

## HRANT DINK FOUNDATION

Hrant Dink Foundation was established after the assassination of Hrant Dink in front of his newspaper Agos on 19 January 2007, in order to avoid similar pains and to continue Hrant Dink's legacy, his language and heart, and his dream of a world that is more free and just. Democracy and human rights for everyone regardless of their ethnic, religious or cultural origin or gender is the Foundation's main principle.

The Foundation works for a Turkey and a world where freedom of expression is limitless and all differences are allowed, lived, appreciated, multiplied and conscience outweighs the way we look at today and the past. As the Hrant Dink Foundation 'our cause worth living' is a future where a culture of dialogue, peace and empathy prevails.

**ARMENIA AND TURKEY:  
AN OVERVIEW OF RELATIONS  
AND PROSPECTS FOR NORMALISATION**

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**Berghof Foundation**



**Canada**

# ARMENIA AND TURKEY

AN OVERVIEW OF  
RELATIONS AND PROSPECTS  
FOR NORMALISATION



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As of 2019, there is no diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey and the land border remains closed. In 2009, the Zurich Protocols were signed between the two neighbouring countries, which outlined the steps for normalisation without preconditions. Nonetheless, the protocols were not ratified by either of the parliaments, and after a long period of lack of progress, the protocols were declared null and void by Armenia in March 2018. Despite the failure of normalisation at the political level, there has been a vibrant civil society action promoting people-to-people contacts and confidence-building attempts between the two neighbouring countries.

Building on this civil society momentum, in 2016, Hrant Dink Foundation convened a Dialogue Group with 10 high-profile members from Armenia and Turkey with background in politics, academia and civil society in order to explore opportunities in public diplomacy and to explore constructive avenues of normalisation. The Group members, supported by two local Rapporteurs from both countries and an External Facilitator, held meetings in Istanbul, Yerevan and Ankara. As a result, the Group has identified specific thematic fields and developed tangible confidence-building measures (CBMs) in fields including migration, education, consular affairs, trade and business relations.

### **CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES PROPOSED BY THE DIALOGUE GROUP**

Based on the works of the Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group, this paper provides a brief overview of the current state and obstacles in different fields, analyses institutional frameworks and opportunities, and proposes a set of recommendations in each field.

## Consular Affairs

### Recommendations

To the Government of Turkey

- Turkey to offer extended duration of stay for the citizens of Armenia.

To the Government of Armenia

- Armenia to offer multiple entry visa for the citizens of Turkey.
- Armenia to derogate from/ease its special permit procedures for the citizens of Turkey holding special/service passports.

To the Governments of Armenia and Turkey

- Turkey and Armenia to agree on a format that will allow them to have official confidential contact on a regular basis in case of emergency.
- Armenia and Turkey to open Consular Offices in one another's countries to provide consular services to their respective citizens, even without establishing diplomatic relations.

## Armenian-citizen Migrants in Turkey

### Recommendations

To the Civil Society of Turkey

- Establishing/supporting mechanisms/networks of lawyers, CSOs, authorities that will provide information, legal aid and services to Armenian-citizen migrants about their rights and responsibilities.
- Encouraging Armenian community of Istanbul to provide support and service to the Armenian-citizen migrants living in Istanbul to address their education and health-care needs. For instance, Armenian hospitals in Istanbul may establish mechanisms of providing health-care services to Armenian-citizen migrants who do not have valid documents and who cannot afford it.

To the Governments of Turkey and Armenia

- Facilitating and improving access to education for Armenian-citizen migrants in Turkey. Turkey may consider making further legal arrangements to allow guest students to have official registration in Armenian minority schools in Istanbul and to grant diplomas for Armenian-citizen students. In a similar vein, Armenia may facilitate the transition of Armenian citizens attending schools in Turkey to continue their education in schools and universities in Armenia.



- Agreeing on a format that will allow both Armenia and Turkey to provide consular services and emergency assistance to their citizens, regardless of the status of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

#### To the Government of Turkey

- Waiving of the visa-overstay fines for Armenian-citizen children born in Turkey who never left the country and who intend to return to Armenia to obtain/renew passports and documents.

## Trade, Business and Transportation

### Recommendations

#### To the Private Sector in Turkey

- Creating free trade zones in Armenia for Turkey-based businesses to open the tax-free access to the Eurasian Economic Union market.
- Encouraging/organising visits for Turkish businesses to Armenia.

#### To the Private Sector in Armenia

- Encouraging IT software exports from Armenia to Turkey.
- Encouraging/organising visits for Armenian businesses to Turkey.

#### To the Government of Turkey

- Opening a trade mission of Turkey in Armenia to assist Turkish businesses operating in Armenia.
- Further easing the preconditions regarding Armenian trail trucks entering Turkey for transit.
- Facilitating the transit of Armenian products using Turkish territory destined to the EU and other markets.
- Facilitating bank transfers to/from Armenia to enable a more conducive environment for trade.
- Opening of the new (third) airway (Karde-Reblo) between Turkey and Armenia in the north that will transit through the Samsun airspace to Western/Northern Europe.
- Encouraging Turkish Airlines to use Armenian airspace for its transit flights to/from Central Asia.

- Use of European/international platforms such as UAPME and EUROCHAMBRES as platforms of networking and B2B cooperation for SMEs from Armenia and Turkey.

To the Governments of the US, Armenia and Turkey

- Setting up a US-supported Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) in Kars-Gyumri/ Armenia-Turkey border, covering high tech products such as textiles.

## Education

Recommendations

To the Higher Education Institutions, Research Centers and NGOs in Armenia and Turkey

- Encouraging universities from Armenia and Turkey to initiate and implement academic exchanges and joint projects through the various Actions of the Erasmus+ framework.
- Encouraging universities from Armenia and Turkey to sign bilateral cooperation agreements to initiate and implement academic exchanges and joint projects.
- Establishing concrete partnerships for the study of Turkish and Ottoman language and literature in Armenia, targeting students, scholars and researchers working with Turkish and Ottoman sources, archival documents, manuscripts, and epigraphic material.
- Establishing concrete partnerships for Eastern/Western Armenian language/ literature education in Turkey.
- Establishing partnerships for education and joint research in high-tech sciences including informatics, physics, engineering, software, programming, animation, robotics, and integrating ICT education in Turkish curriculum.
- Encouraging organisation of regular/annual academic conferences/forums on topics of common interest such as Eurasia, the Middle East, Islam, Caucasus.

To the Governments of Armenia and Turkey

- Encouraging Armenian institutions to register with the Turkish Higher Education Council to ensure diploma recognition.

- Encouraging and facilitating interaction between university representatives from Armenia and Turkey in international platforms.

## Health Services

### Recommendations

#### To the Public Health Institutions, Research Centers and Private Sector

- Encouraging contacts/cooperation/study visits between health-care professionals and medical institutes from both countries including the Armenian hospitals in Istanbul.
- Armenia and Turkey to exchange their good practices and lessons learned from the health-care sector reform and tobacco control.
- Encouraging joint research and exchange of expertise in common diseases such as Mediterranean Fever.
- Encouraging contacts/cooperation/study visits between techno parks for joint exploration of particle acceleration technology.
- Encouraging health tourism between Turkey and Armenia.

## Culture

### Recommendations

#### To the Governments of Turkey and Armenia

- Further facilitating and deepening formal and informal contacts between art/architecture experts from Turkey and Armenia to create a solid foundation for proper rehabilitation of Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey.
- Establishing cooperation mechanisms/committees between the Ministries responsible for culture for the protection and promotion of Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey.
- Establishing cooperation mechanisms between the two governments in preservation of Ani.
- Facilitating the installation of Armenian language signs and information units at Ani cultural heritage site.

- Facilitating cooperation between literary experts, authors, artists from both countries to further strengthen dialogue vis-à-vis music, cinema, research and literature.

## Tourism

### Recommendations

#### To the Private Sector and NGOs in Turkey and Armenia

- Promoting Armenia and Turkey as a destination for tourists from the neighbouring country.
- Development of joint/regional routes: Golden triangle of religious centers in the border regions in Ani, Akhtamar, Etchmiadzin.

#### To the Private Sector in Armenia and Turkey

- Resumption of Yerevan-Antalya direct charter flights in the summer time.

#### To the Government of Armenia

- Facilitation of visa permit procedures for the citizens of Turkey holding special passports.





# INTRODUCTION

The relations between Armenia and Turkey have been predominantly conflictual since the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Even though Turkey was among the first countries to recognise Armenia's independence on December 16, 1991, efforts to establish diplomatic relations were unsuccessful since then. The land border between the two neighbouring countries remains sealed since 1993. The most significant attempt aimed at normalisation of relations between the two countries were the Zurich Protocols signed by the two governments on October 10, 2009, as a result of the process commonly known as the "football diplomacy". The Turkish President Abdullah Gul visited Armenia in 2008 to follow the World Cup qualifier that matched Turkey and Armenia. By the invitation of President Gul, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan made a return visit to Bursa in 2009 for the second match.

The Protocols were signed after a process of bilateral contacts and confidence-building steps between the representatives of the two countries. Envisaging the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations and the opening of borders without preconditions, the Protocols were not ratified in respective Parliaments of the two countries and never came into force.

Signing of Zurich Protocols was still an important milestone in the relations between Turkey and Armenia. Despite the failure of ratification, the diplomatic deal on the Protocols as well as the civil society efforts of the following years that aimed at encouraging cross-border mobility and cooperation created new reality in the relations between the peoples of the two neighbouring countries. There has been a vibrant civil society action in Armenia and Turkey promoting people-to-people contacts in the last several years, while the two countries still need to take significant steps.

Among the most significant efforts at the civil society level was the establishment of a Consortium<sup>1</sup> to implement the programme Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process funded by the European Union. The work of the Consortium has been instrumental in building a momentum in 2014-2017 through large-scale cross-border programmes including professional fellowships, travel grants and exchanges. Building on this momentum, the Hrant Dink Foundation in collaboration with the Berghof Foundation formed the Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group.

Bringing together the preliminary conclusions of the Dialogue Group's work between 2016-2018 and briefed by Rapporteur's one-to-one meetings with various subject experts in both countries,<sup>2</sup> this paper provides an overview of obstacles to address and opportunities to explore in various fields including trade and business, transportation, migration, consular affairs, culture, tourism, education and health-care. It also presents the recommendations of the Dialogue Group for the normalisation of relations between the two neighbouring countries.

