



SUMMARY

REPORT OF THE MFA ACTIVITIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

2016

YEREVAN 2017



In 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, based on the foreign policy guidelines outlined by the President of the Republic of Armenia and his assignments, as well as based on the programme of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, continued its activities aimed at strengthening of the country's external security component, providing favorable external conditions and guarantees for the development of the country, development of mutually beneficial cooperation with friendly and partner countries, deepening of the involvement within international organizations and processes, increasing of the number of Armenia's friends on different continents, strengthening Armenia's reputation and position at the international arena, development of active cooperation with international and regional economic and financial institutions, protection of the interests of the Republic of Armenia and its citizens abroad, preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage, implementation of initiatives directed towards setting of a positive agenda in international relations and initiatives derived from our interests, as well as coordination of foreign relations related activities of state executive bodies.

In 2016, Armenia together with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, continued to exert joint efforts aimed at peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Azerbaijan, opposing to the proposals for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, presented by the Co-Chair countries, as before, was undertaking steps to undermine the negotiation process, even by refusing for months to meet with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and seeking to move the discussions on the issue to other international foras. On January 22, the Co-Chairs issued a statement, where they reiterated that the Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship remains the only agreed format for negotiations, which has the international mandate, and urged to refrain from steps which could endanger the peace process.

In the beginning of April, Baku unleashed a large-scale military aggression against Artsakh, which resulted in numerous casualties. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and the diplomatic missions abroad carried out an extensive work to inform the international community about the Azerbaijani aggression and gross violations by Baku of its international commitments and international humanitarian law.

On April 5 in Moscow a Russian-mediated a oral arrangement was reached to halt military activities and restore the ceasefire in accordance with the trilateral ceasefire agreement of 1994.

In April, Azerbaijan distributed official letters at the UN and the OSCE in an attempt to put under question the validity of the May 12, 1994, trilateral ceasefire agreement signed between Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. As a result of Armenia's efforts, the Co-Chair countries circulated at the UN and the OSCE note verbales stating that the terms of 1994 and 1995 ceasefire agreements do not expire, they continue to remain in force and the parties should strictly adhere to those agreements. This principal stance of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs was also reiterated in the statements made on May 16 at the Vienna summit and on December 8 within the framework of the OSCE Hamburg Ministerial Council.

In order to create conducive conditions for the advancement of the negotiation process meetings of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan were held on May 16 in Vienna, upon the initiative of the US Secretary of State and on June 20 in Saint Petersburg, upon the initiative of the President of Russia. The joint statements issued at

the Vienna summit on the level of the Ministers of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries and at the Saint Petersburg summit on the level of the Presidents of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan reiterated the commitment to the peaceful settlement and enshrined the agreements on the creation of the investigation mechanism of ceasefire violations along the Line of Contact and the expansion of the capabilities of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. Those agreements have not been implemented yet due to the policy pursued by Azerbaijan.

On May 17, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Foreign Minister of Germany, issued a statement on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict where he expressed the Chairmanship's support to the creation of the investigation mechanism and expansion of the capabilities of the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office. He stressed that consolidation of the ceasefire is a matter of high priority for the creation of conditions conducive for resuming the negotiations.

On December 8, the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan met upon the initiative and with the participation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. On the same day, on the sidelines of the 23rd OSCE Ministerial Council meeting, the Foreign Ministers of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries issued a special statement on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. They strongly condemned the use of force or the threat of use of force, the atrocities committed on the field of battle in April while underlining that this conflict has no military solution. They called to honour the agreements reached at Summits in Vienna and St. Petersburg and urged to establish investigation mechanism and expand the capabilities of the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. The Co-Chair countries explicitly stressed that the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue should be based on the fundamental principles of international law - non-use of force, territorial integrity, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as well as on the elements proposed as an integrated whole by the Presidents of the Co-Chair countries in their well-know five statements.

The Hamburg statement of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries once again reaffirmed that the approaches of Armenia are in line with the international mediators.

