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ARMENIA AT THE CROSSROADS

IVLIAN HAINDRAVA

195

EXPERT OPINION





საქართველოს სტრატეგიისა და საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობათა კვლევის ფონდი
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Armenia woke up to a new reality on November 10, 2020. Late at night, the Prime Minister of the country Nikol Pashinyan, the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, and the President of Russia Vladimir Putin, signed a trilateral statement in Moscow¹ which stopped the 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan for Nagorno-Karabakh. The one-page statement includes three main aspects:²

1. The Military: complete cessation of fire; the warring parties remaining at the positions they held by 00:00 on November 10; de-occupation of all Azerbaijani territories adjacent to Karabakh occupied by Armenia; deployment of a peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation for five years on the perimeter of the part of Karabakh that remained under Armenian control (with the possibility of automatic extension for the next five years, if neither party objects);
2. The Humanitarian: the exchange of prisoners of war and deceased servicemen; return of internally displaced persons to Karabakh and surrounding de-occupied territories (control over the latter was generously handed over to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR);
3. The Infrastructural: the restoration of transport and economic links and ensuring their security; including that of the Lachin Corridor connecting Karabakh with Armenia and the road connecting Azerbaijan to its exclave of Nakhichevan, which passes through the territory of Armenia.³

The statement sidestepped the main political issue - the future of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan's position - the war ended with our victory, justice has been restored in the form of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, we are not going to grant any political status to Karabakh and we consider discussions on this topic pointless – was inflexible and remains as such. In Armenia, naturally, the immediate adaptation to such an end of a long and, as it seemed, a victorious conflict when the remaining Armenians in Karabakh (if they remain there) had no better perspective than to be recognized as a national minority living within Azerbaijan, was hard to put up with. It was hard despite the fact that the course of the 2020 war did not promise anything good for Armenia from the very beginning.

Armenians blamed everyone for the bitter defeat - Turkey, Russia, the West, international organizations... Here and there, rebukes were heard even against Georgia – as if, the Turks delivered arms to Azerbaijan and also deployed Syrian militants via Georgian airspace to help the Azerbaijani

army (at the official level, however, such claims were not voiced, while the participation of the Syrians in the war remained dubious). However, because of the capitulation (as many in Armenia called the November 9 statement), Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan became the main target of accusations.

Ex-presidents Serzh Sargsyan (2008-2018) and Robert Kocharyan (1998-2008) appeared at the top of the protest wave. Both are from Karabakh by origin and are the embodiment of the so-called “Karabakh Clan.” Their message to the frustrated public was simple: Did we not warn you that this man (N. Pashinyan) is not fit to be the leader of the nation? Did we not tell you that in case of his leadership, we would face a real danger of losing Karabakh? If you didn’t believe us then (in 2018), at least follow us now, let’s get rid of Pashinyan and his immature team and save what still can be saved.

The winter of 2020-2021 in Armenia was hot. The protest became constant; however, the street is not at all an unknown domain for Pashinyan and it was no hard task for him to mobilize people for counter-demonstrations.⁴ It was not hard, first of all, because the “fatigue” within the sections of Armenian society on the unresolved Karabakh problem that lasted for 30 years after the conflict entered the phase of open confrontation, approached a critical level. Throughout the period of post-Soviet independence, Nagorno-Karabakh, along with the 1915 genocide, has been a central issue in Armenia’s domestic and foreign policy. Moreover, these two topics were the cornerstone of modern Armenian identity. However, while the genocide was the apotheosis of national tragedy, Karabakh became a symbol of national triumph. But this symbol required continuous sacrifices both literally (due to periodic clashes on the front line with Azerbaijan) and figuratively: the entirety of Armenia’s resources - political-diplomatic, economic-financial, diasporic, was directed to the preservation of Karabakh at any cost. And the price was high: living in constant tension (Azerbaijan was never ambiguous that if the peace talks were not to yield results, it would resort to the military force); the exhausting competition with a much more wealthy Azerbaijan in training/equipment/armoring the troops (Arms Race - as it was called in the Cold War era); the growing dependence on Russia which was perceived as the only guarantor of the security of Armenia and Karabakh (as it turned out, only to the extent it coincided with the interests of Russia itself); the rejection of the association with the European Union (this too - by Russian command),

being left out of transport and energy projects due to the closed borders with two neighbors (Azerbaijan and Turkey) and more.

