



SUMMARY

REPORT OF THE MFA ACTIVITIES OF

THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

2017

YEREVAN 2018

Throughout the year 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia continued its activities based on the foreign policy guidelines outlined by the President of the Republic of Armenia and his assignments, as well as on the programme of the Government of the Republic of Armenia aimed at strengthening the external security component of the Republic, ensuring favourable external conditions and guarantees for development of the country, the strengthening of mutually beneficial cooperation with partner countries, deepening the involvement within international organisations and integration processes. Active steps have been taken to strengthen the reputation and positions of Armenia on the international platforms, and to develop active cooperation with international and regional economic and financial institutions. The protection of the interests of Armenia and its citizens abroad, as well as the preservation of Armenian cultural heritage, have occupied an essential part of the Ministry's activities.

The foreign policy assignments, programmes and agenda were discussed in a detailed manner during the meeting of the high ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Ambassadors of Armenia accredited in foreign countries, Permanent representatives to the international organizations and Consul Generals that took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on March 2. President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan opened the meeting with a programmatic speech.

Armenia along with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the French Republic, has continued efforts towards creating conducive conditions for advancement of the process of peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and implementation of the agreements reached at the Summits in Vienna, St. Petersburg and Geneva.

The principled position of Armenia on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement was reaffirmed by the President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan in the speech delivered on September 19 at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly.

The Foreign Minister presented the details of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process and the position of Armenia in this regard in his speech delivered at the OSCE Ministerial Council held in December in Vienna. Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian highlighted nine points featuring destructive stance of Azerbaijan, due to which it has not been possible to achieve a progress in the Nagorno Karabakh peace process.

The summit of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan took place in Geneva on October 16, 2017. Following the summit, for the first time in about four years, a joint statement of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs was adopted.

Throughout the year five meetings between the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers took place.

Baku continued its policy of backtracking from the previously reached commitments, thus undermining the negotiation process. Armenia has repeatedly stressed that if Azerbaijan abides to the calls of the Co-Chairs to strictly respect the ceasefire, implements previously reached agreements, reiterates its adherence to the principles of the conflict resolution proposed by the Co-Chairs and constructively engages in the negotiations, then it will pave the way for creating conducive conditions for moving the peace process forward.

In 2017, 14 statements have been adopted within the format of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. Particularly, in December, within the framework of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Vienna, the heads of delegations of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries adopted an annual statement, where they reiterated full support to the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict based on three fundamental principles of international law: non-use of force or threat of force, territorial integrity, equal rights and self-determination of peoples. They stressed that the agreements reached at the Vienna and St. Petersburg summits should be implemented. They urged for the expansion of the monitoring capabilities of the Office of Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and etc. These are the provisions to which Armenia has repeatedly expressed its support, unlike Azerbaijan.

On May 18, the Co-Chairs made a targeted statement, pointing out that Azerbaijan was the first to use artillery on the line of contact violating the ceasefire.

During the year, the President of Armenia received the Co-Chairs in Yerevan three times. The Co-Chairs had meetings with the Foreign Minister as well. Edward Nalbandian also met with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs in Munich, New York, Geneva, Moscow and Vienna. Within the framework of their regional visits, the Co-Chairs visited Stepanakert and met with the leadership of Artsakh.

A statement supporting the activities of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and three principles of the conflict settlement was adopted at the CSTO Collective Security Council Summit meeting in Minsk, on November 30.

The provision on support to the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, as well as the three principles of international law proposed by them as the basis for settlement, were enshrined in the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement.

The three principles of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement were included also in two resolutions adopted by the European Parliament and reaffirmed in the final statement and recommendations of the EU-Armenia Parliamentary Cooperation Commission in December.

Despite the various efforts of the Azerbaijani authorities aimed at the informational blockade of Artsakh, the number of members of foreign parliaments, public figures and politicians, journalists, bloggers and tourists visiting Artsakh has increased.

In 2017, international recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide, and the active involvement of Armenia in the efforts of the international community towards preventing new genocides and crimes against humanity continued to be among the priorities of the Armenian diplomacy,

On April 25, the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament adopted a resolution condemning the Armenian Genocide.

The number of US states that have recognized the Armenian Genocide reached 48 after Wyoming, Texas, Iowa and Indiana adopted relevant decisions. Armenian Genocide has also been recognized and condemned by local self-government bodies in many countries.

The year was marked by the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations of Armenia with a number of countries, as well as membership in various international organizations. This quarter century benchmark was a good opportunity to summarize what has been done and identify the ways of further cooperation. On this occasion, the letters were exchanged with the heads of states, governments, foreign ministers, as well as with the secretary generals of international organizations, in many countries special events dedicated to the 25th anniversary were organised.

