



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, December 14, 2009

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### IN THIS ISSUE

1. Serzh Sargsyan: Turkey's attempts to link Nagorno Karabakh problem with Armenian-Turkish relations are doomed to fail
2. US Secretary of State presents details of Obama-Erdogan meeting in Washington to Armenian President
3. Marie Yovanovitch: Corruption is flourishing in Armenia because it is accepted by society
4. The 2009 Armenian state budget released 545.3 million AMD for the road re-construction programs in the Armenian province of Shirak
5. Paul Krekorian wins race for Los Angeles City Council seat
6. The "most Armenian" sculpture set up in Lovers' Park
7. "Winter Festival. Armenia 2009" to be held in Yerevan from December 17 to January 5
8. Armenian and Latvian first ladies visit Cafesjian Art Center
9. Armenian film specialists discuss the future of the Armenian documentary film
10. Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II receives Latvian president
11. Tigran Sargsyan: Modern society cannot develop without respect for human rights
12. No significant progress has been made so far regarding human rights protection in Armenia, RA Ombudsman says
13. A Russian educational-methodical center opened in Yerevan
14. Armenian Foreign Minister to take part in meeting of foreign ministers of member states of Francophone International Organization
15. Commission set up to organize events dedicated to the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia

### POLITICS

1. Serzh Sargsyan: Turkey's attempts to link Nagorno Karabakh problem with Armenian-Turkish relations are doomed to fail [Noyan Tapan, 12/12/09]

The signing of the protocols on the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations is a big step forward both in the regional and global sense, and Latvia considers it as "a very positive signal". Latvian President Valdis Zatlers stated this at the December 10 press conference given in connection with his 3-day state visit to Armenia. According to him, the improvement of relations between countries always produces concrete results by promoting prosperity of nations.

President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan in his turn said that Armenia is grateful to all the states, international organizations, political figures and statesmen, thanks to whose intermediary efforts "we have managed to proceed along this path". At the same time he underlined that the efficiency of the process or its failure should be attributed only to Armenia and Turkey. In the words of S. Sargsyan, Armenia values highly U.S. President Barack Obama's position on Armenian-Turkish relations, on the Armenian issue, which he has repeatedly stated in public and during personal contacts. Speaking at Turkish parliament, the U.S. president stated the necessity to recognize the Genocide and the need for Turkey to take an impartial look at its history.

"Of course, it is extremely important for Turkey to understand that peace and stability in the Caucasus will be established only in case of normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations," S. Sargsyan said. At the same time he noted that Turkey's attempts to link the Nagorno Karabakh problem with Armenian-Turkish relations are doomed to fail. "I must repeat that these attempts are doomed to fail from the start. Now I state again that the Republic of Armenia is ready to properly fulfill its international obligations, that is to ratify the Armenia-Turkey protocols, and we expect the same from Turkey. As you remember, I also declared that if Turkey delays the protocols' ratification, Armenia will immediately use the opportunities proceeding from international law".

S. Sargsyan announced that he had instructed the respective state bodies to prepare additions to the legislation regarding the signing, ratification and termination of international agreements. He said that he had sent the protocols to the Constitutional Court which will take a decision on his application on January 12. "In other words, we are continuing the process. Simply, everybody should understand that the more the ratification process is delayed, the more obstacles will emerge," S. Sargsyan said.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, December 14, 2009

---

## **2. US Secretary of State presents details of Obama-Erdogan meeting in Washington to Armenian President [Armenpress, 12/14/09]**

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan had December 10 in the evening a phone conversation with the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the initiative of the latter. Presidential press office told Armenpress that H. Clinton presented to the Armenian President the details of the meeting of the US President Barack Obama with the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Washington.

During the conversation the Secretary of State once again pointed out that the United States will continue its successive efforts directed toward speeded-up normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations without pre-conditions.

President Sargsyan asked Hillary Clinton to convey his gratitude to President Obama for the firm support in the issue of normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations.

Armenian President reiterated the readiness of the Armenian side connected with the process - to respect the international commitments and move forward toward the normalization of relations with Turkey, expressing hope that the same readiness and responsibility will be displayed by the Turkish party too.

During the phone conversation the interlocutors also discussed issues on regulation of Nagorno Karabakh conflict. US Secretary of State reiterated the assistance of her country in peaceful and long-lasting settlement of the conflict, at the same time pointing out that the US Administration views the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations and Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement as two separate processes, each of which will promote the consolidation of peace and security in the region.

