

MINUTES
SIXTH MEETING OF THE EU-ARMENIA PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION
COMMITTEE
15-16 March 2004
Yerevan

The sixth meeting of the EU-Armenia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee was opened by Co-Chairmen Mr Armen Rustamyan and Mrs Ursula Schleicher (PPE) at 3 p.m. on March 15.

Mr Rustamyan greeted the Committee members and the ambassadors of the EU countries.

On behalf of the National Assembly of the Armenian Republic, the Chairman, Mr A. Baghdasaryan, greeted the members of the Committee. He mentioned that the newly elected Parliament had been consistent and principled in carrying out its obligations towards the European institutions. As a result a number of important laws had been approved, and all international conventions that Armenia, which became a member of the Council of Europe in 2001, assumed as its obligation, had already been ratified. In the process of fruitful cooperation with the Council of Europe a new schedule of improvements of the legislative system had been adopted and the National Assembly had started its work in the new session.

He admitted that, following enlargement in May, the EU was for Armenia a distant and desirable objective, which might be achieved through the work of the Committee.

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Armenian Republic, Deputy Minister Mr R. Shugaryan then greeted the participants and talked about the main objectives and priorities of Armenia's foreign policy. He admitted that integration in Europe was the highest priority for Armenian foreign policy and that there existed a great number of mechanisms and ways of achieving this. He said that the European Union was a future objective for Armenia, while EU standards – political, economic and social – were its current aims. Mr Shugaryan noted that European integration was the only aim and objective which had been adopted equally by all three Caucasian states. The speaker emphasized the fact that while, from the political and economic viewpoint, Armenia might have been considered a New Neighbour, from the viewpoint of civilization, culture and trade history Armenia was an Old Neighbour. There was a need for an action programme for the policy of Extended Europe-New Neighbours and the major priority of Armenian foreign policy was to develop it in cooperation with neighbouring countries.

Characterizing Armenia's foreign policy as mutually complementary Mr Shugaryan noted that Armenia would not abandon this policy and would still consider Europe and the EU its final target.

Germany's ambassador to Armenia, H.-W Bartels, was the next to greet participants on behalf of Ireland - which held the Presidency of the EU.

Mr Rustamyan then introduced all the members of the delegation.

After approving the agenda and the minutes of the fifth meeting of the EU-Armenia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, which took place in Brussels on 24-25 March, the Committee discussed the individual items on the agenda.

Starting with the fourth item on the agenda – the process of implementing the declaration adopted on 25 March 2003 – Mr Rustamyan invited Mrs Schleicher to speak.

In her speech Mrs. Schleicher mentioned with satisfaction that the death penalty had been excluded from the new Penal Code. She then asked about the current stage in the process of ratification of the Rome Statute, adopted in 1999, of the International Criminal Court.

T. Holtze, head of the European Commission delegation, said that the Commission's presence in Armenia was very important and that it was considering the idea of opening its own office in Armenia to make cooperation more fruitful.

Co-Chairman and Chairman of the Permanent Commission of the National Assembly for Foreign Relations, Mr A. Rustamyan, reported that a great deal of work had been done in the field of legislation and implementation of obligations since the elections to the new National Assembly; in particular, the sixth protocol had been ratified, on the basis of which the new Penal Code had been improved: court cases were already based on the new legislation. The new Act on the Ombudsman had been adopted under the present Constitution. He mentioned that the institution of Ombudsman was already operating in Armenia. The National Assembly had adopted the Act on Alternative Army Service, taking into consideration proposals and changes made by Council of Europe experts. The National Assembly had ratified all the European conventions, which Armenia had taken over on becoming a member of the Council of Europe. He thought ratification of the Social Charter was very important. Mr Rustamyan also mentioned that the Republic of Armenia had approved the strategic programme for overcoming poverty, as well as the special anti-corruption strategic programme. He also said that in January Armenia had become a member of GRECO, the international anti-corruption organisation. A new package of improvements to the juridical system would be presented to the National Assembly very soon, and a number of new remedial acts would be approved: the Act on Prosecution, the Act on Advocates, and the new Judicial Code of Conduct. He expressed his hopes that within the process of the serious changes taking place in the whole judicial system, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court would also be ratified.

Mr Rustamyan pointed out that local government was a very important section. He said that the present Constitution did not provide for any changes in local government, and that there were many serious problems when adjusting the system to comply with international standards.

