

# ARMENIA AND THE EU'S EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY PROGRAM

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## 1. Introduction

Integration into the European structures is a priority task of Armenia's foreign policy, which is shown by the republic's cooperation with the EU, Council of Europe, NATO, and other organizations, as well as by its bilateral relations with continental states. What is more, Armenia is nurturing the hope of becoming a full-fledged member of the European Union in the future.

On 14 June, 2004, the European Union Council made a decision to include the South Caucasian states in its European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) program and approved the ENP Strategy Paper submitted in May of the same year by the European Commission.<sup>1</sup> The European Neighborhood Policy program is based on the Wider Europe-Neighborhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbors project,<sup>2</sup> prepared by the European Commission in March 2003. The purpose of this document is to develop a universal, proportional approach which also includes financial mechanisms and should meet the development requirements of international and regional cooperation on the periphery of the enlarging European Union. We will note that this document was adopted right before the most extensive enlargement of the European Union to date—in May 2004, ten new states swelled this organization's ranks. In October 2004, the European Commission began preparing Country Reports for the Southern Caucasus, which will form the basis of specific Action Plans between the EU and the region's states within the ENP.

The Report on Armenia was presented in March 2005, after which official Erevan and the EU began drawing up an Action Plan for Armenia under the ENP program. What is more, both sides intend to develop their relations within the already existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which came into force as early as 1999.

The undertakings of the European Union within the ENP program presuppose a new approach which is not part of the contacts this organization has already developed with its neighbor states along the entire eastern and southern perimeter of its borders. The purpose of this policy is not only to share the benefits of the EU's enlargement with all interested neighbor states by strengthening their stability, security, and prosperity, but also to prevent the appearance of new dividing lines between the enlarged European Union and the states bordering on it. Implementation of the ENP will be supported by significant financial and technical assistance from the EU, for which a special mechanism is to be formed—the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). It will begin functioning in 2007 and will provide broad opportunities for cooperation between the European Union and the countries which fall under the ENP program, including by means of new forms of influence which make it possible for the partner states to come as close as possible to European regulations and standards.

But an analysis of the possible level of the new relations between the EU and countries to be included in this program does not give rise to tremendous optimism. These relations not only do not envisage mandatory membership of these states in the European Union, they do not even allow them to count on the same help and assistance rendered to the EU member states. Incidentally, the ENP states are not required to adhere as stringently to specific political and economic criteria as countries applying for EU membership, although adherence to these criteria is just as essential. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that the ENP program has no analogues (including in terms of its financial potential) and is an entirely new system of partnership between the European Union and its new neighbors.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Development Dynamics of Cooperation between the EU and Armenia

Armenia is placing top priority on its contacts with the European Union. This is dictated by the traditional values of the Armenian people who, due to their Indo-European origin, feel a deep genetic bond with Europe and have a world outlook oriented toward it.

<sup>1</sup> See: COM (2004) 374 final, Brussels, 12 May, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> See: COM (2003) 104 final, Brussels, 11 March, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> See: K.E. Smith, "The Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy," *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 4, 2005, pp. 763-767.

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement mentioned above forms the legal foundation of cooperation between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia. It was signed as early as April 1996, but it did not come into effect until July 1999. In particular, it envisages that the European Union will render Armenia every possible assistance in its transition to a market economy and sustainable democracy. The document encompasses essentially all spheres of cooperation, with the exception of military, and the desire of the sides to establish closer relations is manifested primarily in the measures aimed at maximum implementation of this agreement.

In the past, Armenia's policy regarding European integration has not been declarative. This is shown by the specific reforms the republic is carrying out within the framework of a political dialog, in the socioeconomic, trade, legislative, and scientific-educational spheres, as well as in high technology (including information).

### **2.1. Development of a Political Dialog**

A corresponding EU-Armenia Cooperation Council was created and functions within the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. In this Council, the European Union is represented by members of its own Council and the European Commission, and our country is represented by members of its government. The procedures and mechanisms of a regular political dialog between Armenia and the EU are also being executed by means of consultations at the level of their experts. What is more, an EU-Armenia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (PCC) was formed which coordinates the relations between Armenia's National Assembly and the European Parliament and parliaments of the EU member states. In addition, an Interdepartmental Commission on European Integration and Cooperation between European Regional Organizations and the Republic of Armenia was created by a decree of the President of Armenia. This structure, which functions under the auspices of the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, is the executive body for implementing this agreement and other relevant agreements on Armenia's part. TACIS renders technical support to the commission's work, and the Armenian-European Policy and Legal Advice Center (AEPLAC), also financed by TACIS, provides consultation assistance.

