

Other News (1-15 December 2013) Georgia

GEORGIA ALWAYS FACES WAR RISK, SAYS CIVIC ACTIVIST

/Dec 2/Tert.am/

Georgia always faces the risk of a renewed war with Russia, says a representative of a Georgian-Armenian NGO.

"There are certain concerns in the expert circles but not in the government," Arnold Stepanyan, the president of the Multinational Georgia NGO, told Tert.am, commenting on Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to the 102nd military base stationed in Armenia's second largest city of Gyumri. "The Georgian authorities now maintain normal relations with Russia, but the expert circles nonetheless have concerns as the base is just several kilometers away from the Georgian border. Such a base would be a cause of concern in any country," he added.

Georgia's integration in EU is not meant against Russia - President Margvelashvili

/Dec 4/Nyut.am/

Georgia's integration into the European Union is not meant against Russia's interests, Georgian President Georgy Margvelashvili said in an interview with the Georgian television company Rustavi-2 on Tuesday.

'Georgia's integration into the European Union should not be taken as a rivalry between Europe and Russia,' he said. 'Integration in Europe is the choice of the overwhelming majority of Georgia's population and its social and political spectrum.' At the same time, he noted that his country was interested in the normalization of relations with Russia and would continue its dialogue with that country to finally 'achieve this difficult goal.'

At the Eastern Partnership summit in the Lithuanian capital city Vilnius on November 28, Georgia and the European Union initialed the Association Agreement. On behalf of Georgia, the document was signed by First Deputy Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani. On the following day, the Georgian foreign minister and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton inked a symbolic initialing document. The Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union is expected to be signed in September 2014.

Georgia alone in region - Arnold Stepanyan

/Dec 1/Tert.am/

The Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, caused Georgia to remain alone in the region after it initialed an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU), Chairman of the Multinational Georgia NGO Arnold Stepanyan told Tert.am.

'Ukraine was the locomotive. However, Armenia's joining the initialing process was of high importance for Georgia as the attention by the Armenian communities in the US and Europe would have drawn additional attention to the region. But now we have actually been left alone in the region and not only in the region,' Stepanyan said.

He is hopeful that Armenia and Georgia joining the Customs Union and the EU respectively will not affect the Armenian-Georgian political relations. However, it cannot but affect the bilateral economic relations and joint enterprises.

Expert in Georgian studies Vahe Sargsyan voiced the opinion that the Armenian-Georgian border would turn into a border between the Customs Union and the EU after Georgia signed the Association Agreement with the EU in 2014.

Arnold Stepanyan believes that it will at least complicate the implementation of joint projects and cause businesses to leave Armenia for Georgia.

'It may affect on Armenia's exports to Georgia. On the other hand, I think Armenian businesses are likely to enter the Georgian market at higher

rates. The reason is not only our more favorable business laws, but also more favorable conditions for exporting products to Europe,' he said.