

---

# Abdallah Gul Supports Armenia's Membership In Stability And Partnership Platform Of Caucasus Organization

By. H. Chagrian  
AZG Armenian Daily - 23/8/2008

---

Foreign Ministry of Turkey Orders to Minister for Sports to attend the Football Game in Yerevan

Prime Minister of Turkey Erdogan made his first official statement about the Partnership Platform of Caucasus organization initiative on Auguts, then took measures to popularize it during his visits to Moscow, Tbilisi and Baku. He suggested Russia, Georgia and Azerbaijan to join the organization and emphasized the importance of Armenia's participation in it.

Georgia and Azerbaijan gladly accepted the offer, while Russia approached it with certain awareness. First of all the idea was not seriously accepted by Russian diplomats, and secondly they were aware of the United States standing behind the initiative. However, after the official Washington opposed the idea of establishing another political structure in the region, Russia revised its positions and expressed willingness to support the new union under the condition of having the leading role in it.

The Turkish public is not certain about the Stability and Partnership Platform of Caucasus, moreover about Armenia's membership. Therefore serious debate started in Turkey regarding the reality of the idea in general and the issues of Armenia's membership in the future organization.

Professor of Marmara University Busra Ersanli, as repored in August 21 Bianet release, said that there is no proper background for creation of such a union, taking into account the deep controversies between Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The professor also noted that Russia will not bear being an outsider in the organization, and, although welcoming the idea today, Russia will never permit a NATO or USA-oriented structure in the territories of its vital interest.

Eni Cag, commenting upon this initiative, cited the statement of National Movement Party Vice-President Aktay Vural, who said, "Let Armenia stop the occupation of Karabakh and resign the groundless claims about the Genocide. Turkey must not be ensnared with fake ideas, for matters of stability and peace, Armenia must give up the policy of enmity against Ankara and Baku".

Head of MotherlandParty Ugur Mumcun added, "the controversies with Armenia are not of emotional matter. There are serious claims of territories, and it is ridiculous to make an alliance with that country".

In the same release Eni Cag qualified the debatable initiative of Erdogan as a task from the EU. However, the idea was welcomed by Russia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, in this way or that. Erdogan, as reported by Radikal, ordered Foreign Minister Ali Babacan to start talks with Yerevan regarding the Stability and Partnership Platform of Caucasus initiative. Babacan is also to ask Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to become a mediator in the expected Armenia-Turkey talks.

As far as it is known, the negotiations are to be started in September after the UN General Assembly Session, in case the Babacan-Lavrov meeting has positive results.

The idea of inviting Armenia to the Stability and Partnership Platform of Caucasus was also approved by President of Turkey Abdullah Gul. He said that first of all Armenia is to be invited because of being a Southern Caucasian states and secondly, in his opinion, Armenia's membership will help to settle the controversies with Turkey.

But the anxiety of the Turkish authorities is not only about the Stability and Partnership Platform of Caucasus. The question of Abdullah Gul's attendance to the Armenia-Turkey game remains unresolved.

In connection with this matter the Government of Turkey sent the following message to the President's administration, "Although President Abdullah Gul's visit shall have a great importance and positive consequences, the Armenian side has not made yet the gesture necessary to make the visit real. Therefore, the most reasonable neutral move is to send Sports Minister Murad Baseskioglu to watch the game".

---