#### Zurich Protocols

Aiming to normalise relations between Armenia and Turkey, Zurich Protocols refer to two bilateral protocols signed by both countries in 2009: "Protocol on establishment of diplomatic relations" and "Protocol on development of relations." Following bilateral talks that took more than a year, the Protocols were signed by the foreign ministers of Turkey and Armenia, Ahmet Davutoglu and Edward Nalbandyan, thanks to the facilitation of Switzerland, and with the presence of high level representatives from the EU, France, Russia and the USA. The Protocols never came into the force, as they were not ratified by the parliaments of both countries. Although Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was not mentioned in the Protocols, right after the Protocols were signed Turkish official representatives made statements preconditioning the process to the settlement of this conflict. After a long period of lack of progress, on March 1, 2018, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan declared the two protocols "null and void" by formally signing a presidential decree.

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1 Civilitas Foundation, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Public Journalism Club, Regional Studies Center from Armenia; and Anadolu Kultur, Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, and Hrant Dink Foundation from Turkey. For more information please visit [www.armenia-turkey.net](http://www.armenia-turkey.net)

2 Within the scope of this research, in 2016-2018, the Rapporteurs and the HDF staff had approximately 60 one-to-one meetings in Ankara, Istanbul, Yerevan and Moscow with subject-experts working in the fields of business, transportation, culture, tourism, education, migration and consular affairs.



### Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group

First convened by the Hrant Dink Foundation, in cooperation with the Berghof Foundation, Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group is a joint initiative of experts from both countries with backgrounds in politics, diplomacy, academia and civil society who are committed to contribute to the Turkey-Armenia relations at different levels. The overall objective of the Dialogue Group is to develop confidence-building measures (CBMs) aiming at the normalisation of relations between the two neighbours.

The Dialogue Group includes five members from Armenia and five from Turkey.<sup>a</sup> Within the Group, there are members who have actively contributed to Armenia-Turkey normalisation process at different levels in academia, politics and civil society in the past, alongside other members who are getting engaged in Armenia-Turkey relations for the first time with strong commitment by adding their own expertise, ideas, and networks.

Two Local Rapporteurs from both countries and an External Facilitator supported the dialogue process. The Local Rapporteurs have been chosen as PhD holders in conflict studies/international relations with research qualifications and good insight about their own country and domestic dynamics. Throughout the process, the Rapporteurs have carried out constant context analysis and had parallel meetings and focus group discussions with subject-experts, government agencies, think tanks and civil society organisations in both countries. Rapporteurs' work has helped to better brief the Dialogue Group members about the on-the-ground and practical aspects of the CBM fields and to better prepare the Group for collaborative action.

Identified by the Group itself due to her credentials, strong interest in the process and previous experience in the South Caucasus, the role of the External Facilitator has been to provide a frame for the discussions, assist processes of joint reflection, offer experiences and inspiration from other places, help generate options, and thus strengthen the work of the Dialogue Group. Throughout the process, the External Facilitator has been provided collective support by the Berghof Foundation, given its experience in dialogue processes, as well as the Hrant Dink Foundation.

Working as a joint group rather than a binational group composed of members from two different teams, the Dialogue Group has convened six joint meetings between 2016-2018. Right from the beginning, and throughout the whole process, the Dialogue Group strongly identified itself and its focus with the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey. The Group discussed and acknowledged the distinction between normalisation and reconciliation.<sup>b</sup> The overall objective and the ex-

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- a Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group Members: Asaf Savas Akat, Unal Cevikoz (2016-2018) Ara Ghazaryan, David Hovhannisyán, Levent Korkut, Etyen Mahcupyan, Gulsun Saglamér, Rouben Shougarian, Nouneh Sarkissian and Vahram Ter-Matevosyan.
- b In the United States Institute of Peace's (USIP) glossary of peace terms, reconciliation is defined as the long term process by which the parties to a violent dispute (and their successors) build trust, learn to live cooperatively and create a stable peace. It can happen at individual level, community level and national level. [Dan Snooderly (ed.), *Peace Terms: Glossary of Terms for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding*, (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2011)]. Reconciliation is a very comprehensive process that includes many different segments of life. Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group initiative may be a step towards a broader reconciliation but its agenda is more specific and limited to the normalisation of relations between two neighbours.

pected outcome of the CBMs is to reach normalisation of relations between the two neighbouring countries, whereas reconciliation is seen as a broader concept, arriving at a mutual understanding about the past. The Group also believes that in both formats, the methods and participants of the exercise should be different. As a result of these discussions, the Group decided to focus its work on the normalisation process, acknowledging the fact that there cannot be any reconciliation without normalisation.

In the first phase of the initiative, the Dialogue Group members identified specific thematic fields and made initial discussions about how to develop tangible CBMs and gestures in various fields including education, business, culture, tourism, health-care, migration and consular affairs. The Dialogue Group commissioned a needs assessment study amongst Armenian-citizen migrants and their children living in Istanbul to better understand their situation. The research was conducted jointly by Istanbul Bilgi University Center for Migration Research and the Hrant Dink Foundation between November 2017 and May 2018. The research interviewed 153 migrant households living in Istanbul as well as 160 migrant children attending educational institutions. The findings of the research have been compiled in *Makeshift lives: The state of Armenian-citizen migrants and their children living in Istanbul* and published in September 2018.<sup>c</sup>

Since its very first gathering, the Dialogue Group engaged a number of prominent experts, both from Turkey and Armenia, and abroad, working in various fields such as diplomacy, migration, culture, business and trade, and education. Whereas some of the invited experts took part in the different phases of Armenia-Turkey normalisation efforts; others have track records in working with the migrant communities, have solid expertise and extensive networks in academia, and broad knowledge on the business communities of the neighbouring countries.

Even though this initiative is an informal dialogue exercise, and does not have any mandate for official mediation or negotiation between the two countries, together with some of the Dialogue Group members, the Hrant Dink Foundation has informed officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both countries as well as several government officials in order to introduce the nature and objective of the initiative.

The Dialogue Group will continue its meetings and work in each thematic field with a view to turn them into tangible CBMs in 2019 and beyond in an effort to offer constructive avenues for normalisation. The Group will make intensified efforts to reach out to policy-makers in both countries to communicate its suggested CBMs and policy recommendations as such.

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c Pinar Uyan Semerci & Emre Erdoğan, *Makeshift lives: The state of Armenian-citizen migrants and their children living in Istanbul* (Istanbul: Hrant Dink Foundation Publications, 2018).





## ARMENIA AND TURKEY IN THE ABSENCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS: DOMESTIC AND REGIONAL FACTORS AT PLAY BETWEEN 2016 AND 2018

A number of significant domestic and international developments have affected the dynamics between Turkey and Armenia in the period of 2016-2018. Despite the absence of relations between the governments, the growing demand for increased mobility and normalisation at the civil society level have had a positive impact on certain mobility infrastructures. The frequency of direct Istanbul-Yerevan flights operated by AtlasGlobal airlines increased from twice a week charter flights to four-days a week affordable regular flights. This development is also an indication that the isolation policy towards Armenia might be subject to partial modifications.

The straining Russia-Turkey as well as Armenia-Azerbaijan relations had influence on the dynamics between Armenia and Turkey. In early April 2016, a violent escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict culminated with a “4-day war” between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, resulting approximately two hundred casualties. Right after the start of the clashes, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made a press statement, expressing Turkey’s strong moral support to Azerbaijan. These events, as well as their coverage in the Turkish press, which often included anti-Armenian sentiments, triggered heightened anti-Turkish rhetoric in Armenia.

Starting from July 2016, there have been extraordinary domestic developments both in Turkey and Armenia. On July 15, 2016, there was a coup d’état attempt in Turkey. Even though the coup attempt did fail, it was recorded in the Turkish history as one of the most important milestones due to its scale, the civic resistance and the civilian losses, the bombing of the Turkish Parliament and other major state security buildings. Immediately after the coup attempt, the government declared a 3-month state of emergency, which was further extended several times and was lifted on July 19, 2018. The European Convention of Human Rights has been suspended; hundreds of arrests, detentions, and suspensions have been made. Many civil society activists, journalists, academics, civil servants,

judiciary and others have been persecuted under the suspect of being affiliated with FETO<sup>3</sup> that was responsible for the failed coup attempt. Two years on, President Erdogan remains in charge and is more powerful than ever, after winning a constitutional referendum in April 2017. In short, Turkey has become focused on its domestic politics, trying to consolidate its state apparatus.

In Armenia, following the constitutional referendum in December 2015, political system was changed from a semi-presidential to parliamentary republic. Orchestrated by the then President Serzh Sargsyan, this move was acknowledged by many as a step aimed at consolidating Sargsyan's own power. This backfired against Sargsyan three years later and led to a non-violent revolution of people resulting in his resignation.

The revolution was a result of the dissent by the people who opposed the continuation of Sargsyan's rule in a new role as the Prime Minister, which became possible after the introduction of constitutional changes. In April-May 2018, Armenia experienced an unexpected turn of political events causing the change of the political elite that ruled the country for the past 20 years. The system was unable to fight back popular revolt and collapsed in the course of a few weeks. The protests against the regime were initiated by a relatively small group of political opposition but soon attracted massive numbers of followers from different segments of society. The movement was quickly branded as "Velvet Revolution" implying the non-violent nature of the resistance and relatively smooth transition of power from the acting regime to the representatives of the leaders of the protests. In the snap Parliamentary elections held on December 9, 2018 the political alliance led by the leader of "Velvet Revolution" Nikol Pashinyan received more than 70% of the votes marking the end of the transition period following the resignation of Sargsyan. This transition may offer new opportunities for Armenia-Turkey relations. For instance, during the press conference organised following the elections, Pashinyan confirmed that Armenia is ready to normalise relations with Turkey without preconditions.

Alongside with domestic developments, regional and international factors have also influenced the dynamics in and between Armenia and Turkey. In a state-

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3 FETO (Fethullah Terror Organization) or Gulen Organisation (GO) is a transnational network which is led by preacher, Fethullah Gulen, based in Pennsylvania, US. GO affiliates are well organised in civil society, media, education as well as civilian and military bureaucratic organisations, and were behind the coup attempt on July 15, 2016.

ment to the Armenian press in March 2017, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov gave the message that Russia is ready to give the necessary support for the resumption of the normalisation process between Turkey and Armenia.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, Armenia signed a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with the European Union (EU) on November 24, 2017. Although there is no trade deal in this agreement, Armenia continues to develop relations with the EU and offers the EU with opportunity to increase its engagement with Armenia. On the other hand, though not gained momentum yet, Customs Union modernisation process between Turkey and the EU is still planned.

