

# *Armenians Inside Europe*

**A practical guide to the European Union  
for Armenians in Europe**

2007

*Nouvelles d'Arménie*



Education and Culture

**AGBU**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

Europe is also a formidably diverse mosaic of cultures, of which Armenians are a part. The European Union, the most successful political experiment of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, is enormously significant for those who have a stake or an interest in things Armenian.

During the last 20 years, the European institutions have gradually developed a set of policies that aim to promote diversity and protect minority cultures and languages. They have extended an offer of membership to Turkey, where most Armenians in Europe originate from. And they have played an increasing role in helping build up Armenia's political and economic system while preparing its integration into Europe.

This booklet is a practical guide to the institutions and policies of the European Union written from the perspective of Armenians in Europe. It aims to provide a concise overview of the main policies of specific interest to them, and seeks to encourage an active and constructive approach to citizenship. Its purpose is certainly not to formulate a position or make recommendations; but it does hint, where necessary, at particularly promising areas of work. If some of the information provided invites further reflection and debate, so much the better.

European policy-making, however, is both a vast field of enquiry and a rapidly shifting one. A booklet of this type cannot hope to cover all relevant fields of policy or to anticipate future developments. So we have provided references and sources of information which are well worth investigating. We include indications on the people who take the decisions and on possible EU funding sources. In any event, we encourage the reader to look up [www.insideeurope.eu](http://www.insideeurope.eu), which is regularly updated to reflect the most important policy developments relevant to the issue.

## **THE ARMENIANS**

Armenians live in all European countries. Their story started about 3000 years ago in Armenia- Eastern Anatolia and the South Caucasus. The Armenian Diaspora is about half that age-about 1700 years. Over the centuries, driven by trade or by empires, Armenian communities formed in most European countries, from Bulgaria to Sweden and from Portugal to Russia.

They are variously associated with a language, an alphabet, a Church, a homeland and a state, a commitment to books, education and the arts, and a world-wide web of communities that nurture the Armenian idea, each in their own way. They are connected, above all, by a desire to continue to play a part in a story that spans the millennia.

Armenians also tend to be known for the misfortunes of their history. Their collective survival has repeatedly been at issue, particularly during the 20th century. Many of those who escaped the genocide of 1915 suffered more wars in the Caucasus involving the Russian, British and Turkish Empires, Stalinism and its atrocities, the Second World War on the Russian front and, finally, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the conflicts that accompanied it.

## **HOW TO DEAL WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION**

It celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007, now counts 27 Member States, and has built an intricate system of economic integration that binds together the countries of Europe and promotes cooperation between them. The European Union is primarily the most effective system to develop and enforce international law. But it also tries to operate on the basis of a set of values which include a commitment to democratic governance and fundamental human rights, as well as cooperation between countries, and, more recently, cultural and linguistic diversity.

Euro-pessimism notwithstanding, the EU has already made its mark on the European continent and is there for the long run. So it will continue to shape the environment of Armenia and of the Armenian Diaspora.

Yet political institutions, particularly when they operate on a continental scale, can be rather blunt instruments. That is why they need, and often

value, dialogue and cooperation with civil society to understand the issues, resolve contradictions, gather information, develop consensus and help develop policy. Most often, much progress can be achieved from dialogue with various policy-makers, whether top politicians or rank-and-file expert, in the legislative or executive branch, sympathizer or sceptic.

Because the European Union has expressed a commitment to cultural diversity in Europe, to the development and stability of the Armenian State, and to peaceful coexistence between peoples, there is reason to expect that Armenians and the European Union share an agenda.

### **Our advice to those intending to approach the EU.**

- Seek cooperation with the EU: help them to help you. How can helping you make their job easier?
- Be information rich. The EU Commission and Parliament are usually recognized as open institutions, where most decision-makers are interested in new information, providing it is relevant to their jobs. But most people in the EU also know very little about Armenians. Make a rich and interesting case; provide useful and credible information.
- Make sure you understand EU values and existing policy. Emphasize those aspects that support your case.
- Make sure you understand the rules and the instrument, of policy which the EU can use. Legislation is possible in many, but not in all areas of policy (the treaty determine which). Budgetary powers (money) are extensively used: the EU funds a wide range of programmes across the continent and in the rest of the world. Promoting norms and raising awareness is also a widely used policy instrument.
- Not all is possible through information and dialogue. Sometimes, lines must be drawn and conflicts addressed. Make sure your objectives are clear and you have thought through a workable strategy.

## II. THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE ARMENIAN REPUBLIC

### EUROPE'S NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY: A FIRST STEP TOWARDS ARMENIA'S EUROPEAN INTEGRATION?

*"The EU is an axis around which to rally our energies."*

*Vartan Oskanian, Foreign Minister of Armenia*

On November 14, 2006, Armenia signed a groundbreaking agreement with the European Union that should have far-reaching consequences for their relationship. It was a direct outcome of the launch, back in 2003, of the European Neighbourhood Policy, which aimed to create an intermediary's space between Member States and the rest of the world. The policy aims to grant states in Europe's neighbourhood, including the three republics of the South Caucasus, some of the advantages of membership, and to integrate them, each in its own way, into the European economic system.

This form of partial European integration is not entirely new: at the other end of the European continent, Norway and Iceland have already been integrated into the EU's system of governance without actually becoming members. But the Union's western neighbours are stable and prosperous democracies; at its eastern border, by contrast, the EU's challenge is to help stabilise, economically and politically, the countries of its periphery



The President of Armenia Robert Khocharyan and the European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso

by exporting a European model whose effectiveness seems to have been demonstrated during the EU's enlargement to the former communist states of central Europe. Reasoning that the lack of democracy, human rights violations and ineffective governance all contribute to stagnation, conflict and instability, the EU hopes that policy will help prevent or resolve such problems as organized crime, illegal immigration, environmental threats, nuclear safety and the threat of violent conflicts.

Armenia was the 8th country to sign an Action Plan with the EU. The Azerbaijani and Georgian Foreign Ministers signed their own Action Plan at the same time.

Armenia's Action Plan sets out the main axes of co-operation between the EU and Armenia for the five years to come and establishes priorities in the



The Armenian Prime Minister  
Serzh Sargsyan and the European  
Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner

field of reforms to be carried out in Armenia itself. Until now, the main treaty binding Armenia and the European Union was a “Partnership and Cooperation Agreement” (PCA), which entered into force in 1999. Armenia is already implementing this partnership agreement and adopted a national programme in 2006 to harmonize its legislation with EU standards.

Unlike the PCA, which sets out a complete, long-term reform programme, the recently adopted Action Plan is a political document, and it focuses on concrete measures to be adopted within five years. It is supplemented by substantial financial support, focussed on the Action Plan's priorities. In principle, the Action Plan should be a first step towards a closer integration of Armenia into the EU's economic system, and towards a closer relationship with the EU.



The Armenian Foreign Minister  
Vartan Oskanian and the European  
Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner



The Action Plan has considerable political significance for Armenia. The European Union is indeed the only power that seems able and willing to provide a model for reforms in the country and among its neighbours, to actively promote those reforms, to help implement them, and, possibly, to help improve relations among neighbours. Generally speaking, furthermore, Europe is playing an increasing role in the region, partly as a result of Turkey's accession process. Europe has had a Special Representative for the South Caucasus since 2003 whose job is to supervise and coordinate its actions in the region. The post is currently occupied by the Swedish senior diplomat, Peter Semneby.

