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Political, Economic, Press and Information Section

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EU-Armenia: Shaping a positive agenda for future co-operation

EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, visited Yerevan on March 18th. During his mission, he met with the Armenian President, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, as well as with representatives of the opposition and civil society. In addition, accompanied by the Armenian Minister of Education, he visited the Yerevan Regional State College N1, a Vocational Education Training Project supported by the European Commission.

Taking advantage of his presence in Yerevan, Commissioner Hahn attended and addressed also the 4th Ordinary Session of the EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly, presenting the main elements of the recently launched consultation on the European Neighbourhood Policy review.

Throughout his discussions with Armenian interlocutors, Commissioner Hahn has underlined the current important and decisive year for EU-Armenia relations, marked by the joint commitment and effort to enhance EU-Armenia relations where possible and to negotiate a legal base for these future relations.

He expressed satisfaction over the fact that the EU and Armenia have recently successfully completed their joint scoping exercise and identified the potential areas for their future cooperation. This will enable both sides to launch soon negotiations on a new EU-Armenia overarching agreement once the respective negotiating mandates also approved.

The Commissioner highlighted the clear EU commitment to continue engagement in areas where this was compatible with Armenia's future obligations. The EU intends to be forward-looking and to shape a positive agenda for future cooperation. This would be reflected accordingly also in the ambitious agreement to be negotiated soon.

At a joint press conference with FM Edward Nalbandian, Commissioner Hahn stated: "I welcome the good progress made by Armenia as regards the implementation of the Mobility Partnership. In this context I would like to reiterate the EU's firm commitment to enhance the mobility of citizens in a secure and well-managed environment which is a core objective of the Eastern Partnership. However, the steady and satisfactory implementation of the visa-facilitation and readmission agreement is a pre-condition for considering the possibility of launching a visa liberalisation dialogue."

During the meetings with his interlocutors, the Commissioner addressed also the prospects for settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, underlining the importance to strictly respect the ceasefire, to exercise restraint on actions and statements and to create a climate conducive to progress with the conflict settlement. He stressed that the peaceful resolution of this conflict remained a top priority for the EU.

As for the reform-process, Commissioner Hahn acknowledged the progress achieved and encouraged acceleration in specific areas. He stressed that Armenia could count on the continued EU support to advance political and social reforms, to implement the visa facilitation and readmission agreements and improve the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this respect, the Commissioner pointed to the importance of making best use of the significant EU assistance of 140-170 million EUR for the period of 2014-2017, focusing on private sector development, public administration reform and justice sector reform.

- https://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/hahn/announcements/eu-armenia-shaping-positive-agenda-future-co-operation_en
- http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/news/2015/03/20150319_en.htm