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4 "Russia Ready to Assist in Armenia-Turkey Negotiations - Foreign Minister," Sputnik, March, 2017, accessed October 2017, <https://sputniknews.com/world/201703161051634792-russia-armenia-turkey-negotiations/>





# **CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES PROPOSED BY THE DIALOGUE GROUP**

The following sections are an attempt at consolidating the results of the Dialogue Group's work towards both gaining a deep understanding of the context and exploring concrete and feasible steps for confidence-building in the priority thematic fields agreed upon by the Dialogue Group. Within each field, the findings are structured around three tentative dimensions: current state and obstacles, institutional frameworks, opportunities and recommendations. The current state and obstacles dimension aims to both highlight the examples of cooperation established despite the absence of diplomatic relations, and to address the various structural constraints, in an effort to provide a realistic assessment of possibilities. The institutional frameworks dimension presents an overview of the international platforms and instruments, to which both Turkey and Armenia are party, and which can provide enabling grounds for confidence-building. Finally, the opportunities and recommendations dimension puts forth concrete, tangible openings and presents recommendations to the policy-makers.

## **CONSULAR SERVICES**

### **Current State and Obstacles**

Armenia and Turkey have formally recognised each other, yet never established diplomatic relations. Even though there are no consular representations in either country, in practice, the Turkish and Armenian Embassies in Tbilisi are formally assigned to exchange official letters and provide services to citizens. Additionally, since 2001, Armenia has a Permanent Representation in Istanbul, vis-à-vis of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) with its headquarters in Istanbul, yet does not have any bilateral mandate vis-à-vis Turkey. This being the case, citizens of both countries do not have direct access to consular services during their stay in the neighbouring country.

In cases of emergency and deportation, the Permanent Representation do only play the role of a facilitator and refer Armenian citizens to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia. For instance, if citizens of Armenia have their passports lost or stolen during their stay in Turkey, they cannot get their renewed passports from the Permanent Representation of Republic of Armenia to BSEC. In such cases, the Representation can only refer their citizens to contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia directly and/or its embassy in Tbilisi.

Despite the lack of consular offices in both countries, citizens of Armenia are issued a multiple entry visa upon arrival in Turkey, allowing them to stay a total of 30 days within a 180 day period. Citizens of Turkey holding regular passports are issued 21 or 120 day stay single entry visa upon arrival in Armenia, whereas citizens holding special/service/diplomatic passports require a special permit issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, based on an invitation letter prepared by an organisation with legal entity in Armenia.

Recommendations:

- Turkey to offer extended duration of stay for the citizens of Armenia.
- Armenia to offer multiple entry visa for the citizens of Turkey.
- Armenia to derogate from/ease its special permit procedures for the citizens of Turkey holding special/service passports.
- Turkey and Armenia to agree on a format that will allow them have official confidential contact on a regular basis in case of emergency.
- Turkey to open a Consular Office even without establishing diplomatic relations to provide consular services to its citizens in Armenia.

## **ARMENIAN-CITIZEN MIGRANTS IN TURKEY**

### **Current State and Obstacles**

Despite the lack of reliable data, by various estimations there are 10,000 to 40,000 Armenian-citizen migrants currently living in Turkey, with a great majority of them having migrated for economic reasons. The problems and obstacles faced by Armenian-citizen migrants generally follow the patterns of other irregular migrant groups in Turkey, however the absence of an Armenian diplomatic

mission in Turkey that can provide direct assistance and service as well as their identity put them in a more vulnerable position. Their access to information on rights, obligations and registration process in Turkey is limited also in part due to language barriers. As many migrants are not registered in Turkey, they are subject to cumulative visa overstay fines for the violation of legal stay. Therefore, they cannot travel to Armenia due to their visa overstay fines and due to the risk of not being able to re-enter Turkey. Many other legal and bureaucratic issues arise from this situation as well, particularly with the issuance of birth, marriage, death certificates. In some cases, children of Armenian migrants born in Turkey are neither registered in Turkey nor in Armenia. Due to visa overstays and lack of registration, Armenian migrants cannot fully exercise rights in Turkey and in Armenia.

Additionally, even migrants who reside and work in Turkey legally face difficulties in regard to certain social services: Armenian citizens are not able to use their social security and retirement benefits upon return to Armenia, since no agreement for transfer of pension rights exists between the two countries.

One of the major problems is about the education of Armenian-citizen migrants' children. Since 2003, Gedikpaşa Armenian Protestant Church has been informally offering classes to Armenian-migrants' children, in an effort to prevent migrant children from being deprived of education. Here, the official curriculum in Armenia is followed, yet the students are not granted a diploma that is recognised in Armenia or Turkey. Thanks to the discretion of the Ministry of National Education of Turkey, in recent years, the Armenian schools in Istanbul that are subject to Lausanne Treaty have been able to accept Armenian-citizen migrant children as "guest students." Currently, there are approximately 100 guest students who follow the Turkish curriculum, with science classes in Western Armenian and history, geography and literature classes in Turkish. Though schooled, guest students are not issued any diploma/certificate.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Turkey, in 2017, 126 Armenian-citizens were granted a work permit with a definite duration in Turkey. Until 2011, very few Armenian citizens had applied for work permits, however from 2012 to 2013 work permit applications more than doubled and the number of work permit applications rose from 84 to 188. In the following years, this number is more or less consistent: 180 applicants in 2014, 197 in 2015, 174 in 2016 and 150

in 2017. Around 86.5% of applicants came from women and around 44% of applicants were above 50 years old.<sup>5</sup> According to the International Labor Force Law, special approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is required for applications for work and residence permits from countries that do not have diplomatic relations with Turkey.

## **Institutional Frameworks**

Armenian-citizen migrants in Turkey are subject to Law 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection in Turkey. UN Convention on Migrant Workers is ratified, but not implemented. The new Law 6735 on International Labour Force passed primarily for Syrian migrants and only covers registered migrants that have high-quality skills for specific jobs.

In the attempts to alleviate this situation, the Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group has proposed that a number of measures can be undertaken even within the existing legal and institutional frameworks as well as international conventions. To better assess the needs of the community, the Dialogue Group has commissioned a needs assessment study amongst Armenian citizen migrants living in Turkey. The research has surveyed 153 migrant households living in Istanbul, as well as 160 migrant children attending educational institutions. The findings of the research are compiled in *Makeshift lives: The state of Armenian-citizen migrants and their children living in Istanbul* and published in September 2018.

### Recommendations:

- Agreeing on a format that will allow Armenia and Turkey to provide consular services and emergency assistance to their citizens, regardless of the status of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- Waiving of the visa-overstay fines for Armenian-citizen children born in Turkey who never left the country and who intend to return to Armenia to obtain/renew passports and documents.
- Establishing/supporting mechanisms/networks of lawyers, CSOs, authorities that will provide information, legal aid and services to Armenian-citizen migrants about their rights and responsibilities

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5 Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Statistical Management Information System. Accessed September 2018.

- Facilitating and improving access to education for Armenian-citizen migrants in Turkey. Turkey may consider making further legal arrangements to allow guest students to have official registration in Armenian minority schools in Istanbul and to grant diplomas for Armenian-citizen students. In a similar vein, Armenia may facilitate the transition of Armenian citizens attending schools in Turkey to continue their education in schools and universities in Armenia.
- Encouraging Armenian community of Istanbul to provide support and service to the Armenian-citizen migrants living in Istanbul to address their education and health-care needs. For instance, Armenian hospitals in Istanbul may establish mechanisms of providing health-care services to Armenian-citizen migrants who do not have valid documents and who cannot afford it.

## TRADE, BUSINESS AND TRANSPORTATION

### Current State and Obstacles

Despite the lack of diplomatic relations and the closed borders, trade relations between Armenia and Turkey have been established in various domains and scopes. While there is no official decree by Turkey for imposing a trade embargo on Armenia, it continues to hold a reservation against trade by invoking Article 13 of World Trade Organisation (WTO) Marrakesh Agreement.<sup>6</sup> Based on this ground, Turkey does not allow the entry of Armenian imports to Turkey, including goods for transits, and to use its ports and highways. Turkey also has informal sanctions about bank transfers to and from Armenia. Public banks do not allow transfers, some private banks allow on a case-by-case basis.

Nevertheless, there is existing de-facto trade between Armenia and Turkey via Georgia, overwhelmingly in one-way direction from Turkey to Armenia. According to the official statistics in Armenia, based on the data of the National Statistics Service (NSS), Turkey is the seventh importer for the country. Turkish-origin goods are exported to Armenia via Georgia including foodstuff, plastic

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6 “Republic of Turkey does not consent to the application as between it and the Republic of Armenia of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization and the Multilateral Trade Agreements in Annexes 1 and 2 thereto.” WTO Communication dated 29 November 2002 WT/L/501 invoking Marrakesh Agreement Article XIII: Non-Application of Multilateral Trade Agreements between Particular Members

Table 1. Armenian Import from Turkey

<b>TOTAL: 2004</b> <b>\$44,804,700</b>	<b>TOTAL: 2017</b> <b>\$222,920,800</b>
<b>a.</b> Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances - \$4,391,400	<b>a.</b> Textile and clothing items - \$22,483,800
<b>b.</b> Manufactured products (iron, steel, machinery) - \$3,456,300	<b>b.</b> Plastic and plastic products - \$15,332,700
<b>c.</b> Paper and paper products - \$3,414,900	<b>c.</b> Cotton - \$13,372,000
<b>d.</b> Non-ferrous metals - \$2,996,000	<b>d.</b> Textile poster - \$13,014,100

Table 2. Turkish Import from Armenia

<b>TOTAL: 2004</b> <b>\$2,021,200</b>	<b>TOTAL: 2017</b> <b>\$913,300</b>
<b>a.</b> Unprocessed and processed leather – \$1,002,600	<b>a.</b> Unprocessed fur and processed leather - \$574,200
<b>b.</b> Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances – \$188,100	<b>b.</b> Watches and their elements – \$245,300
<b>c.</b> Ferrous metal products - \$232,900	<b>c.</b> Natural or artificial purl, precious or semi-precious gemstones - \$60,700

Source: National Statistics Service of Armenia (NSS)

[https://www.armstat.am/file/article/ft\\_2\\_nish\\_2018\\_18.pdf](https://www.armstat.am/file/article/ft_2_nish_2018_18.pdf), accessed February 2019

home appliances, textiles and construction materials. Between 2004 and 2017, according to the data of NSS, the volume of import from Turkey to Armenia increased about six times (see Tables 1 and 2).