Armenia's Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian believes that the EU can contribute to promoting regional cooperation in the region: "European institutions provide an opportunity for good neighbourly relations today". The consistency in the EU's approach from this point of view is beyond doubt: for instance, Europe has objected to Turkish plans to build a railway line between Kars and Tbilissi, bypassing Armenia, and it calls for an opening of the Turkish-Armenian border. But it has not yet chosen to mobilise either resources or political will for this purpose.

Europe's commitment to the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights in Armenia is among the Action Plan's priorities. After the latest parliamentary elections in Armenia, the EU's Special Representative, Peter Semneby, declared that "Armenia passed the test, which gives a good basis for continuing to develop the partnership with the EU".

But the Action Plan is particularly significant from an economic point of view. It should provide for a significant deepening of commercial and economic relations, for the harmonisation of Armenia's economic legislation

to match EU standards, and for a lowering of non-tariff barriers to trade. This package of measures should encourage investment in Armenia, exports from Armenia to the EU, as well as economic growth. Funding to support reforms and development in Armenia should also increase.

On the subject of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Action Plan mentions the need to take the principle of self-determination into account-but Azerbaijan's equivalent document mentions the opposite principle of territorial integrity! And on that other sensitive question, the future of the Medzamor nuclear power station, the Action Plan does not set a deadline for the installation's closure, though the EU has long insisted that it must be closed down.

There is no doubting the importance of this Action Plan from the point of view of Armenia. For their part, the determination of Europeans to contribute to Armenia's development is limited by the fact that the EU has not yet identified interests sufficiently salient to justify a sustained interest in this country. By way of consequence, Armenia remains largely unknown in Brussels, except maybe for 'it's' genocide.

Integrating Armenia into the European system of governance is a major, long-term project, to which Armenians throughout Europe can contribute. The Action Plan that has just been adopted is a first step.

**“We count on the power of our Diaspora who comfortably represent two cultures and serve as a bridge between Armenia and the countries of Europe and the European neighborhood.”**

***V. Oskanian, Foreign Minister of Armenia***

Charles Tannock MEP,  
the European Parliament rapporteur on the  
European Neighbourhood Policy



## **WILL ARMENIA JOIN THE EU ONE DAY?**

The latest polls suggest that 4 out of 5 citizens of Armenia would like their country to join the European Union-and that two out of three do not expect that to happen before 2015 at the earliest. Successive Armenian governments, furthermore, have expressed their commitment to “European integration”- and are working steadily at adapting their country to EU standards. Armenia is also a Member of the Council of Europe and a European country.

In the EU-Armenia Action Plan, the EU “takes note of the European aspirations expressed by Armenia”, an unprecedented, if diplomatically vague, acknowledgement of Armenia’s aspiration to join the Union. EUSR Semneby comments that “the European neighbourhood policy does not provide for a membership perspective, but it does not exclude it either. A rigorous implementation of the Action Plan would of course be an advantage from this point of view, and would demonstrate that the commitment expressed by Armenia is genuine.”

But unlike Georgia, who clamour for EU membership, Armenia is often

### **THE ACTION PLAN’S 6 PRIORITIES**

In eight priority areas, the plan provides for (generally) concrete and identifiable measures to be implemented in the next five years.

- 1.** Democracy, the rule of law, the judicial system and the fight against corruption
- 2.** Human rights
- 3.** Economic development, the fight against poverty and sustainable development
- 4.** Promoting investment
- 5.** Harmonisation of the legislative and administrative framework, according to European norms
- 6.** Energy and the closure of the Medzamor nuclear power station
- 7.** Nagorno-Karabakh
- 8.** Regional Cooperation.

The full text of the Action Plan is at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action\\_plans/](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/)

cautious in its approach to the EU for two reasons. The first is that it is reluctant to alienate Russia, which is hostile to EU enlargement in its neighbourhood. The second is that the EU is suffering from enlargement fatigue: the number of Member States in the EU grew from 15 in 2004 to 27 in 2007. France in particular fears that hasty enlargements are damaging the European institutions. There seems little point in pressing hard for membership at a moment when neither Russia nor the EU would welcome this.

## SOME OF THE PEOPLE THAT MATTER

■ The European Commissioner in charge of the External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy is **Benita Ferrero-Waldner**. Her personal web site is at: [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/ferrero-waldner/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/ferrero-waldner/index_en.htm)

■ The European Parliament's Committee where all texts concerning Armenia are debated and prepared is its Foreign Affairs Committee. Within the Committee, the person currently responsible for the South Caucasus (the "Rapporteur") is **Lydie Polfer**, a member from Luxembourg from the Liberal Democratic (ALDE) group.



Lydie Polfer

Her web site is at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert/>



Marie-Anne Isler Beguin

■ The European Parliament also appoints parliamentary delegations to follow relations with specific countries. French Green member **Marie-Anne Isler Beguin** is specifically in charge of relations with the countries of the South Caucasus, including Armenia. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert/groupAndCountry/>

■ At the Council of the EU, the Foreign Ministers are in charge of relations with Armenia and other non-EU countries. Their work is prepared in advance by their countries' Permanent Representatives (Ambassadors). <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/>

■ The EU Council has also appointed a Special Representative for the South Caucasus, currently Swedish diplomat **Peter Semneby**. He personally



Peter Semneby

follows EU policy in the South Caucasus on a full time basis, speaks on behalf of the EU and acts as an initiator for EU policy.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.asp?id=1037&lang=en>.

■ Finally, the EU Council also holds yearly meetings with the Foreign Ministers of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The EU is usually represented there by the Foreign Minister of the country chairing the EU Council, usually accompanied by other Foreign Ministers and officials, including the EU Special Representative and the Commission. Similar meetings between officials from the EU and from the Armenian government are also held regularly.

## Information sources

■ **The European Neighbourhood policy's main page:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents\\_en.htm#5](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents_en.htm#5)

■ **Armenia's web page at the European Commission:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/armenia/intro/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/armenia/intro/index.htm)

■ **The European Commission's delegation in Armenia,**

at <http://www.delarm.cec.eu.int>

■ **Armenia's Mission to the European Union**

<http://www.armembassy.be>

■ **The EC has a special helpdesk on External Relations & the European Neighbourhood Policy.** You can contact them:

- by sending an email from the web page:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/feedback/question2.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/feedback/question2.htm)
- by telephone + 32 -2 -299 90 44 or by fax + 32- 2- 299 92 88.
- Or by writing to:

DG RELEX I/5 Information & Communication  
European Commission, Wetstraat / Rue de la Loi 170 (CHAR 13/03)  
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

More links and information also at [www.insideeurope.eu](http://www.insideeurope.eu)

## **OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS**

- The European Movement is the movement that has most consistently pressed for European integration since the very beginning. It has opened a branch in Armenia. <http://www.europeanmovement.am>
- AEPLAC is an EU-funded centre of expertise assisting with adapting Armenia's legislation to EU standards: [www.aeplac.am](http://www.aeplac.am)
- The International Centre for Human Development (ICHD) is one of Armenia's leading Think Tanks and works routinely on Armenia-EU relations: [www.ichd.org](http://www.ichd.org)

## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

The European Neighbourhood Policy is generating opportunities for financial support to projects that serve its policy objectives. Some of the EU's funding is channelled through large-scale projects negotiated with the Armenian government and tendered out to specialized organisations, usually professional consultancies (see box). But a great number of other funding programmes are subject to regular calls for proposals. Various organisations, particularly non-profit organisations, can apply for support for specific projects. Here are some of the fields in which funding will be provided.

