trigger of the current deterioration in Russian-Azerbaijani relations. According to him, the trigger was the Russian strikes on Ukraine's Kremenchuk oil refinery, one of Azerbaijan's sources of income, which was essentially destroyed. Russia had long known that the refinery was operated by Azerbaijanis, but for certain reasons, chose to strike it anyway.

This event set off a chain reaction: the arrest of Russian journalists in Azerbaijan, and actions targeting Azerbaijani ethnic criminal groups within Russia. According to Matevosyan, Russian authorities have now even begun arresting officials who helped establish and expand these Azerbaijani criminal networks.

"Russia has not only started to observe these developments but also understands their core. Though somewhat late, it is now trying to take preventive measures to ensure that the Azerbaijani proxy is not used against it. Being a large and powerful state, Russia has more leeway to make mistakes. Even if it loses the entire South Caucasus, it does not mean that Moscow will fall immediately. Many players are involved here: different wings within the

Russian elite, Great Britain, the U.S., Turkey, and Iran," he said.

Matevosyan noted that Russia has begun targeting Azerbaijani networks within its own territory because it realizes that if it takes harsher measures against Azerbaijan itself, these groups could be used to destabilize the situation inside Russia.

"Instead of seeking to normalize relations with Russia, Azerbaijan is moving toward further escalation while simultaneously deepening cooperation with Ukraine and providing assistance to Kyiv," he argued.

"The Ukrainian authorities have proposed that Azerbaijan store its gas in Ukrainian underground storage facilities. If this happens, Russia may target those facilities as well, hitting Azerbaijan's energy system, which would further increase tensions," Matevosyan warned.

Commenting on the Turkish factor and its role in Russian-Azerbaijani relations, he noted that in the event of a sharp confrontation, Turkey has no alternative but to defend its own interests.

"Given Turkish policy, it is highly likely that Ankara might 'sell out' Azerbaijan by demanding or extracting concessions from Russia in return. The negotiating space is quite broad. While the idea of "one nation, two states" defines Turkish-Azerbaijani relations, we must remember that Turkey's own interests are always paramount. It may even engage in bargaining at Azerbaijan's expense in the hope of gaining something in return," Matevosyan concluded.

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## Peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan possible only through international pressure on Baku, says Swiss MP



According to Stefan Müller-Altermatt, Member of the National Council of Switzerland's Federal Assembly, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev is not particularly interested in establishing peace with

Armenia.

In an interview with Armenpress, the Swiss legislator addressed the prospects of regulating Armenia-Azerbaijan relations and signing a peace agreement. He emphasized that "only through external pressure on Azerbaijan is it possible to reach peace."

In response to a question about the possibility of signing a peace agreement in the near future, Müller-Altermatt noted that there is no need to have great illusions, as President Aliyev is not very interested in achieving peace with Armenia.

"Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev is not interested in peace; on the contrary, he needs Armenia as an enemy to consolidate his power and justify the violation of his own people's rights," warned Stefan Müller-Altermatt.

According to the Swiss legislator, Armenia could expect that the recent tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the Israel-Iran war, might have influence on Azerbaijan.

Ultimately, he said, peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan is only possible through international pressure on Baku.

## Likely Armenia will withdraw from CSTO, says Pashinyan

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has stated that it is more likely for Armenia to withdraw from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) than to reactivate its membership.

He made the remark during a press conference held on July 16 while discussing Armenia's current stance on the CSTO.

*Back in February 2024, Pashinyan*



*announced that Armenia had frozen its participation in the CSTO, citing the organization's failure to fulfill its obligations to Armenia.*

*Since then, Armenia has not taken part in the events organized within the framework of the CSTO and has not paid its membership fee.*

## PM Pashinyan, Commissioner Kos discuss new Armenia-EU partnership agenda in Brussels



Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan held a meeting with EU Commissioner for Enlargement Martha Kos in Brussels.