Since Turkey's exports to Armenia are customs declared as destined to Georgia or in rare cases destined to Armenia via Georgia, it is not possible to provide the exact figure of trade between the two countries. Official statistics provided by

Turkey regarding exports to Armenia are either missing or very low: \$5,000 was reported for 2018; \$13,000 was reported for 2017; \$1,000 was reported for 2016; and \$83,000 reported for 2013; while statistics were missing for 2014 and 2015.<sup>7</sup> Imports from Armenia on the other hand, were reported in larger numbers: \$1,822,000 in 2018 (as of December 2018); \$2,145,000 in 2017; \$1,386,000 in 2016; \$988,000 in 2015; and \$1,465,000 in 2014.

Not having access to the Trabzon port due to Turkey's invocation of Article 13 of the WTO Marrakesh Agreement, Armenia currently exports its products through Georgia's Poti Port. The disadvantages of this route are high transportation costs for Armenia and the absence of ocean type freighters in Poti, required for the further transportation of goods. As a result, freighters bound for the Hamburg Port have to make an additional stop in Italy and switch to high capacity ocean freighters.

According to some experts, as per the requirements of the EU, Turkey has the obligation to allow the transit of Armenia origin goods to the EU, even without opening the land border. Even though there are no clauses in the existing EU-Turkey Customs Union Agreement about transit trade with neighbouring and third countries, including Armenia in its General System of Preferences (GSP) and allowing transit trade is Turkey's legally binding obligation in the accession process under the EU Acquis.<sup>8</sup> However, according to other experts, the WTO Agreements as international instruments prevail over the regional EU Agreements, thus Turkey retains the right to block the entry of Armenia origin goods into its territory for transit purposes.<sup>9</sup>

Despite all these obstacles, businesses find their ways to do trade under these circumstances.

A number of Turkish companies such as LC Waikiki, Mavi, Damat, Penti, BEKO, Bellona and De Facto are already operating in Armenia, and are subject to the same business regulations as other foreign companies. According to some sources, Armenia has been ready to begin exporting domestically produced electricity

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7 [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt\\_id=1046](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1046), accessed February 2019

8 Interview with an expert from Armenia in the field of economics [27.07.2016]

9 Interview with an expert from Turkey in the field of international law [20.09.2016]

to Turkey and negotiations to secure access to Turkish markets have been ongoing.<sup>10</sup>

Since the last couple of years, Istanbul Chamber of Jewelry Makers has been taking part in the international Jewelry Exhibition organised in Armenia by International Armenian Jewelers under the auspices of the Armenian President, and opening a Turkey booth. Supported by The United State Agency for International Development (USAID), Foundation Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development in Armenia (CARD) procures machinery for its farmers and dairy producer members from various suppliers in Turkey. The Turkish suppliers travel to Armenia, train the farmers and producers on the operation of machines and provide maintenance and repair when needed.<sup>11</sup>

#### Air Connection

Even though Turkey closed its airspace to Armenia while sealing its land border in 1993, it opened its airspace in 1995 and allowed for charter flights flying at least once a week from Yerevan to Istanbul starting from 1996. Intermittently, Yerevan-Antalya charter flights have operated in summer. Yerevan-Van charter flights that were announced by Bora Jet in 2013 were cancelled despite initial approval by Turkish aviation authority. Since early 2016, the twice a week Istanbul-Yerevan charter flights were replaced by the four-days a week regular flights operated by the Turkish AtlasGlobal aviation company. As AtlasGlobal flights are registered in the Amadeus system, it allows Armenia to transit via Turkey to Europe. As Armenia has very limited flight connections to Europe, this is quite significant. In April 2017, Pegasus Airlines announced the launch of Istanbul-Yerevan flights from Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen Airport three days a week, however this plan was recalled in a short while.

Despite the lack of diplomatic relations, there is a bilateral protocol on the coordi-

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10 "Armenia to sell electricity to Turkey," *Lragir*, July 2010, accessed October 2017, <http://www.lragir.am/index/eng/0/economy/view/18560>; "Turkish expert says Armenia could sell electricity to Turkey via Georgia," *Arka News Agency*, December 2013, accessed October 2017, [http://arka.am/en/news/economy/turkish\\_expert\\_says\\_armenia\\_could\\_sell\\_electricity\\_to\\_turkey\\_via\\_georgia/](http://arka.am/en/news/economy/turkish_expert_says_armenia_could_sell_electricity_to_turkey_via_georgia/); "Armenia 'Ready' to Export Electricity to Turkey, Says Energy Minister," *Asbarez*, December 2009, accessed October 2017, <http://asbarez.com/75294/armenia-ready-to-export-electricity-to-turkey-says-energy-minister/>

11 More information can be found at <http://card.am/category/eett/>, accessed February 2019



nation of air traffic between the Air Traffic Control Authorities of both countries.<sup>12</sup> In line with the agreement, Armenian aircrafts can enter Turkey airspace and vice versa both for direct and transit flights. Armenian Air Traffic Service (ARMATS) company in Yerevan Zvartnots Airport has direct access to their counterparts in Ankara air traffic control authority. They are in contact on a day-to-day basis not only for the Istanbul-Yerevan direct flights but also for the coordination of air traffic for the aircrafts coming from Europe or Asia and transiting both Turkey and Armenia.

According to some sources, Turkish Airlines used to fly through Armenian airspace for its flights bound to Central Asia including flights to Azerbaijan, as this is the cheapest and quickest route. However due to a non-specified problem, in 2013, Turkish Airlines stopped using the Armenian airspace for its transit flights. Instead, it started using the Georgian airspace, bypassing Armenia which charges similar air traffic fees.<sup>13</sup> Currently Turkey uses the Armenian airspace only for the direct flights between Istanbul and Yerevan.

### **Institutional Frameworks**

Turkey and Armenia are both members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Turkey being a member of GATT since 1951 and WTO since 1995, thus having grandfathering rights in the organisation. Armenia has been a member since 2003. While Turkey approved Armenia's accession to the WTO, it invoked Article 13 of the Marrakesh Agreement<sup>14</sup> against Armenia, which still remains in force. Based on this article, Turkey uses its sovereign right not to allow entry of Armenian imports in Turkey, including transits, and does not allow Armenia to use its ports and highways. On the other hand, WTO Conventions continue to provide the overarching international legal framework for both countries, including the landmark WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) that came into force in February 2017 and ratified by both countries. World Customs Organisation (WCO) is another international organisation where Turkey has been a member since 1951 and Armenia since 1992. Ratified by both countries, WCO Conventions do also provide a multilateral legal framework.

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12 Interview with an expert from Armenia in the field of aviation [29.07.2016]

13 Interview with an expert from Armenia in the field of aviation [29.07.2016]

14 Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, Article XIII, WT/L/501

### Marrakesh Agreement

Signed in Marrakesh, Morocco, on April 15, 1994 by 124 countries, the Agreement established the World Trade Organization, at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. The Agreement defines the scope, functions and the structure of the World Trade Organization, and incorporates the agreements previously negotiated under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as well as the agreements concluded during the Uruguay Round. Entered into force on January 1, 1995, the Agreement aims to create an integrated multilateral trading system.

Armenia and Turkey have both been members of the BSEC, since its inception in 1992. BSEC continues to serve as a unique platform for the two neighbouring countries to discuss trade related issues in a multilateral context, and provides legal instruments such as Trail Truck Agreement and the Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy for the BSEC region.

Due to Armenia's Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) membership and Turkey's Customs Union Agreement with the EU, the two neighbouring countries are subject to different customs regimes. Armenia has been a member of the EAEU since January 2015.

### Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

EAEU is an international organisation for regional economic integration, established by the treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union. The EAEU provides a ground for the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour; and pursues a coordinated policy in the sectors determined by the Treaty. The Member-States of the Eurasian Economic Union are the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation. The overall objective of the EAEU is to comprehensively upgrade, raise the competitiveness of and cooperation between the national economies, and to promote stable development in order to raise the living standards of the nations of the Member-States. The treaty on EAEU came into force on January 1, 2015.

Even though Armenia is in the EAEU and does not have a trade agreement with the EU, the latter remains the main trading partner for the country in 2018, accounting around 26.7% share of the total Armenian exports, being the biggest export market for Armenia; and 22% share of the total Armenian imports, being the second-biggest source of Armenian imports.<sup>15</sup>

Turkey is in Customs Union with the EU. EU and Turkey signed the agreement on December 31, 1995 to implement a Customs Union between Turkey and the European Union. According to the agreement, goods may travel between the two entities without any customs restrictions. EU and Turkey are currently in the process of modernising the Customs Union Agreement. Entered into force in 1996, custom unions is becoming less and less equipped to deal with the modern day challenges of trade integration, and both the EU and Turkey feels the necessity of updating terms and conditions of the union, especially in the fields of agriculture and public procurement.

## **Opportunities**

There are several opportunities of economic and business cooperation and development between Armenia and Turkey.

### Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ)

QIZ were designed by the US in the mid-1990s to support the regional cooperation and development of countries in conflict in the Middle East. Originally designed for Egypt, Israel, Palestine and Jordan, QIZ model implied tax-free trade with the US. Economic partnership with a counterpart across the conflict divide was a prerequisite for the QIZ in the Middle East. "The benefits of QIZ are various: ease of access to US markets being the most important, with open, unlimited quota as well as exemption of tariff and non-tariff barriers; low factor costs as well as a huge supply of labor force."<sup>16</sup> Such models provide not only economic benefits but also serve as an important trust-building mechanism. Similar model could be applied to the Armenia-Turkey context, not requiring opening of the border as such.

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15 <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/armenia/>, accessed February 2019

16 <http://www.qizegypt.gov.eg/Page/Overview>, accessed February 2019

### Recommendation

- Setting up a US-supported QIZ in Kars-Gyumri/Armenia-Turkey border, where high tech products such as textiles are covered is an opportunity to use even with the land border remaining closed. A precondition of establishing a QIZ is WTO membership, to which Turkey and Armenia are both members. Also, one of the participating countries should have a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US. In case of Armenia-Turkey such third country will be needed.

