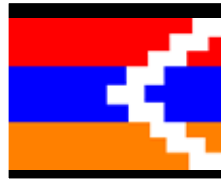




EXPORT POTENTIAL OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IS USED INCOMPLETELY IN ARMENIA PAGE 2



MIXED REACTIONS TO NAGORNO-KARABAKH POLL PAGE 4

ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

31 May - 6 June, 2010

THEMA



Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan said that his visit to Brussels is important for him, as it is the first one after the enactment of Lisbon Treaty, which is of keen significance for the European Union and world. After his meeting with European Union President Herman Van Rompuy, Mr. Sargsyan said that Armenia-EU relations are at the stage of dynamic development. "The EU is of great importance for Armenia not only as a key actor at the international arena, but also as a side, which provides diverse assistance to reforms in Armenia. During the meeting, we discussed a range of issues: conclusion of an association agreement, as well as signing of an agreement to deepen cooperation in free trade," the Armenian President said. As a PanARMENIAN.Net correspondent reported from Brussels, the Armenian President told Mr. Van Rompuy that he is pleased with the EU's support

to the Armenian-Turkish normalization. "Armenia would be glad, if Turkey manages to comply with the EU standards, as in such case we will deal with another, more predictable and stable country. We agreed that there should not be demarcation lines and closed borders in Europe. We also referred to the Karabakh conflict, noting that it, like other conflicts, can be solved only peacefully, without application of force or threat of its use. Some provisions of the European Parliament's Resolution on the South Caucasus are strange for us. A member of the parliament, who has never been to Karabakh and has not consulted with experts, calls to take some step, without taking into consideration the negotiations details and current situation. I don't think this is a right way. The Karabakh war was imposed on us and the current situation is a result of failed attempt to annihilate the Karabakh people," Mr. Sargsyan said.

www.panarmenian.net

"Quote of the week"

"Upcoming negotiations for the future Association Agreement will create additional leverage for internal reform and make available EU financial and technical support"

HERMAN VAN ROMPUY
PRESIDENT OF THE
EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Upcoming Events

May 31: RA Territorial Administration Minister Armen Gevorgyan leaves for Qatar

June 1: International Children protection day

June 2: The members of the Brotherhood of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin will convene in the Mother See

June 26 - July 6: International Open Chess Tournament in Jermuk

USEFUL LINKS

- www.president.am
- www.gov.am
- www.parliament.am
- www.mfa.am
- www.panarmenian.net
- www.matenadaran.am

EXPORT POTENTIAL OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IS USED INCOMPLETELY IN ARMENIA

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan said that the current annual export potential in the field of organic agricultural production totals over \$250mln in Armenia. Currently, the signed agreements on purchase of organic products exceed the country's opportunities by two times, Sargsyan told journalists in Enokavan village of Tavush region, Armenia. "We have 100,000 young fruit plants to provide them to farming enterprises, which are ready to plant them at a territory of over 3ha," the Prime Minister said. During his visit to the region, Sargsyan also visited Tamara Fruit CJSC to familiarize himself with the company's activity. "Tamara Fruit guarantees that it will purchase the entire production of farming enterprises. It means that the field of organic production starts developing actively: there are not problems with funds and young plants. There are only



organizational issues related to signing of agreements between companies and farming enterprises," the Prime Minister said. Sargsyan also promised that the cultivation of organic gardens will have a continuous nature, as this field is among priorities for the development of agriculture in the country. He added that similar gardens will be cultivated also in other regions of Armenia.

www.panarmenian.net

UNDERGROUND PARKING OPENS IN YEREVAN CENTER

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and Yerevan Mayor Gagik Beglaryan attended the opening ceremony of three-level underground parking in Liberty Square. "Construction of parking lots should continue, as the center of the city is overloaded with traffic in the evenings. Similar parking lots will be soon built in Aznavour and Sakha-

rov Squares," Mayor Gagik Beglaryan said. As to the parking price, he said it hasn't been determined yet but will presumably make from AMD100 to 500. The mayor also informed that construction of a cycle park will be launched nearby Admiral Isakov Square in the near future.

www.panarmenian.net

BORODIN QUARTET AWARDED GOLD MEDAL OF RA MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Armenian Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosyan said that on May 26 the Borodin Quartet will again perform in Armenia after a six-year break. The concert is organized in the framework of Prospects of the 21st Century festival, Minister Poghosyan told a press conference. "It is very important that the Quartet observes its traditions. Besides, the quartet celebrates its 65th anniversary this year. I would like to award the musicians with the highest award of the Armenian Ministry of

Culture - Gold Medal - with respect to the anniversary, as well as congratulating the birthday of our compatriot, violin player Ruben Aharonyan. This medal symbolizes the Armenian people's attitude towards the Borodin Quartet," she said. "The medal obliges us not to disappoint the Ministry with our performance," Ruben Aharonyan said, adding that the Quartet will perform its most famous compositions during the concert.

