

THE EURASIAN UNION, EUROPEAN UNION, AND ARMENIAN COMPLEMENTARISM

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ABSTRACT

Today, when democracy is in crisis, the developing countries are finding the stronger global and regional integration processes much more important than before. This is largely true of the post-Soviet countries which, having entered a new de-

velopment stage, are coping with the globalization challenges through structural transformations. The Republic of Armenia is one of them.

Throughout the 25 years of its independence, Armenia has been consistently moving toward a free democratic society irrespective of numerous problems in all spheres, including its foreign policy sphere. Its national security problems are resolved by its military-strategic relations with Russia, which has formulated the idea of the EurAsEC as a common economic expanse to counterbalance the EU. Moscow is putting pressure on all the CIS countries (Armenia among them) in an effort to draw them into this new structure which, in the near fu-

ture, is expected to develop into the Eurasian Union.

European integration is a foreign policy priority in Armenia. The European political establishment, in turn, is demonstrating a far from adequate approach, to say the least, toward Armenia's possible EurAsEC membership. The Europeans make no secret of their intention to put pressure on Armenia, not only to prevent its membership in the Eurasian Union, but also to weaken Russia's influence in the Southern Caucasus and fortify their own positions in the south of the post-Soviet space and the Middle East.

The far from simple choice between the EurAsEC and the EU is proving to be a durability test in complementarism.

KEYWORDS: *Armenia, complementary foreign policy, the EurAsEC, the Eurasian Union, the European Union.*

Introduction

When applied in the foreign policy sphere complementarism can be interpreted as acceptance of external patronage or resources if everything that is done is absolutely clear. For many years, complementarism as one of the Republic of Armenia's main foreign policy principles has been preserving a leeway (in the pinching geopolitical conditions) very much needed to adequately respond to the threats and challenges. For some time this principle has been closely associated with the balance of forces between the regional and extra-regional actors who emerged in the 1990s. For example, its military union with Russia and the multi-dimensional economic processes did not stir up confrontation even though Armenia was developing its foreign policy contacts with the U.S., the EU, and other actors.

The recent dynamics, in particular America's attempts to change the geopolitical balance in the Middle East, the military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and the mounting international pressure on Syria and Iran testify to the fact that the Southern Caucasus has become an arena of rivalry between the West and Russia. While Georgia and Azerbaijan (the former openly, the latter in a somewhat subdued form) have for several reasons opted for European (Euroatlantic) integration, Armenia, until recently, has managed to avoid (thanks to its complementary policy) a direct contraposition (in words and deeds) between Europe and the Russian Federation. It is becoming increasingly harder to balance between the Eurasian and European foreign policy vectors: the time of decision-making is drawing closer.

For a while this brought obvious dividends.

On the one hand, Armenia is tied to Russia, which pours a lot of money into the Armenian economy (for the sake of its complete integration in EurAsEC); the two countries are tied together by their friendly, cultural, historical, social, economic, energy, and military-political relations. Arme-

nia's total dependence on Russia does not guarantee a continued status quo, which, to a certain extent, looks like static ataxia.

On the other hand, there is a chance to join the developed world called the European Union with huge opportunities for innovative improvement some time later. The latter looks much more attractive for a country with rich cultural and civilizational potential that already has enriched mankind's intellectual capacity. This choice, however, might endanger Armenia's vitally important interests.

This means that the rapidly changing situation around Armenia makes its complementary foreign policy course shaky and no longer advantageous.

Eurasian Discourse in Armenia

The Soviet Union retreated from the stage leaving behind newly independent states and a lot of grave problems in all spheres of life. Complete disintegration, however, was avoided thanks to the establishment of the CIS on the ruins of the Soviet Union. From the very beginning several newly independent states (the interests of which had nothing in common with the CIS) preferred to keep away from it; while the membership of others was purely formal.

Closer integration, the need for which was obvious, stirred up old ideas of a Eurasian Union supported, in the past, by famous philosophers and even politicians.

