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# EU-Assisted Reforms Expected To Continue: Are They Only Bolstering Armenia's 'Oligarchic' System?

By NAIRA HAYRUMYAN  
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The European Union expresses its readiness to continue promoting reforms in Armenia. This is what high-ranking European officials say.

And this seems to be the only area of cooperation between the EU and Armenia after Yerevan has embarked on the path of post-Soviet integration.

Its essence is that Europe funds projects for the modernization of the system of governance, justice and rule of law in Armenia. Both Armenia and the European side say that over these few past years a lot has changed due to the reforms. In particular, many bureaucratic hurdles have been removed, the state of prison facilities, technical equipment of the police have been improved and so on.

But many believe that these reforms, in fact, have only improved "the criminal-oligarchic system" that has existed and continues to exist in Armenia. Judging by the high-profile cases that go to the pages of the press, the judicial and law-enforcement systems continue to guard the interests of oligarchs that are close to the power, the tax authorities selectively work with economic agents, government levers are used for the purpose of internal political struggle. And the reform is limited to renovations of buildings, installation of computers and personnel changes.

Experts link this started personnel reshuffle with the jostle that has begun inside the power ahead of the 2017-18 electoral period. This is what may also account for the intention of President Serzh Sargsyan to create a single investigative body that would include all existing investigative agencies - of the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Defense, the State Revenue Committee, and others. To ensure the legal underpinnings for such a body, a commission headed by former Prosecutor-General of the Republic Aghvan Hovsepian has been set up.

Analysts expect that the new investigative body will become the main tool of the forthcoming political struggle.

Serious personnel changes have started within the system of the Police and Prosecutor's Office. In particular, prosecutor of the Armavir region Samvel Sinanyan and prosecutor of Yerevan's administrative districts of Arabkir and Kanaker-Zeitun John Farkhoyan were dismissed.

Before that from their posts were released the prosecutor of Yerevan, head of the department for crimes against the person, the chief of the department for combating corruption and organized crime, and the deputy prosecutor-general of Armenia. And it is, too, linked to the "creation of a new team."

It is yet unclear whether the European Union will fund the establishment of a single investigation committee and whether this committee will actually serve justice and not the purpose of eliminating political opponents of the incumbent authorities.

[http://www.armenianow.com/commentary/analysis/49347/armenia\\_european\\_union\\_reforms\\_continuation](http://www.armenianow.com/commentary/analysis/49347/armenia_european_union_reforms_continuation)

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# Europe Passes To Sanctions Against Armenia

By Haik Aramyan

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On November 23 the European Parliament voted for the amendments to the resolution on strengthening relations with the Eastern Partnership and progress and failures achieved so far.

The resolution inter alia dwells on two conflicts in the Eastern Partnership space. The resolution notes that the EU should be involve in the peace settlement of the conflicts more actively and reiterates its position on the occupation of territories of one state by another state. The resolution notes in particular that the settlement of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh must be in line with the four UN SC resolutions of 1993.

The Armenian deputy foreign minister Shavarsh Kocharyan and Deputy Speaker Eduard Sharmazanov have commented on this resolution.

Kocharyan said the resolution may affect the settlement adversely.

Sharmazanov said the documents adopted before the ceasefire could not be referred because they have lost their force.

The reaction of the Armenian government to international politics and documents is funny. For example, the same government did not utter a single word when Russia and Turkey reiterated their commitment to the unlawful Treaty of Moscow signed in 1921. Under this treaty a significant part of the territories of Armenia were presented to Turkey and Azerbaijan. By the way, Sharmazanov should also note that this document was aimed against the rights of the Pontus Greeks.

Politics is not petty ruses as the Armenian government's representatives of different calibers think, and that may work in Armenia but in international politics it will cost expensive. The government has been fooling around in foreign affairs for four years, so were Kocharyan and Sharmazanov doing, and they thought that would work.

Such things cannot be forgiven, and evidence is the EP resolution.

Europe has met Armenia in every matter, all the Armenian issues were "adapted" to the process of preparation ahead of the association.

Armenia finally had a chance to break away from the Russian-Turkish pincers and resolve its own problems with dignity. In return for that Armenia would be a serious factor in the region, starting to perform several important functions, namely Turkey's containment, Iran-West dialogue and other issues. In other words, Armenia would become an important country.

Instead, the Armenian government and political class chose the way of shedding responsibility and ridding of bugbear, hoping to survive longer. But who will respect such a government? Such a government and the country it heads is marginal, an outcast which can be treated in any way.

As to the EP resolution, everything is highly logical. If Armenia rejects the way it has proposed, Europe is no longer responsible and should answer the political and moral blow. One of the counterattacks is this resolution which evokes the four UN resolutions and occupation.

The resolutions and documents in international politics have a so-called dual meaning. For the winner, that is the Armenian side, these four resolutions laid down the achievements of the Armenian armed forces. These four UN resolutions allowed avoiding human losses, the population of these territories were evacuated to Iran where the UN reception points were operating, and everything was in line with the international law.

For the loser side, which the Armenian side now is, the other message of these resolutions - "occupation" - is relevant, which has been laid down by the European Parliament.

Politics is something serious, not a ruse.

<http://www.lragir.am/index/eng/0/comments/view/31169>

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