



Stakeholder Brainstorming on Armenia-Turkey Programs

MEMORANDUM

This is a brief summary of the stakeholder meeting/discussion that was held at EPF in Armenia on **March 27, 2008**. The agenda of the meeting is enclosed with this memo. The list of participants to the discussion comprised the following grantees, partners, and experts:

- Artak Barseghyan, Youth Academy Non-Governmental Organization
- Arman Padaryan, Komitas State Quartet NCSO
- Ruben Mangasaryan, Patker Limited Liability Company
- Armen Varosyan, Urban Sustainable Development Foundation
- Boris Navasardyan, Yerevan Press Club
- Stepan Grigoryan, Analytical Center for Globalization and Regional Cooperation

- Tigran Mkrtchyan, AIPRG
- Susanna Harutyunyan, Armenian Association of Film Critics and Cinema Journalists
- Georgiy Vanyan, Caucasus Centre for Peace Initiatives

- Nouneh Sarkisyan, Media Support "INTERNEWS" NGO
- Professor David Hovhannisyanyan, Director, Center for Culture and Civilization, YSU

- Alexander Iskandaryan, Director, Caucasus Media Institute
- Ruben Safrastyan, Director, Institute of Oriental Studies, NAS RA
- Naira Sultanyan, Project Manager/Political Officer, British Embassy

- Yeva Hyusyan, Program Development Specialist, USAID
- Ruzanna Baghdasaryan, OSCE Office in Yerevan

- Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan, Director, EPF in Armenia
- Sarah Smith, Deputy Director, EPF in Armenia
- Heghine Manasyan, Director, CRRC Armenia
- Vazgen Karapetyan, Program Officer for Cross-Border Programs, EPF in Armenia

For different reasons a number of invitees were not able to participate, including:

- Hagop Avedikyan, Azg Oratert LLC
- Tevan Poghosyan, ICHD
- Petros Ghazaryan, TV "Kentron"
- Arsen Ghazaryan, President, Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia

- Arsen Avagyan, Counselor to the Policy Planning Department, MFA

The discussion started with the directors of the on-going EPF Arm-Turkish grant projects each presenting the progress and outputs/outcomes of their particular projects. A document titled "Project Progress as of March 31, 2008" is enclosed with this memo.

After the grantee presentations, the floor was opened for the invited partners and experts to ask questions, as well as make comments and recommendations. Enclosed is the summary of major ideas expressed by the participants:

- EPF and the grantee (Komitas State Quartet) should make sure that the security issues are taken care of during the concerts of the (Turkish) Bosphorus Quartet in Yerevan.
- Armenian organizations usually identify improper organizations in Turkey to collaborate with (VK: usually Turkish partner-organizations do not truly represent the mainstream political/social trends in Turkish society). Part of the problem is that (serious) Turkish organizations usually are not interested in bi-lateral programming with Armenian counterparts, while those who express a certain degree of interest do not represent the mainstream Turkish society. EPF might want to conclude a longer-term collaboration with a well-established organization in Turkey (VK: e.g. like TESEV), so that the latter could properly represent EPF in Turkey and facilitate EPF Arm-Turkish programs on the Turkish end.
- Would be useful if EPF could have a list of organizations (both Armenian and Turkish) that have ever been engaged in bi-lateral Armenian-Turkish projects (инвентаризация).
- Also, EPF could think about bi-lateral programs that would intensify discussion of issues that have long been considered taboo in both societies.
- What if EPF initiates a number of programs in each of Armenia and Turkey (without the other party participating) that would address their (national) taboo issues?
- Probably, arrangement of a number of 3-lateral projects that would include partners from Armenia, Turkey, and EU is a good idea.
- Also, building relations with Islamist organizations in Turkey might prove fruitful: a) they do not associate themselves with the mainstream Turkish society; b) they do not associate themselves with the issue of Genocide. Probably, to organize an "ashough" festival (in Armenia) with Sufi elements?..
- EPF might want to modify its current strategy, and come up with an initiative to organize an on-going Armenia-Turkey Forum (this was recently mentioned by Peter Semneby in Istanbul). For this purpose, there is a need to identify groups (organizations) in Armenia and Turkey that are interested in developing bi-lateral relations (VK: the same idea of "инвентаризация" mentioned above).
- There is an impression that all the (on-going) Arm-Turkish programs/projects are Armenia-centered, i.e. in majority of cases are initiated by the Armenian organizations; usually emphasize Armenia's interest in building relationship with Turkey, while the benefits for the Turkish society are not that obvious.
- Susanna Harutyunyan's Arm-Turkish project was initiated by the Turkish partner (VK: as opposed to what Naira said above). The latter arranged for funding to invite Armenian counterparts (film producers, cinema

critics, etc.) to Turkey. Susanna need funds to invite Turkish counterparts to Armenia during the Golden Apricot Film Festival. (VK: EPF is going to award a grant to Susanna's organization).

- Armenia and Armenia-related issues occupy a marginal place in the agenda of major Turkish political forces. It is important to make efforts to enlarge the agenda of influential Turkish political parties towards Armenia-related issues. This is possible to achieve through a series of bi-lateral discussions between political scientists, politicians, and experts.

- Some Turkish organizations are able to fundraise for bi-lateral projects (VK: probably, within the ENP's Cross-Border Cooperation instrument).

- How about bringing parallels between Arm-Turkish and Cypriot-Turkish issues?

- Why don't we consider including scientists, experts in the Arm-Turkish bi-lateral programs? Those not necessarily should include Turks and Armenians...

- Any future strategy should include media-related projects that would provide for collaboration with bigger (more serious) Turkish media outlets and prominent journalists.

- Currently, the Armenian community in Turkey (mostly, in Istanbul) faces a big challenge. Why not to arrange a program that would address that issue in particular?

END.