### **GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE.**

Between 2007 and 2013, the EU's technical assistance to Armenia under the ENP will be EUR 98 million, though more could be provided under certain conditions. This will be allocated to projects agreed between the Armenian government and the EU: about EUR 30 million will go to democratic reforms, another EUR 30 million to regulatory reform and strengthening government capacity, while the remaining 40 million should go to poverty reduction. The full "Indicative Programme" outlining this is available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/armenia/csp/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/armenia/csp/index.htm).

**Capacity building in civil society.** The ENP aims in particular to strengthen civil society in partner countries, frequently through partnerships with EU civil society. In 2007-2010 European assistance will aim to strengthen:

- Civil society organisations and other actors at national and regional level aiming at democratisation, respect for human rights, freedom of expression, women's rights, education, environment, research etc;
- the capacity of civil society to interact with its government.
- Dialogue between the social partners;
- The capacity of civil society to follow the implementation of the ENP Action Plans;
- regional and subregional civil society cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

**Education and training.** *Tempus* is a programme dedicated to promoting cooperation and partnerships between Universities in the EU and in neighbouring countries such as Armenia. *Erasmus Mundus* provides scholarships for post-graduate studies in the EU financed from internal Community funds and has attracted many successful applicants from ENP countries. Over 1500 students from the ENP countries will start studies in the EU during the academic year of 2007/8 thanks to this new programme. The programme includes undergraduate, post-graduate and doctoral students as well as university teachers. *Lifelong Learning* is a new Community programme for education focuses on exchanges for students and teachers at all levels of education, as well as on policy development, exchange and learning.

- For more information: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.html).

**Research.** Science and research constitute one of the largest EU funding programme. It aims to support the development of a competitive, "knowledge-based" economy in Europe. The European Commission seeks to deepen science and technology cooperation in order to create a **borderless European Research area**, including Neighbouring countries.

- The EU's research web site: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm>
- Funding for non-EU countries: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/partner->

**Youth.** Youth exchanges are an important part of the work on promoting

mutual understanding. The *Youth in Action* programme, launched in 2007, includes increased opportunities for cooperation with neighbourhood countries within the *Youth in the World* action. Organisations from the EU and the ENP countries will cooperate through exchanges and training and network projects. ENP organisations can also participate in other actions, in particular the *European Voluntary Service*, on similar conditions.

**Cross-border cooperation (CBC)** involves local actors such as civil society, local and regional authorities in cooperation, often with an important civil society dimension. The European Commission claims that cross-border cooperation is a major priority under the ENPI. It has established in particular a cross border programme for the Black Sea Region. Under this programme, subsidies will also be available for projects involving organizations in Armenia.

**Cooperation between local and regional authorities.** EU-wide networks and national associations as well as individual regions, cities and communes are actively involved in cooperation with local and regional government in the partner countries. In the ENPI bilateral programmes, much increased attention is given to strengthening the local government level, reflecting the APs which contain commitments to strengthen local and regional governments.

**Culture.** Dialogue between writers, thinkers, painters, artists as well as cultural organisations is part of the ENP. So is the dialogue between civilisations and faiths. The Community programme Culture (2007-2013) gives opportunities for cooperation with third countries.

**TAIEX** is a service set up by the European Commission to provide short term technical assistance and advice on the transposition of EU legislation into the national legislation of beneficiary countries and on the subsequent administration, implementation and enforcement of such legislation. Its mains users are those involved in the transposition and implementation of EU legislation, including government institutions at all levels, but also professional and commercial associations and those whose mission is to revise, translate or interpret legal texts.

Find out more on TAIEX at: <http://taiex.ec.europa.eu/>



### III. THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA IN EUROPE

*“There is another Christian people, the Armenians, who are inclined to trading [across the old continent] and are adept at interacting peacefully with all the nations they encounter.”*  
**Immanuel Kant**

The European Union has long sought to promote cooperation between countries and cohesion in European society at large. Along with the Council Europe, it has accordingly been increasingly active in promoting exchanges between countries, the notions of European citizenship, identity and culture, and has also invested in education, research and the arts. Most of these activities are relevant to the Armenian Diaspora.

It is true that these are usually areas where the Union’s power to legislate are limited. But it energetically promotes values and ideas, formulates recommendations and runs campaigns, all of it backed up with funding programmes. Furthermore, the EU has also become a hub for civil-society organizations and networks, which Armenian organizations can engage with to take part more effectively in the EU’s policy-forming debates.

#### A EUROPE OF DIASPORAS

The idea of Diasporas has emerged surprisingly recently in European policy debates. But both the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly and an international academic conference in Barcelona broke new ground in 2005 when they recognized diasporas’ role: diasporas transcend national borders and promote multiple, rather than exclusively national identities. They also often act as bridges between cultures.

The Council of Europe’s Assembly declared that *“Diaspora cultures constitute valuable networks for intellectual, cultural and educational exchange throughout Europe and the rest of the world. They are a key factor in the promotion of cultural diversity, intercultural understanding and tolerance.”* The Barcelona Conference, for its part, emphasized that *“both the diasporas themselves and Europe as a whole have a vested interest in and a responsibility for working towards the preservation of their heritage and values”*.

Declarations don’t make policy, but the notion that durable transnational cultural communities—diasporas—and the EU can make common cause is novel and promising. Until recently, diasporas were more readily associated with conflict than with international cooperation and intercultural skills.

Furthermore, the idea that diasporas deserve a place and indeed add value to the EU is entirely compatible with the values the EU is trying to promote through its programmes. In the future, it could well be integrated more into various into EU policies regarding languages, culture, education, youth, and so on.

- The Council of Europe's Report on Diasporas: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/>
- The Barcelona Conference and declaration on the Diasporas of Europe: [http://www.menuhin-foundation.com/diasporas\\_conference/UserFiles/File/Conference\\_Proceedings1.pdf](http://www.menuhin-foundation.com/diasporas_conference/UserFiles/File/Conference_Proceedings1.pdf)
- The International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation carries forward the ideas of its founder, late Lord Menuhin. This includes a commitment to the arts, to education and to the promotion of minority cultures. The Foundation is the initiator of the Assembly of European Cultures. <http://www.menuhin-foundation.com>

## **THE OTHER EUROPEAN ORGANISATION**

The Council of Europe (CoE) is an entirely separate European institution. It has 44 Member states and covers the whole European continent, whereas the European Union only has 27. It is a more traditional organisation, with fewer powers and a much smaller budget. It does not enact legislation through institutional procedures as the EU does, but through more traditional international Conventions, which each of its member states is free to sign, or not.