On December 29, in violation of the commitments undertaken at the Vienna and St.Petersburg summits, Azerbaijan made a diversionary incursion attempt on the state border with Armenia.

In 2016, the Armenian diplomacy continued its efforts towards international recognition and condemnation of the **Armenian Genocide**, as well as towards prevention of genocides and crimes against humanity.

The Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany adopted resolution on recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide.

On September 19th, the Andean Parliament (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile) adopted resolution recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide.

Local self-government bodies of different countries recognized the Armenian Genocide.

The Foreign Ministry of Armenia made an important contribution to the organizing and holding of the Second Global Forum Against the Crime of Genocide entitled “Living Witnesses of Genocide” on April 23 in Yerevan .

During its Chairmanship of the **Collective Security Treaty Organization**, Armenia continued efforts aimed at development of the Organization, enhancement of cooperation and coordination of foreign policy between Member-States.

On October 14, the CSTO Summit was held in Armenia. It adopted CSTO Collective Security Strategy till 2025.

The session of the CSTO Foreign Ministers’ Council and the joint sessions of the CSTO statutory bodies were held in Yerevan in July and October, respectively.

Throughout the year joint efforts were undertaken aimed at further deepening of the allied strategic relations with the **Russian Federation** and strengthening of multi-sectoral cooperation.

Presidents of the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation held around a dozen of meetings within bilateral and multilateral formats. The President of Armenia paid working visits to the Russian Federation on March 10-11, June 20, August 10, December 28. On October 14, Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, paid a working visit to Yerevan.

Dmitry Medvedev, Head of the Government of Russian Federation, paid an official visit to Armenia on April 7-8 and a working visit on May 20.

The Prime Ministers of Armenia and Russia held meetings on April 13 in Moscow, on June 7 in Bishkek and on October 27 in Minsk.

On July 8-9, in St. Petersburg the 17th session of the Intergovernmental economic committee of Armenia and Russia took place, which was attended by the Prime Minister of Armenia.

On March 11-12, Sergey Naryshkin, Chairman of the Russian Federation State Duma, paid a working visit to Armenia. The Armenian-Russian active interparliamentary cooperation was continued. The 27th and 28th sessions of the Interparliamentary cooperation committee of the National Assembly of Armenia and the State Duma of the Russian Federation were held in Moscow and Kazan (June 2-6) and in Yerevan (November 9-12), respectively.

In 2016, dozens of meetings were held between the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Russia within bilateral and multilateral formats. The Foreign Minister of Russia paid official (April 22) and working (July 4 and October 14) visits to Armenia.

Practical steps were undertaken towards further enhancement of the bilateral military-technical cooperation. On November 30, the Agreement on Establishment of joint group of forces of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia and the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation within the framework the Caucasus region of collective security was signed.

Through the joint efforts of the two countries the trade and economic cooperation was further expanded.

The decentralized cooperation was on rise: on October 14, the 5th Armenian-Russian interregional conference was held in Yerevan. The humanitarian ties were expanded.

Numerous mutual visits at the level of heads of different governmental agencies occurred. Around two dozens intergovernmental and interagency legal documents were signed.

The development of the **Armenian-American** friendly partnership was high on Armenia's foreign policy agenda.

From March 28 to April 1, President Serzh Sargsyan paid a working visit to the United States. The President of the Republic had a meeting with the US Vice President Joseph Biden.

On October 10, in New York President Sargsyan participated in "Armenia. Investment Forum."

On December 1, upon the initiative of the American side, the President of Armenia had a phone conversation with the US Vice President Elect Mike Pence. During the conversation the sides mutually emphasized that under the new US Administration the current level of the Armenian-American cooperation in the political and economic areas will not only be maintained but will receive a new impetus.

On September 20, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian participated in New York in the Refugee summit, initiated by the US President.

On October 7, the regular session of the Armenian-US Intergovernmental Committee was held in Washington D.C.