Boris Shapovalov has pointed out: "It was prominent ideologists of Eurasianism, N. Trubetsky, P. Savitsky and G. Vernadsky, who were the first to point out that a Eurasian Union was needed. They believed that the Soviet Union could be gradually transformed into a Eurasian Union by replacing the communist ideology with Eurasian. When the Soviet Union fell apart late in the 20th century, the public and politicians of some of the former Soviet republics started talking about closer integration. Early in the 21st century, the idea of post-Soviet Eurasian integration and new Eurasianism gained wide popularity. It is supported and developed by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of Russia Vladimir Putin, philosophers and political scientists A. Dugin, A. Panarin, and S. Gavrov, Kirghiz writer Ch. Aytmatov, and many others. On the eve of the Soviet Union's disintegration, Academician Andrey Sakharov offered the first highly detailed project of the Union of Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia. Another project, a Confederation (Union) of Sovereign States, had no chance. The Soviet Union was replaced with a loosely integrated international (inter-state) structure called the Commonwealth of Independent States. Under President Nazarbaev's project, which appeared in March 1994, the Eurasian Union was to unite five former Soviet republics: Russia, Kazakhstan, Belorussia, Kirghizia, and Tajikistan. Later, Armenia and Uzbekistan could have also become members.

"At the turn of the 21st century, Russia and Belorussia first set up a Commonwealth, then a Union State, however a wider Union was obviously needed. The integration structures of the CIS were built at a fast pace, but the Eurasian Union project remained on paper. It was in December 2010 that the EurAsEC summit gave it a new lease of life."¹

The idea was supported and further developed in an article Prime Minister Vladimir Putin published in *Izvestia* in the fall of 2011 as part of his presidential election campaign.

¹ B. Shapovalov, "Evraziyskiy soiuz—perspektivny i vygodny proekt integratsii evraziyskikh narodov," Moldinfo.ru Information Agency, available at [<http://moldinfo.ru/arhiv/4565-2012-08-09-18-27-28>], 15 May, 2013.

In anticipation of the fears of certain countries to fall into the trap of a revived Soviet Union, he pointed out in particular: “By building the Customs Union and Common Economic Space, we are laying the foundation for a prospective Eurasian economic union. At the same time, the Customs Union and CES will expand by involving Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. We plan to go beyond that, and set ourselves an ambitious goal of reaching a higher level of integration—a Eurasian Union.

“How do we understand the prospects for this project? What shape will it take?

“First, none of this entails any kind of revival of the Soviet Union. It would be naïve to try to revive or emulate something that has been consigned to history. But these times call for close integration based on new values and a new political and economic foundation. We suggest a powerful supranational association capable of becoming one of the poles in the modern world and serving as an efficient bridge between Europe and the dynamic Asia Pacific Region.”²

And further: “The Eurasian Union is an open project. We welcome other partners to it, particularly CIS member states. At the same time, we are not going to hurry up or nudge anyone. A state must only join on its sovereign decision based on its long-term national interests... Some of our neighbors explain their lack of interest in joining forward-looking integration projects in the post-Soviet space by saying that these projects contradict their pro-European stance. I believe that this is a false antithesis. We do not intend to cut ourselves off, nor do we plan to stand in opposition to anyone. The Eurasian Union will be based on universal integration principles as an essential part of Greater Europe united by shared values of freedom, democracy, and market laws.”³

The discussions that followed in different formats (sometimes in the form of testing the ground) showed that the idea of a Eurasian Union looked, if not an absolute priority, then at least very important for the political establishment of Russia. At the same time, Armenia, Russia’s main ally in the Southern Caucasus, attracted a lot of attention. In the course of expert discussion and thanks to commentaries supplied by political figures it became clear that there is no agreement on the issue inside the country. There is a widely shared opinion that the lack of agreement is caused by the fairly vague concept of a Eurasian Union; this idea looked much clearer at the level of the Customs Union; it was understood that in the future certain questions and problems would call for more cautious treatment.

For example, political scientist Sergey Minasian has offered the following comment: “Economic cooperation between the two countries is fairly developed; Russia’s presence in the Armenian economy is fairly prominent. This is the price Moscow is paying for Armenian membership in the CSTO and for its base in Armenia. In other words, bilateral cooperation between the two countries and their cooperation within the CSTO is fairly effective and productive. The question is: Why is Russia prepared to pay twice for the same?”⁴

Aram Karapetian, leader of the New Times party, believes that Armenia will, on the whole, profit from its membership in the Eurasian Union, and specifies: “At first, they should offer us a detailed, coordinated, and realized policy of fast industrial growth in Armenia and demonstrate that they guarantee national security of Armenia (and also of Nagorno-Karabakh). Then we will be glad to welcome them.”⁵

According to economist Tatul Manaserian, head of the Alternativa Analytical Center, the Eurasian Union as a form of economic integration would have looked “tempting” but for several

² V. Putin, “A New Integration Project for Eurasia: The Future in the Making,” available at [<http://www.rusemb.org.uk/press/246>], 9 July, 2013.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ “Armenia v Evraziyskom soiuze: vse za i protiv v kommentariyakh ekspertov,” Novostink.ru Information Agency, available at [<http://novostink.ru/analytics/40516-armeniya-v-evraziyskom-soyuze-vse-za-i-protiv-v-kommentariyah-ekspertov.html>], 14 May, 2013.