The Council of Europe has a mandate covering human rights and the promotion of democratic governance as well as cultural policy, language policy, racism and tolerance, cultural heritage, youth, and other areas. The CoE is often particularly influential as a sort of pan-European Think-Tank, initiating debates and launching ideas which the European institutions later take over. After all, the CoE, which was founded in 1949, was even a precursor to the European Community itself, which was born 8 years later, in 1957.

- The Council of Europe: <http://www.coe.int>
- The Council of Europe's portal on human rights and minorities: [http://www.coe.int/T/E/human\\_rights/minorities/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/minorities/)

## MULTILINGUALISM

The latest European Commissioner to be appointed, Leonard Orban of Romania, was asked to lead EU policy on multilingualism. His appointment placed a new emphasis on a field of policy which had long been obscured by more traditional policy portfolios.

Europe's language policy started out in response to practical problems. EU citizens must be able to understand and communicate with their institutions and the European institutions rely, for their daily operation, on numerous interpreters and translators. But each additional official EU language adds to the cost of operating EU institutions: the current 23 official languages cost about 1% of the EU's budget.

It is not just about administrative expenses. The language issue in fact goes to the heart of the main challenge that confronts the EU: how can Europe durably create a sense of community and solidarity among peoples who do not understand one another? Short of choosing a single common language, as the USA did, two centuries ago, the only way to ensure that Europeans can communicate with one another and share a common political space will be to ensure that as many of them as possible speak languages other than their own mother tongue.

European language policy has thus morphed into a policy to promote multilingualism. The ambition of the European institutions is to transform an apparent constraint – the number of languages spoken in Europe-into an asset. “My purpose, declared Commissioner Orban, is to prove that cultural and linguistic diversity are not a burden but an opportunity to grasp”. He makes his case to business too: “multilingualism is good for business [...] and it can give industry a competitive edge”. But multilingualism is also a value in its own right: “Europe's cultural and linguistic diversity is a source of wealth; it must be encouraged and promoted”.

Cultural and linguistic diversity, once a costly burden, has been elevated to the rank of a founding value for the EU. Indeed, the EU's new motto is: “United in Diversity”.

Most of Europe's languages, however, still have no official status in the European institutions. Europe counts 23 official languages, and 60 other languages, not counting numerous dialects and languages spoken by

immigrant communities. Supporters of regional and minority languages have capitalised on the EU's interest in diversity and there are now influential European coalitions that seek to promote lesser used languages. Since the adoption, in 1998, of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, they have enjoyed a degree of official recognition.

As in many fields concerning culture, education and human rights, the European Commission has borrowed its approach from the Council of Europe. The Armenian language is in fact now officially a minority language in Europe: it enjoys official recognition in Poland, Hungary, Cyprus, Romania and Bulgaria.

This recognition endows the Armenian language with a new legitimacy,

**“Multilingualism has been, from the very beginning, part of the genetic code of the Union”.**

*Leonard Orban,  
European  
Commissioner*

opens the door to the jealously guarded community of European languages, and may open the way to public funding too.

At the heart of the EU's policy in support of multilingualism is a substantial funding programme, the «Action Programme for Lifelong Learning”. This programme, which covers the entire educational cycle, places particular emphasis on language learning. It is the first time that lesser used languages are covered by a European programme of this magnitude, and educational institutions or professionals

dedicated to promoting the Armenian language would be entitled to take part in it.

In the long run, the renewed legitimacy which Europe gives lesser used languages such as Armenian may prove at least as important as funding opportunities. According to linguist Gilbert Dalgalian, “representations and the ideological background” created by our surroundings are crucial to the development of languages. If Europeans come to consider smaller languages as a normal part of their cultural surroundings, the decline of the Armenian language in the Diaspora may be reversed.

## SOME KEY PLAYERS

■ Commissioner **Leonard Orban's**  
Web site is at: [http://ec.europa.eu/  
commission\\_barroso/orban/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/orban/index_en.htm)

■ The European Parliament Committee responsible for the issue is the Committee on Education and Culture, Chaired by **Nikolaos Sifunakis**.  
On the web at: [http://  
www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/  
cult\\_home\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/cult_home_en.htm).



Nikolaos Sifunakis



Leonard Orban

■ **The Council formation on the topic is the Council on Education, Youth and culture.**  
<http://www.consilium.europa.eushowPage.asp?id=416&lang=en>

## OFFICIAL WEB SITES

■ The European Commission's web site for minority languages: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/  
languages/langmin/euromosaic/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages/langmin/euromosaic/index_en.html)

■ EC's languages web site: [http://ec.europa.eu/  
education/policies/lang/languages\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages_en.html)

■ EC's education training web site: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html)  
Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: an Action Plan: [http://  
ec.europa.eu/education/doc/official/keydoc/actlang/act\\_lang\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/official/keydoc/actlang/act_lang_en.pdf)

## OTHER ORGANISATIONS DEALING WITH MINORITY LANGUAGES

■ The European Bureau for Minority Languages: [http://living-diversity.eu/2006/  
Charta\\_EN.pdf](http://living-diversity.eu/2006/Charta_EN.pdf)

■ Eurolang: <http://www.eurolang.net/>

■ Euromosaic, the EC's network on minority languages: [http://www.uoc.edu/  
euromosaic/web/homefr/index1.html](http://www.uoc.edu/euromosaic/web/homefr/index1.html)

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND THE YEAR OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

The European Union is a uniquely diverse political entity. It includes 27 different states, each promoting at least one national culture and it includes also countless minorities, diasporas and immigrant groups. But while Member States tend to be the guardians of a national culture, the EU has chosen to promote cultural diversity itself as a value- its motto is “Unity in Diversity”.

To help promote cultural diversity as an asset rather than a liability the European Union and the Council of Europe have launched an “Intercultural Dialogue”, culminating, in 2008, with the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The EU will seek to encourage intercultural dialogue in practice, underline the contribution of different cultures in a European context, promote an active citizenship, identify best practices and try to integrate cultural dialogue in EU policies.

Intercultural dialogue is not a policy; it is, rather, a European campaign. Armenians may have a place in the Year of Intercultural Dialogue and in the EU’s cultural policy in general. The EU can provide an opportunity to

**“Culture is all the dreams and labour tending towards forging humanity. [...] Europe is a culture or it is not.”**

*Denis de Rougemont, quoted in the 2007 Commission Communication on its cultural policy.*

educate fellow Europeans about Armenian culture as a European culture; they can take this opportunity to highlight the very unique place of Diasporas in the European cultural puzzle; they can share Armenians’ special experience of cultural dialogue; and they can try to promote dialogue with Turks in particular.

Making the most of cultural diversity and promoting intercultural dialogue are part of the Zeitgeist of the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century. These themes are likely to remain central to many of the EU’s actions and policies in the years to come.

## SOME KEY PLAYERS

■ Cultural Policy and the Intercultural Dialogue are led by Commissioner **Jan Figel**: [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/figel/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/figel/index_en.htm)

■ As for language policy, the European Parliament Committee responsible is the Committee on Education and Culture, ([http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/cult\\_home\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/cult_home_en.htm) and the Council of Ministers' configuration for Education, Youth and Culture (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.asp?id=416&lang=en>).