## **BUSINESS**

## **3. Marie Yovanovitch: Corruption is flourishing in Armenia because it is accepted by society [Noyan Tapan, 12/12/09]**

Corruption is flourishing in Armenia because it is accepted by society, the U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch said during a talk with reporters on December 9 - International Anti-Corruption Day. Attaching special importance to raising society's awareness in the fight against corruption, she said that the society should demand that the government be transparent in its activities and accountable to the public. In her words, it is important for citizens to say no to corruption and bribery and be more demanding in the defense of their rights.

M. Yovanovitch pointed out the significance of the USAID Mobilizing Action Against Corruption (MAAC) Activity, under which large-scale work is being done to raise public awareness. MAAC is being implemented in all the marzes and in Yerevan. Advocacy and Assistance Centers have been opened throughout the country, and in the past year 2,000 people have applied to these centers with the request to protect their rights.

The U.S. ambassador was among the participants of the forum organized in connection with International Anti-Corruption Day by the USAID, the OSCE Yerevan Office, and the Office of the RA Prosecutor General. M. Yovanovitch delivered a speech, in which she expressed the U.S. government's willingness to assist Armenia with its fight against corruption. She said that they in the United States saw the consequences of the disease called corruption in various cities, nevertheless, it is possible to combat that disease.

The Acting Resident Coordinator of the UN Maria Dotsenko considered corruption as a serious obstacle to Armenia's development, noting that the UN welcomes the readiness of the RA government to combat corruption. According to her, the adoption of the 2009-2012 anti-corruption strategy program of Armenia is an inspiring step. Corruption can be overcome by joint efforts, and the UN will support Armenia in this issue.

## **4. The 2009 Armenian state budget released 545.3 million AMD for the road re-construction programs in the Armenian province of Shirak [Armenpress, 12/14/09]**

The 2009 Armenian state budget released 545.3 million AMD for the road re-construction programs in the Armenian province of Shirak. Within the framework of the sum the 1.3 km-long road sector of the Yerevan-Gyumri-Georgian border road has been reconstructed as well as Haritch-Nahapetavan road sector taking to Haritchavank. During the running year the reconstruction of Gyumri-Kaps-Amasia road continued which kicked off in 2007.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, December 14, 2009

---

Head of the Shirak governor office's road construction and transport department Khachik Khndzertsyan told Armenpress that annually the financial investments for the restoration of the roads of the provinces increase both on the account of the state budget and foreign investments.

In 2009 with the financing of World Bank 51.7 km-long 6 roads have been reconstructed for which 4.3 billion AMD have been provided.

## DIASPORA

### **5. Paul Krekorian wins race for Los Angeles City Council seat [Noyan Tapan, 12/12/09]**

Member of the California State Assembly Paul Krekorian on December 8 won the bitter race for the Los Angeles City Council seat previously held by Wendy Greuel. Paul Krekorian defeated his rival Christine Essel by a 14% margin. Asbarez reports that Essel, who enjoys support of business circles and some of the city's most powerful unions, spent over 1.5 million dollars on her election campaign, whereas Paul Krekorian spent only 571,000 dollars.

Only 15% of citizens with the right to suffrage took part in the election. Krekorian received 10,810 votes (56.56% of the total number of votes), while Essel gathered 8,304 votes (43.44%).

Paul Krekorian assured those who came to his North Hollywood campaign office to celebrate the victory that the task now is "to build a city government that will work for the people and that is marked by honesty and accountability".

## ARTS

### **6. The "most Armenian" sculpture set up in Lovers' Park [Noyan Tapan, 12/12/09] by Jenny Kazumian**

The family of People's Painter, sculptor Hripsime Simonian has donated the ceramic sculpture "Armenuhi" by H. Simonian to Lovers' Park in Yerevan. The 1.9 meter-high sculpture symbolizing the image of the Armenian woman was previously displayed only once and henceforth it will give aesthetic pleasure to residents and guests of Yerevan. As Director of Lovers' Park Sarhat Petrosian said at the December 9 ceremony when "Armenuhi" was unveiled, this sculpture is the most Armenian out of all the sculptures on display in Yerevan. "I am glad that it has been set up in our park. After the opening of Lovers' Park, we have received dozens of offers to put sculptures. We are quite conservative regarding the issue of sculptures, so it was a well-considered step," S. Petrosian noted. According to him, several other sculptures will be put in Lovers' Park soon to complete the complex project on the park improvement.

