

FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT EU-ARMENIA RELATIONS



Relations between the European Union and Armenia are based on the **EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, a modern, ambitious Agreement, which was signed on 24 November 2017 in the margins of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels and entered into provisional application on 1 June 2018. This Agreement provides a framework for Armenia and the EU to work together for the benefit of the citizens of Armenia in the areas of strengthening democracy and human rights, creating more jobs and business opportunities, fairer rules, more safety and security, cleaner environment as well as better education and opportunities for research.

The EU is a key reform partner in Armenia. Following the Armenian 'Velvet revolution' in 2018, the EU stepped up its support and increased its annual allocation in grants to €65 million in 2019. Its current substantial portfolio focuses on supporting the reform agenda of the new government, private sector development, education, and development of focal regions. In addition, since 2014 more than €1 billion in the form of blended loans and grants has been invested in the energy, agriculture and transport sectors.

ECONOMY

- ✓ The **EU is the second largest trade partner of Armenia.** Companies with capital from EU Member States among the largest taxpayers, investors and employers in Armenia. Armenian exporters continue to benefit from the trade preference offered by the EU under the GSP+.
- ✓ The EU provides Armenian companies with funding, training, and export support to new markets, including through the EU4Business initiative. Since 2009, the €40 million of funds invested by the European Union have triggered additional loans of over €450 million and additional financial assistance; this benefitted **25,000 SMEs** and created over **3,200 new jobs**.
- ✓ **The EU supports the tourism industry in several regions across Armenia.** The Dilijan Tourist Information Centre and Arts and Crafts Centres were established, 11 hiking trails in the Dilijan National Park and 300 km of trails in Syunik, Gegharkunik and Vayots Dzor were marked and mapped, destination branding for Chambarak was developed, a tourism information centre at the historic Areni-1 Cave and a cross-country skiing centre in Ashotsk were established, all with EU support. These projects created over 100 new jobs for the local population and supported over 300 local SMEs.
- ✓ The EU-funded pilot '**EU4Regions: support to Regional Development in Armenia**' programme supports regional and local economic development and is expected to create 550 new jobs and increase the competitiveness of over 400 companies. Tailored support was also provided to 2,800 individuals to improve their employability, as well as to over 700 enterprises. This allowed the creation of 460 new, sustainable jobs.

ENVIRONMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

- ✓ The EU is funding better **energy exchange** and transit between Armenia and Georgia, in part by linking Armenia to the regional power grid.
- ✓ Border checkpoints on the Armenian-Georgian border were rebuilt and provided with modern infrastructure and equipment, simplified procedures and **modern border management system**. A modernization of the Armenia-Iran border crossing point in Meghri was signed in January 2020. It will help Armenia become a regional hub, facilitating mobility and enhancing regional economic activity.
- ✓ Once in force, the **EU-Armenia Air Transport Agreement** will pave the way for a greater exchange of travellers, lower airfares, and new business opportunities.
- ✓ With the help of EU funds, a **Laboratory of the Environmental Monitoring and Information Centre (EMIC)** was renovated in Yerevan. It will conduct state-of-the-art water analysis. This will clearly advance the **protection of water and river basins** in Armenia.

GOVERNANCE

- ✓ The EU supports **democratic governance** reforms in Armenia, the rule of law, anti-discrimination efforts, the promotion and protection of human rights, and fundamental freedoms, among others through a pioneering sector reform performance programme on human rights.
- ✓ To improve transparency and integrity of the **electoral system** in Armenia, the EU, as the largest single contributor, supported the early parliamentary elections in December 2018 with a package of €2.4 million, which covered technical equipment as well as enhancing civic participation and domestic observation actions.
- ✓ Through the EU-Armenia **justice policy dialogue**, the EU supports judiciary reforms in line with European standards, in particular through support to a **comprehensive justice reform strategy**, promotes the independence, accountability and efficiency of the judiciary, and contributes to the improvement of judicial infrastructure.
- ✓ The EU supports the Armenian government in its efforts to **fight corruption** through assisting with the implementation of the government's anti-corruption strategy, as well as civil society initiatives that promote anti-corruption reforms and support monitoring of the government's anti-corruption efforts.

SOCIETY

- ✓ The EU has supported efforts to strengthen **gender equality** in Armenia, including: the reduction of worrying sex-selective abortion rates, prevention of gender-based violence and supporting political and economic empowerment of girls and women.
- ✓ The EU has funded innovative **civil society** initiatives and social enterprises. New employment initiatives for people with disabilities and their parents have been developed. For the first time, people with disabilities were integrated in domestic election observation missions in the December 2018 elections. The Aregak Bakery in Gyumri is the first bakery in Armenia run by people with disabilities.
- ✓ The EU-Armenia **Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements** entered into force in 2014, making Schengen visa applications for Armenians easier, quicker, and cheaper.
- ✓ Under **Erasmus+ (2014-2020)**, close to 2,500 students and academic staff from Armenia have studied or taught in Europe, and 1,250 Europeans went to Armenia. In addition, over 8,000 young people and youth workers took part in short-term exchanges, mobility, training and volunteering projects.
- ✓ Over 300 Armenian schools and almost 1,500 teachers have participated in the **eTwinning Plus** platform to increase cooperation through the use of online tools.