Commissioner Jan Figel

■ The Commission's group of 10 leading intellectuals for Intercultural Dialogue. [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/orban/news/docs/press\\_release/group\\_of\\_intellectuals/group\\_of\\_intellectuals\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/orban/news/docs/press_release/group_of_intellectuals/group_of_intellectuals_en.pdf)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

■ The web site of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue: <http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu>

■ The European Commission's Web site on culture: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/index_en.html)

## **THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM AND GENOCIDE DENIAL**

On April 19 2007, the Council of the European Union adopted legislation that made it illegal to “publicly condone, deny or grossly trivialize genocides, crimes against humanity and war crimes”. The legislation (a “framework decision” under EU law) aims to combat racism and xenophobia in Europe. This is the outcome of a difficult negotiation initiated by the European Commission in 2001, whose aim was to harmonize laws on hate crimes across the EU. Like most EU laws, the text will be implemented through legislation adopted by the parliaments of the Member States.

According to the text, Member States can choose not to make genocide denial illegal unless the genocide in question has been recognized by an international court. This is tailored to allow Member States to exclude the Armenian genocide, which was never sanctioned by an international court, from the scope of the legislation. This was of course introduced as a sop to the Turkish government, which denies the Armenian genocide as a matter of policy.

However, while the new legislation allowed Member States to exclude the Armenian genocide from the ban on genocide denial, it does not require them to do so. The decision will be up to the parliament and government of each Member State. The exclusion clause, furthermore, is subject to review in a few years’ time and could be abolished if it is abused.

This is the first time EU law makes genocide denial- and indeed hate speech in general – subject to criminal law. Although some Member States already have similar legislation, they are in a minority, and have never applied it to the denial of the Armenian genocide.

In October 2006, a member of the European Commission had even criticized the French Parliament for voting a draft law to ban denial of the Armenian genocide. It is ironic, then, that barely six months later the EU itself should have adopted legislation which is in fact supportive of the French law. But the decision to adopt the framework decision had not been an easy one to make. EU Member States remain divided between the imperative of preserving freedom of expression and the struggle against racism. They do not all share the opinion of philosopher Karl Popper, as quoted by German Justice Minister Brigitte Zypries: “in the name of tolerance, we must claim the right to be intolerant with the intolerant.”.



Why European legislation against racism? In the first place, article 29 of the EU Treaty, the European institutions' Bible, mandates the EU to act against racism. Furthermore, disparities between the Member States' legislation make it increasingly difficult to prosecute racist crime; the Internet has indeed made that problem worse. Finally, the EU has the legitimacy to act: 84% of Europeans support increased EU action against racism.

The German government regularly invoke their country's "specific historic responsibility" to press for the adoption of European legislation on racism. For them, consistency self-evidently demands that genocide denial be made illegal at the same time as incitement to racial hatred.

How the EU's Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia is translated into each Member State's law is now up to each government and parliament. But a legal principle has been established: genocide denial is now a matter for the courts.

## THE PEOPLE THAT MATTER

■ European Parliament Committee on Freedom, Security and Justice. Its Chairman is **Jean-Marie Cavada** (France).

■ The Person who drafted the report on the framework decision on Racism and Xenophobia is **Martine Roure**, who is also from France. The Web site of the Committee on Freedom, Security and Justice: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/libe\\_home\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/libe_home_en.htm)



Jean-Marie Cavada

■ The Council's formation following racism and xenophobia is the Justice and Home Affairs Council, whose members are the Minister of Justice of the European Union.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>



Martine Roure

■ Proposals for policy and legislation are drafted by the European Commission. The Commissioner in charge of the issue is **Franco Frattini** (at [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/frattini/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/frattini/index_en.htm)).

## OTHER ORGANISATIONS

■ **ENAR**, the European Network Against Racism.

<http://www.enar-eu.org/>

More links and information also at [www.insideeurope.eu](http://www.insideeurope.eu)



Franco Frattini

## EUROPEAN FUNDING PROGRAMMES

Europe runs a substantial number of funding programmes that could be relevant to the Armenian Diaspora. This section focuses only on the most important and the more relevant such programmes. Readers wishing to investigate further should refer to the Inside Europe web site at [www.insideeurope.eu](http://www.insideeurope.eu).

**Culture 2007.** This is the European Commission's flagship programme on culture. It helps promote cultural cooperation, the transnational mobility of people working in the arts and the circulation of artistic works and cultural products in Europe. It provides support for cooperation projects in different artistic disciplines, in cultural heritage, in cultural history and to bodies working at the European level. It also supports the preservation of sites and memorials of historical atrocities as well as the conservation of European cultural heritage.

■ For more information: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/index_en.html)  
See also: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/index\\_en.htm](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm)

**The “Europe for Citizens” programme** encompasses a wide range of activities designed to foster active citizenship and civil society, with the aims of a united Europe, enriched by cultural diversity, and the forging of a European identity. This includes town twinning activities, debates and awareness on Europe and on its future, support to civil society organizations at the European level – and “remembrance activities”: the preservation of the main sites and archives associated with deportations, and commemorating the victims of Nazism and Stalinism.

■ For more information: [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.html)  
See also: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index\\_en.htm](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.htm)

**The Lifelong Training Programme** is the EU's flagship programme on education, and is also a very substantial programme, funding initiatives at all level of education, from primary school to adult education. Education policy, promoted at the European level, is viewed as essential to achieving the Union's objectives, including a high level of education, a sophisticated and competitive workforce, and a culturally diverse Europe. The programme fosters cooperation, exchange and mobility in education and training. It also covers the promotion of language learning, on which particular

emphasis is placed, and innovative practices.

The programme's web sites: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html)  
and [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/static/en/lfp\\_index\\_en.htm](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/static/en/lfp_index_en.htm)

**Youth in Action.** This European programme for youth promotes a great number of initiatives at the local and at the international level, including international youth exchanges, voluntary service, training, seminars and a number of other activities. Several of the activities promoted by the programme can also take place in Armenia. The Youth Programme's Internet site: [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html)

**Research**, under the EU's 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Research Programme, is one of the EU's priorities, and its budget, at more than • 7 billion yearly, represents a very important investment. EU research projects are expected to be of a high quality and often involve complex partnerships and networks. They promote mobility, international partnerships and cooperation, high-risk projects, capacity building in research and cooperation with non-EU countries... EU research funding also covers the social sciences, including questions relating to the development of European society and international relations.

■ For more information: [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html) or  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/research/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/research/index_en.html)

**The Structural Funds.** This review of EU funding would not be complete without a reference to another of the EU's most substantial funds - the cohesion and structural funds. They currently absorb around 44% of the EU's total budget. Their objectives are to help the less developed regions of the Union to catch up with the rest and to promote social cohesion, competitiveness and economic development throughout Europe. This includes training and investment in "human capital" too. Projects must fit into plans drawn up by each Member State, not in Brussels.

■ More on the structural funds:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/regional_policy/index_en.htm)

## IV. TURKEY, THE ARMENIANS AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

### TURKEY'S ACCESSION TO THE EU: WHERE ARMENIANS FIT IN

Turkey officially started negotiating its EU membership on October 3, 2005. But the country turned out to be the most controversial of all recent candidate countries, and these negotiations are expected to last a long time, most likely 10 years or more.