Mr Rustamyan said that the delays in overcoming these problems were connected with the constitutional changes. He said that it would be necessary to reach a political agreement prior to organising a referendum on the Constitution, which was planned for spring or summer 2005. For this very purpose the Chairman of the National Assembly had carried out a series of constitutional improvements. Preliminary discussions would be followed by new discussions between and among all political parties in the National Assembly, and if they reached agreement the referendum would start.

Mr Rustamyan further mentioned that the problems of jurisdiction and judicial system were also connected with constitutional improvements, and one of the main aims was to make the judicial system totally independent of the executive.

Mr Rustamyan said that improvements were being made to the electoral system. Experts had already made some proposals, but a new appropriate electoral law had not yet been drafted.

Mr Rustamyan further mentioned that in recent months some very important steps had been made in connection with freedom of the press. The Act on the Press, Act on Mass Media and Act on Television and Radio had been adopted with changes made in accordance with proposals by experts of the Venice Commission.

Referring to the problem of regional cooperation, Mr Rustamyan confessed that no essential changes in this sphere had been made. He welcomed the declaration by the Georgian President during his visit to Armenia on the necessity for expanding regional cooperation and creating a common economic area disregarding the existing conflicts. Hitherto Armenia had been the only country in the whole region to maintain this position. Azerbaijan still insisted that unless the existing conflicts were resolved politically, it was impossible to talk about cooperation in the region. He said that now Georgia was accepting the same idea as the EU and the Council of Europe, i.e. creation of an area of economic cooperation which could be used to resolve the existing regional conflicts, ease tension and create an atmosphere of confidence.

In connection with the Karabakh conflict Mr Rustamyan said that it was still too early to speak about any progress. The only - and very alarming and unacceptable - change was the declaration of the Azerbaijan President immediately after his inauguration that negotiations should have started from zero. Armenia, on the other hand, said that it was impossible to neglect the enormous work and great efforts by the negotiators; the way ahead was to build on these efforts.

On behalf of the delegation from the European Parliament Mr D. Volcic spoke about the fifth item on the agenda, concerning the political situation in Armenia and the process of its democratisation. He mentioned the declarations made by various institutions of the EU, confirming its determination to cooperate with Armenia and to assume an active role in the region.

Mr Volcic also said that he had received letters from the International Organization of Journalists referring to the subject on the TV channel A1+.

He also talked about the document called Expanded Europe – New Neighbours and said that the delegation to the EU-Armenia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee had made a contribution to it.

Mr Volcic also mentioned the methods of classification of activities and objectiveness of the press in the country.

Mr Rustamyan added a few considerations. He returned to the situation concerning the parliamentary elections, as well as freedom of the press and conscience, which resulted from improvements in legislation. He said that the Council of Europe had criticised insufficient

availability of electronic means of information. He further mentioned problems in connection with the commission for the evaluation of tenders in the area of telecommunications, television and radio. He said that the situation was being resolved and the most recent improvements in the legislative system concerning press liberty gave greater scope for achieving adequate pluralism. The newly adopted Act on the Press, Act on Mass Media, and Act on Television and radio had been improved within the Constitution in order to give the press and mass media sufficient freedom.

As far as the elections were concerned, Mr Rustamyan said that there had been organised missions of observers to oversee the parliamentary elections, and that the common declaration with Council of Europe experts actually affected the process of improvement of the overall electoral system. He also said that it was also necessary to change existing legislation if it was unable to prevent future infringements. One of the main changes applied to the constitution of electoral commissions. The second applied to the status of observers and accredited representatives and giving them greater scope to carry out effective monitoring, particularly during calculations of results. The third applied to voting operations as such: opening of ballot boxes, the process of counting and transparency in recording results, publishing detailed results or registration by local electoral committees.

Mr Rustamyan also talked about court supervision of the election process and enforcement of appropriate punishments. In this respect the Election Act needed major changes.

He said that defining the proper correlation between proportionality and majority, compiling and improving electoral registers, determining a system, as well as issues of registration of appropriate arrangements and regulations and preventing the manipulation of electoral registers were closely connected with the process of elections.