The latter welcomed the visit of the delegation led by the Armenian Prime Minister and highlighted the importance of the consistent and effective dialogue with Armenia. She noted with pleasure that the discussions on the new Armenia-EU partnership agenda have been completed,

and the signing of the document is planned within the framework of the next EU-Armenia Partnership Council session. Marta Kos once again expressed the EU's strong support for Armenia's ambitious reform agenda and the effective implementation of democratic reforms.

Prime Minister Pashinyan noted that he had a productive meeting with the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, expressing hope that the close Armenia-EU cooperation will continue to develop and strengthen in various directions. The Prime Minister highlighted the EU's support for Armenia's economic diversification, transport, infrastructure development, expanding the capabilities of small and medium-sized businesses,

introducing EU standards, etc.

The interlocutors discussed the programs implemented in Armenia with the EU financial instruments and issues related to the promotion of economic partnership.

Reference was made to the programs implemented by the Armenian Government to address the social problems of people forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. Prime Minister Pashinyan highlighted the importance of the international community's continued support in this direction.

EU Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos noted that she is planning to visit Armenia in the near future to discuss joint programs and initiatives in more detail

## I'm 'disappointed but not done' with Putin, Trump says



Donald Trump has said that he is disappointed but not done with Vladimir Putin, in an exclusive phone call with the [BBC](#).

The US president was pressed on whether he trusts the Russian leader, and replied: "I trust almost no-one."

Trump was speaking hours after he announced plans to send weapons to Ukraine and warned of severe tariffs on Russia if there was no ceasefire deal in 50 days.

Trump said that he had thought a deal to end the war in Ukraine was on the cards with Russia four different times.

When asked by the BBC if he was done

with Putin, the president replied: "I'm disappointed in him, but I'm not done with him. But I'm disappointed in him."

Pressed on how Trump would get Putin to "stop the bloodshed" the US president said: "We're working at it."

In an interview from the Oval Office, the president also endorsed Nato, having once described it as obsolete, and affirmed his support for the organization's common defense principle.

## Lavrov says Russia seeks clarity on Trump's 50-day Ukraine deadline

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said that Russia wants to understand what motivated US President Donald Trump's statement that Russia must agree to a peace deal in Ukraine within a 50-day deadline.

"Certainly, we would like to understand what is behind this statement about 50 days. Earlier, there were also the deadlines

of 24 hours and of 100 days, we've seen it all and really would like to understand the motivation of the US president," the top Russian diplomat told a news conference after the meeting of foreign ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member countries in China's Tianjin, Tass reported.

Lavrov noted enormous pressure on

Trump. "It is clear that he is under enormous, I would say, shameless pressure by the European Union and NATO's current leadership which recklessly supports Zelensky's demands and continues to flood it with modern weapons, including offensive ones, at the expense of greater and greater damage to taxpayers in Western countries."

## EU considers suspending visa-free travel for Georgia

The European Union is weighing possible measures against Georgia, including the suspension of its visa-free travel regime, in response to what Brussels sees as serious democratic backsliding in the country.

Speaking to reporters ahead of the Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Brussels, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas said that the situation in Georgia is of deep concern to the bloc.

"We see some serious backsliding in Georgia, and we will discuss what more we can do," Kallas stated. "There are all options on the table, including suspension of the visa-free regime and other elements that could make the Georgian government change its calculus."

She also confirmed that a formal letter will be sent to the Georgian authorities regarding the visa-free regime. "What we will have today is a letter sent to Georgia also regarding the visa-free regime, so they have certain conditions that they had



to comply with. And if these conditions are not met within that deadline, then we will have to suspend the visa-free regime," Kallas added.

The visa-free travel arrangement, in place since 2017, allows Georgian citizens to enter the Schengen Area for short stays without a visa.

The move comes just days after a joint statement was issued on 11 July 2025 by the foreign ministers of 18 European countries — including France, Germany, and the United Kingdom — along with the EU High Representative, expressing deep concern over the "deteriorating situation

in Georgia."