After the last enlargement of the European Union (May 2004), the EU and Armenia signed the Protocol on the Extension of the PCA to the New Members States, and on 4 December of the same year, this protocol, which had already been ratified by the Armenian National Assembly, was signed by the republic's president, Robert Kocharian. What is more, in 2004, the European Commission made a decision to raise the level of its representative office in Armenia to the status of a full delegation (a corresponding agreement was signed in September 2004).

In addition, serious measures are being carried out to achieve the proper level of bilateral military-political cooperation between our country and the EU states, which is largely being established on a planned basis. For example, exchange visits by heads of state have helped to create friendly ties with Great Britain, Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Greece (in particular), and other countries.

### **2.2. Joint Efforts to Harmonize Legislation**

In compliance with Art 43 of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, one of the most important conditions promoting deeper relations between Armenia and the European Union is maximum

harmonization of our republic's legislation with European regulations and standards. Main areas of cooperation have also been defined in this sphere: customs, tax, banking, labor, and antimonopoly legislation; the legal regulation of enterprise activity; protection of intellectual property, the environment, and the consumers; public health, nuclear energy (technical instructions, standards, and regulations), transportation, and so on. In particular, based on Art 14 of the Agreement, both sides assumed obligations with respect to anti-dumping and compensation measures: official Erevan pledged not to carry out such measures if the WTO had not registered (or approved) them and to adopt the necessary legislative acts for this. In compliance with Art 42, Armenia joined several international conventions on the protection of intellectual, industrial, and commercial property.

A similar situation is also developing in other areas relating to harmonization of the republic's legislation with European standards and regulations. But, despite the achievements, much work still remains to be done in this sphere.

### ***2.3. Cooperation in Trade and Economic Development***

On 5 February, 2003, Armenia joined the World Trade Organization, as a result of which the WTO's provisions on trade and goods exchange became part of its international obligations both within the framework of this structure and in the format of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed with the EU.

In compliance with Art 11 of the latter, official Erevan must observe international conventions and agreements regulating international and transit transportation, as well as continue its efforts to improve customs and tax procedures which primarily relate to customs assessment of goods imported into the republic. The European Chamber of Commerce, which opened its representative office in Erevan in February 2003, is playing an important role in intensifying and improving trade relations between Armenia and the EU, including by providing our country's business circles with information about the possibility of establishing corresponding contacts with European partners.

Several measures have been adopted for regulating and licensing certain goods exported to the European Union countries, in particular products of the textile industry. As for trade in nuclear materials, the sides assumed obligations to carry it out in compliance with a treaty to be entered between Armenia and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). But there is no urgent need for this document so far, since Armenia is not engaged in any significant trade in these materials.

Measures aimed at investment in Armenia are of immense importance, including in the development of the republic's service sphere. Official Erevan signed a bilateral economic trade agreement with many European countries, in particular with Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Cyprus, Greece, Great Britain, France, and Italy. The Law on Foreign Investments adopted by the republic is creating a favorable environment for further economic interaction with these countries.

Regular contacts at the level of numerous commissions and sub-commissions created in keeping with the provisions of this agreement are continuing. Their work focuses on giving Armenian goods the most favored treatment status. Measures to establish legal conditions and legislation with the aid of the TACIS-supported AEPLAC and VET (Vocational Education and Training) projects are playing an important role in developing our country's private sector.

