
Between Eternal Haven And Temporary Abode

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It would not be exactly true to say the report of the World Bank experts on demography in Armenia gave us a surprise. But it was good news that the population of our country will have decreased by 200 thousand by the year 2025. The rate and tendency of development that is observed in the country now gives rise to worse forecasts. In this context, it is great that the population of Armenia will have gone down by only 200 thousand and not by 2 million. Moreover, it is great that people will continue to live in Armenia at all by the year 2025 and there will not be only say tourists. The point is that in our country everything is done for tourists now. Hotels, restaurants, night clubs, expensive resorts are being built. Even the construction of elite neighborhoods, which is proceeding so fast, although it is not clear where it is heading for, is for tourists, in fact. Those elite high-rises are targeted at the Armenians living abroad, who are expected to buy apartments looking to Ararat. Most of them do buy. However, these buyers are not residents of Armenia. They live in these apartments for one or two months, for the rest of the months these apartments are havens for souls, sources of satisfaction of the soul. In other words, the construction of elite apartments is also part of the spiritual Armenia project. Meanwhile, the physical Armenia is gradually disappearing. Or growing old, the World Bank experts forecast. But since this time their forecasts are not on the merits of the "tiger", the Armenian government did not bother to work the propaganda machine.

Although it does not matter much. The government must be mindful of it and make moves to avoid the situation that was forecast. Logically, it is necessary to make efforts to improve the quality of life to avoid this situation. It is necessary to build apartments for a bigger class of people, provide people with more or less well-paid jobs, launch flexible mortgage lending for people to be able to have two or three children instead of one.

The government should encourage births by aiding financially. These are the basic means of improving the demographic state which seem obvious to every citizen.

In Armenia, however, it is very slow, and the situation changes at a low rate. We may even say very few more young people can afford to buy apartments in 2007 compared with 2006, and very few more young people's jobs became more steady and profitable. And it is all but evident that very few will have improved their lives in 2008 compared with 2007. The picture will change only in case the government launches the real "second generation" of reforms which are so often discussed. In addition, these should be implemented as fast and consistently as the first generation of reforms in the early 1990s. It is clear that for the government the rate of the first generation of reforms was desirable because it helped create a class of proprietors comprising the government and the pro-government circles. Meanwhile, the second generation of reforms supposes the emergence of a middle class for which the government and the pro-government circles will have to bother.

Meanwhile, the country has no other way. Either radical steps are taken to change the situation in the country which make Armenia attractive not only for Diasporan Armenians for 5 or 6 months but also for the citizens of Armenia for

the year round, or the country becomes a temporary abode where people come for some time and the residents wait until they save enough money for the ticket.
