

ARMENIAN MEDIA MONITORING

No. 1 | 1-15 February 2016

As part of our research and analysis, the Regional Studies Center (RSC) has initiated a new “Armenian Media Monitoring” effort, focusing on political and economic developments and based on a daily survey of Armenian print and electronic media outlets. The RSC offers a summary compilation of the most significant articles, translated into English and produced every two weeks.

POLITICS

OPPOSITION “CIVIL CONTRACT” PARTY LAUNCHES PREPARATIONS FOR 2017 ELECTIONS

2 February 2016

The opposition “Civil Contract” Party launched an initiative, “6000 Proxies,” to prepare for the 2017 elections by fielding their own election observers and proxies, aimed at deploying three proxies in each polling station.

www.aravot.am/2016/02/02/653385/

NEW PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE FORMED

6 February 2016

The Armenian parliament formed a new internal budget office headed by Gagik Barseghyan, a former staff expert with the Standing Committee on Financial-Credit and Budgetary Affairs.

www.panorama.am/am/news/2016/02/06/%D5%B0%D5%AA/1524366

OSCE CRITICAL OF ARMENIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM

8 February 2016

Election experts from the OSCE critically assessed the December 2015 Armenian constitutional referendum, singling out “serious problems” with vote counts and criticizing the authorities for using “considerable public funds” to secure a disputed “Yes” vote for the constitutional referendum.

www.azatutyun.am/content/article/27538670.html
www.aravot.am/2016/02/08/655326/

CANDIDATES FOR OMBUDSMAN

9 February 2016

There were three candidates for the office of ombudsman: Arman Tatoyan, nominated by the Republican Party, opposition deputy Zaruhi Postanjyan nominated by MP Edmon Marukyan and human rights defender Narek Aloyan nominated by MP Tigran Urikhanyan.

www.azatutyun.am/content/article/27541477.html
www.aravot.am/2016/02/12/656892/

NEW ARMENIAN NATIONAL SECURITY DIRECTOR

12 February 2016

By presidential decree, Deputy Prosecutor General Georgi Kutoyan was appointed as the head of the National Security Service (NSS), replacing the retiring Gorik Hakobyan.

<http://news.am/eng/news/311329.html>
www.azatutyun.am/content/article/27548715.html

PRESIDENT CONVENES MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS

12 February 2016

In a rare meeting with senior officials, President Sarkisian “underlined the significance of his controversial constitutional changes, saying that they will democratize Armenia and encourage his administration to improve governance and the rule of law.” Sarkisian again declined to clarify whether he will seek to stay in power after serving out his second and final presidential term in April 2018.

<http://news.am/eng/news/311388.html>
<http://168.am/2016/02/12/595030.html>

ECONOMICS

ARMENIA & ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX 3 February 2016

Despite progress in tackling corruption, the close relationships within political and business circles raise concerns about cronyism and special-interest influence, Heritage Foundation's 2016 Index of Economic Freedom reads.

Armenia came 54th in the rating, appearing among countries with moderately free economy. Georgia was in 230th place (mostly free), and Azerbaijan 91st (moderately free). According to the report, the diversification of the economic base has increased economic dynamism in Armenia, simplification of business procedures having facilitated regulatory efficiency.

Although Armenia performs relatively well in many categories of economic freedom, deeper institutional reforms are needed in areas like judicial independence and government transparency," the report noted. According to the Rule of Law component, Armenia scored 20 out of 100 for Property Rights, and for Freedom from Corruption, received 37 (worldwide average of both indices was a little over 40).

<http://news.am/eng/news/309720.html>
www.panarmenian.net/arm/news/204983/

NEW WORLD BANK LOAN FOR ROAD REPAIR

3 February 2016

The World Bank (WB) will provide an additional \$40 million loan to Armenia for the construction of approximately 190km motorway for the period of 2016-2019.

<http://news.am/eng/news/309616.html>
<http://newsline.am/am/news/view/24418.html>

UK FIRM TO BUILD THERMAL POWER PLANT

4 February 2016

The UK-based Grange Power Ltd of Great Britain plans to build a \$215 million steam-gas thermal power station in northern Armenia.

<http://news.am/eng/news/309803.html>

GAS PRICES DOWN LAST YEAR 8 February 2016

For the period of January 2015-February 2016, gas prices in Armenia fell by approximately 15.1 percent, while the price for diesel fuel decreased by 16.2 percent.

<http://news.am/arm/news/310501.html>
www.lragir.am/index/arm/0/country/view/127478

The **Regional Studies Center (RSC)** is an independent think tank engaged in a wide range of strategic analysis and research, developing policy initiatives aimed at bolstering political and economic reform and conflict resolution in the broader South Caucasus region.

As a leading think tank based in Armenia, the RSC strives to elevate the level of political discourse and deepen civic activism while broadening engagement in the public policy process. One of our core longer-term goals is to serve as a catalyst for reform and sustainable development by contributing to the formulation of public policy through innovative research and objective analysis.

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