For two decades, the government (“Karabakh Clan”) directed national energy not so much to the development of the country as to the cultivation of the image of a victorious hero in an unequal struggle, which served to justify the aforementioned sacrifices. The ascendance to power of Mr. Pashinyan and his young and politically novice team at the end of 2018 was an unmistakable sign that there was a growing demand in society, especially in its youth, to realize one’s potential in the 21st century and not in the 20th (or much earlier). Consciously or unconsciously, being a hostage of the unresolved problem of Karabakh which, in turn, precipitated remaining hostage of Moscow, was becoming unacceptable for many.

On January 4, 2021, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan published a letter entitled the “Origins of the 44-Day War” where he offered his compatriots his own analysis of the processes and circumstances that ultimately resulted in defeat.⁵ In particular, he noted the following mistakes made by the Armenian side at different stages: consent to the exclusion of the representatives of Karabakh from the formats of the peace talks, the failure to use the victor’s position for a quarter of a century to achieve concrete and sustainable political results, instead, giving a false hope to Azerbaijan that the peace process would bear fruit, although there was no real change in this direction, and Baku was not deceived either (by his own admission, it was Nikol Pashinyan himself who became the person who ultimately dismissed Azerbaijan’s hopes). Further, there was the refusal to make unilateral concessions even when the situation acquired alarming contours for Armenia. Naturally, Mr. Pashinyan also mentioned the military aspect - Armenia faced the war of 2020 with weapons of the 1980s while the Azerbaijani army was equipped with modern means of combat. However, the main conclusion that an attentive reader can draw from his letter is the following: **Armenia suffered not only a military but also a political defeat.** Thus, Nikol Pashinyan did not shy away from self-criticism; however, he redirected the blame at his predecessors and main opponents - Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan. And, incidentally, quite justifiably.

This did not scare the opponents - they accused Mr. Pashinyan of incompetence in military matters, along with the political. In particular, Serzh Sargsyan publicly expressed his surprise that during the war the Armenian army did not use the Russian operational-tactical missiles in its

arsenal (known as “Iskander”). He was supported by Robert Kocharyan who also said that the government, which lost the war and the lands, should leave – something, which is a “prerequisite for national revival.” In response, Nikol Pashinyan noted that only 10% of the used “Iskanders” exploded which is why their effectiveness turned out to be minimal. The conflict reached its climax when the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of Armenia publicly disagreed with the Prime Minister’s assessment. On February 24, Mr. Pashinyan dismissed him from his position but faced disobedience, which he qualified as a coup attempt. At that time, the street was also roaring and the feeling was such that Nikol Pashinyan’s government had only a short time to live.

Two main circumstances contributed to easing the situation: 1. The Armed Forces of Armenia did not directly intervene in the political crisis (the position of an individual high-ranking military officers did not result in the direct intervention of the army in the political process) because the military personnel who went through the war knew better than anybody else that if it were not for the ceasefire of November 9, the casualties among the civilian population of Karabakh and in the militaries would be much higher while the end result still would be the same and 2. The issue of early parliamentary elections was included in the agenda (the next parliamentary elections were to be held in December 2023), which gave the opposition a legal and a peaceful opportunity to change the government if the voters were to support this idea.

Early parliamentary elections really were held in Armenia on June 20, 2021. Without delving into the specifics of the local electoral legislation, let us focus directly on its results (in the table):

	Party/Block	Leader	Votes %	Mandates
1.	Civil Contract	N. Pashinyan	53.92	71
2.	Armenia Alliance	R. Kocharyan	21.04	29
3.	I have Honor Alliance	S. Sargsyan	5.23	7
4.	Prosperous Armenia		3.96	-
5.	Republic		3.04	-
6.	Armenian National Congress		1.54	-
7.	Bright Armenia		1.22	-

A total of 107 deputy mandates in the National Assembly were distributed among three political entities. Four more showed results of significance and none of the other 19 entities were able to get even 1% of the votes.

Such a convincing victory of Nikol Pashinyan’s party just seven months after the unsuccessful war was caused by many and various factors⁶ of which we will highlight three here: 1. The unwillingness to return under the rule of the “Karabakh Clan” (basically, there was no other alternative to Mr. Pashinyan’s party in the elections); 2. Associating the chances of solving the Karabakh problem with Mr. Pashinyan (even on poor terms) and not his opponents; 3. The desire to maintain/develop the positive changes achieved inside the country during the short period of Nikol Pashinyan’s premiership.