As if to add to the troubles of the Turkish government of the day, Jacques Chirac, who was then France's President, made an unprecedented declaration at the end of 2006: he called upon Turkey to recognize the Armenian genocide before it joins the European Union.

But, Chirac's declaration notwithstanding, recognition of the Armenian genocide is still not one of the official conditions for Turkey's EU membership, and it does not even feature on the agenda of official Turkey-EU discussions. Furthermore, the EU has apparently not communicated to Ankara that it will have to establish relations with Armenia if it hopes to join the EU one day.

How can such inconsistencies be explained? How do the European institutions in Brussels approach these questions? And under which powers and policies does the EU address them, if at all?

#### GENOCIDE RECOGNITION- NOT A CONDITION FOR MEMBERSHIP

The EU executive, the European Commission, has long made clear that genocide recognition is not a condition

*European Parliament,  
27 September 2006:*

**“Although recognition of the Armenian genocide as such is formally not one of the Copenhagen criteria, it is indispensable for a country on the road to membership to come to terms with and recognise its past.”**

for Turkey joining the EU. It appears, furthermore, that the question has never been debated at the EU's Council of Ministers (the EU's supreme decision-making body) in the context of Turkey's accession negotiations either. In fact, no Member State has so much as raised the issue within that body so far.

This omission is not only justified by Europe's caution in the face of Turkey's explosive reaction to such issues. It can also be explained by the EU's understanding of the issue as a "historical dispute".

In the 1990's, as the EU was working on its major enlargement in Central and Eastern Europe, a number of historical disputes came to complicate the process. Italy once tried to extract compensation from Slovenia on account of the Italians expelled and expropriated by Marshal Tito after World War II. Germany's Chancellor Kohl launched a controversy over the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia, also after World War II. But the Europeans excluded these questions from official negotiations, underlining that they would restrict their dealings to the so-called "Copenhagen criteria" and that the then 15 Member States could not allow

**“An open and constructive exchange of views is needed in Turkey, including on the most sensitive issues.**

**That is necessary [...] for Turkey's reconciliation with its neighbours, including Armenia.”**

***O. Rehn, EU  
Commissioner, 26  
September 2006***

themselves to become the arbiters of ancient quarrels. These were convenient precedents to rely on when the question of the Armenian genocide intruded onto the scene. Those are the precedents that later led the EU to dismiss calls to include genocide recognition among the conditions to Turkey's EU accession.

So Europe does not aspire to become the arbiter of history; if nothing else, that view can be credited for its consistency. But the refusal of the European Commission and Council to mention the genocide, and their habit of resorting to customary euphemisms—"tragic events" or "events of 1915/1916" is more difficult to justify. In October 2006, European Commissioner Olli Rehn went one step further when he urged France not to adopt

the legislation that would make it illegal to deny the Armenian genocide, though it is already illegal to deny the Holocaust in several EU countries, including France. The Commission no doubt legitimately feared the draft legislation would further damage EU-Turkey relations, but it may seem a little late in the day to discover the political relevance of an issue it had ostensibly and persistently excluded from its remit.

## Minorities in Turkey

While it refuses to get involved in historical disputes, the European Union does consider the fight against all forms of discrimination relevant to the accession talks. The issue is indeed covered by the EU treaties and by several pieces of European legislation, thus providing a basis to demand that Turkey treat fairly its minorities, including its small Armenian minority. The discrimination suffered by Turkey's Armenians is the result both of specific legislation and of well



Olli Rehn and Abdullah Gül

established practices. Traditionally, they aimed to prevent Armenians and other non-Muslims communities from developing and to drive them towards assimilation or into exile. The EU has often focussed on the arbitrary expropriations of buildings owned by the Armenian Church, which are routinely carried out in Turkey. Generally speaking, the Commission has acknowledged and criticized these, and other, practices and it has clearly stated that Turkey will have to end them if it hopes to join. But in 2006, the

### *European Commission, October 2004:*

**“As regards the tragic events, in particular the human suffering in the region in 1915/1916, the prospect of Turkey’s accession must lead to an improvement in bilateral relations with Armenia and to reconciliation as regards these events.”**

Commission sadly remarked in its official report that “Turkey’s approach to minorities has not changed”. This is clearly not an area where the Turkish government is keen to press ahead with reforms, and whether or not the EU ultimately ensures that they are implemented will depend on the more principled of its Member States.

## **Europe presses for freedom of speech**

In fact, to date, the Union has most effectively challenged State denialism in Turkey by insisting forcefully on effective freedom of expression in the country. Until 2005, before the start of the actual accession negotiations, Brussels often found it hard to understand what so troubled the Armenians. Had not the Turkish government offered to start a historical dialogue with the Armenian government? Most EU decisions-makers ostensibly failed to understand the Armenian Diaspora’s insistence on pursuing their case through European political institutions rather than through direct dialogue with Turkey or with Turks. Successive trials against journalist Hrant Dink, writer Orhan Pamuk and many others for supposedly insulting Turkish identity, and Dink’s subsequent assassination, have transformed the perception of this problem among the European institutions. The European spotlight finally revealed state denialism in Turkey for what it was, as the controversy touched upon one policy area undoubtedly central to the Copenhagen criteria: freedom of expression. Trial after trial, a consensus was formed in Brussels to demand the withdrawal of article 301 of the Turkish penal code, which allows such abusive prosecutions.

A new battle of wills is now under way between Brussels and Ankara, and it is undeniable that Turkey’s accession process has already opened a window of freedom in Turkey. In addition to many of the books and articles published in the last two year or two, the unprecedented conference on Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, organised in Turkey in September 2005, would not have been authorized in the Turkey of a few years ago.

## **The struggle against racism and xenophobia.**

The EU, then, has shown some mettle when pressing for freedom of expression. What then of fighting denialist policies, particularly those which the Turkish government promotes within the EU’s borders? The European Union does have authority in the fight against racism and xenophobia, of which genocide denial is but one expression. It has recently created the



European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which took over from the EU Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia. It reports on the evolution of expressions of racism and xenophobia in Europe and advises the EU and its Member States on policy in this regard. It has also published reports on specific forms of racism such as islamophobia and anti-semitism. But for the time being this agency does not cover the Republic of Turkey, and it has not yet been asked to investigate Armenian concerns. One might hope that it will be: the FRA may have no other power than to write reports, but that does allow it to highlight specific problems and to bring them to the attention of policy-makers. An FRA report on the subject of Turkish discourse regarding Armenians would effectively amount to a legitimization of Armenian concerns and to their translation in terms of EU policymaking.<sup>1</sup>

### **Good neighbours?**

Oddly enough, the question of genocide recognition by Turkey has not been envisaged by the European institutions from the point of view of relations between Turkish and EU citizens; instead, it has often been portrayed as a bilateral dispute between Armenia and Turkey, with the “tragic events of 1915” just one component of a more intricate quarrel between neighbours. Since 1993, successive Turkish governments have refused to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia, and they have joined Azerbaijan in its blockade of Armenia. These relations are also relevant to Turkey’s accession negotiations. The document that defines the EU’s position in the accession talks insists that Turkey must maintain “good neighbourly relations”. It commits Turkey to “resolving tensions that could exist with its neighbours and to abstain from initiatives which may harm

**“Turkey will have to maintain good neighbourly relations in general and thus normalise its relations with Armenia and open its borders. This will also benefit eastern Turkey, including the Kars region.”**

***Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for enlargement,  
4 September 2006.***

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<sup>1</sup> Read also about EU legislation concerning the denial of genocide, page 26

good neighbourly relations and conflict resolution”. The same document notes that “the border between Turkey and Armenia is still closed and [the EU] hopes that, through dialogue, bilateral relations will improve”.