The expansion of multi-sectoral relations with the **European Union** occupied an important place on the Armenia's foreign policy agenda. Seven rounds of negotiations on a new framework agreement between Armenia and the European Union launched on December 7, 2015, were held.

Armenia joined the EU research and innovation framework programme Horizon 2020.

On March 1, Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the Commission, visited Armenia.

Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian participated and delivered remarks at the EU Eastern Partnership and Visegrad Four Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held in Prague on May 4, European Union and Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers' meeting, held in Brussels on May 23, Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers' Informal Meeting, held in Kyiv on July 11, the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the EU and Eastern Partnership countries, held in Bratislava on September 3.

On November 17, the Informal Meeting of the Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers was held in Yerevan, attended by Johannes Hahn, the EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. Alongside the meeting of Ministers of Education and Science of the Eastern Partnership countries took place in Yerevan.

On December 1, the EU council adopted the mandate of the European Commission to launch negotiations with Armenia over comprehensive agreement on Common Aviation Area.

Armenia's foreign policy agenda also focused on the further development of relations with **neighbouring countries**.

Practical steps were undertaken towards enhancement of friendly, mutually beneficial cooperation with **Georgia**.

On September 5, Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, paid an official visit to Armenia.

On November 4, in the framework of the opening the newly built border checkpoint in Bagratashen, the meeting of the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan and the Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Kvirikashvili took place.

On March 24-25, Mikheil Janelidze, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, paid an official visit to Armenia. On August 1, Edward Nalbandian, Foreign Minister of Armenia, visited Georgia with an official visit. Throughout the year, the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Georgia had a number of meetings on the sidelines of international conferences.

Mutual visits at the level of heads of various governmental agencies were regular.

Armenia undertook efforts to further develop traditionally mutually beneficial and friendly relations with the **Islamic Republic of Iran**.

On December 21, President of Iran Hassan Rouhani paid an official visit to Armenia, during which a number of documents were signed. The joint statement of the Presidents of Armenia and Iran was adopted. The Presidents participated in the Armenia-Iran Business Forum.

On June 5-6, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, within the framework of his official visit to Tehran, signed Memorandum on exemption of visa requirement between Armenia and Iran.

On October 5-8, for the first time "Armenia Expo 2016" exhibition was held in Tehran attended by around 100 Armenian companies.

On December 4-5, in Tehran the 14th joint session of the Armenian-Iranian Intergovernmental commission was held.

Mutual visits at the level of heads of different agencies were regular.

Relations with the **European countries** continued to develop and expand. Throughout the year, there were a number of mutual high level visits.

In 2016, President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan paid official and working visits to Greece, Cyprus, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Luxembourg, Poland, and the Netherlands.

On June 24-26, the Pope Francis paid visit to Armenia under the motto “Visit to the First Christian Nation”

The state visits to Armenia of Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, Fra Matthew Festing, Prince and Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Malta, took place.

The Foreign Minister of Armenia paid official and working visits to Bulgaria, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Montenegro, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, France, and Finland. The Foreign Ministers of Sweden, Germany, and Italy visited Armenia.

The President of the National Assembly of Serbia, President of the Belgian Senate, President of the National Council of the Slovak Republic visited Armenia.

A special attention was given to the deepening of traditional ties with the Member-Countries of the **Commonwealth of Independent States**.

The Presidents of Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, Foreign Ministers of Moldova, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan paid a working visits and the Foreign Minister of Tajikistan an official visit to Armenia.

Armenia undertook practical steps towards further strengthening the cooperation with countries of the **Asia-Pacific region**.

Active efforts directed at further developing and enhancing the **Armenian-Chinese** relations continued.

On April 15-16, Edward Nalbandian, Foreign Minister of Armenia, paid a working visit to China.

On May 21, Meng Jianzhu, Special Representative of the Chinese President, Member of Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Secretary of Political and Judiciary Commission under the CPC Central Committee, visited Armenia.

On June 5-7, the visit to Armenia of Zhang Gaoli, the first-ranked Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPC, took place.