"We strongly condemn the recent, politically motivated, imprisonment and detention of the leaders of Georgian opposition, clearly designed to stifle political opposition in Georgia, a few months ahead of the local elections," the ministers said. They described a pattern of arbitrary arrests and increasing repression of civil society, peaceful protesters, and independent journalists, warning that these developments signal a shift toward authoritarianism, in direct contradiction to European norms and values.

The statement also noted that political repression by Georgian authorities has already led to a significant downgrading of relations with the EU and its member states, including a reduction in assistance and cooperation. The ministers warned they would not hesitate to use available tools — both unilateral and multilateral — if Georgia continues on its current trajectory.



## France 24 rebuts false reports on alleged nuclear waste shipments to Armenia



The French television channel France 24 has refuted false claims alleging that France secretly transported nuclear waste to Armenia.

In a report prepared by the channel, correspondent Catalina Marchant de Abreu emphasized that the disinformation, which quickly went viral on social media, is entirely false.

"The publication appeared on June 26 and began circulating the same day. It was viewed more than 2.1 million times on the X platform alone," she said. She said that the claim alleged that the French company Orano, which operates in the nuclear energy sector, needed a new nuclear waste storage site and had chosen Armenia for this purpose. It even claimed that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan allegedly accepted "a shady French donation" of 1.6 million euros, sacrificing a national park, wildlife,

and public health for profit.

She noted that users widely shared the fake story, which included a video narrated in French by a voiceover with a pronounced accent, which is not characteristic of professional journalistic standards.

When asked by the TV presenter how the fake news originated, the correspondent explained that the initial publication appeared on June 25 on a French-language website called Courriere France 24.

"All posts on X referred to this website, but it is fake. Domain registration data shows it was created recently-on June 16, 2025. The IP address indicates it was not created in France but in Peru. Colleagues from TF1 analyzed the site using AI tools and determined that all of the content was generated by artificial intelligence," she explained.

The fake website misused the names of reputable media outlets, including France 24. For instance, it published an image originally produced by the France 24 editorial team. Many of the fake articles were signed under the name of Romain Fiaschetti, a real French journalist, who confirmed via LinkedIn that his identity had been stolen and used without his knowledge.

The correspondent also addressed

who might be behind the disinformation campaign.

"As in similar cases, there are clear signs of a coordinated disinformation effort employing tactics typical of Russian propaganda, such as creating fake websites and using identity of entities to add credibility to the disinformation. For example, the so-called NGO Green Armenia, which published the story, was also fake. While a real NGO by that name exists, the fake website is greenarmenia.org, which was created on June 18, shortly before the story went viral. The real site is green-armenia.org," she noted.

After the fake story appeared on the fake website, it was widely circulated by pro-Russian accounts on X and amplified by actors linked to the Russian government.

She noted that the disinformation was most likely coordinated by Azerbaijan as well.

"It was also widely covered in Azerbaijani media, from television networks to news agencies."

"In conclusion, this was a coordinated disinformation campaign targeting both Paris and Yerevan," the France 24 correspondent said.

## Lieutenant General Edward Asryan participates in the LANDEURO Conference



On July 14, by the invitation of the United States European Command, the

First Deputy Minister of Defense-Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces

of the Republic of Armenia, Lieutenant General Edward Asryan, has visited the Federal Republic of Germany to participate in the LANDEURO Conference, the defense ministry has said.

In the framework of the conference, Lieutenant General Asryan held a working meeting with the Chief of Staff of the French Army, General Pierre Schill. The issues related to cooperation between the Armenian and French Armed Forces were discussed.

Additionally, Lieutenant General Asryan engaged in a series of informal discussions with senior military officials from the Land Forces of the United States and various European countries.



## Side event by Armenia's Permanent Mission to UN held during UN High-Level Political Forum



On July 16, on the margins of the UN High-Level Political Forum, the side event organized by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the UN was held under the title “Biodiversity Preservation

as a Catalyst for Sustainable Development.”