And there were indeed such achievements. For example, as Mr. Pashinyan came to power, Armenia’s rating in the corruption perception index initially changed dramatically for the better and then, in the following years, it continued gradual improvement (for comparison, see the data on Georgia and Azerbaijan):⁷

Year	Armenia	Georgia	Azerbaijan
2021	58	45	128
2020	60	45	129
2019	77	44	126
2018	105	41	152
2017	107	46	122

The positive dynamics in terms of such indicators as economic freedom, the degree of freedom of the press (where Armenia ranked 51st and even surpassed Georgia which was demoted to 89th place while Azerbaijan is 154th among 180 states⁸), the state of democracy and others were also impressive. Obviously, the pandemic left its negative impact on Armenia’s economy as well but the overall trend of its recovery was undisputable. Citizens also approved the traffic police reform which, akin to Georgian model, was transformed into a mobile patrol police.⁹

Early parliamentary elections were also followed by early presidential elections (since 2018, Armenia has been a parliamentary republic and the president with limited powers is elected by the National Assembly for a

seven-year term). Armen Sarkissian, elected on March 2, 2018 (nominated by the pre-revolutionary government), announced his resignation on January 23, 2022. A year earlier, on January 11, 2021 he published a letter in which he noted in particular that, in the early 1990s, Armenia, for the first time in many centuries, not only did not lose but regained historical territories in the fight against an opponent with significantly superior capabilities. Later, it embarked on a long path of presenting the desired image as the truth where imitation replaced real deeds and projected the illusion of Armenia which had a well-organized state, advanced economy and science and a strong army, although the reality was completely different. Only the Armenians themselves were deceived by this, laying the foundation for their own defeat. And the defeat was swift to come and Armenian society faced “yet another moment of all-national psychological depression”.¹⁰

In short, Armen Sarkissian distanced himself from the Armenian political class as such and left. It seems he left politics altogether. Nikol Pashinyan’s 71-mandate majority in the NA faced no problems in electing a new president (according to the law, 65 votes in the second round is enough for this).

*63-year-old Vahagn Khachatryan, an economist by profession, became the fifth president of Armenia on March 3, 2022. In 1990-1996, he was a member of the Yerevan City Council; 1992-1996 - City Mayor; 1995-1999 – Member of the National Assembly (Parliament); 1996-1998 He was an adviser to the first president of Armenia - Levon Ter-Petrosyan and from 2013 until his election as president - a member of the “Armenian National Congress” party (leader - L. Ter-Petrosyan). In August 2021, he was appointed as the Minister of High-Tech Industry, which was a manifestation of his support for Mr. Pashinyan’s course. Ideologically, he is seen as representing the liberal camp. His first official visit as the president was to Tbilisi on May 30, 2022.*¹¹

After that the internal political situation in Armenia calmed down but Karabakh and, more generally, security remained as the most painful domestic/foreign issue. According to the IRI public opinion poll of July 2022, 54% see security as the main challenge (another 11% ranked it as the second most important problem) while political instability was ranked second at 10% and 9% respectively, and the economy and unemployment were ranked third 5% and 11%, further respectively.¹² Unemployment was 5% (first mentioned) and 11% (second). The survey (given the cautious

attitude towards the results of any survey in countries like ours) also revealed some other interesting moods. For example, 32% support the return to presidential rule and only half of this - 16% - the preservation of the parliamentary republic model (in the 2015 referendum, the majority supported the transition to a parliamentary republic, although the voting procedure became the subject of serious criticism and mistrust). Only 7% has a positive and another 21% - a somewhat positive view on the normalization of relations with Turkey.¹³ The attitude towards the ongoing war in Ukraine is also remarkable where 17% of respondents assigned the responsibility for the initiation of the war in Ukraine to the USA, 16% to all sides equally, 14% to Volodymyr Zelenskyy personally, 10% to NATO, 8% to Vladimir Putin personally, 6% to the government of Ukraine and 5% to the Russian Federation.