On August 22, the 9th session of the Armenian-Chinese Joint intergovernmental committee on trade and economic issues took place in Yerevan.

In June Armenia hosted Days of Chinese culture.

Attention was paid to a further development of cooperation with **Japan**.

On April 1, the regular 7th session of the **Armenian-Indian** Intergovernmental committee took place in Yerevan.

ON September 28, the Armenia-India Business forum was held in Armenia.

On November 1, the Foreign Minister of Armenia paid an official visit to **Indonesia**.

Works were carried out towards development of the collaboration with **Arab States**. Issues related to security of the Syrian Armenians, preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage in **SAR** and assistance to the Armenians of Syria, were at the top of the agenda. The only diplomatic mission in Aleppo - the Consulate General of Armenia - continued its activities.

On November 9-10, Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, paid an official visit to the **United Arab Emirates**.

On January 25-27, the regular session of the **Armenian-Iraqi** Intergovernmental committee took place in Baghdad.

On the sidelines of International conferences Foreign Minister of Armenia had meetings with his **Iraqi, Jordanian, Qatari, Moroccan and Syrian** counterparts.

Armenia continued steps aimed at developing relations with the countries of the **American continent**.

On August 11-15, the President of Armenia paid a working visit to Brazil, where he had a meeting with President Michel Temer. President Serzh Sargsyan also attended groundbreaking ceremony for the new building of the Republic of Armenia Embassy in Brasilia.

In international fora the Foreign Minister of Armenia had meetings with the Foreign Ministers of **Canada, Cuba, Bolivia, Honduras, Argentina, Brazil**.

In 2016, practical steps were undertaken for developing Armenia's relations with the African countries. The Foreign Minister of Armenia had meetings with the Foreign Ministers of **Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Chad, Burundi, Cameroun, Madagascar, Togo, Congo and Niger**.

Documents were signed aimed at the development of relations with a number of African countries.

Armenia continued its active involvement within **international organizations** and multilateral formats.

Throughout 2016, the Republic of Armenia was actively engaged within the **Eurasian Economic Union**.

From February 1, representative of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan assumed the position of the Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission for four years.

With the participation of the President of Armenia two sessions of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council at the level of the President were held on May 31 in Astana and December 26 in St. Petersburg, where the Presidents signed the EEU Tax Code Agreement, as well as documents related to the main areas of integration in the framework of the EEU, and common market of services of the Union.

The Prime Minister of Armenia participated in five sessions at the level of heads of governments of the EEU Member-States. On May 20, the regular meeting of the heads of governments was held in Yerevan.

Armenia had an active participation in the ongoing processes within the **Commonwealth of Independent States**. Within that framework around three dozen documents were signed.

The Republic of Armenia continued to deepen its involvement within the **United Nations**.

The Foreign Minister of Armenia participated in and delivered remarks at the 71st session of the UN General Assembly. On September 19, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian chaired the first session of the UN Summit to Address Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants. On September 21, the Foreign Minister of Armenia chaired the UNGA session. Edward Nalbandian had a meeting with the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

On February 29, in Geneva Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian delivered a speech during the 31st session of the **UN Human Rights Council**.

On September 20, at the UN Headquarters Edward Nalbandian, Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed on behalf of Armenia the Paris Agreement on **Climate Change**.

Active work was carried out within the framework of the **UNESCO**.

Republic of Armenia had an active and consistent involvement in the international efforts being undertaken aimed at **international peace and security**. Armenia continued its participation in the international peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Lebanon and Mali.

On December 5, in Vienna, at the **IAEA** Headquarters, Edward Nalbandian participated in and delivered remarks at the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Security.

On December 7, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian delivered remarks at the **Open Government Partnership** Summit in Paris.

Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian participated in and delivered remarks at the 16th Summit of the International Organisation of **La Francophonie** held in Antananarivo; on the sidelines of the summit he had meetings with the chairman of the Organization President of Madagascar, the Secretary General of La Francophonie, as well as with the heads of delegations of a number of Member-States of the Organization. In Antananarivo a decision was taken to held the 2018 Summit of the International Organization of La Francophonie, which unites 86 member, associated and observer states, in Armenia.