Mr K. Arakelyan continued on the same subject. He mentioned that the polarisation of society, resulting from the present social and economic situation in Armenia, seemed to have been reflected in the press, and the problems of an independent press had not been resolved. There were newspapers defending the interests of the ruling political forces, and on the other hand there were others expressing the interests of the opposition.

The opposition political forces were either not presented in the Armenian national television and radio or presented unrealistically. A joint effort was needed to provide the population with objective information and to maintain a free and independent press.

Mr Arakelyan mentioned that the appointment of all nine members of the delegation by the President violated the principles of an independent press and suggested the need for making adequate changes in the law. He also talked about the low level of information of the population.

Mr Rustamyan thanked Mr Arakelyan and gave the floor to Mr Khanbhai who spoke about the necessity of freedom of the mass media and the method of appointing the Ombudsman.

Mr Kh. Sukiasyan expressed his opinion that Armenia was still in a transitional period and that there still existed certain traditions from the era of socialism hindering the country's development. Referring to TV companies, he said that there was no independent television in

Armenia, where politicians, economists and public representatives could have expressed their opinions. He thought that certain elements of democracy were being ignored in the region because of fear of the consequences. Because of the existing social situation in Armenia the population was not sufficiently informed. Changes in legislation carried out with the help of the EU might be beneficial for society. In many aspects of democracy Armenia lagged behind, but at least some stability had already been achieved.

Mr V. Baghdasaryan mentioned that it was impossible to evaluate the situation unilaterally as there were serious problems involved in the constitution of delegations. For many years Armenia had been living under a different regime to the straight path to democracy, freedom of the press and of conscience, and that changes had not been understood correctly by all sections of society. Freedom often brought relevant and irrelevant insults, accusations on the part of the press and TV companies, and there was no form of punishment. First of all it was necessary to improve the status of television and give it a stable basis. Mr Baghdasaryan did not agree with the statement that there was no opposition press in Armenia; he insisted that it existed. He favoured the existence of ideological, constructive and healthy opposition, and was against the creation of opposition just for personal interests. A healthy opposition could be beneficial to the state.

Mr Rustamyan pointed out that until constitutional power, now in the hands of President, was correctly divided among the three branches of the state existing problems could not be resolved. He expressed his concerns about the fact that the President appointed the whole commission and the Ombudsman, and the committee for justice including its chairman. He added that it was important to push forward the process of global changes to enable the National Assembly to control and to make unbiased decisions.

Mr Sukiasyan admitted that the executive branch in Armenia enjoyed significant power, while the National Assembly had no adequate instrument of authority. He also pointed out the necessity of global changes. He added that the judicial system was not independent and lacked mechanisms for protection against false statements and insinuations.

Mr Rustamyan added that implementing constitutional improvements would change the whole system, and that the Ombudsman would eventually be appointed by the Parliament.

Mr Arakelyan noted that the authorities considered the opposition as a sort of a stepson and that the same standpoint was taken by mass media. This attitude needed to be changed.

Mr Rustamyan closed the discussion of the subject and invited Mr Avetisyan to present his report on Implementation of the Anti-corruption Strategic Programme of the State.

Mr Avetisyan presented the state decision of 6 November 2003 on approval of the anti-corruption strategy and the implementation programme, as well as two documents regulating practical measures against corruption, their conditions, role and importance.

The programme had the following specifications:

- exact legal specification of the concept of 'corruption';
- corruption is on two levels, i.e. for the upper and the lower social classes;
- the reasons for corruption in the state apparatus;
- it is emphasized that preventive anti-corruption activities must be implemented in the spheres of the economy, taxes and customs, education and medical care and the legal system;

- main reasons for corruption - confusion between and among three components of power, existence of a socially unstable and exaggerated state apparatus, abuse of authority, and misunderstanding of the role of the state;
- instruments and directions of the fight against corruption.

Mr Avetisyan also mentioned that prior to this decision, certain laws and legislative acts had been adopted to fight corruption. The Programme presents the following three directions of the anti-corruption struggle - society's awareness of the danger of corruption, prevention of corruption and the superiority of law.

Mr Khambai felt that in contrast to western legislative authorities, the Armenian Parliament was not open to society. But at the same time he acknowledged that within the past 10-12 years the country had changed and certain progress was quite obvious. Nevertheless corruption had been demoralising society.

Mr Avetisyan said that both the authorities and the opposition were already willing to fight corruption. For the purpose of discussing the methods of struggle a commission of representatives of different political forces of the Parliament had been set up.