A diplomat at the Council of Ministers justifies this rather vague stance by recalling that there is no legally binding common EU position with regards to Armenia. In the absence of clear criteria to judge “good neighbourliness”, all that Turkey is in fact asked to do at this point is to try its best.

## **Trade rules**

Yet there is one area of the EU’s external relations that is part of the core mandate of the European Union: its common commercial policy. The 27 Member States have common rules governing their trade with third states such as Armenia, and must follow EU decisions regarding customs duties, quantitative restrictions to trade and technical standards for example. And it so happens that the EU has signed a trade agreement with Armenia on the subject. Back in February 1994, Greece placed the newly independent former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia under embargo because it believed its small neighbour had designs on Greek territory. Within two months, the EU demanded that Greece lift the embargo, and even sued the Hellenic State before the European Court of Justice- even though Macedonia was not an EU member.

The Commission then argued that the Greek embargo was in violation of EU trade rules. The parallel between the Macedonian case and Armenia’s is obvious; the only significant difference between the two cases is that Greece was then a member of the EU, while Turkey is not yet. In theory, Turkey will have to establish commercial relations with Armenia before it joins, as Greece was forced to do with Macedonia. But the issue has apparently never yet been raised in the course of discussions between Europe and Turkey. In today’s delicate circumstances, furthermore, Member States clearly do not wish to add to tensions between Turkey and the EU, and are doing everything to keep new and delicate issues off the agenda, at least until the forthcoming elections in Turkey.

## **A self-inflicted train crash?**

The EU’s position does allow us to look forward to a meaningful expansion of freedom of expression in Turkey and a rollback of discrimination against

The Enlargement Commissioner  
Olli Rehn and the  
Commission President Jose  
Manuel Barroso



the Armenian minority. In the future, Europeans may come to press Turkey to establish trade relations with Armenia. They might even come to object to official Ankara's hostile discourse towards Armenians. These may be interesting topics for Armenian organisations in Europe to investigate. On the other hand, in spite of numerous European Parliament resolutions, it is unlikely that genocide recognition as such might become an explicit official condition for Turkey's membership of the EU.

Conditions for membership clearly are usually not so much the outcome of political decisions as the application of European law, including precedents established in earlier enlargements. For Armenians' concerns to be taken on board, they must first be expressed in terms of European law and in terms of the accession criteria. Armenians must also make their case convincingly: is genocide recognition to be dealt with as one of the dimensions of the relations between Turkey and Armenia, as the Council of Minister maintains; or is it part of the struggle against racism and for the defence of fundamental rights within the EU? Is Turkey's policy towards Armenia a reasonable response to conflict in its neighbour-hood, or a breach of EU norms...?

In theory, politics can take over where law does not provide clear guidance in solving a problem. It often does, on issues touching on Member States' major interests. But for this to happen in the context of Turkey's EU accession process, Member States must make a unanimous decision, a requirement which is almost impossible to satisfy.

In the final analysis, it thus seems that while Europe is acting decisively in ensuring Turkey's enforcement of EU legislation on ceramics or alcoholic beverages, it is remaining obstinately indifferent to questions that go to the heart of its political legitimacy-ensuring peaceful coexistence between

neighbours and fighting intolerance and discrimination.

Europe is now pursuing negotiations while skirting issues which may derail the entire process one day. Its executive, the Commission, has not even explored the subject of Armenia-Turkey relations. It has supported no initiative aimed at promoting education in Turkey, dialogue between Armenians and Turks, or cross-border relations between Armenia and Turkey.

This situation will undoubtedly contribute to increasing tensions between the bureaucratic aspects of the accession negotiations, technical and secret as it is, on the one hand, and the political process on the other. France has already significantly changed the rules of the game by requiring that each future enlargement be approved by referendum. As a result, one may well look forward to a political crisis a few years down the line, when the Armenian question, and others, may wreck Turkey's accession process. Unless of course the EU decides to address Turkey's Armenian question in earnest before then.

## **THE MECHANICS OF ACCESSION**

The accession negotiations consist essentially in adapting the candidate country's (in this case, Turkey's) legislation and practices to the EU's. But politics also play a role, including on a number of sensitive issues, such as Cyprus.

### **The criteria for membership**

The formal criteria for membership – the so-called “Copenhagen criteria” – were set in principle at a European Summit in 1993. Candidate countries are required to:

- 1-Fully adapt their legislation to EU law.
- 2-Respect a set of “political” criteria which are considered fundamental: a fully functional democracy, respect for human rights and good neighbourly relations.
- 3-The European Union remains first and foremost an economic system, so the economy of new member states must also be sufficiently sound to be integrated into the European Union.

It has not always been easy to translate these principles into clear criteria. “Political” criteria in particular do not always relate to European law: the European Union does not regulate democratic practice, respect for human rights, or the foreign policy of EU Member States. So these criteria were often defined using other sources of international law, or legal principles common to Member States. But even in those fields where EU legislation or policy does exist there can be room for interpretation.

## **The accession negotiations**

The negotiations themselves are a confidential process. They start with a screening, carried out jointly by the European Union and Turkey, of the country’s legislation and practice, in the light of the EU’s requirements. The steps required to ensure compliance are then analysed in detail in a series of reports submitted by the European Commission to the EU Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers, finally, decides to open the negotiations themselves; it can however include benchmarks to be fulfilled before the start of negotiations.

Negotiations are then carried out between diplomats and senior civil servants-25 Member States plus one candidate country-on each of 33 chapters covering the whole range of accession criteria, chapter by chapter. Once agreement is reached, a chapter is then closed; once the 33 chapters are closed, negotiations come to an end. An accession treaty is then drafted, and is adopted and ratified by all Member States, by the candidate country and by the European Parliament.

## **Political monitoring**

In addition to the negotiations proper, the EU institutions monitor progress in Turkey in an annual monitoring cycle. In the autumn, the European Commission publishes a report on the situation in Turkey and formulates recommendations to the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers then adopts its own position. The European Parliament also votes a text, and attempts to influence discussions in the other two institutions, but its own role is rather limited in a procedure where the Council of Ministers, the Turkish government and the European Commission are the main players.

## **1987-2007: THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RECOGNIZED THE GENOCIDE 6 TIMES**

The European Parliament has recognized the Armenian genocide on numerous occasions. It first tackled the issue with an historic resolution “on the Armenian question” in 1987, at a time when Turkey’s membership was being discussed. But after Turkey’s application was rejected, Parliament abandoned the issue for more than 12 years.

In 2000 it put the issue of the genocide back on the agenda, soon after EU Heads of State accepted to consider Turkey’s application to join the EU. Although the Parliament adopts one report on Turkey every year, the issue of the genocide disappeared from its agenda for nearly 4 more years, largely at the insistence of enlargement Commissioner Verheugen.