www.panarmenian.net

ARMENIA MOVED TO 100TH PLACE IN FIFA RANKINGS

March 2010 FIFA World Rankings were announced on May 26, showing Armenia to have dropped 1 point, moving to 100th place with 311 points. Azerbai-

jan ranks the 109th with 259 points; Georgia is the 120th with 217 points. Next FIFA rankings will be published upon completion of World Championship on July 14.

www.panarmenian.net

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- **MAY 24:** Cross to be fixed on Holy Cross Church in Akhtamar
AH
- **MAY 25:** Karine Minasyan appointed Armenian Deputy Minister of Economy
AH
- **MAY 26:** Armenia's teams participate successfully at World Team Table Tennis Championships
AH
- **MAY 26:** Trade and economic relations development emphasized by Armenia and Ukraine
AH
- **MAY 26:** 28 hail suppression systems set in Armenia's regions
AH
- **MAY 27:** Armenia placed 118th and 80th in world ranking for download and upload speed
AH
- **MAY 27:** "Your Time to Read" campaign launched in Armenia and France
AH
- **MAY 28:** Lincy Foundation continues assisting Armenia in schools construction in earthquake zone
AH
- **MAY 28:** Armenia, Singapore to develop relations
AH
- **MAY 28:** Armenian delegation participates in World Congress on IT in Amsterdam
AH

POLISH FOREIGN MINISTER TO VISIT ARMENIA

Armenia attaches importance to conclusion of Association Agreement with the EU, free trade zone creation and relaxation of visa regime, RA Deputy Foreign Minister said. "All this will have a good impact on the Armenian society," Karine Kazinian said during Eastern Partnership Foreign Minister Informal Meeting on Sopot. Ms. Kazinian also met with representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss Armenian-Polish cooperation as well as the impending visit of Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorki to Armenia. She also met with EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy Stefan Fule, RA MFA press office reported.

www.panarmenian.net

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP IS EFFECTIVE MEANS TO STIMULATE COOPERATION

On May 27, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan met with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission Catherine Ashton. Mr. Sargsyan noted that the integration into Europe remains among priorities of Armenia's foreign policy. The parties referred to new opportunities provided by the Eastern Partnership, noting that its format is

an effective means to stimulate cooperation among the Caucasian countries. They also discussed conclusion of an association and free trade agreement between the EU and Armenia, as well as visa regime relaxation for Armenian citizens. The Armenian-Turkish relations and Nagorno Karabakh conflict also were in the focus of the meeting, the press service of the RA President reported.

www.panarmenian.net

ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT TO ORGANIZE ROCK AGAINST GENOCIDE ROCK FESTIVAL



Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan said that the government is going to organize Rock against Genocide festival, which will bring together numerous world stars, who

have already agreed to participate in it. The Armenian government decided to allocate AMD 10mln to restore music school N6 in Gyumri. According to the Prime Minister, this project is a result of friendly relations among rock stars and their Armenian fans, who provided assistance under Rock Aid Armenia project. Sargsyan also stressed the great contribution of Deep Purple vocalist Ian Gillan, who transferred the entire proceeds – AMD 18.3mln - of a charitable concert in Yerevan for the rehabilitation of the school.

www.panarmenian.net

SCHIFF SUBMITS ARMENIAN GENOCIDE SURVIVAL STORIES INTO CONGRESSIONAL RECORD



U.S. Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA) submitted four stories from survivors of the Armenian Genocide to be included in the Congressional Record – the first four of many submissions the Congressman has received as part of the new Armenian Genocide Congressional Record Project.

“It is difficult if not impossible to find an Armenian family not touched by the genocide, and this is an opportunity to make their experiences part of the nation-

al record,” Rep. Schiff said. “Through the Armenian Genocide Congressional Record Project, I hope to document the harrowing stories of the survivors in an effort to preserve their accounts and to help educate the Members of Congress now and in the future on the necessity of recognizing the Armenian Genocide.”

The Armenian Genocide Congressional Record Project, pioneered by Rep. Schiff, is part of an ongoing effort to parallel H. Res. 252, the Congressional resolution he sponsored to recognize and commemorate the genocide carried out against Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923. Rep. Schiff continues to encourage survivors of the genocide and their families from throughout the country to participate in the project by sending in the stories of what happened to their family during the genocide.

www.panarmenian.net

RA GOVERNMENT TO REVISE MACROECONOMIC FORECAST FOR 2010



The United Nations mandate doesn't envisage participation in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process but the Organization is hopeful that the conflicting sides will register progress, a representative of the UN Secretariat said. The official also told PanARMENIAN.Net that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon did not send any letter to the Azerbaijani representation to the UN. Earlier, Azeri media spread reports that Mr. Ban sent a letter, saying that “he is pleased with intensification of the negotiation process.”

www.panarmenian.net

ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT APPROVES PROGRAM ON GYUMRI INDUSTRIAL PARK ACTIVITY IN 2010

On May 27, the Armenian government approved a program on Gyumri industrial park activity in 2010. Armenian Deputy Minister of Economy Ara Petrosyan said that that program includes three basic components: introduction of innovations and modern technologies, the industrial park's management by the economic development fund of Gyumri, as well as establishment of educational, scientific and research laboratory in mechanics and electronics jointly with local and international companies. Besides, the program foresees development of a business model for creation of a free trade zone at the industrial park's territory. According to preliminary calculations, investments at the amount of AMD 200mln will be required for the program implementation. Meanwhile, the program will be financed through both budgetary and other funds permitted by the RA legislation.

