

## ***European Neighborhood Policy and Security***

On March 6, 2006 the second phase of the negotiations process between Armenia and the European Union regarding Armenia's Action Plan for the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP AP) took place in Brussels. According to the negotiating parties, the process was quite effective and currently the outcomes of the negotiations are being summed up in order to send the revised draft to the EU. Of course, there are still certain issues left on the negotiations table, such as the promulgation of the EU membership as a final goal, the project timeframe, the nuclear power station of Armenia, etc. Many arguments can be put forward to claim that there is an urgent need to shift from declarations and imitations to the reality; that we should not expect Europe to come up with more initiative than it is necessary, or rather we should be the ones to take up the task of initiation; that Armenia with and without its nuclear power station is a totally different geopolitical factor and so on. However, it seems that we have already sufficiently discussed the issues that still remain on the negotiations table, and that the Armenian team participating in the negotiations process seems to heed the issue with due seriousness and draft possible solutions with required depth.

The issue seems to lie in a totally different dimension. One thing is obvious: the ENP AP should be regarded as a political declaration, by which the country declares its position, role, and the priorities for the near future. From this perspective it is important to understand what the core of this declaration is, and what goal the country sets. Eventually, it is necessary to understand what interests drive the country. What the interests of the Europeans are and what our interests are may not be too obvious at a first glance.

### **What do they want?**

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The interest of the EU is very clear: it is stated in a number of official documents and various EU officials have voiced it in their political statements and speeches for quite a number of times. In the domain of European Neighborhood Policy a special place is reserved for the strategy of European security, which in essence leads and outlines almost all the security provisions included in this policy, and which refers to the Caucasus and issues associated with this region. It should not be ignored that essentially the security factor underlies the ENP program, and that the EU treats its new neighbors as a security and stability zone. To put it simply, Europe wants to have stable and predictable neighbors who are more or less prone to European values. This is clear and logical.

### **What do we want?**

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In terms of security our interests do not seem to be defined, at least these are not declared officially. Virtually, issues dealing with the security of Armenia can get a final resolution only in case a concept paper on Armenian security is legislatively secured. This means we have at least a year and half to define our interests. However, the ENP AP negotiations are taking place at present. Therefore, we need to use this instrument as well to address our security issues.

For some reason we have always stemmed our state interests from the Nagorny Karabakh issue, whereas from the very perspective of resolving the issue effectively, it shouldn't have been so. Armenia has her own security interests which should not be regarded as secondary the political agenda of the country. From this perspective, in the future negotiation processes it is in Armenia's interests to consider the following issues:

*Nagorny Karabakh conflict:* the ENP AP provisions should include concise and clear steps which will ensure more warrants for avoiding the possibility of a new war and resolving the conflict over a negotiation table and;

*Isolation:* If the European Union strives for ensuring a stability and security zone for itself, then the isolation of Armenia should bother not only the latter, but Europe as well. This issue can be discussed in the document as well.

*Cultural security:* Demolition of Armenian cultural artifacts in neighboring countries is a strong blow at Armenian identity, and therefore the Armenian security. Incidentally, the same is true of any culture. Therefore, European Union is expected to take measures for providing cultural security, especially within the framework of ENP AP.

*Xenophobia:* This phenomenon continues to be on of the major issues of the era, and we, in particular, experience it in the form of growing armenophobia. Armenia and the European Union have mutual interests in this respect as well, thus it is necessary to outline a number of actions directed towards the resolution of the issue.

#### **P.S. The ambiguity of left and right hands**

Meanwhile, a document called "Benchmarks of Armenian Security" is circulating in the country, which may become the foundation of the future concept paper on the national security of the Republic of Armenia. Without any attempt to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this document, let's highlight two major provisions which are noteworthy in the context of ENP negotiations:

1. There is a statement in the document that Armenia does not have an intention of applying for NATO membership;
2. The document does not mention in any way that Armenia intends to become an EU member.

Wouldn't it be more natural if we had kept silent regarding the first point and did not state it as a final goal, and conversely, had stated EU membership as a goal? Isn't life more unpredictable? And does it not require more flexibility?

*The paper is elaborated based on the opinions passed by the participants of the discussion "The current stage of negotiations on ENP Action Plan", which took place on March 22, 2006. The roundtable discussion was attended by independent analysts, government officials, and representatives of the international organizations. The round table was organized with the support of the UK Department for International Development /DFID/.*