#### **2.4. Regional Economic Relations**

Armenia is participating in regional programs sponsored by the European Union. In October 2003, the tenth intergovernmental ministerial meeting of the TRACECA countries was held in Erevan. (In 2004, our republic chaired this program.) The European Union granted Armenia more than 10 million Euros in 2004 in the TACIS program format envisaging, in particular, technical support of the CIS countries. It received the same help within the Food Program. What is more, our country is receiving grants from the EU within the framework of regional integration financial support programs, in particular the INOGATE project. Armenia has also been participating in conferences at the foreign minister level of the Black Sea and Caspian Region countries and the European Commission (November 2004). They were devoted to integration and development prospects of the transportation and energy markets in the countries of these two regions. Armenia welcomed this initiative by the European Commission and expressed its willingness to actively participate in developing mutually advantageous cooperation in the mentioned spheres.

#### **2.5. Results and Efficiency Assessment of EU-Armenia Cooperation**

Cooperation between Armenia and the EU has also been developing in high technology, education, and the social sphere (particularly in ensuring food safety). An important role in this cooperation was played by the significant financial and technical assistance rendered to Armenia all this time. It came primarily through ECHO (European Commission of Humanitarian Aid Office), TACIS, and FSP (the WHO Food Safety Program), between 1991 and 2004 the European Union gave the republic aid amounting to more than 380 million Euros and also granted loans of more than 86 million Euros.

### **3. EU-Armenia Cooperation Prospects in the Context of Development of the European Neighborhood Policy Program**

#### **3.1. ENP—A New Way to Strengthen Partnership**

This program is important for Armenia not only from the viewpoint of its economic development interests, the strengthening of democracy and democratic institutions in the republic, a political dialog, and regional security problems. It is also important in the conceptual respect, since it presumes using the integration processes to achieve stable regional development and create an atmosphere of mutual respect in the Southern Caucasus. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the orbit for removing the main obstacles hindering Armenia's security and further development is located precisely in the European dimension. Talks are being held in the OSCE on settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, while normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations, lifting the blockade of the

borders, the problem of Ankara recognizing the Armenian genocide, and so on are mandatory conditions being imposed on Turkey, which wants to join the EU. So the important political significance of the ENP program lies in the fact that it could provide a new foundation for Armenia's cooperation with the EU countries in security, foreign, and defense policy, as well as in strengthening stability in the Southern Caucasus. The European Union is also interested in this. The European Security Strategy notes in particular that "it is not in our interest that enlargement should create new dividing lines in Europe. We need to extend the benefits of economic and political cooperation to our neighbors in the East while tackling political problems there. We should now take a stronger and more active interest in the problems of the Southern Caucasus, which will in due course also be a neighboring region."<sup>4</sup>

It goes without saying that Armenia is cooperating with NATO, the leading organization for ensuring European security, at a very high level. But as the military component of the EU develops, the time is also drawing near for our country to possibly become involved in several undertakings within the Common Foreign and Security Policy/European Security and Defense Policy program (CFSP/ESDP).

Since Armenia and the EU entered the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (which envisages strengthening relations in essentially all spheres apart from the military), significant changes have occurred in the foreign and defense policy of the European Union, and European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) has been formed and achieved specific development. Armenia's security policy has also undergone a certain amount of transformation, in which an increasingly greater accent is being placed on strengthening military-political cooperation with European countries. Taking into account the new geopolitical realities in the Southern Caucasus and the EU's interest in preventing the appearance of new dividing lines in Europe, as well as against the background of Armenia's ongoing effective partnership with NATO and Erevan's military-political cooperation with Washington, it would be expedient to define the parameters of cooperation between Armenia and the EU within the framework of the CFSP/ESDP. In particular, significant prospects in this sphere are related to the conception of *preventive engagement* of the European Union in ensuring stability and security along its new borders.<sup>5</sup>

What is more, one of the special features of Armenia's policy regarding Euro-Atlantic and European military-political integration should be kept in mind. In contrast to Georgia, for example, where this process is characterized by greater declarativity, as shown in every move made by official Tbilisi aimed at cooperation with NATO or the U.S., in Armenia, decision-making and decision-implementation in this sphere are somewhat different. As members of the highest Armenian foreign policy leadership justifiably note, a special feature of our state's Euro-Atlantic and European integration consists in the fact that official Erevan makes a political decision for every, even relatively small, step toward developing partnership in this sphere. This is due to the geopolitical reality which has formed around Armenia, and is also dictated by the conceptual basis of its foreign and defense policy—complementariness. What is more, this special feature of the political decision-making process in Armenia regarding questions of military-political cooperation with NATO and the EU (just like with the U.S.) gives these relations greater specificity and intensity.