www.panarmenian.net

MIXED REACTIONS TO NAGORNO-KARABAKH POLL



Official government reactions to the parliamentary contest in the breakaway republic of Nagorno-Karabakh were mixed, election groups said. The Azeri central election commission characterized the weekend parliamentary contest as a “farce,” the Armenia bureau of Radio Free Liberty/Radio Europe reports. More than half of the nearly 100,000 eligible voters in the region took part in the poll, the Azeri election commission said. Four parties were competing for seats in the 33-member Parliament. Azerbaijan and Armenia have complained of violations to a 1994 cease-fire related to

conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, an area of dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Nagorno-Karabakh, which declared independence in 1991, lies inside Azerbaijan but has a population that is predominantly ethnic Armenian. Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian told the state-run news service that the vote meant that “the citizens of the Nagorno-Karabakh republic once again have proved their resolve to express their will to live freely and independently.” Elections officials in the region said the Free Fatherland slate of self-appointed Prime Minister Ara Harutiunian was leading with about 47 percent of the vote. Moscow, for its part, said it didn’t believe the peace process “could depend on the holding of elections,” said the RFE/RL report. The United States, Russia and France have been trying to mediate the territorial dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia that has resulted in the deaths of some 30,000 people.

www.upi.com

VAN ROMPUY: EU-ARMENIA RELATIONS STRENGTHENING RAPIDLY

The Eastern Partnership is a powerful vehicle for bringing the countries involved closer to the EU and to each other, President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy has said after his meeting in Brussels with Armenia’s President Serzh Sargsyan.

A Council statement quoted Van Rompuy as saying EU-Armenia relations were strengthening rapidly. He said the EU had adopted negotiation directives for an ambitious Association Agreement and looked forward to starting negotiations shortly, including talks on a Deep

and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). The European Council President said “upcoming negotiations for the future Association Agreement will create additional leverage for internal reform and make available EU financial and technical support.” He expressed hope that progress would be made soon on visa facilitation and readmission issues, and reiterated the EU’s continued commitment to peace and security in the Caucasus, including through contributing to the resolution of the protracted conflicts.

Full story www.cnpi-info.eu

ARMENIA, NATO SEE PROGRESS IN RELATIONS – ARMENIAN PRESIDENT

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen share the view that Armenia and NATO have made significant progress in bi-lateral relations. “Yerevan intends to consistently continue cooperation with NATO members and allies in combating terrorism, protecting borders, and carrying out peacekeeping missions,” Sargsyan said at a meeting with Rasmus-

sen in Brussels on Tuesday. The parties also discussed the settlement of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenian-Turkish relations. “By dictating preconditions and violating the agreed-upon timeframes, Turkey has exhausted the limit of confidence as a negotiating partner,” the Armenian presidential press service quoted Sargsyan as saying.

www.interfax.com

ARMENIA CELEBRATES NATIONAL DAY FRIDAY, MAY 28



On May 28, Armenia celebrates its National Day. On this date in 1918, the Armenian National Council declared the independence of Armenia, proclaiming itself the new republic’s temporary government. The holiday is also known as First Republic Day. Armenians take pride in this first breath of life of an independent Armenian state. Republic Day was not celebrated during Soviet times, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union it gained importance in Armenia’s annual celebrations. On this day, the President and other government officials raise the Armenian flag at the Presidential Palace in Yerevan, capital of Armenia. The country’s streets are decorated with the national colors of red, blue, and orange. In most of Armenia, it is a day spent with family and friends. Politics is kept to a minimum during friendly conversations over khash, a typical Armenian dish made with the hooves, the shin bone, and the stomach of a cow. Armenia is a mountainous, landlocked country on the southeastern edge of Europe, and at the gateway to the Middle East and all of Asia.

Full story www.mb.com.ph

'70S ROCKERS DEEP PURPLE RETURN TO "SPIRITUAL HOME"

Legendary '70s rock band Deep Purple returned after 20 years to the Armenian capital of Yerevan to play a charity concert to help build a music school in the country. Fronted by vocalist Ian Gillan, the band first held a benefit concert in 1990 to help victims of the Spitak earthquake, which struck northern Armenia two years earlier.

Fans, including several hundred who traveled from Iran and Georgia, packed the 10,000-seat concert hall in Yerevan to once again cheer on the band performing some of its biggest hits. Gillan calls Armenia his “spiritual home,” where “the spirit of adventure is always in the air” and where Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan is a big fan of rock music and the band as well.

www.eurasianet.org

"Armenia Highlights" is compiled in association with [Patriot Center](http://www.patriotcenter.org)

DISCLAIMER: Views expressed in "Armenia Highlights" do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Armenia.