

OPEN BORDER MAY STIMULATE TOURISM; TURKISH EXPERT

ARKA

Feb 12, 2010

YEREVAN, February 12. /ARKA/. Speaking at a round table discussion today on 'Turkish-Armenian Relations and Cross-Border Regionalism', the chairman of the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), political analyst Guven Sak, said after the Turkish-Armenian border opens businessmen on both sides could realize jointly successful projects, particularly in tourism. He said trading in industrial goods is not enough to improve economic contacts between the two countries and tourism can help.

Armenian prime minister Tigran Sargsyan, who also attended the discussion, said Armenian authorities' steps designed for normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations "are well thought-out." "The president opened a new page in the history of neighbors. This is not a diplomatic game, but an aim to normalize relations,' he said.

According to the prime minister, "it happens quite rarely when global players share the same views. I mean the provisions of the protocols on normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations are defended by the US, Russia and Europe, and "this is an exclusive opportunity to improve relations."

Guven Sak said Armenia is an important country for Turkey as the routes to Russia and Central Asia lie across it.

TIGRAN SARGSYAN: THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO THE NORMALIZATION OF THE ARMENIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS Hasmik Dilanyan

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"Radiolur"

12.02.2010 14:42

Public discussions on "Armenian-Turkish Relations and Border Regionalism" organized by the American Commerce Chamber in Armenia (AmCham), Turkish Economic Policy Research Institute (TEPAV) and US Embassy in Armenia took place in Yerevan today.

There is no alternative to the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations, since having closed borders in the 21st century is a nonsense, Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan said.

The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan's message to the Turkish President and his speech in London. "The President's speech confirms that the Armenian authorities have enough political will to overcome the stereotypes shaped between Armenia and Turkey and establish new relations between our countries,"

the Prime Minister noted.

According to Tigran Sargsyan, the normalization of relations must be considered on three different levels. "On the first level we should look at what the authorities have to do. Secondly, we should take into consideration how our societies perceive the current situation and how they see the future of the Armenian-Turkish relations. On the third level we should consider how the international community reacts to the improvement of the Armenian-Turkish relations and how the atmosphere in the region will change as a result of normalization of these relations."

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ARMENIAN AND TURKISH BUSINESS OWNERS MEET IN YEREVAN, PROMOTE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Tert.am

12 Feb

On February 12, the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia (AmCham) and The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), a private, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank devoted to independent research in the areas of economic policy, governance and foreign policy, with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan, hosted a panel discussion on "Turkish-Armenian Relations and Cross-Border Regionalism." Panelists for this event included Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, U.S. Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch and TEPAV's President and a Turkish economist, Professor Guven Sak (TEPAV).

The roundtable discussion brought together representatives of the corporate sector on both sides of the border to better understand the role of business in developing relations between the neighboring countries, as well as economic and business opportunities that may arise with an open border between Turkey and Armenia.

Professor Sak delivered the keynote presentation: "Turkey's Experience of Economic Liberalization and Cross-Border Regionalism and the Role of the Private Sector in the Development of Relations with its Neighbors." The event was attended by representatives of major business associations, international organizations, diplomatic missions, and the Government of Armenia.

TEPAV representatives are visiting Yerevan February 10-12 for meetings with business and government officials, non-government organizations and others involved in the promotion of cross-border cooperation.

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12.02.2010, Aysor.am

<http://www.aysor.am/en/news/2010/02/12/tepav/>

"Armenian-Turkish border's opening is beneficial both for Armenia and Turkey. By the border's opening, sales areas for Armenia-made goods will increase, competition will be stimulated, and the country will become closer to Europe,"

said U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, Marie L. Jovanovich at today's panel discussion on "Armenia-Turkey relations and cross-border regionalism."

"Since the moment when Armenian President Sargsyan had invited Abdullah Gul to visit Armenia, and the 'football diplomacy' had launched, there were taken many serious steps. There were signed Armenia-Turkey protocols last year, this week Presidents of the two countries has sent each other messages, so we really hope the protocols will be ratified by two countries' parliaments," she said.

It's worth mentioning that the panel discussion "Armenia-Turkey relations and cross-border regionalism" is being held in Yerevan with participation of Armenia's Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian, U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Marie L. Jovanovich, and TEPAV's president, Professor Güven Sak, who, in his part, presented Turkey's experience in liberalization of economy and role of the private sector in developing relations with neighbors.