Along with the far-reaching political and regional goals, the ENP program has a vital economic significance for Armenia. It is no accident that the European Union has become one of Armenia's largest trade partners (it accounts for approximately 40% of its commodity export struc-

<sup>4</sup> See: *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy*, Part II, *Strategic Objectives: Building Security in Our Neighbourhood*, Brussels, 12 December, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> See: *EU Security and Defense Policy: The First Five Years (1999-2004)*, ed. by N. Gnesotto, ISS-EU, Paris, 2004, p. 51.

ture). At the same time, the EU is making serious efforts to gain a stronger foothold in the Southern Caucasus with the help of several programs called upon to promote the development of regional cooperation and the implementation of reforms in keeping with European standards. In the cultural, scientific-technical, and educational spheres, Armenia is primarily attracted by the fact that the ENP program provides it with the opportunity to participate in similar programs in the EU itself. In particular, our republic is showing an interest in joint environmental protection, technical staff retraining, training organization, information, and telecommunication projects, as well as those aimed at resolving youth problems.

### ***3.2. Erevan's Principled Approach to Implementing ENP Programs***

Armenian experts and members of the country's leadership believe that significant adjustments should be made to the measures being undertaken within the framework of the Action Plan to ensure that the new document does not become a replay of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and is not limited only to the items set forth in it. All the same, this agreement will still form the legal basis for EU-Armenia cooperation, which naturally will allow for full use to be made of the opportunities envisaged in it. In other words, when carrying out the Action Plan, one of official Erevan's main tasks is to avoid strictly formal or cosmetic changes. Whatever the case, reference to specific measures will become one of the basic elements of the Action Plan.

The main parameters for drawing up the Action Plans for countries to which the ENP program applies have already been defined in corresponding documents, including in the Country Reports for the Southern Caucasus. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that one of the main aspects of Armenia's viewpoint with respect to carrying out the ENP has been repeatedly voiced by its leadership: for our state, cooperation with the EU is not a goal in itself, just as it is not limited to our desire to become (in the future) a member of this structure. No less than the goal itself, Armenia is just as interested in the process of European integration, since this process is capable of bringing our country closer to the standards toward which the republic is striving (regardless of its membership in European structures and organizations). Without making political declarations about its possible membership in the EU at the current stage, and thus not placing its European partners before a choice, official Erevan is asking for the emphasis to be placed on intensifying cooperation in such key spheres as bringing the republic's legislation into harmony with European norms, developing democracy and democratic institutions, encouraging economic cooperation, and so on. In some sense, this may be one of the main differences of Armenia's policy and approach in its relations with the EU structures. As members of the republic's official circles and experts note, this policy is arousing a positive response in its European partners. This is what the republic is interested in: using European methodology and standards is important to it not so much because the EU or another organization demands it, but because it is vitally important for achieving the level in the mentioned spheres to which our country is striving.

An important indicator of the seriousness of Armenia's intentions regarding intensification of current relations with the EU and the development of new ones is the decision to approve the National Program for Implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, Decree No. 743-A, 29.04.2004, which has no analogue in other South Caucasian countries. In so doing, it should be added that this decision was made by the republic's government even before official settlement by the European Commission and EU Council of the question of including our state in the ENP program.

In so doing, it can be maintained that in the context under review, Armenia's goal is European integration (with ambitious and far-reaching plans regardless of implementation of the ENP). But in so doing, the republic will exert maximum efforts to make use of the opportunities opening up before it within the framework of the ENP program.

## 4. Spheres of Specific Cooperation Within the Framework of the Action Plan

### 4.1. Analysis of the Country Report and Contours of the Action Plan

On 2 March, 2005, the European Commission prepared ENP Country Reports for the Southern Caucasus, which were to become the basis for drawing up individual Action Plans for these countries within the framework of the ENP program. The European Commission gave a generally positive assessment both of the overall level of cooperation between the EU and Armenia, as well as the development level of our state in all the reviewed areas. The picture becomes even clearer when comparing Armenia's Report with the Country Reports of other South Caucasian states. For example, according to EU experts, in terms of certain parameters, Armenia has made greater achievements than Georgia and particularly Azerbaijan.

