
Yerevan In The Grip Of Geopolitical Poles (The First Round Of The Fight)

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Serge Sargsyan's statement on Armenia's intention to join the Customs Union (CU) didn't halt the geopolitical process over Armenia.

Discussions on the course of development continue there.

According to the head of the Institute of the Caucasus, Alexander Iskandaryan, Armenia cannot really join the Customs Union and the absence of borders is not the main problem: "The CU was established for Kazakhstan and Russia, and their interests and demands contradict Armenia's needs. For example, Kazakhstan and Russia produce and export energy products; Armenia imports them. Moreover, the countries of the CU and Armenia not only have no common borders, but also between us there is Georgia, which is a very specific country for Russia.

Furthermore, these are thousands of pages of texts which have been developing for years. All these norms cannot be simply applied to Armenia."

The question of the possibility of combining membership of Armenia in the CU and initialling of the association agreement within the EU program of the Eastern Partnership is in the focus of attention. The European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Stefan Fule, has already stated that in the context of Armenia's statement on joining the CU, it is difficult to imagine the association agreement with the EU being initialled on November 29th in Vilnius. According to him, there is a problem of compatibility between obligations to the CU and the free trade area with the EU. "For example, you cannot simultaneously reduce customs rates, as is required by the Agreement on a deep and comprehensive free trade area, and increase them as a result of membership in the Customs Union," Fule thinks. The possibility of the other document - the Association Agreement - being initialled by Armenia is also excluded.

However, considering the fact that the geopolitical competition between Russia and the West for the post-Soviet space won't stop due to the decision of Yerevan to join the CU, and Armenia wasn't included in the program of "Eastern Partnership" accidentally, it could be predicted that the Europeans will try to find another option for settlement of the problem that has occurred. For example, in the future a new document for Armenia can be developed.

A small country with numerous problems in the economic sphere, constant migration, having a conflict with Azerbaijan and difficult relations with Turkey is involved in an argument between two leading centers of political force - Russia and the West. In the first round of the fight Moscow won, which has such trump cards as providing the security of Armenia, exporting gas to Armenia and the presence of a million Armenian migrants in Russia. The EU, and the West in general, has never been interested in the security problems of Armenia.

* Susanna Petrosyan, Yerevan. Exclusively to Vestnik Kavkaza

<http://vestnikkavkaza.net/articles/economy/45194.html>