Interestingly, however, these pro-Russian/anti-Western sentiments (among others, blaming the West for the defeat in 2020 as mentioned above) have changed as demonstrated by a telephone poll conducted by the authoritative international Gallup organization in November.¹⁴ A total of 69.3% of respondents positively evaluated France's response to the September events, 68.8% - Iran's, 62.3% - the USA's, 36.9% - the EU's and only 29.6% to that of Russia (CSTO's - 8%). As for the vector of foreign-political orientation, 44.6% think that Armenia should have similar relations with all centers of influence (27.6% were of this opinion in the 2020 survey), 17.4% think that Armenia should move towards Russia (in 2020 - 25.1%), 15.5% - towards the USA (in 2020 - 9.2%) and 9% - prefers the European Union (in 2020 - 17.1%).¹⁵ It should also be noted that in 2020, 7.2% hoped for military assistance from the CSTO while at present the number is only 0.2%.

So what happened in September of 2022 that caused, perhaps not a tectonic but a visible shift in public opinion? To answer this question, we need to follow the events that developed in the context of the settlement of Azerbaijan-Armenia relations after the end of the 2020 war. The trilateral statement of November 9 seemed to have paved the way for the relevant process, although as stated above, it sidestepped the future (status) of Karabakh. There was the unambiguous position of Azerbaijan (without any status) but such a perspective was unacceptable for the other (even if defeated) side - according to the aforementioned Gallup survey, 90% of Armenian citizens consider the inclusion of Karabakh within the boundaries of Azerbaijan to be unacceptable if the locals would only get the status of a national minority. The figure was the same in May.

Another problem - the delimitation of the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan (its length is about 1,000 kilometers) - could not be the subject of the November 9 statement but its significance in terms of resolving bilateral relations is almost as important as the Karabakh issue. Especially taking into consideration that during the Soviet period, several mini-exclaves were created on both sides of the border as a result of which places on the territory of Azerbaijan compactly inhabited by Armenians were administratively subordinated to the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia and vice versa. During the war of the early 1990s, the population abandoned these exclaves and today the question of their territorial belonging complicates the process of border delimitation which is highly sensitive for both societies. In addition, as it happens in such cases, the parties use maps of different times and situations as way to advance their respective arguments while Russia says that the only “real” maps are in its possession and this problem cannot be solved without its involvement.¹⁶

Finally (although, we can continue to enumerate the list of problematic topics) – there are the different interpretations of the text of the November 9 statement which also happens when there is no trust between the parties. In particular, when it comes to the security of the Lachin Corridor and the road leading from Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan through the territory of Armenia, Azerbaijan considers both of them in the same domain (“corridor”) while Armenia talks about asymmetry (Lachin is a corridor, the Nakhichevan road is not). The point is that the “corridor” implies a kind of exterritoriality; that is, an unhindered movement when the party on the territory of which this corridor passes through does not carry out neither the customs nor border control (unless it is specifically agreed upon). In this dispute, Armenia appeals to the text of the statement (where the asymmetry indeed exists) and Azerbaijan appeals to common sense and logic because it does not understand why two routes with the same function should enjoy different statuses.

Another trilateral meeting at the highest level, which was held again in Moscow two months after the November 9 statement, was precisely largely devoted to the restoration of the road infrastructure, although it did not yield any tangible results. In the meantime, the West also decided to engage in the process; realizing that the developments of the processes should not be left solely to Moscow. The West, which remained aside for the month and a half of the 2020 Karabakh war, realized that without its active involvement, either the Iranian version (3+3; i.e., three South

Caucasian states plus the three immediate neighbors - Russia, Turkey and Iran) or the Turkish one (the same six parties without dividing them into two ranks) of the “South Caucasian platform” would gain traction. Despite Georgia’s open skepticism towards such formats (precisely due to the exclusion of the West),¹⁷ both Brussels and Washington considered it unacceptable to allow the unchecked development of the processes, even more so when there is not a high level of trust for Turkey, not to mention Iran, in these two capitals.

The West also decided to host/mediate the negotiations on the final settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan (however, after the meetings in the West, Armenian and Azerbaijani negotiators demonstratively visited Russia as well so as not to incite the latter to organize any kind of provocations). In this regard, the meetings in the first decade of October 2022, within the framework of the European Political Community Summit in Prague (the Russian Federation and Belarus were not invited to Prague), was important. The meeting hosted intensive negotiations in different formats between Nikol Pashinyan and Ilham Aliyev. After the summit, information was spread that Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to recognize each other’s territorial integrity.

