
ArmeniaBulgaria Economic Cooperation Falls Behind Political Dialogue

PanARMENIAN.Net - 11/12/2008

President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, who arrived to Sofia by the invitation of the President of Bulgaria, Georgi Prvanov, has started today his two-day official visit. The Armenian delegation headed by the President comprises the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Culture, Economy, Transport and Communications, other officials, as well as the renowned journalist Svetana Paskaleva, the RA leader's press office told PanARMENIAN.Net.

After the official welcoming ceremony in Sofia, the President of Armenia laid a wreath at the Memorial of the Unknown Soldier. Afterwards, the two Presidents held a private meeting followed by the negotiations in the extended format. Serzh Sargsyan and Georgi Prvanov hailed the current level of political dialogue between the two countries. The Presidents of Armenia and Bulgaria noted also that economic cooperation and the trade turnover in particular, which approaches 150 million USD, are lagging behind the political relations and that necessary steps should be taken toward the reconstruction of the trade structure as well as for the further development of economic cooperation. Presidents Sargsyan and Prvanov highly praised the bilateral as well as the multilateral cooperation of Armenia and Bulgaria. President Sargsyan thanked the President of Bulgaria and said that in some difficult historical junctures the Bulgarian people were congenial to and embraced kindly our people who later integrated entirely in the Bulgarian society. The President of Bulgaria also highly praised the Armenian-Bulgarian relations and noted that the high level of trust, which exists between the two peoples, allows to develop new comprehensive programs.

The Presidents of Armenia and Bulgaria also mentioned that the two peoples have many common features, share common problems, and on many instances have faced together arising challenges. The President of Armenia underscored that the two countries have a common future and that the future is built on the values shared by the two peoples, which are the Christian values, a democratic system, and liberties - all of which allow to look toward the future.

The leaders of the two countries mentioned with satisfaction the existing adequate legal field - there are almost fifty agreements between Bulgaria and Armenia which today have been augmented by another four. One of them pertains to the organization and conduct of the Days of Bulgaria in Armenia in 2009 and the Days of Armenia in Bulgaria in 2010. The other three agreements are related to the cooperation in the areas of civil service and state governance, amendments to the agreement on avoidance of double taxation of income and property, as well as to the cooperation in the area of archives administration.

The Presidents of Armenia and Bulgaria highlighted the importance of fostering cooperation between the executive agencies and business circles and noted that the tomorrow's Armenian-Bulgarian Business Forum in Sofia provides an excellent opportunity for the businesses to get acquainted, to examine the possibilities, and develop joint programs.

Presidents Sargsyan and Prvanov stressed also the importance of cooperation in the area of transportation. The President of Bulgaria hailed and welcomed the Armenian-Turkish dialogue and expressed hope that the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border would be beneficial for Bulgaria as well. The two

Presidents concurred on that issue and noted that the open borders would provide a direct transportation and automobile connection between Armenia and Bulgaria. President Sargsyan spoke also about Armenia's intention on constructing the Armenia-Iran railway. The sides also stressed the importance of the establishment the air transportation link between the two countries.

President Georgi Prvanov invited President Serzh Sargsyan to attend the energy forum to be held in Bulgaria next year.

The President of Bulgaria expressed readiness to assist Armenia with experience and expert assistance in the framework of the Eastern Partnership Program.

The President of Armenia handed to the President of Bulgaria a letter of gratitude from the people of Armenia to the people of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian authorities for their assistance provided after the devastating earthquake of December 7, 1988 in Spitak. The President of Armenia sent over a hundred thank you letters to the world leaders, with the words of gratitude on behalf of the people of Armenia for their assistance to Armenia after the earthquake.

The Presidents of the two countries came up with a Joint Declaration and answered the questions of the journalists.