But in 2004 a new Parliament was elected and a new Enlargement Commissioner appointed. As the start of actual negotiations approached, the new Parliament once again put the issue on the agenda of negotiations.

### **6 resolutions about the Armenian genocide**

1. June 1987: First ever resolution on “A political solution to the Armenian question”.
2. November 2000. Morillon Report on Turkey’s Accession
3. February 2002. Gahrton report on the South Caucasus
4. December 2004. Eurlings Report on Turkey’s Accession
5. September 2005. Brok Report on Turkey’s Accession
6. September 2006. Second Eurlings Report on Turkey’s Accession.

It has never left it since and genocide recognition has gradually taken on more prominence, mostly as a result of the publicity generated by repression of dissent in Turkey itself and by Hrant Dink’s assassination.

Genocide recognition has now become routine, and both public opinion and political circles in Europe are more aware of the issue and of its nature than ever before. Ritual repetitions aside, however, this awareness has yet to translate into practical policy to help resolve Turkey’s Armenian problem.

## WHO IS IN CHARGE?

■ **At the European Commission:** Olli Rehn, Finnish Commissioner and his services prepare and monitor accession negotiations. [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/rehn/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/rehn/index_en.htm)

■ At the EU Council, The 25 Foreign Ministers and, in their absence, their Permanent Representatives in Brussels, take the decisions. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.asp?id=388&lang=en>

■ **The European parliament.** Work on Turkey's membership is prepared by its Foreign Affairs Committee. In the context of the accession process, its formal role is restricted to ratifying the Accession Treaty, at the end of the negotiations. It adopts one resolution every year to express its views on



Ria Oomen-Ruijten

the progress of negotiations and reforms. The Member of the European Parliament charged with drafting the report is currently, currently **Ria Oomen-Ruijten** (EPP-ED). The President of the Parliamentary Delegation for Turkey, **Joost Lagendijk** (Green), is also particularly active on the issue. Go to their personal web sites from [http://](http://www.insideeurope.org.index.php?id=400)



Joost  
Lagendijk

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The European Commission allocates about EUR 500 million a year to help prepare Turkey for European Union membership. Most of that is allocated to centralized projects negotiated between the Turkish government and the European Union. But some funds are in fact open to specific calls for proposals to which non-profit and other organizations can submit a proposal. Turkey is already eligible for funding under quite a number of regular EU funding programmes, such as the Youth in Action Programme or the Culture 2007 Programme, which are described in the previous chapter. There are clearly numerous opportunities here to promote projects of interest either to relations between Armenia and Turkey, to relations between Turkey and the Armenian Diaspora or to Armenians in Turkey. Examples of relevant programmes are listed below. But applicants should be aware that many projects must not only be approved by the European Commission, but also

by the Turkish Government's Central Contracts Unit-whose officials may not understand the importance of supporting projects involving Armenians.

## **Civil Society Dialogue**

In an attempt to tackle public hostility towards Turkey's membership bid, the European Union has decided to launch a Civil Society Dialogue. This dialogue funds projects aimed at improving mutual understanding between young people in Turkey and the EU, between municipalities, between universities and between professional organizations.

- For more information on the civil society dialogue: [http://www.avrupa.info.tr/Sivil\\_Toplum\\_Diyalogu.html](http://www.avrupa.info.tr/Sivil_Toplum_Diyalogu.html)

## **The Black Sea Cross Border Cooperation Programme**

The European Commission has also launched a cross-border programme that includes all the countries surrounding the Black Sea, including Turkey and Armenia. The programme will fund different kinds of cross-border projects, which will be published by its secretariat. Information on this programme will be published on [www.INSIDEEurope.eu](http://www.INSIDEEurope.eu) once it is available.

## **General sources of information on EU external funding for Turkey and other countries**

- An overview of EU financial assistance to Turkey: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial\\_assistance/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial_assistance/index_en.htm)
- All funding opportunities published directly in Turkey by the Turkish government's Central Contracts Unit: <http://www.cfcu.gov.tr/tender.php?lng=en>
- An online database listing all the funding opportunities published directly by the European Commission: Europaid web site: [www.europaid.eu](http://www.europaid.eu)
- The European Commission's delegation in Ankara: <http://www.avrupa.info.tr/Duyurular,Tender.html>



## **Information sources on Turkey's accession process**

- Turkey's page at the Commission: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/turkey/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/turkey/index_en.htm)
- The Euro-Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (FEAJD): <http://www.feajd.org/>. The FEAJD campaigns for recognition of the Armenian genocide and against Turkey's membership of the European Union. It is affiliated with the CDCA (France), the ANCA (USA) and the FRA/Dashnaktzoutioun (Socialist) party.
- Euractiv.eu, also provides a complete dossier on Turkey's accession process at <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eu-turkey-relations/article-129678>
- More links and information also at [www.insideeurope.eu](http://www.insideeurope.eu)

### **GENERAL REFERENCES – FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE EU, ITS INSTITUTIONS AND ITS POLICIES**

- Europa- the EU's official web portal: [europa.eu](http://europa.eu)
- European Commission: <http://ec.europa.eu>
- The European Parliament: <http://europarl.europa.eu>
- The EU Council: <http://consilium.europa.eu>
- <http://www.Euractiv.com>, a general information portal on EU matters.
- A guide to EU funding: the 2007 Guide to European Union Funding – Accessing Europe's largest Donor. Published by ECAS, the European Citizens Action Service. Information and orders from: <http://www.ecas.org/Publications/2374/default.aspx?ID=601>
- *Europe's Freephone helpdesk:*  
+00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 to ask questions about the EU and its activities.

## **THIS PROJECT AND ITS THREE PARTNERS**

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**Les Nouvelles d'Arménie Magazine** is the most widely read French language Armenian magazine in the world and is circulated internationally. It strives to provide high quality information on news and events from Armenia and from the Armenian Diaspora. It provides a unique forum for open debate and exchange of views on current issues.

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E N L I G N E

**Orer Magazine and the ICKVE.** Orer magazine was launched in 1999. It is published in Armenian in Prague and is distributed throughout Europe. Orer magazine publishes news from the Armenian Diaspora of Europe as well as from the Republic of Armenia. It covers in particular Czech-Armenian and European-Armenian political relations. Orer is distributed in 25 countries of Europe.

The magazine is published by the Information Centre Caucasus-Eastern Europe (ICKVE), a non-government and non-profit organization. ICKVE plays an important role in bringing together the Armenian minority in the Czech Republic and arranges cultural, educational and indeed spiritual activities in the country. The Information Centre Caucasus-Central Europe, ICKVE, was founded in Prague (Czech Republic) in 1999.

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**Inside Europe** is a Think Tank dedicated to providing information, analysis and ideas and promoting debate about European policies concerning the Armenians of Europe. It is premised on the view that the European Union now plays a major role in decisions that profoundly affect the development and future of Armenians in Europe.

Inside Europe was founded in 2006 and is based in Brussels. Its Advisory Board includes Baroness Cox (politician, UK), Prof. Susan Pattie (anthropologist, UK), Prof. Bernard Coulie (President of the University of Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium), Pierre Gurdjian (Director of McKinsey and Company, Belgium) and Raffi Kalfayan (former Secretary General of the International Federation of Human rights, France).

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