

European Neighbourhood Policy - ARMENIA

EU-Armenia relations: basic facts

The EU-Armenia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) entered into force in 1999, with the goal of promoting respect for democracy, rule of law and human rights, as well as market economy reforms, trade liberalisation and cooperation in a wide number of sectors.

The ENP Action Plan was adopted in November 2006 and its implementation will be monitored and guided through the PCA Sub-Committees.

Major developments in 2007 and overall assessment

In general, Armenia has demonstrated a strong commitment towards the implementation of the ENP Action Plan, despite some initial delays caused by Parliamentary elections in May 2007 and internal coordination issues.

Good progress was achieved in particular in the areas of judiciary reform, the administration of elections and the Ombudsman institution. Of key importance for 2008 will be proper implementation of recently adopted legislation.

International observers have concluded that the conduct of the February 2008 Presidential elections was mostly in line with international standards. There are however concerns with regard to the declaration of the state of emergency in the aftermath of the elections and related to clashes between police and opposition protesters. The situation has shown that - despite progress achieved in 2007 regarding respect for human rights and rule of law - there is a necessity for further improvement.

In order to improve integrated border management at the national and regional level, a project on regional border management in South Caucasus (2008-2009) was launched in October 2007. Participating countries agreed to implement measures on a bilateral basis (,Armenia-Georgia, Azerbaijan-Georgia).

Armenia has managed well on the macro-economic side with a strong growth in 2007 at a rate of 13.7% (double-digit for the sixth consecutive year).

The bilateral trade with the EU grew by 17.4% compared to 2006 and amounted to nearly €1 billion. The EU is Armenia's main trading partner (nearly 40% share in Armenia's overall external trade).

The business climate has been further improved, although at slower pace than in earlier years. More efforts are needed to improve the customs administration.

Further progress was made in 2007 in reducing poverty - the proportion of the population living under the poverty line has continued to decline steadily to 29% in 2007 and the share of extreme poverty is now down to 6.5% of the population.

The recent upgrading of the European Commission delegation in Yerevan is a tangible sign of the Commission's commitment to the future development of the country.

Some examples of how the EU supports reforms in Armenia

The EU is providing policy advice supporting economic, political and social reform and development through the Armenian European Policy and Legal Advice Centre (AEPLAC).

A very successful food security programme (€100 million over 10 years) is currently ongoing to support the government's poverty reduction efforts by providing budgetary support and technical assistance for key land and agricultural reform, public finance management and social sector reform.

Regional development projects (together with the Council of Europe) and EIDHR projects are supporting democratic reform.

Work is under way to support nuclear safety measures in order to keep up sufficient safety standards for the country's outdated nuclear power plant (Medzamor). Over a number of years the EU supported the development of a comprehensive energy strategy for Armenia to strengthen its energy security and develop alternative energy supplies.

A number of projects are focusing on education, especially in the field of vocational training which is one of the priority areas in the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

On higher education, reform continued in line with Bologna Process principles with the support of the Tempus programme, which has been the main driving force behind the modernisation of curricula and improvements to the administrative and organisational structures of universities. Student mobility to the EU increased (by 60% in 2007) through participation in Erasmus Mundus.

In the area of youth, Armenia registered an increase (over 20%) in participation rates in the relevant actions of the Youth in Action programme as compared to 2006. Armenian young people and youth workers were involved, for instance, in a large-scale project on conflict management involving other partners from the Southern Caucasus countries as well as from EU Member States.

Assistance to Armenia

In 2007, €21 million in Community assistance has been allocated for Armenia.

An indicative amount of €98.4 million has been allocated for the period 2007-10, under the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument.

The Communication from the Commission to the Parliament and the Council *Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2007* (3 April 2008) and a country report on Armenia are available at

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents_en.htm

More on Armenia and ENP

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/armenia/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm