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# Policy Brief Համառոտագիր

**Աջակցություն Հայաստան - Թուրքիա  
հարաբերությունների բարելավմանը**

**Support to Armenia - Turkey  
Rapprochement**

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Սույն համառոտագիրը ստեղծվել է Ամերիկայի ժողովրդի նվիրատվության շնորհիվ, ԱՄՆ Միջազգային զարգացման գործակալության (USAID) աջակցությամբ. նրա բովանդակության համար պատասխանատու է Մարդկային զարգացման միջազգային կենտրոնը: Այստեղ արտահայտված տեսակետները պարտադիր չէ, որ համընկնեն ԱՄՆ Միջազգային զարգացման գործակալության կամ ԱՄՆ կառավարության տեսակետներին:

# The known ways of regulating Armenian-Turkish relations



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## **The crisis of the format: in the hole or out of the hole?**

During the second half of 2010 no positive developments registered in the relations between Armenia and Turkey. Even worse, both politicians and public opinion leaders started to voice pessimistic predictions regarding the probability of successful ratification of the Armenian-Turkish Protocols more frequently. Nowadays one often can hear the argument that the authorities of both countries will restrain from initiating any constructive action, having appeared in the vortex of national elections to be held in June, 2011 in Turkey and in 2012 and 2013 in Armenia. Meanwhile, an opinion circulates among diplomats and politicians that unilateral cancellation of the current attempts of rapprochement is pregnant with serious risks, and is not justified for any of the negotiating parties, though the current format hinders the development of further negotiations on rapprochement. In contrast, another group of politicians and public figures thinks that the cancellation of the “doomed” process and a “death certificate” on the current format will actually denote the beginning of a new phase of political negotiations, which may encounter fewer hazardous reefs of manipulations on the way and may have better chances for success.

In general, the situation is the following: experts and politicians seem to be unanimous in their evaluation of the current phase of the rapprochement process between the two neighbors. They argue that the process of ratifying the Protocols has ended in a deadlock, either temporarily or even forever. Approaches regarding the ways out of the dead end vary. However, everyone agrees that it is necessary to break the deadlock. In the process of seeking exits it is essential to rely on this latter positive point accepted by all. Otherwise, finding a solution has no alternatives.

## **Three-dimensional solutions to two-dimensional problems**

Thus, what should be the solutions in this stalemate, when any real inter-state, bilateral initiative is perceived as impossible without the ratification of the Protocols, while the ratification itself is practically impossible because of domestic and exogenous political processes? In physics a solution to such stalemates has certain logic: when the relation of the two values and their range statement are initially defined while the equation counterintuitively has no solution, the solution is sought in a new dimension.

In the process of regulating the relations between Armenia and Turkey such an approach implies the involvement of a third party, accepted by both sides, into inter-state practical issues and infrastructural problems. Azerbaijan cannot be such a party, as its presence in the rapprochement process will certainly be deconstructive.

## **The third root of quadratic equation**

Infrastructural and systemic projects with participation of a third party are possible only when the compound interest of cooperation exceeds the political interest of the obstacles that exist in the result of the current status quo. It is not possible in a two-dimensional format, since any project, which requires economic or infrastructural interference from the state, and which is beneficial for

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Armenia, is cancelled by the Turkish government in its cradle: the principle of “we won’t yield one iota to the enemy” is unyielding. It is clear that no economic gain can overcome such a political impediment.

Trilateral cooperation offers a different map of interests and manipulations. Certain things have already become a reality, for instance, combining the Armenian-Turkish systems of telecommunication and goods transportation through the territory of Georgia; establishing partnerships between the financial infrastructures, and a number of other infrastructural cooperation projects. It is these infrastructural projects that possess more potential in a long run with comparatively little interference. The ice having covered the inter-state relations is to break in these particular segments of cooperation. Therefore, the more of these projects there are, the larger and more obvious the fruits of political regulation of the relations will become. The potential of such cooperation projects is large, for instance, in the customs sector and in integration possibilities of the energy systems.

Each idea on possible cooperation has both advocates and opponents. For instance, some experts think that the statement that Turkey needs large resources of energy and that enlarging energy capacity of Armenia is justified with the expectation of future cooperation is simply a trap. Some even consider it to be a pre-meditated bait. Another group of experts and politicians think that the energy cooperation between Armenia and Turkey is inevitable. Such cooperation does not only have a huge potential for the regulation of the relations between the two countries, but also for the development of peace and stability in the whole region. If the arguments of the pessimists are mainly limited to the perception of the political interests and priorities of one party only, Turkey, the optimists support their arguments with the existence of the interests of the third party and the latter’s willingness and chances to influence the existing process. Such arguments may be put forward in case of any trilateral initiative which is politically acceptable. It is necessary to weigh and discuss pros and cons very meticulously and responsibly. In any case, it is necessary to seek solutions in the third dimension and continue to be pro-active.

*The paper is elaborated based on the opinions passed by the participants of the discussion “Armenian-Turkish relations: windows of possibilities”, which took place on January 25, 2011. The roundtable discussion was attended by independent analysts, government officials, and representatives of the international organizations.*

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