

# Armenia-European Union Cooperation Council's 9th Sitting Held In Brussels

Noyan Tapan - 10/12/2008

The annual sitting of the Armenia-European Union Cooperation Council took place on December 9 in Brussels. Armenia's delegation consisting of various departments' high-ranking representatives led by RA Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian took part in it.

Jean-Pierre Jouyet, the Minister of European Affairs of France presiding over in EU led the delegation on the part of Europe.

Presenting the steps undertaken in Armenia in the direction of fulfillment of the European Neighborhood Policy Actions Plan, E. Nalbandian said that program's fulfillment is the priority of cooperation with EU, the evidence of which is RA President Serzh Sargsyan's creating an interdepartmental commission coordinating cooperation with European structures. The RA Foreign Minister also attached importance to the signing of the agreement on sending a group of EU advisers to Armenia on business, for efficient implementation of reforms in various spheres in cooperation with EU.

RA Deputy Ministers of Finance, Economy, Energy, and Justice presented the reforms implemented in those spheres, government's economic policy, reforms done in the court and legal sphere, steps undertaken to provide Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant's security, program of building of a new nuclear power plant.

The fulfillment process of the Armenia-EU Actions Plan of the European Neighborhood Policy was discussed in detail during the sitting. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the successful implementation of the program. At the same time it was mentioned that program's possibilities are not exhausted completely yet and there are considerable prospects to expand the cooperation.

The European side welcomed the Moscow Declaration on Nagorno Karabakh settlement adopted lately, the December 4 joint statement of OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries' Foreign Ministers and the December 5 statement of OSCE Foreign Ministers Council.

The Eastern Partnership proposal was presented by the European Commission, which envisages deepening of cooperation between European Union and partnership member countries in a number of spheres.

At European side's request E. Nalbandian presented the negotiations process of Nagorno Karabakh settlement, as well as the steps aimed at normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations.

A meeting between E. Nalbandian and Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy, took place after the sitting. The sides discussed a number of issues regarding Armenia-European Union cooperation and exchanged thoughts over regional developments.

After the meeting E. Nalbandian, Minister of European Affairs of France Jean-Pierre Jouyet and Benita Ferrero-Waldner signed an Agreement on Some Aspects of Air Communications between the Republic of Armenia and the

European Community. It will facilitate cooperation of Armenia and European Union member-countries, as well as Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Iceland, and Norway in the aviation sphere.

According to the report provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department, the previous day, on December 8, E. Nalbandian had a large speech on Armenia's foreign policy at the Royal Institute of International Relations of Belgium.

In his speech he in detail presented the Nagorno Karabakh settlement negotiations process. Touching upon the statement of OSCE MG co-chairing countries' Foreign Ministers in Helsinki calling for using the positive moment created after the meeting of Armenian and Azeri Presidents, OSCE Foreign Ministers' statement, and Azerbaijan's response to those documents, E. Nalbandian said: "It is not the first time that Azerbaijan after taking one step, I would say even half a step goes two steps back, and a natural question emerges: is Azerbaijan indeed ready to go to solution of the Nagorno Karabakh problem today?."

In connection with the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations the RA Foreign Minister said that the two states are indeed interested in establishment of diplomatic relations with each other and opening the border, therefore normalization of the relations without preconditions is logical. He considered positive and constructive his last contacts with the Turkish Foreign Minister and said that an agreement has been reached to continue the meetings.

Minister of State of Belgium Francois-Xavier de Donnea, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Peter Semneby, Special Representative of NATO to the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Ambassador Robert Simmons, members of Belgian parliament and Senate, dozens of Ambassadors accredited in Brussels were present at E. Nalbandian's speech.

Completing his visit to Brussels on November 9, E. Nalbandian left for Sofia where he will join the delegation led by RA President Serzh Sargsyan.

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