EU STANDS BY ARMENIA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The EU reacted fast and responded to the urgent needs of countries in the Eastern Partnership during the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of Team Europe, the EU has mobilised an ambitious support package totalling over **€980 million** to help tackle immediate needs, such as support to the health sector and vulnerable communities, as well as short-term needs to support the social and economic recovery of the six countries.

As part of this, a tailor-made COVID-19 response package for Armenia worth over **€92 million** is being mobilised using a mix of existing and new funds to deliver concrete support to people.

✓ SUPPORT TO THE HEALTH SECTOR AND EMERGENCY NEEDS:

- Working with the WHO to supply medical devices and personal protection equipment, such as testing kits, masks, gloves, goggles, safety suits, and gowns. Training of medical and laboratory staff.
- A roadmap on the introduction of a single E-Health System for the public healthcare sector has been adopted – 6 e-health registries and portals are already operational.
- Support to the Ministry of Emergency Situations in partnership with the Swedish and Lithuanian civilian protection agencies to improve civil protection and disaster risk management.

✓ SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND VULNERABLE GROUPS:

- Emergency grants to support vulnerable citizens, the elderly and children.
- Distance learning tool for over 350 children in isolated communities, ensuring equal access to education.
- Grants to promote social change and inclusive, sustainable development in Armenia.

✓ SUPPORT TO SMEs:

- Through the **EU4Business** Initiative, SMEs and the self-employed can access grants, loans and business advice to withstand the crisis.
- The EU offered a series of free online trainings to help over 1,000 Armenian SMEs develop new digital approaches for their businesses.

✓ SUPPORT TO FISCAL RESILIENCE

- Increased financial support to Armenia's national administration to: build resilience of the health system with the necessary tools to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak and similar future shocks; ensure Armenians have access to social support to cope with the negative effects of the COVID-19 outbreak; and support the economic recovery of businesses.

IN FOCUS:

examples of what has already been delivered

Over
3,000

vulnerable households, including the elderly people, people with disabilities and large families in Shirak, Tavush and Lori regions, received humanitarian aid packages.

Personal protective equipment

including

6,000 gloves,

2,300 medical masks,

70 litres of sanitizing gel and

5 non-contact infrared thermometers

provided to the Human Rights Defender's Office to facilitate safe and uninterrupted work and interaction with citizens.

EU-supported 3D printing company AugmentAR, has produced over

4,000 masks

and **glasses** and donated them to

50 hospitals.

The success has clearly inspired the company's employees, they are now working on designing files to print out artificial respiration devices.

EU4Youth is supporting Armenian start-ups with

online advice

to help them get their businesses up and running despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Arevshat Garibyan, a young entrepreneur from Armenia, received support to set up his food processing business, adjust to new staff safety requirements, and has successfully managed to keep production running despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

IN FIGURES

The EU supports many
Armenian local businesses

such as the Mountain Goods and Holani tea, honey and dried fruit brands, the Clean Goris circular economy initiative of turning plastic bottles into plastic bags, an essential oil production, the Tonir Wedding Village business and ARK Ecological camps.

Thanks to EU support, the
Yerevan Metro

has been provided with modern carriages, safer metro operations were secured, and substantial energy savings made.

Total bilateral trade between the EU and Armenia has been increasing over the last 10 years, reaching over

€1.2 billion

in 2018.

7,000

households receive support for energy efficiency renovation.

BOOSTING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

The EU's leading research and innovation programme, **Horizon 2020**, became operational in Armenia in 2016. Armenian research institutes, universities, and individual researchers as well as businesses now have access to opportunities, from fundamental science to demonstration projects, on an equal footing with researchers from EU Member States. 32 innovative and research projects with participants from Armenia have already received Horizon 2020 grants. The first project is being implemented in Armenia.

E-CHAMPIONS

The EU is the main promoter of e-governance in Armenia. To date, EU support includes the introduction of an electronic document-management system known as "Mulberry" (paperless ministry concept) in Armenian government institutions; an e-system for submitting tax statements; an electronic civil status registry, a one-stop-shop vehicle registration system, an automated driver's licence issuing system, online "e-police", e-Citizen portal www.e-citizen.am, e-visa system, e-apostille system, e-notary, e-draft (draft legal acts discussion platform), "e-request.am" on-Line Interactive Portal to enable requests, complaints or suggestions to the government, and an online business registry. Furthermore, an ongoing project is developing a single interoperability platform for the services provided by the government, and establishes a single window for all state border crossing points. Another just started project aims to provide a "front desk" to the Governmental Interoperability Platform (GIP), enabling citizens and businesses to receive services online.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains an obstacle to stability and prosperity in the region. The EU, including through its Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, supports and complements the efforts of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group to facilitate the resolution of the conflict. The EU also promotes confidence and peace-building civil society activities in support of the official peace process and aimed at bridging the conflict divide.

The EU also funds a project to promote exchanges and discussions towards the normalisation of Armenia-Turkey relations.