Mrs Schleicher returned to the phenomenon of corruption and said that it existed everywhere, and that the fight against it was effective only if all those who break the law were punished. It was necessary to find the appropriate instruments for such a struggle.

Mr Sukiasyan admitted that all these problems existed in Armenia and this meeting would be effective, if the experience of the EU was inculcated in the country and a civilised and prosperous society was founded.

Mr Ghonjehyan said that evaluating the state of freedom of conscience and pluralism had been too strict and insisted that opposition politics always had an opportunity to express their standpoints either on television or in the press. He noted that declarations made in the National Assembly, as well as questions and answers of both the delegates and the government were broadcasted on television. Referring to the control function of the National Assembly, he mentioned that according to the Constitution it was authorized to control only budget expenses and long-term loans from foreign countries.

Mr Rustamyan announced that the meeting would continue the next day: issues of culture and education, the economic and social situation and the environment would be discussed.

The next day the Committee started its work with a discussion of education, science and culture. Mrs. H. Bisharyan began by affirming that improvements to the system had been carried out in 2003 and that a basis had been created for their future expansion. The main strategic points included increasing the system's efficiency, developing the management system, increasing staff and information bases, guarantees regarding the right to education, and integration into the international educational system. She said that one of the main tasks of the general educational system was its optimisation. In accordance with the programme, approved by the state of Armenia, a certain amount of work had already been done in the field of optimisation of the situation at individual schools as well as among them. Parallel to that programme improvements had been made in the sphere of general education, including all aspects of the system: structure, content, management and financing. Large-scale subsidies to

schools had been made in 2003 and the reconstruction of 59 schools was being financed from the state budget. Mrs Bisharyan also talked about culture. In 2003 more than 400 exhibits from the Armenian Museum Fund were put on display in various museums in seven states the world over. The programme called the Unified Computer Network of Armenian Libraries was a great contribution to the development of the library sector. Based on the programmes adopted in 2003, the History and Cultural Monuments Agency was doing a lot of significant work in the field of maintenance, reconstruction and keeping records of monuments at the expense of the Republic, as well as in recording newly discovered monuments and in compiling lists of cultural and historical monuments in various regions of the Republic. She also mentioned that five of the 16 theatres had been rebuilt with the help of the Lincy Foundation.

Mrs. Schleicher asked a few questions. She wanted to know whether university studies in Armenia were free of charge, what authorities controlled universities and other institutions of higher education, and whether it was easy to find a job after completion of studies at a technical college.

Mrs Bisharyan answered that there were both paid and free departments at universities. She added that if a student gained high marks in the entrance examinations, he/she had a chance of studying in the free department. The universities were under the Ministry of Education and Science. Mrs Bisharyan mentioned that there were also colleges in Armenia, and added that the new programme of higher educational institutions for the current year included the establishment of business schools, which would be equal to colleges. The students would obtain professional education there and the majority of graduates would be able to find adequate employment in Armenia.

The next item on the agenda was the economic and social situation in Armenia. Mrs Schleicher asked Mr Khanbai a few questions.

Mr Khanbai said that he had studied indicators of economic and social progress in Armenia for the previous two years, and mentioned some of them.

Mr Sukiasyan answered the questions. He pointed out that the bank interest rate in Armenia was not 28%, but was below 20%. He also mentioned that the previous year the European Investment Bank had provided Armenian banks with a new instrument called the trade facility. It was granted to organisations which buy from European and other countries. The trade facility given to Armenia included interest amounting to 8-10%. Mr Sukiasyan also said that long-term mortgage loans (up to 15 years) would soon be provided in Armenia as in other advanced countries. The tax system was a very sensitive problem. It was very important to create a system where all taxpayers fulfil their duties equally and which did not leave room for evasion.

