
Opening Of The Border Should Not Be Viewed As Doing A Favor To Armenia

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EDWARD NALBANDIAN: OPENING OF THE BORDER SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS DOING A FAVOR TO ARMENIA

On November 24 the Foreign Minister of Armenia, Edward Nalbandian, paid a one-day visit to Istanbul as Foreign Minister of the country chairing at the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC).

The Armenian Foreign Minister visited BSEC Secretariat, where he had a meeting with Secretary General Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos. During the meeting reference was made to issues of improving the BSEC activity and boosting economic cooperation between the member states.

Turning to the priorities of Armenian chairmanship, Edward Nalbandian noted that the 600 events scheduled for the forthcoming six month term are targeted at improving the organization's image and deepening of cooperation between member states in different spheres.

Later Minister Nalbandian delivered a speech at the sitting of the BSEC International Secretariat, member states of BSEC and observers and representatives of their adjunct bodies and presented the priorities of the Armenian chairmanship.

The Foreign Minister noted that Armenia has assumed BSEC chairmanship at a period of the world financial crisis, various difficulties in the economy of different states, and the member states should join efforts to overcome those challenges.

Speaking about the priorities of Armenian chairmanship, Edward Nalbandian emphasized the development of regional transport infrastructures as the main objective. Armenia's priorities will include the cooperation in the fields of energy, ecology and agriculture.

Minister Nalbandian said also that Armenia attaches importance to the deepening of BSEC-UN and BSEC-EU cooperation.

The sitting was followed by Minister Nalbandian's press conference, featuring representatives of more than 100 Turkish and international media.

In response to the question on the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations, Minister Nalbandian noted that the full normalization of relations derives from the interests of the two countries and peoples, and the ongoing dialogue between Armenia and Turkey is targeted at that objective, i.e. establishment of diplomatic relations and opening of the border, which should not be viewed as doing a favor to Armenia, since Turkey is no less interested in it.

Minister Nalbandian later visited the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, where he had a meeting with Armenian Patriarch Mesrop Archbishop Mutafyan. Minister Nalbandian met also with representatives of the Armenian community.

The same day Minister Nalbandian had a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Ali Babacan, following which Ali Babacan gave a dinner in honor of Edward Nalbandian.

During the two-hour meeting the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Turkey discussed issues related to the normalization of bilateral relations.

The Ministers exchanged views on the initiative of establishing a Cooperation and Peace Platform in the Caucasus.

During the briefing that followed the meeting, Minister Nalbandian and Ali Babacan said it was held in a constructive atmosphere. The Ministers agreed to continue the efforts targeted at the normalization of bilateral relations.