⁵ Ibidem.

rather serious “buts”: “First, not all CIS countries are drawn into the project, which makes integration harder. Second, Armenia is probably the only country in the world that is a member of a free economic area with no common borders with it. Goods are taken across Georgia, which grossly violates the rules of the World Trade Organization: it should allow free transit to Armenia as a blockaded country. Third, there are fairly stubborn economic and political contradictions between the countries that hypothetically claim membership in the hypothetical Eurasian Union. Fourth, not all services and goods are covered by the free trade principle. In the case of Armenia, tobacco is the only exception, while in the case of other countries the lists are much longer. If under these conditions Armenia makes many goods and services tax-free the gap in the budget will become even bigger.”⁶

Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian agrees with the above: “We have clearly outlined our position; we are interested in the integration processes within the EurAsEC, but we want to know how integration will proceed and which forms it will assume. There is the experience of remote territories that are entitled to subsidies, aid, and preferences if and when they join a territorially remote economic space. This should be discussed by all members of the integration community for the simple reason that integration should be economically stimulated.”⁷

This is true: nowhere in the world are there countries that belong to unions with which they have no common borders. Membership in this structure is hardly profitable because the producers who sell their products or buy products abroad will have to take them through customs in third countries. This will make the procedure much more expensive: in the absence of free movement of goods, the need to coordinate customs tariffs with the other members of the Union makes this sort of cooperation meaningless.

This fully justifies Armenia’s official position: the republic should remain an observer in the EurAsEC until real possibilities appear for a different type of cooperation. Today, Armenia is active within this structure and is fully involved in all the economic cooperation programs with the possibility of becoming a full member of the EurAsEC Executive Committee.

Armenia’s integration into the Eurasian Union is highly promising once the rules of the game are specified. Trade should be free and also fair. So far, an invitation for cooperation is at least premature; there is no strong conviction that all the conditions indispensable for mutual confidence and full-scale integration have been put in place.

Political scientist Stepan Grigorian has offered his own recipe of multisided cooperation: “Armenia should actively cooperate with the European Union, where the rules of the game are absolutely clear: it will be for us to decide whether we find this or that offer profitable or not.

“Russia plays according to different rules and we should actively cooperate with it in the security sphere; in all other spheres we should cooperate with the EU. Brussels may force Erevan to arrive at a final decision on the Customs Union. Our answer is clear: in the absence of a common border it is useless. It should be said in all justice that Russia is not pushing us into the Union against our will.”⁸

On the whole, those who asked themselves whether Armenia needs this were guided not only by commercial interests and pragmatism; they also wanted to understand the nature of the Eurasian Union and whether Armenia would profit from its membership in it.

⁶ “Armenia v Evraziyskom soiuze: vse za i protiv v kommentariiakh ekspertov.”

⁷ T. Sarkisian, “Dlia chlenstva v EurAsEC Armenii nuzhen osoby status,” Radio Liberty, available at [<http://rus.azatutyun.am/content/article/24540687.html>], 10 May, 2013.

⁸ “Armyanskiy ekspert: v osnove “Evraziyskogo soiuz” nichego net, Rossia pytaetsia otvlech vnimanie i stran SNG, i Evropy,” Novostink.ru Information Agency, available at [<http://novostink.ru/analytics/41516-armyanskiy-ekspert-v-osnove-evraziyskogo-soyuz-nichego-net-rossiya-pytaetsya-otvlech-vnimanie-i-stran-sng-i-evropy.html>], 17 May, 2013.

The underlying political principles of the Eurasian Union need clarification; the latest developments in the world and the mounting rivalry between regional and international heavyweights have added urgency to the issue. It remains to be seen whether the West will accept Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Union (its idea is treated with a lot of apprehension in the Western capitals), whether Armenia will profit from it, and whether it will be able to preserve its complementary policy.

Experienced politician Kiro Manoian, head of the Ay-data Office of the Dashnaktsutiun Party, said at a press conference on 27 December, 2012 that the talks between Armenia and the European Union had been accelerated; the EU, said the politician, was trying to keep those potential members away from the Eurasian Union that Russia would like to see in it in the first place.