### Free Trade Zones

To support economic cooperation, Armenia can set up Free Economic Zones providing tax incentives for Turkish businesses. This can be done within the EU-Turkey Customs Union Agreement and Eurasian Economic Union-Armenia Agreement. Businesses from Turkey can manufacture in Turkey, transport their products to Armenia, label them as made in Armenia and sell to the 160 million EAEU market saving around 30% on customs/ duties. One of such zones in Armenia, Meridian Free Economic Zone for Jewelry, already has resident companies from Turkey.

### Recommendation

- Creating free trade zones in Armenia for Turkey-based businesses to open the tax-free access to the EAEU market.

### IT and software

Cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has a huge potential given the level and scope of the software industry in Armenia. ICT sector makes up the 3.6% of Armenia's GDP, and 9% of its exports.<sup>17</sup> In the past, there have been different attempts of cooperation between the representatives of the industry. Non-for-profit organisations have played an important role in connecting the for-profit organisations in this area proving that benefits of such economic cooperation has long-term potential. Turkey-based TEPAV and Armenia-based PJC have been actively engaged in building relations between the representatives of the IT sectors promoting regional and international cooperation.<sup>18</sup>

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17 World Bank. 2013. Armenia Report. (Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, 2013)

18 Held in October 2016, "StartupIstanbul", hosted 10 start-up companies from Armenia. For more information on this collaboration between TEPAV and PJC, please visit <http://armenia-turkey.net/en/Armenian-10-Startup-Representatives-Will-Participa>

#### Recommendation

- Encouraging IT software exports from Armenia to Turkey. Turkey's software industry is less developed as compared to the hardware industry. Armenia has the potential to export IT to Turkey.

#### Trade Missions

Trade relations between the two countries are substantially limited because of the closed land border and lack of diplomatic relations. However, even in such conditions, existing cooperation between the representatives of different sectors of economy and the opportunity of engaging new economic actors will become mutually beneficial in case there are policy-level mechanisms in place supporting trade relations. With this regard, introducing trade missions may significantly ease the cumbersome procedures and may open new opportunities for different business actors. According to the International Law, existing diplomatic relations is not a pre-requisite for opening trade missions.

#### Recommendation

- Opening a trade mission of Turkey in Armenia to assist Turkish businesses operating in Armenia to support economic cooperation between the two countries. This will require official engagement between different Ministries of Turkey and Armenia, dealing with foreign affairs and trade.

#### Transportation

Currently, there are some constraints regarding the entry of Armenian trail trucks to Turkey, and their use of Turkey's highways and ports. In the framework of BSEC, a number of special transit permits have been agreed upon among some of the member countries, including Turkey and Armenia, which remained insufficient both in number and scope. Transit operations are also currently conducted under the TIR convention, however these are not cost-effective because of persisting barriers in international transport.

#### Recommendation

- Trade opportunities can significantly increase if Turkey further eases the pre-conditions allowing Armenian trail trucks entering Turkey for transit.

## Transit Ports

Opening transit routes allowing Armenia to use the Trabzon and/or Rize Port for its transit operations is another measure that will mutually benefit both countries. Currently, Turkey does not allow Armenia to use its highways and ports. Armenia currently exports to its biggest trading partner EU by using ship type freighters at Batumi/Poti ports in Georgia, which significantly increases the costs due to switching mode of transportation. Transit trade sometimes is more important than bilateral trade. This will lower transportation costs for Armenia and introduce customs revenues for Trabzon/Rize Port and Turkey.

### Recommendation

- Facilitating the transit of Armenian products, which are destined to the EU and other markets, using Turkish territory.

## Bank Transfers

Currently, Turkey has informal sanctions about bank transfers to and from Armenia. Any transaction is subject to approval by Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade. Only some private banks allow bank transfers to/from Armenia on a case-by-case bases.

### Recommendation

- Facilitating bank transfers to/from Armenia to enable a more conducive environment for trade.

## Airways

Armenia has been in need of additional airways for its flights to Western/Northern Europe including Bulgaria. The existing two airways between Turkey and Armenia are not sufficient as there is a lot of air traffic.

### Recommendation

- Opening of the new (third) airway (Karde-Reblo) between Turkey and Armenia in the north that will transit through the Samsun airspace to Western/Northern Europe. A request by ARMATS was made to the Turkish authorities several times, and was neither rejected nor approved.

To sum, even under existing constraints, cooperation between the different sectors of economy and engagement of new economic actors will become mutually beneficial in case there are policy-level mechanisms in place to support trade re-

lations. In the absence of consulates, the establishment of mutual trade missions will be a welcome step towards assisting Turkish businesses operating in Armenia and Armenian companies importing goods from Turkey, as it may ease the current complicated procedures of transit permits and customs declarations, as well as may open new opportunities for different business actors.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Current State and Obstacles**

The lack of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey has significantly affected the sphere of education. Even though it has a great potential, and there are almost no restrictions, institutional cooperation between the two neighbouring countries in the field of education has been rather limited. Cases of such cooperation, particularly academic exchange and research projects between higher education institutions and high schools, have usually been enabled through the facilitation of civil society initiatives. In 1999, Yerevan State University signed cooperation protocols with Ankara University and the Middle East Technical University to start regular academic exchange, which were not materialised eventually. So far, only Eurasia International University in Armenia used the Erasmus+ for exchange with Turkey and sent several students to METU for two consecutive years. There are also few cases of students who have individually applied to universities in the neighbouring country. Most students studying in Armenia are Turkish citizens of Armenian descent. Some Armenian-citizen students studying in Turkey have been provided with scholarship by the Turkish Prime Ministry. In secondary level, the Dilijan School that is part of the United World College network, has accepted a number of high school, students from Turkey and provided them with scholarships.

As per the regulations set by the Turkish Higher Education Council (YÖK), foreign universities need to register with the Council in order to secure the recognition and equivalence of diplomas issued. Until 2015, only Yerevan State University and Gyumri Pedagogical Institute from Armenia were included in the list of universities recognized by YÖK, since they had registered during the Soviet period in mostly student-driven processes. In 2015, the American University of Armenia took the initiative and applied for recognition and YÖK approved it with its standard procedure. While YÖK approval is imperative for the recognition of

diploma equivalency of individual students, it does not have any requirements or restrictions about bilateral exchange agreements between Turkish and foreign universities. Diplomas issued by Turkish universities are recognised in Armenia without a need for additional registration procedures.

## **Institutional Frameworks**

### **Bologna Process**

Both Turkey and Armenia are full members of the Bologna Process - European Higher Education Area. As part of the Bologna process, Armenia transitioned to a two-cycle (Bachelors, Master's) degree system, as well as credit accumulation and transfer system (ECTS).

### **Erasmus+**

Armenia and Turkey are both engaged in Erasmus+ programme. Turkey is among the Erasmus+ Programme Countries, which can fully take part in all the Actions of the Programme, whereas Armenia is a Partner Country and can take part in certain Actions of the Programme, subject to specific criteria or conditions. The international higher education dimension of the Erasmus+ Programme includes actions and mechanisms targeted at policy reforms, institutional capacity building, innovation and exchange of good practices, and student and faculty exchange. High School programmes between the two countries are not eligible for support under the Erasmus+ framework.

### **Horizon 2020**

Both Turkey and Armenia are also part of the Horizon 2020 (H2020) framework, an EU instrument for supporting research and innovation in science and technology from 2014 to 2020. Turkey has been a member since 2014, and Armenia joined in 2016, gaining full access to the funding instruments. Horizon 2020 can support activities in the areas of scientific and technological cooperation, in particular IT, science, research, exchange between young students fostering sustainable interaction between schools, research institutions, industry and civil society organisations, both in bilateral and multilateral context. European Union may consider opening tailor-made Horizon 2020 projects to fund joint initiatives between Armenia and Turkey, with a view to normalise relations between the two countries.

### **European University Association (EUA)**

As the representative organisation of universities and national rectors' confer-



ences in 47 European countries, European University Association (EUA) has 62 member universities from Turkey and two from Armenia, National Polytechnic University of Armenia and Yerevan State University. EUA provides a platform for interaction amongst the member universities and with the EU institutions.

## Opportunities

### Cooperation within the Erasmus+ framework

Within the Erasmus+ framework, the main area for possible cooperation between Armenia and Turkey is Higher Education Exchange projects between universities and institutes. The opportunities under the Key Action 1 and 2 include high-level integrated international study projects delivered by consortia (where Turkey can be participant) of higher education institutions in the EU and in Partner Countries (such as for instance Armenia) that award full degree scholarships to students worldwide; opportunities for students as well as staff of higher education institutions in Armenia and/or Turkey to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country; capacity building in the field of higher education projects promoting cooperation and partnerships that have an impact on the modernisation and internationalisation of higher education institutions and systems in Partner Countries; knowledge alliances and strategic partnerships between higher education institutions and enterprises that aim to promote creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship by offering new curricula, learning opportunities and qualifications.

Armenia and/or Turkey-based higher education institutions can apply to the cooperation projects through the Erasmus+ national offices in either of the country, depending on who is the initiator.

#### Recommendation

- Encouraging universities from Armenia and Turkey to initiate and implement academic exchanges and joint projects through the various Actions of the Erasmus+ framework.

### Cooperation in Ottoman/Turkish studies

Cooperation opportunities can also be explored in the field of Turkish and Ottoman language study and instruction towards building on the existing capacity and expectations of institutions and scholars in both countries.

In Armenia, there are two major Turkology departments including the Turkish Studies Chair at Yerevan State University and Turkish Studies Department at the National Academy of Sciences. Due to the growing interest and the felt need for further expertise, Russian-Armenian University is planning to establish a Turkology Department and Matenadaran Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts is planning to start Ottoman language classes for its staff. American University of Armenia's Extension Office started Turkish classes as elective courses. These universities and institutes have expressed interest for collaboration in academic exchange as well as joint research with their counterpart institutes/scholars in Turkey.<sup>19</sup>

The possible fields of collaboration suggested are academic exchanges; joint study and research on Ottoman manuscripts including those written in Armenian letters; the cataloguing and restoration of Ottoman manuscripts; translation of selected Ottoman works into Armenian and into modern Turkish; provision of Ottoman language/Turkish instruction and resources in Armenia and provision of Armenian language instruction and resources in Turkey; organisation of seminar series about the Ottoman/Turkish literature, culture and arts, social life in Armenia and about the Armenian literature, culture and art history in Turkey.