Mr Ghonjehyan mentioned the economic growth rates which were important to the extent that they permitted implementation of long-term programmes. In this regard he referred to the adoption of the Strategic Programme for Surmounting Poverty, development of the Programme for Medium-term State Expenses for the Period of 2004-2006, and the new Act on the State Budget of Armenia for the Year 2004, ratified by the National Assembly the previous year. He further talked about the beginning of work on the programme called Politics of Stable Economic Development of Armenia, which would be completed in 2004. He mentioned that Armenia had recently become the 54th subscriber to the International

Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard. The previous year the Republic's economy had increased by 13.9%, industry by 15%, and general circulation of money had amounted to 2 billion dollars. He said that about 30% of commodity circulation pertained to Great Britain and Belgium. Growth had been achieved in both imports and exports. Since 2001 there had been a significant reduction in the absolute deficit in both tax budget and loans. In 2003 the deficit had been under 3%. He talked about progress in the structural sphere and mentioned the special significance of the TACIS programme for technological progress. He also spoke about the budget deficit and said that, despite the downward trend, by the end of 2003 it had amounted to 8.6%. Over a nine-month period in 2003 direct investments had amounted to 12 million dollars. New legislation on investment policy was being drafted. Mr Ghonjehyan added that Armenia was ranked 44th in the world as the country with economies open for innovation. In 2003 small and medium-size businesses had provided 38% of the country's overall output. As far as the banks' interest rate system was concerned, the 28% interest rate no longer existed. Economic progress had not been automatically accompanied by progress in the social sphere. The 2004 budget specifically targeted expenditure in the social sphere. Almost 50% of the country's population was poor. The average pension did not cover the minimum living costs.

On the question of problems in the area of environmental protection, Mr Ghonjehyan said that the policy practiced in this area was aimed at creating a system for natural resources rehabilitation, prospective utilisation and control of forests, prevention of soil degradation, reduction of anthropogenic factors resulting in deserts, effective utilisation and control of water resources, rehabilitation of ecological balance of lake Sevan, waste disposal and solution of the problem of hazardous industrial wastes. He welcomed the EU's new initiatives in resolving problems concerning water resources. In Armenia there was the pressing problem of large accumulated quantities of ecologically hazardous disposal of old unused medicines, chemicals and toxic wastes.

In response to questions by Mr Volcic and Mr Khanbai, Mr Ghonjehyan noted that the GDP rate per person was not satisfactory. He also said that there was an upwards trend and that over the previous three years its average annual growth had been 12%. As far as interest rates were concerned, the interest on savings was in the order of 5-7%, and loans carried an interest rate of 12-24%. Profits amounted to 6%-16%.

Mrs Schleicher raised the problem of the Metsamor nuclear power station.

Mr Ghonjehyan acknowledged that in this respect Armenia had already stated its position. He added that he did not know the exact terms of the closure of Metsamor. It should be some time between 2008 and 2010.

Mr V. Baghdasaryan mentioned that the demand for natural gas in the Republic was obviously growing and that the Armenia-Iran gas pipeline was an issue of vital importance for Armenia. Referring to the issue of the closure of Metsamor, he added that there was a problem with the nominal price policy. The Commission for the Regulation of Armenia's Natural Privileges had determined the nominal price of 7 167 drams inclusive of VAT per kWh of electricity produced by the nuclear power station, and 18 269 drams per kW-hour of electricity produced by Hrazdan hydroelectric power station. If Hrazdan produced an additional 2 billion kWh of electricity annually, the nominal selling price of electricity would be 5 drams higher. Mr Baghdasaryan mentioned that if Metsamor closed down and hydroelectric power stations had to cover the deficit in electricity, Armenia would face a

significant problem in the area of price policy, as adding 5 drams to the nominal price was a serious problem for a country in such a social situation. He felt that when the nuclear power station was shut down, Armenia would have to compensate for the lack of electricity. It would either have to build new hydroelectric power stations with the help of investors or prepare to build a new nuclear power station. Otherwise there might be serious problems in both the social and economic areas, and the next price policy depended on this decision.

Mr Volcic asked Mr Baghdasaryan to express his opinion on whether the greatest danger arose from potential raids on the gas pipeline or from the fact that the Metsamor nuclear power station was built in a seismic area.

Mr Baghdasaryan answered that nobody was against innovations or closure of the nuclear power station, but at the same time it was important to create conditions for building a new nuclear power station. Due to the country's geographical situation the nuclear power station was a necessity for Armenia. If preparations for the establishment of a new nuclear power station were carried out in such a manner that its construction would start within the next 3-4 years, it would be possible to keep the present nuclear power station operational, until the new one was completed. As far as hydroelectric power stations were concerned,

He noted that in a country like Armenia it was unreasonable to build new ones, as they would not operate regularly and constantly.