The active engagement of the West is beneficial for both Armenia and Azerbaijan because their strategic goal coincides more with the West than with Russia due to a simple circumstance: the West is in favor of resolving the conflict on terms mutually acceptable to the parties while Russia – on its own terms . This became clear when the West proposed the following path towards final solution to Yerevan and Baku: determining the status of Karabakh within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, delimiting the border between the states, recognizing each other’s territorial integrity and establishing diplomatic relations. Russia offered the parties the only (but extremely challenging) correction to this formula - postponing the issue of determining the status of Karabakh for 25 years. This will ensure that the Russian peacekeepers remain in the Karabakh zone for at least the same duration; that is, Russia will maintain the levers of pressure on both sides. The appointment of a new Prime Minister (“State Minister”) in Karabakh (in that part, which remains under Armenian control) will serve the same purpose. Ruben Vardanyan, born in Yerevan in 1968, assumed this position on December 4. The fortune of this successful businessman who operated in Russia was estimated by Forbes at USD 1 billion. At the beginning of September, 2022, he announced that he was renouncing

his Russian citizenship and moving to Karabakh. At first, he stayed away from taking office but later changed his mind. According to him, in the last two years the locals had the feeling that everyone abandoned them. "The Armenians of the whole world are obliged to help them," said the billionaire.¹⁸

It was difficult for Nikol Pashinyan (and the Armenian public) to ignore the Russian bait. Postponing the final solution of the problem into the future (who knows, what will happen in 25 years?!) is more convenient both politically and emotionally than recognizing Karabakh as an integral part of Azerbaijan *now*. Azerbaijan is of the opposite opinion: it is the winner *now* and wants to finally resolve the problem in this instance as it can talk to its opponent from the position of force. That is why Azerbaijan's demonstration of force was swift when Armenia attempted to drag out the process.

On the night of September 12-13, intense fighting began on several sections of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border (not in Karabakh per se). After the end of the 2020 War, local shooting episodes occurred every now and then, but not to the scale it achieved this time. A ceasefire was reached only on the evening of September 14, although by that time, approximately 200 Armenian and 80 Azerbaijani servicemen had been killed (or were missing). Yerevan accused the opponent of occupying 10 km² of Armenian territory and Baku responded by announcing that it had deployed troops along the border "of its own land."

In this situation, Armenia turned to the CSTO (whose members, apart from Armenia, are the Russian Federation, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) for help, and this time it had a formal basis for such a move. Unlike Karabakh, which has not been recognized by anyone, and neither the CSTO nor the Russian Federation separately (which has signed many agreements in the field of military cooperation with Armenia) had any obligations in terms of its security, aggression against a member-state of CSTO bears the responsibility of countermeasures according to the charter of this organization (similar to the Article 5 of the North Atlantic Charter). Yerevan was under no illusion that the allies would march against Azerbaijan (apart from the Central Asian states, even official Minsk does not hide its sympathies towards Azerbaijan). But Russia's disengagement, while they had the information that even Russian peacekeepers came under Azerbaijani fire (although there were no casualties among them), caused indignation in Armenia.

It was not Russia but the USA, which showed moral support for Armenia. At that time, the speaker of the House of Representatives of the Congress, Nancy Pelosi, flew to Yerevan on September 19 and her visit caused unequivocally positive emotions among citizens. Although Mrs. Pelosi's rhetoric was measured and she signaled to her hosts that Armenia needs to make up its own mind about what it wants from the US, there was a feeling that Washington would not leave Armenia at the mercy of Russia.¹⁹

In this regard, France went even further. The country's Senate passed a resolution calling on the executive power to introduce sanctions against Azerbaijan²⁰ which caused a sharp negative reaction from Baku. This was all the more expected because France is already considered a "pro-Armenian" entity in Azerbaijan and Baku soon received more proof of this. Official Baku declared the joint document adopted at the meeting of the Organization of Francophone countries²¹ in Tunisia as the product of the Armenian²² lobby supported by the French President Emmanuel Macron and refused to participate in the peace talks mediated by France. Consequently, the meeting scheduled for December 7, 2022 between Ilham Aliyev and Nikol Pashinyan in Brussels was postponed indefinitely.

Against the backdrop of anti-French sentiments in Baku, the dissatisfaction with Russia was now expressed in the streets of Yerevan. On November 22, the President of Russia, who arrived at the CSTO Summit, was met by a protest demonstration and the Prime Minister of Armenia did not sign the final documents of the summit itself. "During the last two years, the member state of the CSTO has become the target for Azerbaijan's attacks at least three times and so far we have not actually had the CSTO's reaction to Azerbaijan's aggression which is a big blow to the CSTO's image," said Nikol Pashinyan during his speech at the summit,²³ echoing the thoughts of his compatriots.