A special attention was given to Armenia's constructive involvement within the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe**. Edward Nalbandian, Foreign Minister of Armenia, participated in and delivered remarks at the OSCE Informal Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating states held on September 1 in Potsdam and 23rd Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Hamburg held on December 8-9.

Active engagement in cooperation within the **Council of Europe** was continued. On May 18, Edward Nalbandian participated in and delivered remarks at the Ministerial session of the CoE held in Sofia.

The collaboration with the **NATO** evolved. In July the President of Armenia participated in the Summit of the NATO member and partner countries in Warsaw dedicated to the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan. The Armenia-North Atlantic Council meeting was held in Brussels, attended by the Foreign and Defense Ministers of Armenia. The latter had a meeting with the NATO Secretary General. On December 7, at the NATO Headquarters, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian attended and delivered remarks at the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the countries participating in the Resolute Support Mission, which provides security in Afghanistan.

On July 1, Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian participated in the 34th session of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member states of the **Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation**, where he delivered a speech.

Edward Nalbandian, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Rashid Alimov, Secretary-General of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization** (SCO), signed in Beijing a memorandum on granting to Armenia the status of a partner for dialogue of the SCO.

One of the most important directions of the activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the **development of foreign economic relations** of Armenia. Activities were conducted towards deepening of the economic ties in bilateral and multilateral formats, finding new export markets for the Armenian products, presenting the investment opportunities of Armenia, establishing contacts with business circles of various states and other directions of economic diplomacy.

With the direct participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 12 sessions of intergovernmental commissions with various countries were held. 83 documents in the commercial sphere were signed. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the session of the interagency working group on strengthening of the economic cooperation.

Business conferences, exhibitions of Armenian products were organized. The cooperation with international financial structures was continued. Numerous delegations from international financial and credit structures visited Armenia: World Bank, International Monetary Fund, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Asian development Bank.

The Ministry assisted in an active and comprehensive manner to the development of **interparliamentary contacts**, strengthening of the cooperation in parliamentary formats of the international organizations.

Notable steps were taken towards expanding with a number of states of the **decentralized cooperation**.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to coordinate and support the deepening of the **foreign contacts of the state management bodies of Armenia**.

Great attention was attached to the support of the initiatives of the Ministry of Diaspora of Armenia towards strengthening the **Armenia - Diaspora** ties.

The Ministry undertook joint efforts with Ministry of Culture of Armenia towards representing the **Armenian culture**, protecting the Armenian cultural heritage abroad, establishing and developing cultural cooperation with various countries.

The protection of the rights and interests of the citizens and legal persons of Armenia abroad was at the center of attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Consular Department and the consulates provided services to around 148 000 citizens.

During 2016 the international legal framework of Armenia was expanded: 108 international treaties and 33 documents, which do not constitute an international treaty, were signed, 95 intergovernmental, interstate and interdepartmental documents were ratified and 60 intergovernmental, interstate and interdepartmental documents entered into force.

In 2016 the President of Armenia paid 18 foreign visits. 8 heads of state visited Armenia. The President of the National Assembly paid one foreign visit. Presidents of parliaments of 4 states visited Armenia. The Prime Minister of Armenia paid 5 working visits. Heads of governments of 10 states visited Armenia. Minister of Foreign Affairs paid 38 foreign visits, 24 Ministers of Foreign Affairs and leaders of international organizations visited Armenia. Minister of Foreign affairs of Armenia had 104 meetings with his foreign counterparts and leaders of international organizations.

The steps towards raising the international awareness about the positions of Armenia's foreign policy, strengthening the reputation of our country received new impetus. The President of the Republic of Armenia, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs gave dozens of interviews to international influential media outlets, held press conferences and lectures in many countries.

In the host countries diplomatic representations organized dozens of events, dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the Independence of Armenia.