A number of institutions from Turkey including public and private universities, research centres and foundations have also expressed willingness to collaborate in these areas, both by hosting/sending students and scholars from/to Armenia and initiating joint projects.

Amongst them is the Yunus Emre Institute - a public foundation in Turkey that supports scientific infrastructure and education standards for Turkish language domestically and abroad. The Institute organises certificate programmes of "Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language" domestically and abroad. The Turkology Directorate of Yunus Emre Institute collaborates with universities to provide the demanded services abroad to all willing to learn Turkish language, literature, culture and arts. In this context, a "Turkology Project Cooperation Protocol" is signed with universities and existing departments are supported and opening new departments is encouraged. As part of the Protocol, Turkish faculty members are assigned to Turkology/Turkish Language and Literature departments

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with academics from Armenia on several occasions in 2016 and 2017.

abroad, curriculum and material support is offered, and efforts are made towards providing a higher quality and continuing education-training.<sup>20</sup>

#### Recommendation

- Establishing concrete partnerships for the study of Turkish and Ottoman language and literature in Armenia, targeting students, scholars and researchers working with Turkish and Ottoman sources, archival documents, manuscripts, and epigraphic material.

#### Cooperation in Eastern/Western Armenian studies

In Turkey, there is a growing interest in the Armenian language and studies. Erciyes University in Kayseri is the only degree-granting Department of Armenian Language and Literature in Turkey. While the short-lived Armenian Language programme at Trakya University had to be discontinued due to lack of teaching staff, Armenian Language at Yıldırım Beyazıt University in Ankara is in the process of setting up a special chair on Armenian studies. Bogazici University provides Western Armenian classes as elective course on a regular basis, while Lifelong Education Center at Kadir Has University offers Eastern Armenian classes as elective course by hosting visiting scholars from Armenia. In 2014-2015, Istanbul Sehir University hosted a visiting scholar from Armenia, who provided Western Armenian literature classes.

#### Recommendation

- Establishing concrete partnerships for Eastern/Western Armenian language/literature education in Turkey

#### Cooperation in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) education

Another discipline-specific area of cooperation is the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector, which is quite developed in Armenia with serious know-how and skilled labour in software and programming. The software developed in Armenia is being used by many international companies. Turkey on the other hand, is well advanced in the hardware front. There is software expertise in Armenia, but not sufficient investment. Armenia has the skills, but needs investors. There are Technoparks in Turkey and this is a priority agenda. There is no Technopark as such in Armenia, but there is TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, which provides secondary and high school students with

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20 <https://www.yee.org.tr/en/content/turkology>

free of charge after school education in advanced technologies including software, animation and graphic design. In general, ICT education is integrated in the official curriculum of Armenia, while in Turkey, there is still a need to introduce it to the education sector.

#### Recommendations

- Establishing partnerships for education and joint research in high-tech sciences including informatics, physics, engineering, software, programming, animation, robotics, and integrating ICT education in Turkish curriculum.
- Encouraging Armenian institutions to register with the Turkish Higher Education Council to ensure diploma recognition.
- Encouraging and facilitating interaction between university representatives from Armenia and Turkey in international platforms.
- Encouraging the organisation of regular/annual academic conferences/forums on topics of common interest such as Eurasia, the Middle East, Islam, and the Caucasus.

## HEALTH SERVICES

After the 1988 earthquake, Armenia has acquired special medical expertise and tools. Armenian health specialists went abroad, received training and came back. Diaspora organisations have followed this tradition and contributed to the building of a strong health sector in Armenia. Armenia is well advanced in research and practice in certain fields of medicine such as Mediterranean Fever, triple heart surgery, nuclear cancer treatment and dentistry.

Mediterranean Fever is a common disease, and is also prevalent in Turkey. Armenia is well advanced in research in this field, attracting specialists from the National Institutes of Health in the US. Particle acceleration technology is another promising area, as this technology will be very important for the future of medicine and agriculture. Armenia already has an existing facility. Cancer and radiology are other important promising areas.

Triple heart surgery, and bypass operations performed by well-qualified doctors at affordable prices in Armenia. Patients from the US, Russia and Europe are also coming to the country to go to dentist, and to make implants.

On the other hand, Turkey is quite competitive in health-care services, and con-

tinues to invest in attracting medical tourists especially from the Middle East. If the land border would be open, health-care services in Armenia would be very important for the Eastern region though. Since there are not enough hospitals in the border provinces like Kars-Igdir-Ardahan-Agri, patients very often go to the hospitals in Erzurum in important cases.

Tobacco control practises in Turkey can be an example for Armenia as there are recent attempts by the Ministry of Health in Armenia to implement a similar law to decrease tobacco usage in the country. The similarities in culture and the law enforcement processes can be discussed by the experts of two neighboring countries, and this can be another field of collaboration.

Last but not least, between 2003 and 2013, Turkey's health-care transformation has undergone a structural transformation, with the support of the World Bank. The Health Transformation Program (HTP) implemented in this scope aimed at improving the health services all over the country through the universal health coverage system as well as a series of changes in health financing, insurance, and administration of hospitals. Turkey may share its experiences and good practices about the HTP, as Armenian government is planning to invest more in health-care and aims to improve its health-care system.

There is also a new genre in Turkey: Iranian and Azeri doctors. They are valuable because they have a different paradigm on what health and disease is. In this sense, Armenia can offer Turkey a new paradigm, for instance in acupuncture.

#### Recommendations

- Encouraging contacts/cooperation/study visits between healthcare professionals and medical institutions from both countries including the Armenian hospitals in Istanbul (Yerevan State Medical University; Russian-Armenian University Bioengineering, Biomedicine, Medical Technology, and Genetics; American University of Armenia Public Health Institute).
- Armenia and Turkey to exchange their good practices and lessons learned from the health-care sector reform and tobacco control.
- Encouraging joint research and exchange of expertise in common diseases such as Mediterranean Fever.
- Encouraging contacts/cooperation/study visits between techno parks for joint exploration of particle acceleration technology.
- Encouraging health tourism between Turkey and Armenia.

## CULTURE

### Current State and Obstacles

Thanks to the cultural affinity shared by Turkey and Armenia, one of the most active fields of civil society action has taken place in the cultural domain. Nevertheless, outside of civil society institutional and official avenues of collaboration have been few. Despite the presence of rich and extensive Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey, there are no official bilateral cooperation mechanisms in place for the preservation and restoration of shared cultural heritage. There is also a significant gap in access to works of literature since translation initiatives have been limited.

### Opportunities

#### Arts and Architecture

Since 2009, preservation and restoration works for the various components of Ani complex have been implemented through an ongoing partnership between Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the World Monuments Fund (WMF). In the past, there have been several projects by civil society actors from Turkey and Armenia aimed at sustaining dialogue among the professional circles of the two neighbouring countries.

In the early 2010s the government of Turkey initiated rehabilitation of Armenian cultural heritage sites solely by the Turkish experts with no formal and systematic engagement of Armenian specialists. Moreover, the restored monuments were mainly presented to the world as "Anatolian medieval architectural monuments" with no mention of their Armenian origin. As a positive development, since the last several years (between 2013-2016), there is more mention of the Armenian origins in the information site of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey.<sup>21</sup>

Within the framework of the programme Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process, two civil society organisations in Turkey and Armenia, Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF, Armenia) and Anadolu Kultur (AK, Turkey), supported a group of experts, including architects, restoration specialists and historians, from both countries to make assessment visits to study Armenian cultural heritage in and around the area of Mus, Artvin and Ani. Such visits were the first bilateral initiative of Armenia and Turkey-based specialists to

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21 <http://epfarmenia.am/component-ATNP2/Exchange-of-Art-and-Architecture-Experts>, accessed February 2019

engage in dialogue. Moreover, the significant impact of this activity was not only the professional dialogue among the experts but also the dynamic it accelerated after a week of joint group work impacting Armenia-Turkey normalisation.

In late 2014, the Ministry of Culture of Turkey had sent a letter to the Ministry of Culture of Armenia inviting the involvement of Armenian experts in the restoration projects in Ani that the Turkish government proposed to include in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. The Armenian Ministry of Culture nominated three experts, who were not involved in restoration projects. In 2016, UNESCO included archaeological site of Ani in the World Heritage List. In the statement, mentioning of the “capital of the medieval Armenian kingdom of the Bagratides” was a major development. Ani’s restoration process may create collaboration opportunities for the two neighbouring countries.

Along with the acceptance of Ani to the World Heritage List, UNESCO directed a set of recommendations to the Turkish Ministry of Culture. These include presenting an accurate and balanced representation of the history of the site, improving the interpretation and presentation of the property, and establishing an improved international cooperation for conservation and restoration work. UNESCO has also requested a progress report on these recommendations to be submitted by December 1, 2017 for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session in 2018.

## Cinema

Anadolu Kultur and Golden Apricot Fund for Cinema Development established the Armenia-Turkey Cinema Platform (ATCP) in 2009 to serve as the first cultural network between Armenia and Turkey. ATCP is a co-production and communication initiative that aims at developing close cooperation and links between the two societies through supporting and promoting films and filmmakers from Armenia, Turkey and the Diaspora.

Every year, ATCP conducts two workshops with the participation of approximately 20 filmmakers from Turkey, Armenia, and the Diaspora: one in Istanbul in April, during the International Istanbul Film Festival; and one in Yerevan in July, during the Golden Apricot International Film Festival. In the course of the three-day workshops, the participants pitch their film projects to an international jury and

explore co-production opportunities. The workshops also provide a venue for the screening of the ATCP-supported films.<sup>22</sup>

#### Literature, Music, Urban space and Social Research

Various civil society projects have been implemented in other fields of culture with the participation of experts from Turkey and Armenia, thanks to the initiatives of civil society experts from both countries. In this scope, various workshops, joint research, and joint publications have been carried out in the fields of music, oral history, cultural heritage and urban space.

Furthermore, literary works of renowned authors from Turkey have been translated to Armenian in the past several years. Among the first was the translation of Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* in 2009. Recently, within the framework of the programme Support to Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process, Armenia-based translators of Turkish with distinguished professionals of literary translation and a contemporary Turkish author Birgul Oguz have jointly translated Oguz's *HAH* into Armenian.<sup>23</sup>

#### Recommendations

- Facilitating and deepening formal and informal contacts between art/architecture experts from Turkey and Armenia further to create a solid foundation for the proper rehabilitation of Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey.
- Establishing cooperation mechanisms/committees between the Ministries of Culture of Armenia and Turkey for the protection and promotion of Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey.
- Establishing cooperation mechanisms between the two governments in preservation of Ani.
- Facilitating the installation of Armenian language signs and information units at Ani cultural heritage site.
- Facilitating cooperation between literary experts, authors, artists from both countries to further strengthen dialogue vis-à-vis music, cinema, research and literature.