The ceremony was attended by Yerevan Mayor Gagik Beglarian, artist Shahen Khachatrian, art critics, relatives and pupils of H. Simonian. "Each person should help the city develop as much he (she) can. The sculpture created by my mother will help people perceive life in a positive sense," H. Simonian's son - Honored Architect, painter Artsvin Grigorian said.

The sculptor's granddaughter Arevik Grigorian informed those present that "Armenuhi" had been kept at Hripsime Simonian's studio for many years. In her words, when Lovers' Park opened, they decided to put this work in the park where it would be in the right architectural atmosphere. "For a long time, we were looking for a proper place to put the sculpture and finally chose this islet. Newly wedded couples always come here and I think that from now on the sculpture will appear in the photo albums of all new couples, which will give a long life and a new spirit to this work," she said.

### **7. "Winter Festival. Armenia 2009" to be held in Yerevan from December 17 to January 5 [Noyan Tapan, 12/12/09]**

"Winter Festival. Armenia 2009" will be held in Yerevan from December 17 to January 5 on the initiative of Kanachastan NGO and with the assistance of the RA Ministry of Economy. Director of Deem Communications company Raffi Niziblian said at the December 9 press conference that the purpose of the festival is to have a good time during the winter, especially on pre-holiday and holiday days, and to make Yerevan more colorful.

"We are organizing this festival for a second time, and this time the program will include more events and participants. 2 thousand people participated in the parade last year, and this time we expect over 3 thousand participants," R. Niziblian said.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, December 14, 2009

---

According to Head of the Tourism and Territorial Economic Development Department of the RA Ministry of Economy Mekhak Apresian, the festival is expanding year by year and has a chance to become a festival of international importance as it will attract tourists from other countries.

The opening ceremony of "Winter Festival. Armenia 2009" will take place at Arno Babajanian Concert Hall. An exhibition of Christmas trees will be held in Lovers' Park on December 18, and a winter parade with the participation of numerous dance and theatrical groups from Yerevan and regions is scheduled for December 19.

The festival program also envisages a display and tasting of holiday dishes, as well as winter games and an open-air concert. The festival will finish on January 5 in the yard of Surb Katoghike Church with a performance symbolizing Christ's birth.

## **8. Armenian and Latvian first ladies visit Cafesjian Art Center [Armenpress, 12/14/09]**

Cafesjian Art Center hosted today Armenian first lady Mrs. Rita Sargsyan and Latvian first lady Lilita Zatlere accompanied with the spouse of Armenian Foreign Minister Natalia Nalbandyan.

Visiting various exhibition-halls Armenian and Latvian first ladies got acquainted with numerous valuable samples from Jerald Cafesjian's personal collection. "Japan and Persian glass-made works, ceramic works and sculptures were presented in one of the exhibition-halls.

Wall-paintings reflecting the main events of the Armenian history were presented to the guests as well – the creation of Armenian letters, the war of Avarayr, the Armenian renaissance through the proclamation of the first republic in 1918.

The guests were presented also the "Green Eye of the Pyramid" work symbolizing the Armenian culture made by the authors who have turned the glass into a monumental sculpture.

World-famous painter Arshil Gorky's paintings and drawings are of great significance in Cafesjian personal collection, which deserved the enormous attention of the first ladies. The exhibition-hall of "Swarovski" was of great interest for the guests as well.

In the shop-exhibition hall of Cafesjian Art Center the high-ranking women watched items which are unique in the world – beginning from literature to jewelry.

The art center in its turn had prepared presents for the guests; the glass-made miniature of "Cascade" complex was devoted.

## **9. Armenian film specialists discuss the future of the Armenian documentary film [Armenpress, 12/14/09]**

A round table-discussion on the films shot by "Hayk" cinema studio during 2004-2008 years was conducted today in the Union of Armenian Cinematographers. Young and honored film specialists and directors discussed the 30 documentary films shown December 1-10.

Chairman of Union of Armenian Cinematographers Ruben Gevorgyants said that in the recent period a break of ties between a movie and public has been noticed, which is necessary to eliminate in near future by presenting high-quality and more valuable films. According to him, it is necessary to give a way to the young generation, as it is they that must provide the firm basis of tomorrow's film. Speaking of documentary films, he noted that they are screened for the history and should become the witness of the time.

Film specialist Emanuel Manukyan said that the demand of the documentary film is the reflection of the objective reality. According to him, before screening a film it is necessary to make a clear idea to whom it is addressed.

Young film specialist Rafik Movsisyan said that Armenian documentary films need serious improvements. First of all it is necessary to change the approaches in regard to screening a documentary film.

The participants of the discussion expressed hope that Armenian documentary film will have serious achievements in near future.

## **RELIGION**

### **10. Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II receives Latvian president [Armenpress, 12/14/09]**

President of Latvia Valdis Zatlers was hosted today in the Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin by the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II accompanied by the Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan.



Catholicosate press service told Armenpress that welcoming the visit of the Latvian president to the Spiritual Center of Armenia, the Catholicos presented the role and importance of Etchmiadzin and the Armenian Apostolic Church in the life of Armenians.

Referring to the friendship of the two peoples, His Holiness expressed gratitude to Latvian authorities for the care displayed toward Armenian community.

Expressing gratitude for the reception, the Latvian president noted that Armenians being law-abiding citizens of Latvia bring their contribution to the public, political and social life of the country.

## SOCIAL

### **11. Tigran Sargsyan: Modern society cannot develop without respect for human rights [Noyan Tapan, 12/12/09]**

Modern society cannot develop without respect for human rights, while man with knowledge and education who represents the driving force of modern society cannot imagine life without freedoms. Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan declared this at the December 10 round table entitled "The Protection of Human Rights in Armenia. Achievements and Challenges" organized on the occasion of Human Rights Day.

"Our duty is to form such an environment, in which any citizen of the Republic of Armenia will be able to exercise his (her) constitutional rights, since all the provisions of Article 30 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are reflected in the Constitution of the RA," the prime minister said, adding: "The system of values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly must become the essence of each person, a necessity like air and water, without which we cannot imagine a prosperous life".

According to the RA Government Information and PR Department, T. Sargsyan underlined the importance of the Council of Europe Forum for The Future of Democracy to be held in Armenia in 2010. "Through education and enlightenment we will spread the ideology of respect for human rights in Armenia and make it a necessity for everybody," he said.

### **12. No significant progress has been made so far regarding human rights protection in Armenia, RA Ombudsman says [Noyan Tapan, 12/12/09]**

The RA Ombudsman Armen Harutyunian believes that there are shortcomings in the field of human rights protection in Armenia, and so far no significant progress has been made in this respect. He expressed this opinion at the December 10 discussion "The Protection of Human Rights in Armenia. Achievements and Challenges" held on the occasion of International Human Rights Day.

In his words, in order to promote human rights in Armenia, it is necessary that 70% of the laws be applied in practice. The ombudsman stressed that citizens must also struggle for their rights. According to him, in Armenia human rights are violated mostly in the judicial system, by the police and the local self-governing bodies.

He said that the RA Ombudsman Office annually receives about 6,000 complaints.

### **13. A Russian educational-methodical center opened in Yerevan [Armenpress, 12/14/09]**

A Russian educational-methodical center opened today in Yerevan, which will extend literature and curriculums to educational establishments for teaching the Russian language in Armenia.

Head of the Russian Partnership mission in Armenia Victor Krivopuskov noted that it will bring together the professionals of Russian language to discuss issues on the practice of teaching of the Russian language, on methodical manuals and a number of other similar issues.

The teachers who visited the center were presented the educational classrooms ensured with computers and the newest equipments.

Nearly 2 000 unit feature and educational-methodical literature was presented in the library. Among the feature literature there are works of both classical and contemporary Russian writers.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, December 14, 2009

---

## **14. Armenian Foreign Minister to take part in meeting of foreign ministers of member states of Francophone International Organization [Armenpress, 12/14/09]**

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan is leaving for Paris to take part in the meeting of foreign ministers of the member-states of Francophone International Organization scheduled for December 14-16.

Armenian Foreign Ministry's Press and Information Department told Armenpress that within the framework of the conference Armenian Foreign Minister will have a number of bilateral meetings.

December 14 Minister Nalbandyan will conduct in Paris consultation of Armenian ambassadors to Europe.

## **15. Commission set up to organize events dedicated to the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia [Armenpress, 12/14/09]**

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan signed a decree on setting up a commission which will prepare and organize events dedicated to the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. Presidential Press Office told Armenpress that the chairman of the commission is Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan.

---

Produced by AGBU Armenian Representation

*Please be advised that the AGBU Armenia News Bulletin is for general reference only and should not be reprinted in any form without the explicit written permission of AGBU. All rights reserved.*

*Established in 1906, AGBU ([www.agbu.org](http://www.agbu.org)) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City with an annual budget of \$36 million, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians on six continents.*