The joint efforts have been continued with the Russian Federation aimed at further strengthening of the Armenian-Russian allied and strategic relations in all directions.

There were about a dozen official and working meetings between the Armenian and Russian presidents in bilateral and multilateral formats. There were active contacts between the heads of legislative and executive bodies of the two countries. Dozens of meetings were held between the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Russia, both in bilateral format and multilateral platforms.

The Armenian-Russian close cooperation in defense, military-technical, economic, inter-regional, cultural, scientific-educational, humanitarian and other spheres has been strengthened.

During the year, about 20 intergovernmental and interministerial legal documents have been signed.

The development of the Armenian-American friendly partnership has occupied an important place in the foreign policy agenda of Armenia. The bilateral political dialogue has been maintained. On March 3, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian had a phone conversation with Rex Tillerson, US Secretary of State.

Delegations from the US Congress, as well as California Senate and Assembly visited Armenia in September and October respectively.

Steps towards expanding bilateral trade and economic cooperation have been undertaken.

Expansion of cooperation with the European Union continued to remain one of the main directions of foreign relations of Armenia.

On November 24, the delegation headed by Serzh Sargsyan, the President of Armenia, participated in the 5th Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels, at the end of which Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, in the presence of Serzh Sargsyan and President of the European Council Donald Tusk, signed the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, which became one of the main achievements of the Summit. This comprehensive agreement has opened a new page in Armenia-European Union relations.

Among other achievements of the year 2017 was the initialling of the Agreement on Common Aviation Area, the conclusion of negotiations on joining the Culture sub-programme of the Creative Europe project, and the signing of a Protocol on High-level Mutual Understanding on extending the Trans-European Transport (TEN-T) network to the Republic of Armenia.

In April, President Serzh Sargsyan participated in the meeting of the heads of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) member states in Bishkek, where it was unanimously decided to appoint the representative of Armenia Yuri Khachaturov to a position of the CSTO Secretary General from May.

In 2017, Armenia continued its active involvement in the activities of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

In October Yerevan hosted the session of the heads of the governments of the EAEU member states and the second international forum of the Eurasian Partnership.

Armenia continued its active involvement in the works of the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF) and partner organizations.

On March 7, Serzh Sargsyan, President of Armenia visited the headquarters of the OIF and had a meeting with Michaëlle Jean, Secretary General.

The preparations for the 17th summit of the International Organization of La Francophonie to be held in Yerevan in 2018 has been launched. Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian assumed the chairmanship of the OIF Ministerial Conference at the 34th Annual Meeting of the OIF Ministers in Paris, in November. The Foreign Minister of Armenia delivered a speech at the Ministerial Conference, which has unanimously approved the proposals by the Armenian side on the dates for the OIF Yerevan Summit, the logo and the "Living Together" slogan.

On the occasion of the two-months long Francophonie Season about 600 events the were organized in Armenia in the spring of 2017.

Practical steps have been taken to further develop relations with neighbouring countries.

Armenia has pursued a policy of deepening the existing cooperation with Georgia.

Official visits to Georgia of the President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, Chairman of the National Assembly Ara Babloyan, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan as well as the official and working visits to Armenia of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Mikheil Janelidze took place. The foreign ministers of the two countries held a number of meetings in the framework of multilateral forums.

The reciprocal visits on the level of heads of the different ministries and agencies of the two countries took place on a regular basis.

There Armenian-Iranian cooperation has continued to expand. President Serzh Sargsyan paid a working visit to Iran in August. Prime Minister of Armenia visited Iran. Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Iran had numerous meetings on various international platforms. Foreign Minister of Iran visited Yerevan.

Cooperation has been developed in trade, economy, energy, transport, agriculture, science, education, culture and other spheres.

In his speech at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, President Serzh Sargsyan, referring to the absence of Armenian-Turkish relations, stressed that if there will be no positive developments towards ratification by Turkey of the 2009 Protocols, Armenia will declare the Zurich protocols null and void, and will enter the spring of 2018 without them.

Armenia has actively participated in the ongoing processes within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Attention has been paid to the deepening of traditional ties with the CIS participating states.

President of Armenia visited Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to take part in the official opening ceremonies of the "Astana Expo-2017" international exhibition and the 5th Asian Games respectively.

During the official visit of the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon to Armenia in June a joint statement was adopted by the Presidents of Armenia and Tajikistan and 9 bilateral agreements were signed.

Following the official visit of the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow to Armenia in August, a joint statement of the presidents was adopted and 9 interstate and interministerial agreements were signed.

In November, Igor Dodon, the President of Moldova paid an official visit to Armenia.

Steps have been taken towards deepening the cooperation with European countries. A series of high-level meetings with European high-level officials were held.

President Serzh Sargsyan paid an official visit to the French Republic, a working visit to the Kingdom of Belgium. In the framework of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, the President met with Andrzej Duda, President of Poland.

Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian made official and working visits to France, Austria, Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland, Vatican, Serbia, Estonia, Belgium and Greece.

Within the framework of international conferences, Foreign Minister of Armenia met with the Foreign Ministers of Austria, Finland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, Ireland, Malta, Spain, the United Kingdom and Kosovo.

The Presidents of the Senate of the Netherlands and Czech Republic, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Poland, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, UK Minister for Europe and America, State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Finland visited Armenia. Chairman of the National Assembly of Armenia paid an official visit to Poland.

Sessions of the Armenian-Italian, Armenian-Lithuanian and Armenian-Czech Intergovernmental Commissions were held.

In 2017 Armenia has taken consistent steps to develop relations with the Asia-Pacific region.

With respect to China the year was marked by active mutual interagency visits related to the political, economic, cultural, security spheres and the fight against terrorism.

On November 2-4, upon the invitation of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Serzh Sargsyan paid a working visit to New Delhi. Vice President of India paid an official to Armenia. The Chairman of the National Assembly of Armenia visited Japan and Korea.

The rights of national and religious minorities in the Middle East and their protection from the identity based crimes have always been in the focus of Armenia.

President of the Republic of Armenia paid an official visit to Qatar. He visited UAE to participate in the "Armenia-United Arab Emirates" investment forum in Abu Dhabi. The Foreign Minister visited Qatar.

On September 29-30, the 5th session of the Armenian-Egyptian Intergovernmental Commission was held in Yerevan, where 7 documents were signed.

Steps have been taken to deepen bilateral relations with Israel, which have been marked by high-level reciprocal visits.

In March, Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian visited Jerusalem to attend the solemn ceremony dedicated to the reconstruction of the Aedicule at the Church of Holy Sepulchre. In November, upon the invitation of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Israel, the Foreign Minister of Armenia paid an official visit to Israel.

Three documents have been signed in July during the official visit to Armenia of Tzachi Hanegbi, State Minister for Regional Cooperation of the State of Israel.

The issues of the security of Syrian-Armenians, preservation of Armenian historical and cultural heritage in Syria, and providing assistance to Syrian-Armenians remained in the spotlight. Armenia continued supplying humanitarian aid to Syria. Upon instruction of the President of Armenia, 80 tons of humanitarian aid has been delivered to Syria.

A number of mutual visits on various levels took place between Armenia and Iraq. The Foreign Ministers held meetings in the framework of international organizations. Intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary ties were expanded. The 4th session of the Armenian-Iraqi Intergovernmental Commission was held in Yerevan on September 25-26.

Armenia has taken steps to develop relations with the states of the American continent.

In February, Bolivia's parliamentary delegation visited Armenia and Artsakh.

In October, members of the Delegation of the Mexico-Armenia Friendship Group of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico visited Armenia and Artsakh.

Within the framework of the official visit of the Foreign Minister of Brazil to Armenia in November, a document on trade and investment cooperation between government of the Republic of Armenia and the Federative Republic of Brazil was signed.

Armenia has continued to deepen its engagement in the United Nations (UN) structures.

The President of Armenia participated and delivered a programmatic speech at the 72nd session of the General Assembly. The President had a meeting with António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

On March 16, a solemn event dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Armenia's accession to the UN took place in New York with the participation of Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and UN Secretary-General António Guterres. On March 17, Edward Nalbandian held a meeting with António Guterres. In September, Foreign Minister Nalbandian, who was in New York as part of the delegation of Armenia, held 23 bilateral meetings.

Intensive work has been carried out within the framework of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In November, Armenia was elected as a member of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation for the period 2017-2021, and a member of the UNESCO Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict for the period 2017-2021.

The 150th anniversaries of birth of Komitas and Hovhannes Tumanyan were included in the UNESCO Calendar of anniversaries of eminent personalities and historic events for 2018-2019, and "Kochari, a traditional group dance" was inscribed in the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Great attention was paid to the active involvement of Armenia in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) within all the three dimensions of its activity.

Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian met with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Sebastian Kurz, OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and his successor Thomas Greminger, and the Special Representative for the South Caucasus Ambassador Günther Bächler.

On November 22, Yerevan hosted a conference entitled “Preventing and Countering Hate Crimes against Christians and Members of other Religious Groups - Perspectives from the OSCE and beyond”, organized by the OSCE Austrian Chairmanship and OSCE/ODIHR with the support of the Foreign Ministry of Armenia.

The OSCE Office in Yerevan stopped its activities on August 31 due the refusal of Azerbaijan, to join the consensus over the decision on the extension of the Office’s mandate. Azerbaijan found itself in total isolation on this issue within the OSCE. Discussions have been launched with the OSCE Secretariat and a number of participating states on continuing implementation of the OSCE programmes in Armenia.