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22 <http://www.cinemaplatform.org/tr>; <http://www.cinemaplatform.org/sayfa.aspx?LngId=5&PagId=89>, accessed February 2019

23 <http://www.armenia-turkey.net/en/HCA-Armenia>, accessed February 2019



## TOURISM

### Current State and Obstacles

While still not in comparison with tourists from neighbouring Georgia and Azerbaijan, the number of Armenian-citizens visiting Turkey has increased significantly especially after 2008. According to the statistics of Turkish border crossings, 41,692 Armenian-citizens came to Turkey in 2006; 67,198 in 2014; 48,522 in 2015; 39,063 in 2016; and 48,320 in 2017.<sup>24</sup>

Eastern parts of Anatolia with extensive Armenian cultural heritage as well as summer resorts in Antalya have been the main destinations for Armenian tourists. For many years, Kilikia Tour from Armenia has been working with several tour agencies in Turkey, including Gagik Tour based in Van, and has been organising package tours from Armenia to Kars and Van. While Bagrat Tour has prepared its package tours to Antalya, Armavia/Tower Travel occasionally arranged direct charter flights between Yerevan and Antalya in the summer time.

On the other hand, Armenia has not been in the radar of Turkish tourists for many years, even though it has a lot to offer to tourists from Turkey with its history, culture and nature. Around 7,500 visited in 2013, around 6,000 in 2014 and 2015, around 9,000 in 2017, and around 14,000 in 2018.<sup>25</sup> Yerevan by itself is larger than all the Turkish cities east of Gaziantep. Even though there is a strong interest in border regions of Turkey including Kars, Igdir as well as nearby Van and Diyarbakir to visit Armenia for touristic purposes, the closed land border remains to be the biggest obstacle for their travel to Armenia.<sup>26</sup>

### Opportunities

Despite the closed land border, as the direct flights between the two countries have become more regular, there is a growing interest towards the opportunities that Armenia might offer as a tourism destination to Turkey (Tsaghkadzor Ski Resort, Tatev Monastery, Agro Tourism, Wine and Cognac Routes and Caucasian Trail) and Turkey as a tourism destination for tourists from Armenia (Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey and summer resorts).

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24 T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018 Yılı Sınır Giriş-Çıkış İstatistikleri, accessed January 2019, <http://yigm.kultur-turizm.gov.tr/TR,9854/sinir-giris-cikis-istatistikleri.html>

25 Statistical yearbook of the Republic of Armenia 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

26 Research on the Socio-Economic Impact of the Turkey-Armenia Border (Istanbul: Hrant Dink Foundation Publications, 2014)

Kilikia Tour and Gagik Tour had the experience of bringing Turkish tourists to Armenia using their “state social package” allowances. Many doctors, teachers, civil servants use their “social packages for holidays” to travel to Armenia.

In 2017, Kilikia Tour and Gagik Tour opened a joint booth during EMITT International Tourism Fair in Istanbul. Turkish travel agency Oniva Tour based in Istanbul organised several package tours to Armenia in 2017.

#### Recommendations

- Promoting Armenia as a destination for tourists from Turkey.
- Promoting Turkey as a destination for tourists from Armenia.
- Development of joint/regional routes: Golden triangle of religious centers in the border regions in Ani, Akhtamar, Etchmiadzin.
- Resumption of Yerevan-Antalya direct charter flights in the summer time.
- Facilitation of visa permit procedures for Turkish tourists holding special passports.





# ARMENIA-TURKEY OFFICIAL RELATIONS CHRONOLOGY SINCE 1991

- 1991** Volkan Vural, the Turkish Ambassador to Moscow visited Armenia in April. During the visit, Vural and the Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan prepared a draft agreement on establishing good neighbourly relations.<sup>27</sup>
- 1991** On September 21, Armenia declared independence following a referendum.<sup>28</sup> Turkey was among the first countries to recognise Armenia's independence, albeit without establishing diplomatic relations.
- 1992** Turkey allowed food aid to Armenia from Europe to be delivered via Leninakan/Gyumri-Kars passenger train, with Russia having cut off supplies following the declaration of independence.
- 1992** In March, the Minsk Group was founded under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in an effort to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The group is co-chaired by France, the Russian Federation, and the United States. Its permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, and Turkey as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan in addition to the OSCE Troika.<sup>29</sup>
- 1992** The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was established on June 25, in Istanbul, when the Summit Declaration was signed by the Heads of State and Government of eleven countries – Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine.<sup>30</sup>

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27 Aybars Görgülü, Turkey - Armenia Relations: A Vicious Circle (Istanbul: TESEV, 2008) <http://tesev.org.tr/en/yayin/turkey-armenia-relations-a-vicious-circle/>

28 Thomas deWaal, Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)

29 <http://www.osce.org/mg>

30 <http://bsec.mfa.am/en/intorg-BSEC/>, accessed February 2019

The Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization was established in March 1994 in Istanbul.<sup>31</sup>

**1993** The first document for the construction of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipeline was signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan in Ankara on March 9. The intergovernmental agreement in support of the pipeline was signed by Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey on November 18, 1999, during a meeting of the OSCE in Istanbul, Turkey. The construction began in April 2003, and was completed in 2005. Armenia was bypassed.

**1993** Chair of Nationalist Movement Party in Turkey, Alparslan Türkeş, and Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan met confidentially and unofficially in Paris on March 12 at a meeting brokered by Samson Ozararat. They discussed policy options for normalisation. The process stalled after Turkey's decision to seal the border in April 1993.<sup>32</sup>

**1993** On April 3, in response to the escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in particular the capturing of Kelbajar province by the local Armenian forces, Turkey stopped grain transportation to Armenia; unilaterally and formally sealed its land border with Armenia; halted the Kars-Gyumri rail connection and closed the air corridor.

**1994** Bishkek Protocol was signed on May 5 as a provisional cease-fire agreement by the delegations of the Armenia, Azerbaijan, unrecognised Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation and its Representative to the OSCE Minsk Group.

The cease-fire agreement for Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was achieved thanks to the efforts of Russian diplomat and co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group Ambassador Vladimir Kazimirov.<sup>33</sup> As the May 1994 cease-fire agreement did not contain the word "permanent" or any other word that may convey the same meaning, Yerevan undertook direct negotiations with Baku and Stepanakert. The three parties to

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31 <http://www.bsec-organization.org/>, accessed February 2019

32 Can Dündar "Türkeş, Ermeni sınırına anıt dikmeyi düşünmüştü," *Milliyet*, October 2009, accessed October 2017, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/can-dundar/turkes--ermeni-sinirina-anit-dikmeyi-dusunmustu-1151297/>

33 <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/Bishkek%20Protocol.pdf>, accessed February 2019

the conflict signed a new document on July 28, which reconfirms the cease-fire agreed to in May, but adds a new provision. Accordingly, the conflicting parties are obliged to maintain the cease-fire until the signing of the major political agreement which entails complete cessation of the military hostilities.<sup>34</sup>

- 1995** Turkey signed the Customs Union Agreement with the EU.
- 1995** Turkey decided to reopen the H50 air corridor which was closed in 1993 for flight connections to Armenia. The reopening of this air corridor was requested by the Azerbaijani civilian aviation authority.<sup>35</sup>
- 1996** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey authorised the Armenian National Airlines to start operating commercial passenger flight between Yerevan and Istanbul,<sup>36</sup> and allowed the use of the Turkish air corridor for other destinations, starting with flights between Yerevan and the resort town of Antalya.
- 1997** Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC) was co-established on May 3 in Istanbul and Yerevan with a view to promote and facilitate close cooperation between the Armenian and Turkish business circles. At the time, it was the first institutional link between the public and private sectors of the two countries.<sup>37</sup>
- 1999** Turkey was recognised as a candidate for full membership for the EU.
- 1999** The EU-Armenia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed. Armenia was included in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004 and in the Eastern Partnership in 2009.

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34 <https://hetq.am/en/article/67967>, accessed February 2019

35 Burcu Gültekin Punsmann, Ali Osman Dizman, Seda Kırdar and Anna Gevorgyan, Review of Legal Issues between Turkey and Armenia, (Ankara and Yerevan: TEPAV, USAID & International Center for Human Development, 2012) p. 14; TEPAV, Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia and Turkish-armenian Business Development Council, Impediments to Direct Trade between Turkey and Armenia (Yerevan: UMBA, 2012)

36 Ibid.

37 <http://www.tabdc.org/>, accessed February 2019

**1999** After the earthquake in the Marmara Region in Turkey, TABDC played a role in arranging for the supply of earthquake aid from Armenia to Turkey in both August and October.<sup>38</sup>

Immediately after the Marmara earthquake, Armenia offered to fly in 100 professional rescuers and 10 truckloads of equipment. The aid plane full of supplies waited at the Yerevan airport and finally 11 days after the disaster, Armenia's aid reached Istanbul after Ankara gave clearance. Armenia's Department for Emergency Situations sent a cargo plane delivering \$10,000 of medicines, three diesel generators, and other first aid suppliers. Five employees of the Department and a team of experts from the National Service of Seismic Protection accompanied the airlift.<sup>39</sup>

**2001** The Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC) was established in July supported by the US State Department and under the supervision of the Center for Global Peace of the American University in Washington D.C. One of the first attempts of Track 1.5 diplomacy concerning the improvement of Turkish-Armenian relations, TARC concluded its work in April 2004 and issued its recommendations to both governments. For instance, six months after TARC was established, Ankara lifted restrictions and normalised the visa regime for Armenian citizens traveling to Turkey. New regulations allowed Armenian passport holders to pay \$15 and get their visa upon arrival at the Istanbul airport.