As was expected, in the Report on Armenia, the main emphasis was placed on the insufficiently efficacious formation of democratic institutions and on the need to continue work to harmonize the republic's legislation with European standards. An important aspect is the need to continue cooperation in power engineering (in the context of the EU's demands to close down the Metsamor Atomic Power Station). It was noted in particular that the results leave something to be desired in this sphere.<sup>6</sup> Another important aspect of this Report is reference to the National Program for Implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which was given a high appraisal by experts from the European Commission. An integral component of the Report on Armenia, like the Reports on Georgia and Azerbaijan is reference to regional conflicts and the need for their rapid settlement.

Along with this, in the recommendations to the EU Council (when presenting the Country Reports for Southern Caucasus), the European Commission particularly emphasized the achievements made by Armenia in some key spheres: "Armenia has achieved a good macro-economic performance in recent years with impressive economic growth rates. There are indications that this is starting to have some impact on the high levels of poverty in Armenia. Its accession to the WTO in 2003 indicates that it has made progress towards key market-oriented reforms. There has also been progress in aligning Armenian legislation with that of the EU. The adoption of an anti-corruption strategy and the creation of an anti-corruption council are important steps."<sup>7</sup> In other words, it was noted that Armenia was paying keen attention to the development of those spheres within which it has been cooperating with the EU.

<sup>6</sup> See: *European Neighbourhood Policy Country Report, Armenia*, COM (2005) xxxxxx.

<sup>7</sup> *European Neighbourhood Policy Recommendations for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and for Egypt and Lebanon*, Communication from the Commission to the Council. COM (2005) xxx, xx February 2005.



The list of specific areas of cooperation within the framework of the Action Plan given below could help to develop relations between the EU and Armenia, as well as reveal a new set of problems requiring solutions. The information was gathered on the basis of consultations with interested government structures, NGOs, and independent analytical centers and experts.

#### **4.2. Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**

The entire set of obligations aimed at protecting basic human rights and fundamental freedoms was drawn up in strict compliance with the Copenhagen political criteria, that is, it envisages stability of the institutions guaranteeing democracy, execution of international legal regulations and documents adopted in this sphere, and so on. In so doing, special attention was focused on the following areas:

- confirmation of adherence and guarantees of implementing the main conventions of the U.N. and Council of Europe, as well as the additional protocols related to them;
- freedom of speech and mass media;
- respect and protection of the rights of national minorities;
- unconditional ban against torture, and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, the creation of acceptable conditions in places of confinement;
- further development of the structures of a civil society.

#### **4.3. Development of Democratic Institutions, Legal Regulations, and Judicial Reform**

In compliance with the Copenhagen criteria, the main international agreements and conventions adopted in this sphere must be ratified and observed, fundamental democratic institutions developed, and the judicial system reformed in compliance with European standards. In this respect, the following measures must be carried out:

- developing and reforming the voting system and its institutional structure;
- carrying out judicial reform and developing the judicial system;
- raising the qualifications of judges and other employees in this sphere, improving the material and information support of courts;
- establishing efficient cooperation between judicial bodies of the EU and Armenia.

#### **4.4. Political Dialog, Reforms in Public Management and Local Self-Government, Fighting Corruption**

Cooperation in these areas should primarily be related to the processes occurring within the framework of the general political and constitutional reforms being implemented in Armenia. Here the following aspects can be singled out:

- holding another referendum to make amendments to the country's Constitution;
- developing a local self-government system;
- reforming public management;
- anti-corruption measures within the framework of the provisions of the international organization called Council of Europe Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO). What is more, efforts must be continued to implement the republic's Anti-Corruption Strategy, including with respect to synchronizing its main provisions with the corresponding European base.

#### ***4.5. Synchronization and Harmonization of Armenian Legislation in Trade, Market Mechanisms, Standardization, etc.***

- Developing and implementing European standards and mechanisms in the tax sphere, legislative regulation of value-added and excise tax in compliance with WTO regulations, as well as the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed by the EU and Armenia.
- Reviewing the possibility of creating free economic zones in harmony with WTO regulations and EU legislation.
- Drawing up and approving measures to protect consumer rights.
- Creating conditions for improving the convertibility of currency, developing the financial market, and so on.
- Improving anti-monopoly legislation, making structural changes in anti-monopoly bodies.
- Protecting author's rights, intellectual and scientific-technical property, developing and establishing cooperation among statistical and among regulating services.