He added that European and Eurasian integration could be combined if Armenia joined the Eurasian Union (its membership in the Customs Union presupposed a choice between the two). So far, Armenia has been preserving a balance, but in the future, said Manoian, both sides will be hiking up the pressure and concluded: the Armenian leaders will try to move closer to the EU and the countries of the Eurasian space. Armenia has found itself in a quandary, and even if the absence of common borders with the countries of the Customs Union gives it a certain leeway, in 2013 the country will probably have to make a final choice.⁹

Armenia- the European Union

Cooperation with the EU is one of the key foreign policy trends; the political dialog between Brussels and Erevan has reached a high level, which is amply confirmed by the frequent visits of top figures of both countries. Since June 2004, Armenia has been involved in the European Neighborhood Policy program. Under the five-year Action Plan launched on 1 January, 2007 Armenia has to cooperate and demonstrate progress in eight priority fields—law, human rights, the economy, investment climate, administrative reforms and legal approximation, the energy sector, regional cooperation, and the Karabakh problem.¹⁰ The fact that this information appeared in official sources points to positive trends in the relations between the EU and Armenia.

Indeed, the European Union may serve as a link between Armenia and the developed world economic centers; Armenia will get a chance to promote its economic interests and to become integrated in the world economic, scientific, and technical centers. This is all the more probable because Armenians are tied to Europe by centuries-old cultural and religious values. This explains why EU integration is one of the most prominent issues on the Armenian agenda. Brussels is fully aware of Armenia's aims and interests.

The European Union wants Armenia as its member for several absolutely clear reasons.

- First, the EU political establishment is still very much inspired by the idea of setting up a South Caucasian Confederation of sorts (under EU patronage) of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia to undermine Russia's interests in the region.

⁹ See: "Prichina uskoreniia peregovorov mezhdru Armeniyei i ES—Evraziyskiy soiuz: mnenie," Novostink.ru Information Agency, available at [<http://novostink.ru/analytics/41571-prichina-uskoreniya-peregovorov-mezhdru-armeniyei-i-es-evraziyskiy-soyuz-mnenie.html>], 17 May, 2013

¹⁰ See: "Sotrudnichestvo Respubliki Armenia s Evropeyskim soiuzom," Official site of the Foreign Ministry of the RA, available at [<http://www.mfa.am/ru/country-by-country/eu/>], 11 May, 2013.

- Second, neither the EU nor the U.S. is prepared to accept Armenia as a pro-Russian country; they want to detach it from Russia and to create a buffer zone bordering on Iran and Turkey in the region.
- Third, geographically Armenia can serve as a geo-economic hub for Europe's trade with Central Asia and the Far East bypassing Russia.
- Fourth, Armenia is rich in ores and minerals: gold, diamonds, copper, molybdenum ores, and nickel. Some of the mines have been bought by European companies. For example, British Lydian International has been working at the Amulsar gold mines (10 km away from the Jermuk Spa) through Geoteam CJSC, its daughter company. According to preliminary assessments, the mines contain about 2.5 million ounces of gold (over 75 tons); reality might prove even more stunning.¹¹

On the whole, Brussels' interests are clear. Not infrequently officials talk about full EU membership for Armenia. Colin Roberts, Director of Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, U.K., stated: "Great Britain believes that the six post-Soviet countries involved in the Eastern Partnership Program, including Armenia, should become, in the final analysis, full members of the European Union."¹²

The agreement on readmission signed on 19 April, 2013 in Brussels is another obvious sign that the EU wants to integrate Armenian society into the "big European family." It is intended for rapid identification of people, on the basis of mutual agreements, who should be promptly and safely returned to Armenia, from where they came to EU territory. A treaty on association between Armenia and the EU that will be ratified in 2014 envisages, among other things, a deeply rooted and comprehensive free trade area.¹³

- Fifth, Armenia is a Christian country with rich historical and cultural heritage; its mentality and civilizational preferences are close to those of Europe.
- Six, the EU might be interested in the intellectual resources of Armenia (especially in technological designing and nanotechnologies) for the sake of scientific and technical progress and cultural and educational development of the European Union.

At the same time, Armenia has been receiving clear signals about its cooperation with the Russian Federation. At any time an agreement with the EU on simplified visa regime and a planned agreement of free trade area can be revised—everything depends on integration cooperation between Armenia and the EurAsEC.

Recently, German Ambassador to Armenia Rayner Morel said that Armenian membership in the Eurasian Union would discontinue the talks on a simplified visa regime with the EU.¹⁴ Moreover, in that case Armenia will never receive the loan of €1.5 billion (which the EU has postponed).