According to a statement issued by the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the UN, the side event discussed the vital interlinkages and complementary nature of

biodiversity and sustainable development, and presented examples of practical solutions for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sustainable Development Goals, within the framework of national experience, regional and international cooperation, and local initiatives.

The panelists of the side event included H.E. Mr. Paruyr Hovhannisyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations, H.E. Ms. Chimguundari Navaan-Yunden, Director of the COP17 Preparatory Office and Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, H.E. Dame Barbara Woodward, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, Ms. Ivana Živković, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Ms. Doreen Lynn Robinson, Deputy Director of Ecosystems Division of the UN Environment Programme, Mr. Matheus Bastos, Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations.

## Government to allocate 3.4 billion drams for construction and modernization of educational institutions

The Armenian government has approved the allocation of approximately 3.4 billion drams for the construction, renovation and equipment of educational institutions across the country.

The funds will be directed toward the implementation of a program aimed at building, renovating, and furnishing 300 schools and 500 kindergartens. The decision was made during today's Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Zhanna Andreasyan noted that part of the allocation will be used to replenish the rapid response fund for schools, as well as to provide logistical support for institutions implementing artificial intelligence (AI) training programs.

Minister Andreasyan emphasized that the decision also supports the expansion



of the AI school program, which has been implemented in cooperation with

the Science and Technology Foundation since 2023.



## Charles Aznavour statue unveiled in Yerevan



A statue honoring legendary French-Armenian singer and National

Hero of Armenia Charles Aznavour has been officially unveiled in Yerevan.

The monument was installed at Aznavour Square, in front of Moscow Cinema. Attending the event were Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan, French Ambassador to Armenia Olivier Decottignies, Aznavour's family and friends.

The selection of the statue was a joint effort by the Yerevan Municipality and the Aznavour Foundation. The monument is being installed as part of the celebrations dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Charles Aznavour's birth.

Back in February 2024, the winning design for the commemorative statue was announced. The competition attracted over 60 applications and more than 100 miniature models from artists around the world. The winning sculpture was created by artist Davit Minasyan.

## Armenian students win silver medal and honors at 57th International Chemistry Olympiad



The Armenian team achieved impressive results at the 57th International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO), held from July 5 to 14 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The team brought home one silver medal and three honorable mentions.

Arman Khachatryan, a 12th-grade student at the Vanadzor Special School with Advanced Studies in Mathematics and Natural Sciences, earned the silver medal. Honorable mentions were awarded to David Ghazaryan from "Quantum" College (Grade 12), Sevada Harutyunyan from "Photon" College in Gyumri (Grade 12), and Mikael Aleksanyan, an 11th-grade student at the Vanadzor Special School.

The Olympiad consisted of both theoretical and practical components and

brought together 355 students from 90 countries. Each country was allowed to field a team of up to four participants.

The Armenian delegation was led by Andranik Davinyan, a researcher at the Center of Organic and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, and Artyom Petrosyan, a student of the Faculty of Chemistry at Yerevan State University.

During last year's 56th International Chemistry Olympiad, the Armenian team won four bronze medals.

## COP17: Yerevan to host major UN Biodiversity Summit in October 2026

Armenia is set to take center stage in global biodiversity discussions, as Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has officially announced that the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will take place in Yerevan from October 18 to 30, 2026.

In a post shared on the social media platform X, the Prime Minister expressed Armenia's readiness and enthusiasm to host the landmark event:

"Pleased to announce that the Biodiversity #COP17 dates are confirmed & will

be held in Yerevan on 18-30 October 2026. We look forward to welcoming all parties & stakeholders to Armenia to advance efforts for biodiversity conservation!" PM Pashinyan wrote.

The COP17 conference will bring together representatives of nearly 200 countries, along with international organizations, scientists, indigenous groups, civil society, and youth advocates. The event is expected to play a pivotal role in advancing the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in 2022.

The Government of Armenia has already begun preparations for the summit, which is anticipated to be one of the most important international events the country has hosted in recent years.





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