Armenia has actively participated in the works of the Council of Europe (CoE) statutory and specialized bodies. Reciprocal visits of the Foreign Minister of Armenia and the heads of structural divisions of the CoE took place.

The cooperation between Armenia and the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) has continued within the framework of the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP). In April, the North Atlantic Council and Armenia approved the Armenia-NATO IPAP 2017-2019 document.

In February, at the NATO Headquarters, President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan met with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

During the parliamentary elections of April 2 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated the works aimed at receiving the international observation missions and ensuring necessary conditions for their activities. About 650 international observers arrived to Armenia on this occasion.

One of the most important objectives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the development of foreign economic relations.

Necessary work has been carried out to organize the process of planning and implementation of the actions deriving from relevant decisions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

The development of trade and economic relations with the People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, the United States, the UAE, India, the Czech Republic and Italy, were on the agenda of consultations held at the office of the president, with the participation of respective Ambassadors of Armenia.

Armenia joined World Free Zones Organization.

The President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as well as the Vice President of the European Investment Bank visited Armenia. The activities within framework of TRACECA programme have been maintained.

In December Foreign Minister of Armenia assumed BSEC presidency.

On May 16, at the session of the general assembly of the Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges in Tehran, a decision was made to transfer the headquarters of the Federation to Armenia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also engaged in the activities towards Armenia's accession to the "Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative" (EITI).

Six sessions of the intergovernmental commission, four business forums were held, and dozens of documents were signed.

Armenia continued its close cooperation on international, regional and bilateral levels in a fight against human trafficking and exploitation. Armenia has a leading position in the list of countries most successfully combating the human trafficking.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has continued coordination of activities of state governing bodies in the field of human rights ensuring their compliance to the international commitments undertaken by Armenia.

Global security and non-conventional issues were on the foreign policy agenda.

On September 21, at the 61st session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Armenia for the first time was elected as a member of the IAEA executive board.

The Republic of Armenia has brought its active, consistent involvement into international peace and security efforts. Participation in peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan (Resolute Support), Kosovo (KFOR), Lebanon (UNIFIL) and Mali (MINUSMA), as well as cooperation with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has continued.

In accordance with the decree of the President of the Republic of Armenia on coordinating the activities of state bodies in the conduct of unified foreign policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has continued to coordinate the external contacts of the Armenian state governing bodies and to contribute to their deepening.

Foreign Ministry of Armenia and the diplomatic representations of the Republic of Armenia supported the efforts related to parliamentary diplomacy, providing comprehensive assistance to the development of inter-parliamentary relations, strengthening and intensifying cooperation in the parliamentary formats of international organizations.

Additional efforts were made to develop the decentralized cooperation with a number of countries.

The strengthening of Homeland-Diaspora ties and the support to the initiatives of the the Ministry of Diaspora in this regard continued to remain among important issues of the foreign policy agenda. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia actively participated in preparatory works and the conduct of the Sixth Armenia-Diaspora Pan Armenian Forum held in Yerevan in September.

Special importance was attached to the activities carried out jointly with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia for the promotion of Armenian culture abroad, preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage abroad and establishment and development of cultural cooperation with different countries. Days of Armenian culture have been organized in many countries around the world.

in 2017 diplomatic relations have been established with 7 countries. As of December, the Republic of Armenia has diplomatic ties with 175 states.

The international legal framework has been expanded. 73 international treaties were signed, 106 international treaties were ratified and verified. 64 international treaties entered into force.

142 936 documents were circulated in the Foreign Ministry system.

The protection of rights and legitimate interests of Armenian citizens and legal entities abroad, as well as the assistance to the Armenian citizens and ethnic Armenians in crisis situations has always been high on the agenda of the Foreign Ministry. The

Foreign Ministry's Consular Department and consular offices abroad served the needs of about 151.000 citizens.

President of the Republic of Armenia paid 21 foreign visits. 4 heads of states had official visits to Armenia. The Chairman of the National Assembly made 8 foreign visits. Heads of parliaments of 3 countries visited Armenia. Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia paid 8 visits abroad. Heads of governments of 8 countries visited Armenia - 1 of them with an official visit and 7 with working visits. Foreign Minister made 41 foreign visits. 19 Foreign Ministers and heads of international organizations visited Armenia. Foreign Minister held 105 meetings with his counterparts from various countries and heads of international organizations.

Throughout the year, the steps aimed at raising the international awareness on foreign policy positions of Armenia and strengthening our country's reputation have been continued.

The President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister gave dozens of interviews to the reputable international media outlets and held press conferences and lectures in a number of countries, presenting the positions of Armenia with regards to various regional and international processes, challenges and their responses, as well as reforms being carried out in the country, economic, investment and tourism opportunities.

Armenia and Artsakh were featured in publications and special editions of various international media websites and periodicals.