At the same time, Baku also expressed dissatisfaction with the Russian peacekeepers alleging they were turning a blind eye to the transfer of weapons and ammunition from Armenia to Karabakh through the Lachin corridor and concentrates containing gold from the opposite direction. Azerbaijan expressed its dissatisfaction through actions, blocking traffic in the Lachin corridor for three hours on December 3. Despite its brief duration, the action demonstrated the vulnerability of Karabakh and its Armenian population (about 100,000 according to Armenian sources and up to 40,000 according to Azerbaijani party) which is connected to Armenia solely by the Lachin Corridor. In the following days, Azerbaijan

blocked this corridor for a longer period using hundreds of “eco activists” (thus hinting at the ineffectiveness of the Russian peacekeepers) while also cutting off the supply of natural gas to the Karabakh population (to illustrate its vulnerability).

If we take into account that in the meantime first Iran conducted military exercises near the Azerbaijani border and then it was followed by joint Azerbaijani-Turkish exercises on the other side of the border (relations with Iran is a topic for a separate discussion), it becomes clear that there is still a long way to go not only before the final settlement of the Karabakh problem, but also in terms of achieving stability and restoring communications in the area where the borders between Armenia, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Iran meet.

In short, the situation deteriorated sharply. Armenia tries to minimize losses. Azerbaijan tries to maximize gains. Russia, Turkey and Iran try to acquire as many benefits as possible. The West tries not to allow new escalations. And Georgia, while maintaining its own orientation and acting within limited capabilities, is trying to be useful in establishing a sustainable peace in the South Caucasus.²⁴ All this is happening against the backdrop of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

* * *

The author is grateful to the reader who reached these final lines and in conclusion notes the following:

- The presented material is not, as they say today, an insider’s view. This is a view from the outside, but not from afar;
- There is a dozen of papers given in the bibliography that complete the overall picture (in some cases they have their own bibliography attached);
- Precisely four years ago - in December 2018 - the letter published by the author in the Expert Opinion series about the Velvet Revolution of Armenia ended with the words: “The year 2019 will not be easy for our neighbors. All the more - Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, Armenia!”

The observation/prediction of that time, as well as honest best wishes, are still valid today.

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16. Выступление В.Путина на заседании дискуссионного клуба «Валдай», 21.10.2021 <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66975>
17. See e.g., **S. Dzakumashvili**: "3+3 Regional Cooperation and Georgia: What is at Stake," GFSIS, 2022 <https://gfsis.org.ge/files/library/opinion-papers/175-expert-opinion-geo.pdf>
18. <https://www.forbes.ru/profile/ruben-varpanyan> 04.11.2022
19. „Визит Нэнси Пелоси в Ереван: завышенные ожидания и суровые реалии“ 19.09.2022 <https://verelq.am/ru/node/115002>
20. The French Senate also managed to pass a resolution (also of a recommendatory nature) on the recognition of the independence of Karabakh in November 2020, already after the end of the war-2020, by 305 votes to 1 (author's note).
21. Organization of French-speaking countries, founded in 1970, which includes Armenia among its 58 member states (since 2008). The President of the European Council Charles Michel, the Prime Ministers of Belgium and Canada, Alexander de Croo and Justin Trudeau, took part in the Tunis meeting, along with the leaders of other states (author's note).
22. "Azerbaijan Slams France, Armenia over Francophonie Summit Document, Remarks" 11.20.2022 <https://www.rferl.org/a/azerbaijan-criticizes-france-armenia-francophonie/32138926.html?lflags=mailer>
23. RFERL, November 24, 2022 <https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-csto-pashinian-criticism/32145663.html?lflags=mailer>
24. See e.g., **E. Avdaliani**: "The Collective West Will Play a Minimal or No Role in the Initiatives Related to the Security of the South Caucasus, Russia, Turkey and Iran Will Take over the Initiative," 11.10.2021 <https://www.interpressnews.ge/ka/article/678268-emil-avdaliani-samxret-kavkasiis-usaprtxoebastian-dakavshirebul-inciatiavebshi-kolektiuri-dasavleti-minimalur-an-saertod-aranair-rols-ar-sheasrulebs-inciativa-rusetis-turketis-da-iranis-xelshi-ikneba>