The consultations are organized by the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia (AmCham) and the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), with the support of the U.S. Embassy Yerevan.

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12.02.2010

<http://www.aysor.am/en/news/2010/02/12/armenian-turkish-relations/>

Armenian President had opened a new page in Armenia-Turkey relations, said Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian at the panel discussion on "Armenia-Turkey relations and cross-border regionalism."

"This is a completely deliberate step. I think, you'll agree that Armenia's President has opened a new page in Armenia-Turkey relations. We are dealing with new reality. And whether our opponents like this or not, we all have to reckon with this reality," said Prime Minister.

"We've been offered an exclusive chance, and we must snatch at a chance.

The authorities show a political will in the process on normalisation of relations and border's opening," said PM, keeping in view the importance of Armenian President's speech in London's Chatham House on Wednesday, February 10.

Tigran Sarkisian also pointed that Armenian President's message to his counterpart Abdullah Gul is another clear confirmation of strong and resolute positions of President Sargsyan over that issue.

If Turkey's government ratifies protocols, neither obstacle will arise in Armenian Parliament, according to Mr. Sarkisian. "We can't wait so long.

Our counterparts in reasonable terms must answer the question how they see normalisation of relations, and whether they are going to show a political will," he said.

It's worth mentioning that the panel discussion "Armenia-Turkey relations and cross-border regionalism" is being held in Yerevan with participation of Armenia's Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian, U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Marie L. Jovanovich, and TEPAV's president, Professor Güven Sak.

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http://www.armenianow.com/news/20861/armenianturkish_relations

Round table: Turkish think tank and AmCham Armenia discuss Armenian-Turkish relations



Photolure

US Ambassador, Armenian Prime-Minister and Turkish analyst during the roundtable discussion.

By [Gayane Abrahamyan](#)

ArmeniaNow reporter

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Armenian Prime minister Tigran Sargsyan said Friday that steps made by authorities directed at the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations, “are well thought-out.”

“The president (Serzh Sargsyan) opened a new page in the history of neighbors,” said the Prime Minister. “This is not a diplomatic game, but it is rather an aim to normalize relations.”

The premiere’s comments were delivered at a round table discussion ‘Turkish-Armenian Relations and Cross-Border Regionalism’, attended by the Chairman of the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), political analyst Güven Sak, US Ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch, representatives of major business associations, international organizations and sponsored by the American Chamber of Commerce Armenia (AmCham).

According to the prime minister, “it happens quite rarely when global players share the same views,” that is to say the positions included in the protocols on normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations are defended by the US, Russia and Europe, and “this is an exclusive opportunity to improve relations.”

The Turkish analyst said both countries will benefit if the Armenian-Turkish border will be opened.

Ambassador Yovanovitch in her report, referring to the opportunity of border opening, stated that the concerns over it are justified, and all concerns must be taken into consideration, lessening risks as much as possible.

“However, the border opening will be beneficial for consumers of both Armenia and Turkey, and Armenia will get no longer be isolation,” the ambassador stressed.

Participants of the meeting discussed the scenarios of further development of relations with neighbors, as wells as the possible threats connected with border opening, however most of the speakers stated that they (threats) can be overcome by Armenia.

Sak presented a report on Turkey’s economic liberalization, a panorama of Turkey’s economic development (in 1980-2009).

According to the Turkish professor, thanks to the democratic economic policy implemented in Turkey over the past two decades, the economy was strengthened in the country, and it became a leader in the region.

According to his report, currently about 640,000 businessmen work in Turkey, and the volumes of export reach \$132 billion and are almost equal to import volumes; whereas in 2009, the export volumes were \$700 million, twice less than the volumes of import in Armenia.

U.S. Envoy Argues For Turkish-Armenian Border Opening



YEREVAN (RFE/RL)—The U.S. ambassador in Yerevan, Marie Yovanovitch, claimed on Friday that Armenia would draw substantial economic benefits from the possible opening of its border with Turkey and most Armenians seem to realize that.

Reiterating Washington’s strong support for the Turkish-Armenian normalization, Yovanovitch said Armenia’s heavy dependence on Georgian transit routes carries an “enormous risk” that was highlighted during Georgia’s August 2008 war with Russia. The resulting disruption of vital cargo supplies to the landlocked country underlined the importance of having an open border with Turkey, she said.