According to *Financial Times* which referred to the Dublin speech of the then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, "there is a move to re-Sovietize the region. It's not going to be called that. It's going

¹¹ See: A. Mgdesian, "Zolotaia likhoradka tumanit turisticheskije perspektivy armyianskogo Jermuka," Ecolur.org Information Agency, available at [<http://www.ecolur.org/ru/news/mining/gold-rush-darkening-tourism-perspectives-for-jermuk-in-armenia/3270/>], 13 May, 2013.

¹² C. Roberts, "Velikobritania schitaet vozmozhnym vstuplenie Armenii v ES," available at [<http://rus.azatutyun.am/content/article/24969926.html>], 13 May, 2013.

¹³ See: E. Gabrielian, "Under the Association Agreement Armenia Pledges to Introduce Laws and Legal Practices of the EU. Interview with Deputy Minister Zograb Mnatsakanian," *The Aravot* newspaper, available at [<http://ru.aravot.am/2013/05/01/155457/>], 14 May, 2013 (in Russian).

¹⁴ See: R. Morel, "Posol Gemanii: chlenstvo Armenii v Evraziyskom soiuze pomeshaet ee evrointegratsii," *Times.am* Information Agency, available at [<http://times.am/?l=ru&p=13237>], 10 May, 2013.

to be called a customs union, it will be called Eurasian Union and all of that,” she said, referring to various iterations of a Moscow-backed plan to deepen economic ties with its neighbors. “But let’s make no mistake about it. We know what the goal is and we are trying to figure out effective ways to slow down or prevent it.”¹⁵

Washington went even further: it warned Armenia that in 2013 it would cut down its humanitarian aid by 17% (from \$44.2 million in 2012 to \$36.6 million in 2013).¹⁶

This means that Armenia will have to fight for its right to choose its foreign policy course independently, the complementary nature of which is gradually losing its efficiency.

Complementarism as a Concessional Dilemma

Traditionally, complementarism has been and so far remains the key political alternative of Armenia, which during its long history suffered defeats and sustained losses, on the one hand, while it managed to remain a subject of international law, on the other. The complementary system, a subject of numerous studies, was present, albeit to different degrees, at all stages of Armenian history. This is responsible for the etymological and epistemological specifics of “Armenian complementarism.”

Let us have a look at the political interpretation of the system of complementarism and its positive contribution to the development of the Armenian statehood; we should also decide whether it will be acceptable in future.

Former Foreign Minister of Armenia Vartan Oskanian, one of the ideologists of Armenian complementarism, believes that it is the best possible foreign policy option. He writes: “At the present stage Armenia has abandoned complementarism in its foreign policy for the simple reason that it presupposes openness, which is no longer practiced. Complementarism cannot be efficient if nothing is said about it and if its meaning remains concealed. Complementarism demands that all poles should receive adequate information; that the political and ideological foreign policy principles of countries should be taken into account and no claims on them should be made. If these points are ignored and if complementary policy is pursued on the sly, it will not produce the desired results... There is no complementary policy; the term has disappeared; the situation is vague, while our foreign policy is deprived of its ideological base. We do not know where we are going and what we want. The country is drifting... Since we cannot come out with a foreign policy ideology it is for the external players to supply their interpretations and act according to their interests. Not infrequently, our interests differ. We should identify our aims, without this successful foreign policy is impossible.”¹⁷

At the same time complementarity does not presuppose that confidential information is transferred to any third agent resolved to influence the country’s domestic policies by political, ideological, military-strategic, social, economic, and energy methods. Alexander Iskandarian, Director of the Caucasus Institute, has pointed out that “we are not talking about a share of foreign involvement in

¹⁵ [<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a5b15b14-3fcf-11e2-9f71-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2Xaj3nhEU>].

¹⁶ See: “The United States Cuts Down Its Humanitarian Aid by 17%,” Information News agency Lragir.am, available at [<http://www.lragir.am/index.php/arm/0/politics/view/79146>], 12 May, 2013 (in Armenian).