#### ***4.6. Socioeconomic Development and Trade***

- Improving the investment climate, including transparency, predictability, and simplification of regulation, guaranteeing the protection of foreign investments and envisaging consultation on the liberalization of other capital movement within full implementation of Section V of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.
- Closer harmonization with European standards and practice in employment and social policy, coordinating the development of the social security system.
- Achieving maximum support from the EU in implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.
- Intensifying cooperation in the energy sphere, including in the creation of alternative sources of electric energy (or help to build a new atomic power station) after depletion of resources and closing down of the Metsamorsk Atomic Power Station.

- Achieving a qualitatively new level of integration between Armenia and the European Union in the socioeconomic and trade spheres by providing our republic with access to the market of the European Union countries, which is envisaged by the conceptual documents of the ENP program.

#### **4.7. Prevention and Settlement of Regional Conflicts**

It can be presumed that this sphere of cooperation will be of special significance, since without settlement of the Karabakh conflict, no serious results can be expected when implementing the objectives declared by the ENP program—achieving regional stability and economic development of the South Caucasian states.

- Keeping in mind the specifics of the Karabakh conflict, some synchronization of measures to settle it should be enforced in the ENP Action Plans for Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- Measures should be drawn up aimed at post-conflict rehabilitation of the affected territories, including with respect to their de-mining, rebuilding border population settlements, rendering social assistance to the conflict victims, refugees, and so on.

#### **4.8. Cooperation in Foreign and Defense Policy**

As the practice of several countries which have already submitted their ENP Action Plans (Israel, Ukraine, and Moldova) shows, these documents enforce several parameters of prospective cooperation within the CSDP/ESDP. Based on this, it would be wise to enforce similar measures in Armenia's Action Plan too. But in so doing, we should not forget that the European Union has still not fully defined its cooperation priorities in the security sphere with states involved in the ENP program. So for starters, it seems most realistic to cooperate both in problems of prime importance in international security as a whole (nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, fighting terrorism), as well as in the military-civilian activity of the European CSDP group (political planning and joint studies, military-civilian relations, development of legislation in the military sphere, tightening up parliamentary control over armed forces).

- Crisis management, political planning, joint assessment of threats and risks, cooperation between analytical and other organizations in strategic studies and problems of regional security.
- Nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and development of a system of export control in Armenia. Despite the fact that Armenia is party to essentially all the international documents in this sphere and is actively cooperating on problems of export control and nonproliferation, the republic's corresponding departments are in need of technical refurbishment. Relations should be developed under the EU WMD Strategy and other joint undertakings.
- Cooperation in the struggle against international terrorism, including by implementing the UNSC Resolutions 1373/01 and 1269/99 and the U.N. Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism of 1992.

- Adopting joint measures against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), man-portable SAM, and so on, including within the framework of the U.N. Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UNPoA);
- Military-civilian relations, cooperation in improving civilian and parliamentary control over the military sphere, development of corresponding legislation.

#### **4.9. Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation**

As the basic documents of the ENP program show, cooperation between the border territories of neighboring countries under the auspices of the EU should play an important role in implementing this policy (in compliance with the Convention on Cross-Border Trade, as well as other relevant documents adopted within the European Union and Council of Europe). There are already successful precedents of this cooperation between states which are not members of the EU, for example, between Rumania and Moldova, for which money is allotted from a special fund. At the same time, the thesis often voiced by EU official representatives not to allow communication projects to be implemented in the region which could entail the isolation of one of the South Caucasian countries should be enforced in conceptual documents. One such project is the Kars—Akhalkalaki railroad branch, since there is already a Kars—Giumri railroad which links Armenia to Turkey.