“The benefits [of border opening], I think, are clear to Armenia,” Yovanovitch told a panel discussion in Yerevan on Turkish-Armenian cross-border commerce. “An end to geographic and economic isolation; expanded export opportunities, especially for the depressed communities near the border; opening of the new transport routes that would reduce transport costs; easier access to Armenia for Turkish goods; increased competition and choice for Armenian consumers, a higher quality of Armenian products ... and new export routes for Armenian products.”

The diplomat continued to make the case for opening borders, claiming that Armenian exporters would also gain access to Turkey’s large and highly protected market. “In addition, with Turkey and the European Union linked by a customs union agreement for trade purposes, an open border with Turkey would put Armenia on a border of Western Europe,” she said.

Yovanovitch also spoke of what she called significant political and economic benefits of border opening for Turkey. "Turkish companies would have new export markets in Armenia, and by establishing operations here they could take advantage of favorable export tariffs to Russia and other CIS countries at the same time as they create employment for Armenians," she argued.

The remarks reflect the view of not only the U.S. government but also the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and other lending institutions. Senior IMF and the World Bank officials believe that a positive impact of border opening on Armenia's recession-hit economy would be felt as early as this year.

Armenian, economists, however, assert that-border commerce with Turkey would actually damage the domestic economy. They say it would flood the domestic market with cheap Turkish consumer goods and thereby hurt many Armenian manufacturers.

Yovanovitch said she found such concerns legitimate but added that she believes the Armenian government can minimize possible "short-term shocks" resulting from the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations. "Opening the border between Armenia and Turkey will require adjustments," she said. "But I'm confident that the long-term benefits to both countries and the region far outweigh any short-term economic impacts."

Yovanovitch also stood by her view that most Armenians support rapprochement with Turkey, despite an unprecedented wave of opposition against the agreements by most Armenians in Armenia and its far-flung Diaspora.

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US AMBASSADOR: OPENING OF ARMENIAN-TURKISH BORDER WILL PROVIDE BIG ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH COUNTRIES

Panorama.am
16:47 12/02/2010

The opening of the Armenian-Turkish border and normalization of ties between Armenia and Turkey will provide big economic opportunities for both countries, US Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch told a panel discussion on "Turkish-Armenian Relations and Cross-Border Regionalism" today.

"Many in Armenia are concerned that different spheres of the Armenian economics will be harmed after the border opening. It will be a serious challenge but it will create possibilities for both the consumers and the producers. I would not like to underestimate the challenges but closed borders do not lead to anything good," Ambassador said.

As Yovanovitch said, open border will ease Armenia's economic isolation enabling Armenia to enter into a market of 70 million creating opportunities to cut economic and transportation expenses, boost competition and volumes of export.

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U.S. ENVOY ARGUES FOR TURKISH-ARMENIAN BORDER OPENING

<http://www.asbarez.com/2010/02/u-s-envoy-argues-for-turkish-armenian-border-opening/>
Feb 12th, 2010

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TURKISH ENTERPRISERS IN ARMENIA

<http://www.lragir.am/engsrc/economy16805.html>

13:44:01 - 12/02/2010

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Panelists for this event included Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, U.S. Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch and TEPAV's President, Professor Guven Sak (TEPAV).

The roundtable discussion brought together representatives of the corporate sector on both sides of the border to better understand the role of business in developing relations between the neighboring countries, as well as economic and business opportunities that may arise with an open border between Turkey and Armenia.

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About TEPAV

The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV - www.tepav.org.tr), based in Ankara, is a private, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank devoted to independent research in the areas of economic policy, governance and foreign policy and is financially supported by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchange of Turkey (TOBB). TEPAV, as a major Turkish policy oriented research institute, has been enriching content of the public policy debates and has contributed to the establishment of platforms and dialogue mechanisms.

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<http://www.today.az/news/armenia/61500.html>

<http://hyemedia.com/2010/02/12/turkish-think-tank-and-amcham-armenia-discuss-armenian-turkish-relations/>

<http://www.armtown.com/news/en/a1p/20100212/201002123/>

<http://times.am/2010/02/12/open-border-may-stimulate-tourism-turkish-expert/>