Mr Sukiasyan spoke about relations with neighbouring countries. He said that immediately after the announcement of independence Armenian authorities had often declared their willingness to establish mutually beneficial relations with all countries. Armenia was very much concerned with political stability and economic progress in the region. Perception of the region as a unified economic and political area was a very important guarantee for the progress of each country. He added that in the present situation of fragile stability it was more than important to bring cooperation to a new level, which was possible only on the basis of regional integration. Armenia was well aware of the fact that regional integration included cooperation of political structures, economic interdependence of the countries, mutually beneficial utilisation of the natural resources, fruitful and full-scale use of the communications network and preparing and implementing new methods of economic cooperation in the region. The southern Caucasus today lacked the regional progress that Europe had had in the 1940s, when the whole economy was interdependent and individual economics and political systems were integrated. The progress of one country in the region affected the progress of the neighbouring countries. Mr Sukiasyan also talked about problems of Euro-integration. The development of relations with the EU was really important for the establishment of business and economic relations. He also mentioned that deeper regional integration would guarantee such level of progress, which would provide for the removal of contacts with the EU on a qualitatively different level. He was certain that further deepening of cooperation with the EU would positively affect the character of internal social relations in Armenia and the process of their development. The extension of meaningful relations with the EU was essentially a component of European politics, but it was also Armenia's wish to become part of such integration.

In the following discussion Mrs. Schleicher emphasized the subject of Nagorno Karabakh and said that she would have welcomed a deeper analysis of the problem. She appealed to the participants to start an active dialogue on the subject.

Mr Rustamyan drew participants' attention to the present state of the conflict and to the principles of its solution. In 1991 Karabakh had announced its independence according to all international criteria, and today it was a sovereign independent entity with all the structures of state management. Nevertheless, the republic was still not accepted by the world as a political entity. Accordingly, Armenia was the link between Karabakh and the international community. He noted that Armenia was the main guarantee of the development of democratic institutions in Karabakh, and the installing and maintaining of human rights and liberties in this area. For this very reason Armenia supported Karabakh financially. Mr Sukiasyan mentioned some negative consequences of the failure to recognize the status of Karabakh by international bodies. The main outstanding problems were refugees from the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, the right of freedom of movement and the limited opportunities of communication. As for resolving the problem as a whole, if international observers were to put aside preaching and political calculations and study the actual facts and causes, the Karabakh problem would have been much clearer and understandable for them. It would also be much easier to come to an agreement. Mr Rustamyan stated some principles necessary for resolving the problem:

- it was necessary to differ between the regional conflicts;
- the main parts of the problem were interdependent and should be viewed as a whole;
- three bodies - Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan had to be referred to as the parties to the conflict.

Mr Rustamyan noted that Mr Alijev had announced, that the negotiations should have started from zero. He explained this by the fact that the results achieved after 10 years of enormous work and extensive efforts of the negotiators and parties to the conflict were not acceptable for Azerbaijan. Often-repeated mutual compromise had been understood as a mechanical means of problem-solving by mutual withdrawal. Mutual appeasement must have one purpose: all the parties must compromise for the purpose of revealing the truth. The negotiators must reveal the truth. Mr A. Rustamyan noted that only a compromise would result in a final proposal which would make the parties come to an agreement.

Mrs Schleicher noted that, as they were not directly involved, it was very difficult to find the solution from distance.

In response to Mrs Schleicher and Mr Volcic, Mr Rustamyan said that he considered it possible for the international community to recognize Nagorno Karabakh. In his opinion there were similar cases in the world that had already been resolved, and the right of the nations to self-determination served as a basis for such solution.

When talking about the stage and package variants he said that the trend was to refer to the stage-package combined variant. Mr Rustamyan noted that if the interdependence of individual parts was preserved at every stage, there was no great difference between the two variants. He added that the only correct variant was to submit solutions that did not overlook and avoid the heart of the problem.

At the end of the meeting there was a discussion of the Document on Announcements and Suggestions (particularly its item No. 33), which was followed by unanimous adoption of the Document.

The date of the next meeting of the Committee, which is to take place in Brussels, will be determined in September, following the EU elections and constitution of a new delegation.

The minutes was drafted by:

Victoria Mnatsakanyan – Head Specialist of the National Assembly’s Board for International Relations, and Tamara Shahbazyan - Leading Specialist.