



NEWS BULLETIN

Embassy of the Republic of Armenia

"Today we have three absolute, non-negotiable and unquestionable values: the Republic of Armenia, the Diaspora and Karabakh, Preserving these three national values must be the sacred goal of every Armenian."

Hayastany Hanrapetutioun Daily

The Embassy of the Republic of Armenia congratulates all Armenians on the occasion of the 12th Anniversary of Armenia's Independence.

ARMENIA

PRESIDENT ROBERT KOCHARYAN ADDRESSES THE NATION

Yerevan, 21 Sept.2003. - "Today is a day of celebration for all Armenians in the world. We are a witness to a new historical era. Today the Republic of Armenia is ready to stand up to its commitment to be a homeland for all Armenians in every sense of the word. There is a sense of pan-armenianism in all that we have done; almost every achievement that we have gained has been with global Armenian involvement.

In a historical resolution in 1991 the people of Armenia chose to build a free and democratic state. That state today is best described as a country of an established state infrastructure, an organised army and a free economy. Despite all odds we continue to adhere to our principles of national and human values. The people of Armenia have paid a high price for independence. Independence is the cornerstone value of our society and is not something that can ever be bargained," said President Kocharyan in his address to the people of Armenia on the occasion of the 12th anniversary of independence of Armenia.

FOREIGN MINISTER VARTAN OSKANIAN ADDRESSES THE 58TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 25 Sept.2003.- "2003 has been a good year for Armenia. Our steady, double digit growth rate is the fastest in the CIS. We are pleased with this and we also accept the challenge. We know that with economic growth comes an even greater responsibility: to confront the social gaps, that can lead to social inequality and domestic instability. The shortest path to the eradication of such transitional ills as polarization of society, the urban-rural gap, uneven access to higher education, is to sustain this high level of economic growth,"- stated Armenia's Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian. Oskanian also laid out Armenia's stance on issues of the Middle East, Iraq, Nagorno-Karabagh and the Armenian Genocide.

PRESIDENT ROBERT KOCHARYAN VISITS BULGARIA

Sofia,09-10 Sept.2003. - President Robert Kocharyan assessed his official the visit to Bulgaria as productive and stated that Bulgaria and Armenia have a lot in common in their interests and aims, have faced similar problems and both countries are striving to achieve their goal of European integration. Armenia's Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian has assessed the official visit of President Robert Kocharyan to Bulgaria as highly positive. Talking to the media, Oskanian stated that the various bilateral and multilateral meetings held in Bulgaria were productive and a number of agreements were reached. An inter-governmental commission will now look closely at the outcome of the visit and make specific suggestions. The Foreign Minister singled out transport as one of the areas that were of special interest to both countries.

The political arena likewise was productive; bilateral negotiations were comprehensive and constructive. Oskanian paid special attention to the fact that Bulgaria gains the next presidency of the OSCE, and this could be an opportune time to renew the Nagorno-Karabagh peace process, that has stalled since the run-up to the Azerbaijan presidential elections.

ARMENIA PARTICIPATES IN CIS SUMMIT

Yalta, 18 Sept. 2003.- President Kocharyan headed Armenia's delegation to the CIS summit held in Yalta. The delegation included Prime Minister Andranik Margaryan, Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian and other government officials. The summit discussed multilateral economical issues, such as a common free trade zone, air traffic, etc. The development of further cooperation between the states was also discussed. Leaders of the CIS countries also discussed anti-terrorism issues. President Kocharyan held bilateral talks with Presidents Eduard Shevardnaze of Georgia and Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine.

LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT ROLANDAS PAKSAS ON OFFICIAL VISIT TO ARMENIA

Yerevan, 16 Sept.2003. - President of Lithuania Rolandas Paksas was in Yerevan on an official visit. Rolandas Paksas met with President Kocharyan, Prime Minister Andranik Margaryan and Chairman of the National Assembly Arthur Baghdassaryan. The Lithuanian President also met with Catholicos of All Armenians, HH Garegin II. President Paksas met with the students and academic staff of the Yerevan State University.

ARMENIA ABOLISHES THE DEATH PENALTY

Yerevan, 12 Sept.2003.- In an historic move, the National Assembly of Armenia ratified the 6th Protocol of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights (ECHR) banning the death penalty in times of peace. The National Assembly adopted the measure on September 10th with a vote of 92 to 1. The pledge to abolish the death penalty was a key part of a series of commitments made by Armenia upon joining the Council of Europe in January 2001.

ARMENIA- DIASPORA BUSINESS CONFERENCE HELD IN YEREVAN

Yerevan, 15 Sept.2003.- More than 900 businesspeople from Armenia and Armenian communities abroad gathered in Yerevan to explore ways of promoting Diaspora investments into Armenia's economy. The three day conference was opened by President Robert Kocharyan. "You can combine patriotism with successful business in Armenia", Kocharyan told the nearly 150 Diaspora entrepreneurs. In the words of US Armenian millionaire Vahakn Hovnanian, "The Diaspora capital is a huge iceberg, but what we see here is its small tip".

**YEREVAN HOSTS
FIRST INTERNATIONAL ARMENOLOGICAL CONFERENCE**

Yerevan, 15 Sept. 2003.- The Armenian National Academy of Sciences and the State University of Yerevan jointly hosted the First International Armenological Conference in Yerevan. In his address President Robert Kocharyan described the conference as a “significant event for the scientific community of Armenia”. “Since independence, this is the first event of its kind. It is only natural that this is being held in Yerevan, as Yerevan should not only be the capital of independent Armenia, but also the capital city of Armenological studies. I warmly welcome all our foreign participants, to whom I refer as the worthy successors of Heinrich Hubsman, Antoine Meye and other renowned armenologists,” said President Kocharyan.