¹⁷ V. Oskanian, “Armenia otkazalas ot komplementarizma vo vneshney politike—eks-glava MID,” Georgia Times Information Agency, available at [<http://www.georgiatimes.info/news/89238.html>], 15 May, 2013.

the Armenian economy ... but about a combination of military-strategic and economic cooperation, in particular, with Russia and the West.”¹⁸

This approach, which presupposes that two ideological rivals are invited to work in the same fields, is not complementary policy but collaborative or corporate culture that spread to all spheres of mutual relations.¹⁹

As distinct from political complementarism as a relatively old system under which the country that pursues this policy is deprived of natural possibilities of cooperation (especially if there is not enough mutual confidence between the partners and an understanding of the basic political rules of *modus vivendi*), the corporate culture is functionally geared toward cooperation; it has all the necessary imperatives indispensable for the smooth functioning of the modern and developing state.

This presupposes that no pressure levers are applied on a partner; that relations are corporate, free, and mutually complementary; and that there is a real possibility of interests being realized by a consensus on the basis of mutual confidence and mutual advantage. Armenia has reached a point at which it has to choose between the North and the West. In fact, the corporate culture of political development (cooperation for the sake of common good) is much more acceptable than the old traditional Armenian complementarism of dependence on partners.

What will Armenia do? From the very beginning it hinted that it is resolutely opposed to contrapositions and either/or formulas; in other words, it favors “combination.” The question is: Will Armenia preserve its balanced foreign policy course with the help of complementarism (which, according to Oskanian, has disappeared)?

In Lieu of a Conclusion

On 30 May, 2013, speaking at the parliament, Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia Shavarsh Kocharian created the impression that today, very much as before, Armenian diplomacy is avoiding making final decisions about Armenia’s associated membership in the EU and its possible membership in the Customs Union.

He said, in particular: “Armenia cannot become a EU member and join the CIS free trade area at one and the same time; it cannot move toward the Customs Union either. On the other hand, if we joined the Customs Union we would not remain sovereign in certain aspects. In this case we would not be able to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union. If you avoid both options, something that Armenia is doing right now, its belonging to the free trade area of the CIS and that of the EU becomes non-contradictory.”²⁰

The deputy foreign minister further pointed out that since Armenia is staying away from the Customs Union, it could sign the Association Agreement and the agreements on a free trade area with the CIS.²¹

The next day, Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Hovik Abrahamian, speaking at the Standing Committee and the PACE Bureau, announced that his country remained devoted to its policy of Eu-

¹⁸ A. Iskandarian, “Komplementarizm vneshney politiki Armenii stanovitsia realnostiu—politolog,” Evrazia Information Analytical Center, available at [<http://eurasia.org.ru/8247-komplementarizm-vneshnej-politiki-armenii-stanovitsya-realnostyu-politolog.html>], 16 May, 2013.

¹⁹ See: E. Rosen, *The Culture of Collaboration*, 1st edition, Red Ape Publishing, 2009; S. Bowles, H. Gintis, *A Cooperative Species: Human Reciprocity and Its Evolution*, Princeton University Press, 2011.

²⁰ Sh. Kocharian, “Chlenstvo v Tamozhennom soiuze ne pozvolit Armenii podpisat Assotsiativnoe soglasenie s ES—MID,” Regnum.ru Information Agency, available at [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/armenia/1665477.html>], 3 June, 2013.

²¹ See: *Ibidem*.

ropean integration: “We have enough political will to move forward the reforms and build a dignified, sustainable, and democratic state. This is the choice of the nation and each of our citizens, therefore, we reconfirm our readiness to cooperate, actively and efficiently, with the European structures.”²²

CE is no EU—this much is clear, but this fact and the fact that President of Armenia Serzh Sargsian did not attend the EurAsEC summit in Astana (Armenia is a EurAsEC observer country) speaks volumes.

It seems that the problems have nothing to do with the change in the foreign policy vector—the country merely wants to preserve its complementary foreign policy.

I think that Armenia will try to postpone the time of decision-making. It remains to be seen whether it will succeed. Recently, the prime ministers of Russia and Armenia met in Minsk at a meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the CIS Member States.

According to the press releases, Dmitry Medvedev and Tigran Sarkisian discussed bilateral trade and economic relations, as well as integration within CIS and the Customs Union. The Russian prime minister offered the following comment: “On the whole, Armenia wants to join. We, in turn, think that this is important. All we need to do is find an adequate format for this cooperation.”²³

²² H. Abrahamian, “Armenia verna svoey politike integratsii v evropeyskie struktury—speaker parlamenta,” Regnum.ru Information Agency, available at [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/armenia/1665763.html>], 3 June, 2013.

²³ “Medvedev i Sarkisian obsudili uchastie Armenii v Tamozhennom soiuze i stroitelstvo novogo bloka AES,” Regnum.ru Information Agency, available at [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/armenia/1666148.html>], 3 June, 2013.