- Taking into account the prospects for Turkey joining the EU, cross-border cooperation between Armenia and Turkey could stimulate not only their commercial ties. From the viewpoint of European integration, this cooperation is important for Brussels in a slightly different respect too—the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border—which could help the development of Turkey's eastern regions and improve the social status of the population living there. In a certain sense, this aspect is also important for stimulating the rates of development and reform of the European Union itself. Otherwise Brussels will need to allot large amounts of money from its own structural funds to raise the standard of living of the population in Turkey's eastern regions and bring it into harmony with average European standards (in the event Turkey joins the EU).
- Another successful example might be similar cooperation between the northeast border regions of the Republic of Armenia (Lori and Shirak) and the southern territories of Georgia (Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti).
- Further development within the framework of the TRACECA and INOGATE regional communication transportation projects.

#### **4.10. Cooperation in Migration, Employment, Human Contacts, Science and Technology, Culture and Education, and Environmental Protection**

These spheres have still not been given as much attention as the ones mentioned above, due to which fewer financial resources have been allotted to their implementation. Nevertheless, these spheres encompass a wide range of important issues, without which EU-Armenia cooperation would be incomplete. They include:

- full implementation of Art 24 of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which envisages the creation of equal conditions for migrating workers and the guarantee that discrimination based on national, race, and other differences is abolished;
- interception of illegal migration and traffic;
- creation of as many conditions as possible for contacts among people, which presumes a certain simplification of visa conditions, right down to liberalization of entry into the Schengen zone (these measures can even be carried out in the medium term);
- participation in joint projects in science, culture, education, in the development of new technologies, and so on;
- implementation of joint projects in the postal and telecommunication sphere, in the development of the information society, and in environmental protection.

## 5. Conclusion

The European Neighborhood Policy document is a long-term program. Armenia has a long path to hoe in order to establish full-fledged cooperation with the European Union, whereby it should not expect immediate and major financial support from the EU. In the short term, developing ties in the political sphere is designated, whereas the financing of specific projects will not begin until 2007.

On the whole, the South Caucasian countries do not have any particular way to defend their interests in Brussels, as was the case with Finland, for example, which at one time lobbied the EU “North Dimension,” or Spain, which stated its case within the framework of the so-called Barcelona Process. A certain exception is probably Georgia, which with its striving (supported by the states of East/Central Europe and the Baltic) for military-political integration with NATO can count on similar assistance in other areas of cooperation with the EU as well. On the other hand, although the Southern Caucasus has already geographically come right up to the borders of the European Union and so is already of importance to it, the threats ensuing from this region are not so serious that they arouse particular (and immediate) concern from the viewpoint of security of the European community. This is probably what explains the fact that in 2003 the Southern Caucasus was not included in the Wider Europe project and it did not become part of the ENP program until 2004.<sup>8</sup> This is compelling the countries of the region to take a more serious approach to carrying out such unconditional prerequisites of cooperation with the EU as the development of democracy and democratic institutions, fighting corruption, protecting fundamental human rights, and so on.

Armenia will assume obligations which not only correlate with the Copenhagen criteria, but which also harmonize as much as possible with the conditions demanded of prospective member states in the EU. What is more, as already emphasized, official Erevan is setting itself very realistic goals, the achievement of which directly depends on the success of the ENP program. For example, to obtain (in future) the status of associated member in the EU, which, along with political dividends, could become a powerful boost to economic development in our country, and in particular will be of special significance for its free as possible access to the European market.

The process of institutional integration of the South Caucasian states into the European community requires masses of time and effort. On the one hand, the region’s countries must strive to meet the

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<sup>8</sup> See: D. Lynch, “The EU: Toward a Strategy,” *The South Caucasus: A Challenge for the EU, Chaillot Papers*, No. 65, ISS-EU, Paris, December 2003, pp. 171-179.

European criteria and requirements, which will make it possible for these countries to resolve the problems in their relations with the European Union (when they join it). On the other hand, the EU must free itself from its currently justified worries and concerns regarding undesirable complications during this process when/if it is ultimately crowned by success. In this respect, it would be wise for the states of the region to acquaint themselves with the experience of successful interrelations between the ten countries which joined the European Union in 2004 and this organization.

Armenia views European integration not only as institutional integration into the European economy and politics, but also as a way to return to those spiritual values and to that world outlook which linked the country with Europe in the past for a long historical period of time.

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