**2001** The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to BSEC was established in Istanbul

**2003** Armenia joined the World Trade Organisation on February 5. While Turkey approved Armenia's accession to the WTO, prior to the General

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38 Burcu Gültekin Punsman and Esra Çuhadar, Reflecting on the Two Decades of Bridging the Divide: Taking Stock of Turkish-Armenian Civil Society Activities (Ankara: TEPAV, 2012)

39 Hratch Tchilingirian, "A Devastating Earthquake Shakes the Land, People and Government of Turkey," Armenian International Magazine (AIM), October 1999, Volume 10, Number 10, pp. 24-27, <http://oxbridgepartners.com/hratch/index.php/publications/articles/91-a-devastating-earthquake-shakes-the-land-people-and-government-of-turkey>, accessed February 2019



Council that approved the accession package of Armenia, Turkey invoked Article 13 of the Marrakesh Agreement<sup>40</sup> against Armenia, which remains in force to date. Based on this article, Turkey uses its sovereign right not to allow entry of Armenian imports in Turkey, including transits, and does not allow Armenia to use its ports and highways.

- 2003** Tower Travel & Tourism from Turkey in partnership with Bagrat Tour from Armenia started charter flights between Istanbul and Yerevan twice a week. In the summer time, they also arranged occasional charter flights between Yerevan and Antalya.
- 2004** TARC issued its recommendations to both governments concerning the improvement of Turkish-Armenian relations and terminated its activities.
- 2004** The Turkish Embassy in Tbilisi became charged with conducting communication with Yerevan, a function previously carried out by the Turkish Embassy in Moscow. The Turkish and Armenian embassies in Tbilisi are communicating through the exchange of notes.<sup>41</sup>
- 2005** On April 10, 2005, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent a letter to the Armenian President Robert Kocharyan proposing the establishment of a joint commission of historians. In his reply on April 26, Kocharyan argued that the group should have a bigger mandate.<sup>42</sup>
- 2005** The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipeline was officially inaugurated in Azerbaijan on May 25 with the presence of presidents of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Georgia and Kazakhstan.
- 2005** Negotiations between Turkey and the EU started for Turkey's accession to the EU.

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40 Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, Article XIII, WT/L/501

41 Burcu Gültekin Punsmann, Ali Osman Dizman, Seda Kırdar and Anna Gevorgyan, Review of Legal Issues between Turkey and Armenia (Ankara and Yerevan: TEPAV, USAID & International Center for Human Development, 2012)

42 Thomas deWaal, Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)

- 2006** The construction of the South Caucasus Pipeline (Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline) was completed.
- 2007** Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia signed a trilateral agreement to launch the construction of the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway, partially as an alternative route to the Kars–Gyumri–Tbilisi railway, which has been out of use since 1993. The completion was initially planned for 2010, the railway started operating in October 2017.
- 2007** Hrant Dink, the editor-in-chief of Agos Newspaper, was assassinated in Istanbul on January 19. Armenia sent an official delegation to the funeral held on January 23, including the Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakosyan, as well as the General Secretary of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Foundation, Karen Mirzoyan.
- 2007** Armenia and Turkey began secret Swiss-facilitated talks.<sup>43</sup>
- 2008** Turkish President Abdullah Gul extended a message of congratulations to Serzh Sargsyan upon his election as the President of Republic of Armenia.
- 2008** Armenia and Turkey were drawn in the same qualification group for the 2010 World Cup finals. In June, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan sent an invitation to Turkish President Abdullah Gul to attend the first match of the Armenia-Turkey national football teams.
- On September 6, President Gul flew to Yerevan to attend the football match, becoming the first Turkish head of state to visit Armenia. He was accompanied by the Foreign Minister Ali Babacan who stayed in Yerevan longer for talks on the diplomatic texts being negotiated in Switzerland.<sup>44</sup>
- 2008** Russia and Georgia fought a five-day war (South Ossetia War). On August 13, the day after a ceasefire was signed, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced in Moscow a multilateral initiative called the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform.

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43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

- 2009** US President Obama delivered a speech at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, confirming the strong support of the US for the full normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia.<sup>45</sup>
- 2009** In a ceremony held in Zurich on October 10, 2009, the foreign ministers of Armenia and Turkey signed the two protocols on the establishment of diplomatic relations and the development of relations. The Protocols were signed in the presence of the Swiss President and Foreign Affairs Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Russian Federation Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, EU Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana. The Protocols envisaged “normalisation without pre-conditions” and included a timetable for parliamentary ratification process.
- 2009** Upon the invitation by President Gul, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan travelled to Bursa on October 14 to attend the second/return football match. He was accompanied by Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan.
- 2009** Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan made a statement in Ankara in October 2009 during his party congress: “Turkey cannot take a positive step towards Armenia unless Armenia withdraws from Azerbaijani land [...] if that issue is solved our people and our parliament will have a more positive attitude towards this protocol and this process,” Erdogan told a party congress in Ankara. “We will bring the protocol to parliament but parliament has to see the conditions between Azerbaijan and Armenia to decide whether this protocol can be implemented,” he said.<sup>46</sup>
- 2010** On April 22, the President of the Republic of Armenia signed a decree on the suspension of the process of ratifications of the Protocols.<sup>47</sup>

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45 <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-obama-turkish-parliament>

46 “Turkey-Armenian pact undermined by Karabakh dispute,” Euractiv, August 2011, accessed October 2017, <http://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/turkey-armenian-pact-undermined-by-karabakh-dispute/>

47 <https://www.mfa.am/en/bilateral-relations/tr>, accessed February 2019

- 2010** With the financial assistance of the USAID-Armenia, Support for Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement Project (SATR) started in October 2010 and continued until September 2012. The project was implemented by a consortium of four organisations from Armenia including Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF), Yerevan Press Club (YPC), International Center for Human Development (ICHD), and Union of Manufacturers and Businesspeople of Armenia (UMBA) – each with a set of Turkish organisations as their partners (subcontractors).<sup>48</sup>
- 2011** Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan ordered the removal of Monument to Humanity in Kars, a statue dedicated to fostering Armenian and Turkish relations.
- 2011** Van was devastated by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake on October 23, 2011. Armenia’s Emergency Situations Ministry transferred forty tons of tents, sleeping bags, blankets, and other aid to the Turkish Red Crescent Society.<sup>49</sup>
- 2011** The Ministry of National Education of Turkey issued a regulation for the children of undocumented migrants from Armenia to study in the Armenian Schools with a “guest student” status. The students are still not eligible for graduation certificates though.
- 2013** Turkish President Abdullah Gul extended a message of congratulations to Serzh Sargsyan upon his re-election as the President of Republic of Armenia.
- 2013** Bora Jet announced its plans to start direct flights between Yerevan and Van starting from April 3th after obtaining necessary permits and licenses from relevant Turkish authorities. These plans were cancelled on March 28th before starting operating, following resistance by Azerbaijan.<sup>50</sup>

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48 Lawrence Robertson and Stepan Grigoryan, “Support for Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement (SATR) Project: Mid-Term Evaluation,” (Washington D.C.: USAID, 2012) [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pdact906.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdact906.pdf)

49 David Phillips, *Diplomatic History: The Turkey-Armenia Protocols* (New York: Columbia University Institute for the Study of Human Rights, 2012)

50 Jonathon Burch, “Turkey scraps flights to Armenia after Azeri resistance,” Reuters, April 2013, accessed October 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-armenia-flights-idUSBRE9300BR20130401>

Deputy Governor of Van Mehmet Yuzer stated that BoraJet canceled the agreement after a low number of passengers during preliminary flights.

However, an Armenian tour agency, Narekavank, issued a statement on March 29 saying that it was the Turkish aviation authorities who suspended the first flight between Yerevan and Van.

According to the agency, the decision was made on March 28 by Turkey's General Department of Civil Aviation.<sup>51</sup>

**2013** On September 3, Armenia decided not to sign the Association Agreement with the EU and on the same day it announced its decision to join the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia Eurasian Economic Community.

**2013** Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu attended the meeting of BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Yerevan on December 12. On the sidelines of the BSEC Meeting, Foreign Minister Davutoglu held bilateral meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Edward Nalbandyan.<sup>52</sup>

**2014** President Serzh Sargsyan signed the accession treaty with the Eurasian Economic Union.

**2014** With the financial assistance of the European Union, the programme Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process started in January and continued until August 2015. The programme was implemented by a consortium of eight organisations, four from Armenia and four from Turkey.<sup>53</sup>

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51 "Van-Yerevan flights end before starting,"Hürriyet Daily News, March 2013, accessed October 2017, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/van-yerevan-flights-end-beforestarting.aspx?pageID=238&nID=43930&NewsCatID=345>

52 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/foreign-minister-davutoglu-attends-the-meeting-of-bsec-council-of-ministers-of-foreign-affairs.en.mfa>, accessed February 2019

53 Civilitas Foundation, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Public Journalism Club, Regional Studies Center in Armenia and Anadolu Kultur, Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey TEPAV, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, and Hrant Dink Foundation from Turkey. [www.armenia-turkey.net](http://www.armenia-turkey.net), accessed February 2019

- 2014** Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan extended a message of congratulations to Recep Tayyip Erdogan on August 10, upon his election as the President of Republic of Turkey.
- 2014** Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandyan attended the sworn-in ceremony of the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara on August 28.
- 2015** On February 16, the Zurich Protocols were called back from the National Assembly of Armenia according to the decree signed by President Sargsyan.<sup>54</sup>
- 2015** In October, AtlasGlobal started operating regular flights between Istanbul and Yerevan. In April 2016, AtlasGlobal opened an office branch in Yerevan.
- 2016** With the financial assistance of the European Union, the programme Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process – Stage II started in April 2016 to be continued until August 2017.
- 2016** On April 1, an unprecedented escalation on the line of contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan led to four consecutive days of intense fighting. By lowest estimates, 200 soldiers died, making this the worst escalation since cease-fire of 1994.
- 2016** In October, Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group convened its first meeting in Yerevan.
- 2017** In a statement to the Armenian press in March, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov gave the message that Russia is ready to give the necessary support for the resumption of the normalisation process between Turkey and Armenia.<sup>55</sup>
- 2017** Armenia initialed the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with the EU on March 21st.

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54 <https://www.mfa.am/en/bilateral-relations/tr>, accessed February 2019

55 "Russia Ready to Assist in Armenia-Turkey Negotiations - Foreign Minister," Sputnik, March, 2017, accessed October 2017, <https://sputniknews.com/world/201703161051634792-russia-armenia-turkey-negotiations/>

- 2017** In April, Pegasus Airlines announced the launch of flights between Yerevan and Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen Airport three days a week; however days later the plan was recalled.
- 2018** On March 1, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan declared the Zurich Protocols with Turkey null and void.
- 2018** In December, Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group convened its sixth meeting in Istanbul.

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