FIFTH ARMENIA – EU COOPERATION COUNCIL MEETING

Brussels, 30 Sep, 2003. - The Armenian delegation to the 5th Armenia – EU Cooperation Council meeting (Brussels, September 30) was led by Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian. The Minister met with Javier Solana, EU Secretary General and Chris Patten, EU Commissioner for External Relations. For the first time, the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Heikki Talvitie took part in the meeting. Developments in South Caucasus, the implementation of joint programs, steps taken to improve Armenia’s investment and business climate, and other issues were discussed. The EU delegation offered support to develop the business climate and to reduce poverty. “This is a priority region for the European Union,” stated EU Commission’s top official Michael Leigh, “and the intensity of our cooperation and our intentions to further develop it in the period ahead are witnesses to the importance we attach.”

ARMENIA AT UNESCO 32nd GENERAL CONFERENCE

Paris, 30 Sept. 2003.- Addressing the UN Educational, Science and Cultural Organization’s 32nd General Conference in Paris Vartan Oskanian welcomed the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and reminded that three outstanding Armenian medieval monasteries have been entered in the World Heritage List while the nomination of another monastery, - Noravank, has been submitted to World Heritage Committee. He stressed that both cultural diversity and the protection of monuments are especially significant for nations which have monuments beyond national borders. Minister Oskanian praised the cooperation in this sphere with Governments of Iran and Georgia and expressed his hope to work with the government of Turkey to maintain the Armenian monuments which are of universal value. He informed the Conference about the systematic destruction of the unique Armenian monuments in Nakhichevan by Azeri authorities, and called on the UNESCO to send monitors to the region to witness the destruction. Minister Oskanian urged the General Conference to include in the organization’s Draft Calendar the 1600th anniversary of the Armenian alphabet, to be celebrated in two years as “a nod to the value of Cultural Diversity, and to the significance of languages and cultures as the live evidence of human and civilizational development and advancement”.

UNITED KINGDOM

**UK ARMENIANS CELEBRATE 12 YEARS OF ARMENIA’S
INDEPENDENCE**

London, 20 Sept. 2003.- A large audience of British Armenians at the St Yeghishe Armenian Church heard Ambassador Vahe

25 A Cheniston Gardens, London W8 TG E-mail: armembuk@onetel.com Tel.: 02079385435 Fax: 02079382595

Gabrielyan’s address to the Armenian community on the occasion of the National Day of Armenia. Ambassador Gabrielyan noted Armenia’s political history over the last decade, cited Armenia’s remarkable socio-economical recovery and called upon particularly the youth to be more vigorous and enthusiastic in their thoughts and deeds towards Armenia. Other keynote speakers of the day were His Grace Bishop Nathan Hovhannisyan and the Chairman of the Armenian Church and Community Council Mr Ara Palamudian. The audience was later presented with a fine performance of Armenian folk songs by the “Hover” choir, visiting London enroute home to Armenia from Edinburgh. The event was organised by the ACC&C of Gt. Britain under the auspices of the Embassy of Armenia in the UK. HBM Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, Miss Thorda Abbot-Watt also attended at the ceremony.

EMBASSY OF ARMENIA HOSTS NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION

London, 24 Sept. 2003.- After a lapse of a few years the Embassy of Armenia hosted a reception to celebrate the National Day of Armenia at the Nvart Gulbenkian Hall in Iverna Gardens, Kensington. The reception was attended by close to 150 attendees from the London diplomatic corps, the international community, and representatives of the British government, local authorities and members of the Armenian community. HM Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, attending on behalf of Her Majesty congratulated Ambassador Gabrielyan on Armenia’s National Day.

**AMBASSADOR GABRIELIAN VISITS CARDIFF, ATTENDS
PARTY FOR WALES CONFERENCE**

Cardiff, 19 Sept. 2003.- On the invitation of Plaid Cymru (Party for Wales), Ambassador Gabrielyan visited Wales and attended the annual Plaid Cymru conference. Ambassador Gabrielyan met with the party chairman Daffyd Iwan, congratulated him on his election to the post and expressed his hope for continuing and strengthening of Welsh-Armenian relations. Daffyd Iwan expressed his thanks to the Ambassador for his coming to Wales and reiterated the Party for Wales’s commitment to fostering Welsh-Armenian relations.

PARTY CONFERENCES

Brighton and Bournemouth.- In September Ambassador Vahe Gabrielyan also attended the Liberal Democrat and Labour Party annual conferences. The conferences are annually attended by a large number of diplomats accredited in the UK and are seen as an important event in the political life of the nation. At a diplomatic reception in Brighton Ambassador Gabrielyan met with Charles Kennedy, MP, the leader of the Liberal Democrats. At the Labour Party conference he briefly met Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, Secretary for International Development Baroness Amos and Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon and participated in the events planned for diplomats.

KHACHATRYAN CENTENARY AT ST. JOHN’S, SMITH SQUARE

London, 28 Sept. 2003.- A charity recital dedicated to the 100th anniversary of composer Aram Khachaturian was given by a group of gifted young Armenian musicians at St. John’s hall. The talented musicians are grant-holders of the Vladimir Spivakov Charitable Foundation and laureates of international music competitions and were brought to Britain by the “Hayastan” All-Armenian Fund and sponsored by a few British Armenian benefactors.

In a short address to the audience Ambassador Gabrielyan paid tribute to Aram Khachaturian, one of the greatest composers of the 20th century. The Ambassador congratulated the group on a fine performance and thanked the All-Armenian Fund for the wonderful evening and their continuing devotion to Armenia.